

Mendocino Coast Whale Festivals!

Each and every March, coastal Mendocino County celebrates the migration of gray whales. Fun for locals and visitors alike, you'll find wine walks, foot races, beer tastings, interactive science demonstrations, even a margarita competition – all in celebration of the most majestic of marine mammals. Check out the numerous events and activities – there are fun happenings for everyone in the family!

Mendocino – March 7 & 8

Saturday, March 7 – Chowder Tasting Event

Back by popular demand...it's the Chowder Tasting event at Crown Hall. Savor and sample Chowders from several local restaurants! Event is from 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM (or until chowder runs out). www.mendocinocoast.com/whale-home

Saturday, March 7 – Wine Walk

Meander through the village of Mendocino and duck into shops that are hosting wineries. Hop aboard the MTA Trolley for a scenic ride to each participating wine-tasting venue. Tickets available for purchase. 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM. www.mendocinocoast.com/whale-home

Saturday, March 7 – Whale Watching Station

Join CA State Parks staff and docents to spot gray whales from the high bluffs of the Mendocino Headlands as they migrate north to their arctic feeding grounds. We'll scout for spouts at Shipping Point; about a 1/4-mile past Portuguese Beach at the west end of Main Street. Drop in anytime between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM! This program is weather-dependent. www.mendoparks.org/whale-festival

Saturday, March 7 – Storytime & Crafts

Make it a family outing for story time and crafts at the Mendocino Community Library during Whale Fest! 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM. The library is located at 10591 William Street near Little Lake Street. www.mendocinocoast.com/whale-home

Saturday, March 7 – "The Boy Who Talks to Whales"

This film will be viewable at the Kelley House Museum from 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM. Admission is \$10. Museum is open Friday through Sunday, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM, 45007 Albion Street, Mendocino. www.kelleyhousemuseum.org

Saturday, March 7 – Flashback to 1976 – 50th Anniversary Celebration

Join the fun for a 70's dance party from 5:00 – 8:00 PM. No host bar, small bites and n/a beverages plus a DJ rockin' the house. Admission is \$25. Crown Hall, 45285 Ukiah Street, Mendocino. www.mendocinocoast.com/whale-home

Little River – March 14 & 15

Saturday, March 14 – Spring Ranch Whale Walk

Join a CA State Park Interpreter for a mini-hike along the Spring Ranch trail to look for migrating gray whales! The guided portion of the hike will end at the coast, and visitors should plan to enjoy the 0.75-mile return hike at their own pace. RSVP limit - 18 cars at Spring Ranch and a 'soft' maximum of 30 people 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM & 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM. Location: Spring Ranch Property, Van Damme State Park. This FREE event is weather-dependent. *Note: The trail includes uneven surfaces and is not stroller or wheelchair-friendly.* www.mendoparks.org/whale-festival

Saturday, March 14 – Margarita Madness

Sip, Savor, and Vote! Join us for the ultimate Margarita showdown—a thrilling competition and fundraiser for MendoParks! Watch as bartenders from near and far shake, mix, and rim their way to victory. You'll get to judge sample

Margaritas and vote for your favorite, all while supporting 10 coastal state parks. Tickets are \$50; hours: 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM. www.littleriverinn.com/gatherings-and-events

Saturday, March 14 – Mocktail Trail

Join participating lodging partners in Little River for the first ever Mocktail Trail, from 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM. Try creative mocktails at Little River Inn, SCP Mendocino Inn & Farm, Cottages at Little River Cove, and Inn at Schoolhouse Creek. Tickets are \$25/per person. www.eventbrite.com/e/mocktail-trail-tickets-1982242498674?aff=oddtcreator

Fort Bragg – March 20 – 22

Friday, March 20 – Campfire Stories & More

Join California State Park Interpreters for an engaging evening of songs, stories, trivia, and s'mores around the campfire in MacKerricher State Park's Campfire Center. Visitors will learn why we celebrate this charismatic cetacean while sipping hot cocoa as the sun sets. All ages welcome. This FREE program is weather-dependent. 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM. www.mendoparks.org/whale-festival

Saturday, March 21 – 38th Annual Whale Run & Fun Walk

Join other race enthusiasts for a run and fun walk along the coastal trail in Fort Bragg. This popular event features a Kiddie Race, 10K Run, 5K Run and 5K Fun Walk. It's one of the most beautiful places for a race! Sign-up deadline is March 9th. Soroptimist International of Fort Bragg and Noyo Sunrise is proud to sponsor and host this annual event. 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM. www.whalerun.org

Saturday, March 21 – Chowder Tasting Competition

Start your day with a taste of chowder from many local restaurants and then vote for your favorite chowder as this event marks a return during Whale Fest Weekend. Get tickets and chowder at the Town Hall on Laurel & Main Streets in downtown Fort Bragg. 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM (or until chowder runs out). www.mendocinocoast.com/whale-home

Saturday, March 21 – Downtown Wine Walk

Enjoy beautiful wines and hors d'oeuvres from over a dozen wineries from Mendocino County while visiting local shops and the quaint downtown Fort Bragg. Whale watch from miles of beaches including along the coastal trail in Fort Bragg. Tickets available for purchase. 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM. www.mendocinocoast.com/whale-home

Saturday, March 21 – Fort Bragg Rotary Beer Fest

It's a party at the annual Rotary Beer Fest – featuring live music and BBQ for purchase at Eagles Hall. Sample local and regional craft beers, meet the brewmasters and have a heck of a good time! Taste the ales and watch the whales! Tickets available for purchase. Must be over 21; ID required. No kids, no pets. Free bus rides. 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM.

Saturday, March 21 – MacKerricher Whale Walks

Scout for spouts on this guided walk in MacKerricher State Park. California State Park Interpreters will guide visitors north along the Haul Road Trail to watch for the magnificent migrating Eastern Pacific Gray Whale. Join us to learn the incredible story of this fascinating population of marine mammals! All ages welcome. This FREE program is weather-dependent. 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM & 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM. www.mendoparks.org/whale-festival

Sunday, March 22 – Wine & Whales at Weller House

Enjoy libations and more at one of the most historic inns with a water tower, garden and redwood paneled ballroom. Tickets are \$50/per person. Hours are 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Call for tickets. www.wellerhouse.com

Saturday & Sunday, March 21 & 22 – Soroptimist Craft Fair

The Soroptimists are hosting a whale of sale up and down Laurel Street in downtown Fort Bragg. Find a wide variety of amazing, handcrafted items, from quilts and toys to ironworks, pottery, knits and crochet, jewelry, paintings, tools, and puzzles. You won't find a better place to get one-of-a-kind gifts. 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM. www.mendocinocoast.com/whale-home

Saturday, March 21 – Storytime & Crafts

Make it a family outing for story time and crafts at the Point Arena Library during Whale Fest! 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM. The library is located at 499 East Laurel Street. www.mendocinocoast.com/whale-home

Sunday, March 22 – Mendonoma Whale & Seal Study

Mendonoma Whale & Seal Study's Scott and Tree Mercer will be on hand at the Crow's Nest to do a daily count of migrating gray whales. They'll help visitors spot whales and answer questions about these incredible creatures. While there, enjoy the marine science exhibits at the Crow's Nest. Crow's Nest Interpretive Center – Noyo Headlands South Trail. 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. www.noyocenter.org

Sunday, March 22 – MacKerricher Whale Skeleton Painting

Throw on that old painting shirt and help apply another coat of paint to the whale skeleton in MacKerricher State Park! Come to paint, sip cocoa, and learn the fascinating history of MacKerricher's fully articulated gray whale skeleton. Help ensure that these amazing bones are preserved for years to come. This is a FREE event for all ages. 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Weather dependent. www.mendoparks.org/whale-festival

Sunday, March 22 – Whale Song Sound Bath

Sonic Soul Sounding Collective invites you to celebrate the miraculous healing song of whales and the start of Spring. 3:00 PM – 5 PM Cobalt Gallery, 432 N. Main Street in Fort Bragg.

Point Arena – March 28 & 29

Saturday, March 28 – Whale Watching at Point Arena Lighthouse

Watch whales and visit with Scot & Tree Mercer of the Mendonoma Whale & Seal Study at their information table and viewing station at the Lighthouse, from 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM. A small collection of binoculars will be on-hand for people to use. Entry is \$5.00. www.pointarenalighthouse.com/post/whale-watch-at-the-lighthouse

Saturday, March 28 – Killer Whale Beverage

The Record will be serving their "killer whale" and Under-the-Sea non-alcoholic beverages during the weekend. Hours are 3:00 PM – 10:00 PM. www.therecordpointarena.com

Saturday, March 28 – Storytime & Crafts

Make it a family outing for story time and crafts at the Point Arena Library during Whale Fest! 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM. The library is located at 225 Main Street. www.mendocinocoast.com/whale-home

Saturday, March 28 – Cornhole Tournament

Take part in a rollicking cornhole tournament in downtown Point Arena. Time is TBD.

Saturday, March 28 – Burning Down the House (concert)

Burning Down the House is the Bay Area's premier *Talking Heads* tribute band, delivering high-energy performances that celebrate the iconic sound and artistry of Talking Heads. Formed by seasoned musicians, they bring this dynamic music to life for unforgettable live music experiences at both public gigs and private events. Doors open at 6:30 PM; show starts at 7:00 PM at Arena Theater. www.burningdownhouse.com/calendar

Saturday, March 28 & Sunday, March 29 – Whale-themed Food & Drink

Check out select restaurants for whale and seafood-themed food and beverage offerings.

More Events

Saturday, March 28 – Greenwood State Beach Whale Watching Walks

Join California State Park Interpreter, Anica Williams, for a guided walk along the bluffs overlooking Greenwood State Beach. Binoculars provided to watch for the incredible Eastern Pacific Gray Whale. Discover more about our State Marine Mammal and their inspirational survival story! This FREE event is weather-dependent. Walks are 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM & 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM. Requires an RSVP. www.mendoparks.org/whale-festival

Every Saturday & Sunday in March – Guided Whale Walks

Join Noyo Center docents for this one-hour walk along the Coastal Trail and learn about the gray whale migration and local marine life. South Coastal Trail. Start at the parking lot of the South Coastal Trail on the Noyo Headlands and end at the

Crow's Nest Interpretive Center. Noyo Headlands South Trail. Free (suggested \$10 donation). Sunday walks feature both Spanish and English-speaking docents. 10:00 AM. www.noyocenter.org

Monthlong – Crow's Nest Interpretive Center

Visit our headlands facility to view special marine mammal specimens, in addition to the tidepool aquarium, marine mammal exhibits, and a deck from which to watch for passing whales. Crow's Nest Interpretive Center, Noyo Headlands South Trail. Free. Hours are 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM; extended hours March 15 & 16; 22 & 23 from 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. www.noyocenter.org

Monthlong – Mendocino Whale Wars Exhibit

Few people know that the Mendocino Whale Festival started not as a party, but as a war: the Mendocino Whale War. In 1975, when Greenpeace captured footage of a Russian vessel slaughtering whales off the Mendocino Cape, it became the catalyst for a small group of concerned citizens to take action which included a dramatic anti-whaling campaign off the coast. The first Whale Festival was held that year in March, 1976 to educate the public about the plight of the endangered whales and to raise money for the voyage. Visit the Kelley House Museum during March to view posters, photographs, and news clippings in an exhibit curated by Mendocino High School student Sebastian Allen. www.kelleyhousemuseum.org