

Bash for Behemoths: Whalefest Monterey

Shower the beautiful aquatic visitors with attention, love.

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Monterey Whalefest

It's a sight often seen around Monterey Bay. Now landlubbers pause, as they do annually, to honor the area's migratory whales.

FERVOR-STOKING FLUKES: Follow pretty much any Monterey-based boat company or tour outfit or travel organization or nature photographer and you're bound to see whale sightings posted on your various social media feeds. It almost seems as if the fervor-stoking sightings arrive on the hour, each hour, even if they pop up daily or every few days. The postings are enough to drive a whale enthusiast who is *not* within whale-viewing distance of Monterey Bay to distraction, for one can only see so many photos of fully extended flukes and breaching beauties before one starts planning a trip. And while whales show a tenacious knack for not sticking to our human schedules, as far as any longed-for sightings go, there is a weekend where many mavens of some of the largest animals on the planet will make for Monterey: Saturday, Jan. 23 and Sunday, Jan. 24. It's the 6th Annual [Monterey Whalefest](#) in "The Whale Watching Capital of the World," and a number of fans, and experts, will be out in fishtastic force at Old Fisherman's Wharf.

WHILE BOAT TRIPS... out into the whale's home turf will surely cheer many a visitor, some of the most interesting action will be on land, or wharf, rather. Look for "a symposium with lectures and

documentaries related to ocean and marine life conservation" among the many happenings filling up the weekend schedule. Also look for "educational displays" and entertainment and "interactive activities for kids." Humphrey the Humpback Whale, a 60-foot model, will also be "on site in honor his migratory friends." It's a free festival that, in the end, "benefits many local and national marine organizations that inspire, educate, explore, and empower the public to protect the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary." The American Cetacean Society, Hopkins Marine Station, Otter Project, Marine Mammal Center and several other organizations are expected to attend.

AND CAN YOU GO IN SEARCH... of the massive mammals, those colossal kings and queens of the ocean? You can, if weather allows. There are ticketed boat trips leaving regularly from the Wharf, so find a place aboard and keep those peepers peeled. Scrolling past a blue or minke or orca photo on your Instagram or Facebook feed is pretty swell, but eyeing one right before you could be a life-changer, as far as altering experiences go.

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