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## **6<sup>th</sup> Annual Whalefest Monterey Announces Speakers for its January 23 & 24, 2016 Symposium**

December 2015. Monterey, CA. Monterey Old Fisherman's Wharf Association will sponsor and hold the 6th Annual Whalefest Monterey at and around Old Fisherman's Wharf, 1 Old Fisherman's Wharf, Monterey, CA 93940, "The Monterey Bay Whale Watching Capital of the World™", on Saturday, January 23rd and Sunday, January 24th, 2016 from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The event celebrates the migration of the gray whales, and benefits the many local and national marine organizations that build awareness about the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) – they educate, inspire, and empower the public to protect it. The free event for all ages will feature many fun interactive exhibits and activities from marine non-profits and other organizations.

Whalefest Monterey once again has lined up world-renowned marine scientists, researchers, authors and historians to speak at a two-day Symposium on January 23rd and 24th, 2016 as part of the Whalefest Monterey event on and around Old Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey. This year's presentations focus on the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and its wildlife; climate change, weather and water anomalies and their affects on marine life; whale entanglements and rescues; and local marine history.

On Saturday, Paul Michel from MBNMS/NOAA will provide an overview of the abundant marine life in Monterey Bay; while leatherback turtle researcher Scott Benson will discuss biology and ecology of leatherback turtles including information specific to the endangered western Pacific population that utilizes US west coast waters as a foraging region. UC Santa Cruz distinguished professor Dan Costa will share his research experience with elephant seals.

Cannery Row Foundation founder and John Steinbeck expert Michael Hemp explores the fate of the Western Flyer research ship that took "Doc" Ricketts and John Steinbeck on a well documented research trip to the Sea of Cortez 70 years ago, and local fisheries historian Tim Thomas will entertain with tales of whales, sardines and canneries in old Monterey.

Scientist, researcher and New York Times bestselling author of "Blue Mind", Wallace J. Nichols, will be on hand to share his insights on the remarkable truth about the benefits of being in, on, under or simply near water. He'll also sign copies of his book, available at the event.

Sunday's program focuses on climate change and recent meteorological and oceanographic events and their affect on marine life in general and whales in particular. Marine Biologist Steve Webster, one of the founders of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, will talk about the effects of climate change on whales; while marine ecologist Steve Lonhart explores warm water abnormalities recently observed in Monterey Bay and beyond. Rounding out the program are

presentations by the Northern California Whale Entanglement Team, including founder Peggy Stap of Marine Life Studies, who'll share their experiences and insights into rescuing injured whales on the high seas and in port.

A full schedule of the program with additional speakers (subject to change) will be released later. Additional information about the presentations and speakers' biographies can be found on the Monterey Wharf's website: <http://montereywharf.com/index.php?page=whalefest-monterey-2013>

For more information about Old Fisherman's Wharf, go to [www.montereywharf.com](http://www.montereywharf.com) or call [\(831\) 238-0777](tel:8312380777).

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