



**Lincoln City Visitor
& Convention Bureau**
801 SW Hwy 101, Suite 1; 541-996-1274
800-452-2151; www.oregoncoast.org

Lincoln City Chamber of Commerce
4039 NW Logan Road; 541-994-3070
www.lcchamber.com

Tanger Outlet Center
1500 SE East Devils Lake Rd
541-996-5000
www.tangeroutlet.com

Driftwood Public Library
801 SW Hwy 101; 541-996-2277
www.driftwoodlib.org

Chinook Winds Casino Resort
1777 N.E. 44th
888-CHINOOK; www.chinookwindscasino.com

Lincoln City Lodging Association
www.lincolncitylodgingassn.com

Lincoln City Parks and Recreation
2150 NE Oar Place; 541-994-2131
www.lincolncity.org



LINCOLN CITY

~ WHALE WATCHING ~



THE BEST PLACE ON THE
CENTRAL OREGON COAST
TO TIDEPOOL OR WATCH

WHALES



LINCOLN CITY'S WHALE WATCHING AND TIDEPOOLING

Whale Watching

The Gray Whales

Whale watching is year-round entertainment in Lincoln City. Although several species of whales pass by the beach, the most commonly seen is the Pacific Gray Whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) which migrates annually from the Arctic to Baja California, Mexico, and back. Hunted nearly to extinction in the 1850's, full endangered species protection in 1947 has brought them back nearly to their original population of about 23,000.

This great mammal, stretching 45 feet in length and weighing nearly 40 tons, got its name from the gray patches and white mottling on dark skin. The gray whale has no dorsal (top) fin but rather a dorsal hump near its 12-foot wide fluke (tail) and paddle shaped flippers. One unusual characteristic of gray whales is that they are benthic (bottom) feeders, diving deeply to the bottom of the sea, rolling on their sides, and scooping up tons of bottom sediment. When the whale closes its mouth, sediment is squeezed out through baleen plates (their version of teeth), leaving behind thousands of tiny ocean creatures like amphipods, krill, and tube worms.

Migration

In October each year, the gray whales leave their feeding grounds in the Arctic Seas and begin their 14,000-mile roundtrip journey to Baja California, Mexico. The trip each way takes about 2

to 3 months and is the longest migration among mammals.

On their way to Baja California, the whales pass by the Oregon Coast in late December and early January. While in the Baja lagoons, they mate and bear 1500 pound calves after a 12 to 13-month gestation. In mid- to late March, the males and juveniles pass by Lincoln City again on their return trip, with the mothers and youngsters following near the beach in early to mid-May.



How to See Them

What to look for

Generally whales are first spotted by their blows. Find a time when the seas are calm and white caps are not present, like early mornings or sometimes late afternoons. Then look between the horizon and where the waves begin to break near the shore for white sprays of water rising from the surface.

Whales generally blow water 12 feet high 3 to 5 times before diving beneath the surface, where they remain submerged for an average of 5 minutes. If you see their tails rise out of the water, the dive may well be

deeper and longer, up to 15 minutes. Since whales travel in groups, when you see one blow, you will likely see others nearby even if that one is just about to disappear into the depths.

If you are really lucky, you might even see one spy hop (raise its head vertically out of the water and look around) or breach (launch its body partially or completely out of the water and fall on its side with a great splash at the surface). Having a spotting scope or binoculars may help, though often you can spot them simply by looking.

Where to look

Because of the position of the ocean with respect to the beach, you cannot see whales when you are on the beach. But you can from higher cliffs or banks near the ocean. Good places for viewing in the Lincoln City area are from Cascade Head, the Roads End State Park, the bank at northwest 21st street, from the dining room or room balconies at the Inn at Spanish Head, the cliff at southwest 40th street, or Boiler Bay about 9 miles south of Lincoln City.

And if you are really serious about getting up close, you can take a whale watching boat trip. Those excursions are offered for a reasonable fee at several companies in Depoe Bay, just 10 miles south of Lincoln City.

Dockside Charters

541-765-2545

Tradewinds Charters

541-765-2345

Zodiac Adventures

541-765-2248

When to see them

Because of the migration, the largest volume of whales pass by Lincoln City in late December, late March, and early May. The Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department offers "Whale Watch Spoken Here" in December and March. That program places specially educated volunteers and spotting equipment at various locations on the central coast, including the Inn at Spanish Head. Volunteers cannot only help you spot the magnificent mammals, but can provide you additional information about whales and other sea life. For upcoming dates for the program, call the Lincoln City Visitor & Convention Bureau at 800-452-2151 or visit www.oregoncoast.org.

Although that program is not offered in May, May is a great time to watch on your own. The mothers and calves are headed north and often come very close to the beach as they travel, playing, rolling on their sides, and slapping their flippers on the surface.

But if you are unable to be here when the groups pass during the migration, don't despair. About 200 whales live in the Lincoln City area all year long. When the larger group is traveling by, the resident whales may travel with them for a bit, but they return to their home in Lincoln City's Pacific seas after only a short absence. In Lincoln City, whale watching is truly a year-round joy!

Tide Pools

What are they?

The ocean's tides are created by the gravitational pull of the sun and the moon. Each tide cycle is about 25 hours and creates one or two high tides and two low tides each day. The constant movement of tides creates pools of water in rocky areas on or near the beach, which can be shallow pools on the beach or deep holes farther out.

Because water is regularly moving in or out of the pools, the environment in the pools changes all the time with respect to its temperature, the amount of salt and oxygen in the water, the severity of crashing waves, or the exposure to sun and drying air or predators. As a result, the animals and plants that live in tide pools must be tough and adaptable to survive.

Four general kinds of tide pools exist: 1) splash zones created by the highest tides and storm waves; 2) high tide zones; 3) mid-tide zones which experience a regular back and forth covering of water; and 4) low-tide zones which are usually covered by water. In splash zones you will see creatures like lichens or white clustered barnacles. In high zones you might spot a hermit crab or a vividly-colored orange mussel. Mid-tide zones house purple and green anemones, mussels, and red or orange or pink sea stars, while low tide zones are good environments for crabs, small fish and urchins.

Where Can I Visit One?

There are several good places to visit tide pools on the Lincoln City Beaches. One great place is at Roads End State Park in the north part of Lincoln City, where you can view many starfish, urchins, and anemones. Similar little ocean creatures may be seen on northwest 40th Street, in front of the Chinook Winds Casino Resort or near the beach access at northwest 15th. You will want to get a tide table and visit those sites as close to low tide as possible.

Don't Touch!

Although technically you are allowed to harvest up to 72 mussels per day, it is not a good idea to touch or move creatures or plants in the tide pool. The environment is rugged for those tiny beings, and human interference merely makes them more vulnerable or could cause damage to the entire pool. In some cases the little beings might even be harmful to humans. Enjoy the view only, so others may enjoy it after you.

Be Careful!

When you are looking at that wondrous sea life, you are standing on rocky areas when the tide is out. Eventually the tide will come back in to cover the very area you are standing on. Unless you are aware, the beach can also be a dangerous place. Occasional high waves sweep up over the rocks knocking unsuspecting persons into the sea. Or sneaker waves, much higher and stronger than normal and which occur without warning, may pull you into the currents. Never turn your back on the water.