

## Gulf of Catalina Gray Whale preservation and Education Foundation

### Trip Summary

By Todd Mansur Captain/ Marine Naturalist

### Trip 1

February 5, 2020

Vista Del Mar Elementary / Mrs. Kris Hostetler

92 students

Today's Trip departed at 10:00am with calm seas and overcast skies.

On the way out of the harbor there were several California Sea Lions Swimming and resting near the bait dock located close to the middle of the harbor.

The students also noticed several different Marine birds, Gulls, Pelicans and Cormorants.

At 10:25 the Captain sighted 1 South Bound adult Gray Whale.

The Whale was in 120 feet of water 1.5 miles North of Dana Point.

Its behaviors were normal for a traveling Gray Whale. It would surface every 3 to 4 minutes and take 3 deep breaths giving the students great opportunity to see this animal as it made it's way down our coast to it's mating and nursing grounds of the Baja Lagoons.



At 11:15 we decided to leave and search for others however, there were no others to be found at 11:40 we started to head back.

Total sightings: 1  
Gray Whale

## SOUTH BOUND GRAY WHALE

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Trip Summary

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Trip 2

February 12, 2020

Vista Del Mar / Mrs. Kris Hostetler

94 Students

Today's trip departed at 10:00am clear skies and zero wind. A great day to go look for whales. As we left the harbor the students were enjoying all the marine life that takes refuge in our marina. They saw several Sea Lions and many different marine birds.

As we headed out to sea in search of whales we received a call over the VHF radio informing us of a large pod of Common Dolphin 5 miles off Dana Point Harbor. Not knowing of any other animals in the area we headed towards the Dolphin.

At 10:42 we were now caught up with what appeared to be close to 1000 Common Dolphin feeding on sardines. This was amazing in itself however; as we followed we notice that, as the dolphins weren't alone.

Feeding with these amazing dolphins was a 45 foot adult Humpback whale. The students couldn't believe what they were seeing thousands of Dolphins with an enormous Humpback whale. We had several close looks at all of these animals and at 11:10 we started heading in.

At 11:32 we were almost in the harbor when to our surprise was a southbound juvenile Gray whale in 40- feet of water just below the harbor entrance. We had very little time but were able to get some good looks at this whale as it took several breaths on the surface.

Total sightings:

1000 Common Dolphin

1 Humpback Whale

1 Gray Whale

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Naturalist



Trip 3

February 28, 2020

Concordia Elementary/ Mrs. Lavene Forminko

116 Students

Today's trip left a little late at 10:10am. The weather conditions were great zero wind with some high clouds. As we motored out of the boat dock the students were already seeing animals. We have several California Sea lions in our marina. Seeing them as we leave has become a regular sighting and for our students, an exciting way to start their trip.

At 10:35 one of the crewmembers sighted a pod of common dolphin. Not having heard of any other whales in the area the captain headed out towards them. It appeared that they were feeding while they slowly moved down the coast 4 miles off Dana point.

Common Dolphin is amazing as they usually show interest in the boat giving students a great unobstructed look. Today however was even more exciting as there were dozens of newborn calves with their mothers. Total it looked like at least 300 Dolphin in the pod. We followed until 11:00 then left to look for Gray whales.

At 11:35 we had spotted 3 Gray whales, two adults and one calf. What an amazing find. At first the whales were heading down the coast but, after a few breathing cycles on the surface they started heading North. These animals should be heading north towards the feeding grounds this time of year. The Calf was probably getting in some play time and may have re-directed them for a short while. After getting a great look at these animals we headed back to the harbor.

Total sightings:  
300 Common Dolphins  
3 Gray whales



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Trip 4

March 9, 2020

Malcom Elementary / Mrs. Jennifer Butterworths

92 Students

Today's Trip Departed at 10:00am with Cloudy Skies but light wind.

As we departed we had our local Sea lions to start the trip as they rested in the marina. The students always get excited when they see the Sea Lions in the Marina. Its a great why to get them looking out for other sightings.

Dana Point Harbor has so much marine life that our students not only get a chance to see Sea Lions but also all the different Marine birds like Pelicans, Gulls, Cormorants, Snowy egret's and many others.

Today's trip on the water was Short on Gray whale sightings but full of excitement. At 10:45 after what seemed to be an endless search for a whale one of the crew spotted an enormous pod of Common Dolphin.

At 11:00 we had entered a pod of at least 1200 Common Dolphin feeding on sardines as they swam down the coast. The animals were nearly 6 miles off Dana Point. They played all around the boat giving the students a very exciting show. We noticed several calves, which made it even more exciting for our students.

At 11:35 we had to head back. Sadly there were no other sightings.

Total sightings: 1200 Common Dolphin



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Trip 5

March 12, 2020

Kinoshita Elementary/ Mrs. Van's

92 Students

Today's trip departed early. As the students arrived at 9:30am we immediately boarded them to get them out of the light rain. Departing at 9:35.

The weather was calm winds with light rain. At 9:51 we had our first whale sighting. This couldn't have worked out better. In 90 feet of water just 1 mile north of Dana point we had 3 north bound Gray whales. It was hard to identify for certain but we think one of the three was a calf.

The 3 whales made for an exciting show for the students as they came up to breath and frequently showed their tail flukes before making a dive. We followed them at 4.4 knots until 10:40.

At 10:45 we spotted a pod of offshore Bottlenose Dolphin. What an added extra to an already great trip. The Dolphin were traveling North up the coast at 5 knots in 100 fathoms of water 4 miles off Dana Point. There were approximately 45 animals in the pod. After watching them Play next to the boat and surf our wake we decided to head back.

11:20 Arrive back To Dana Point Harbor.

Total Sightings:

3 Gray Whales

45 Bottlenose Dolphins

