



## Dana Point is Awarded the first Whale Heritage Site in the Americas



Dana Point, the Dolphin & Whale Watching Capital of the World®, is the first Whale Heritage Site in the Americas, as established by the World Cetacean Alliance (WCA). The WCA is the world's largest marine conservation partnership, dedicated to the promotion of safe and sustainable whale watching.

### What is a Whale Heritage Site?

A Whale Heritage Site is an outstanding location where cetaceans (whales, dolphins, or porpoises) are embraced through the cultural, economic, social, and political lives of associated communities, and where people and cetaceans coexist in an authentic and respectful way.

Whale Heritage Sites give visitors a transparent and easy way to select responsible whale and dolphin watching destinations, encouraging them to experience these incredible animals in their natural habitat, in an authentic and respectful way.

Donna Kalez and Gisele Anderson, Co-Directors of the [Dana Point Whale Watching Company](#), began the application process early in 2020 after successfully trademarking Dana Point as the Dolphin & Whale Capital of the World® in 2019.

Kalez explained, "To have Dana Point recognized as a Whale Heritage Site is a dream and has been a goal of mine for some time. Dana Point has historically been an incredible destination to watch and learn about whales and dolphins and now we are happy to share this with the world."

Anderson added, "Being the first Whale Heritage Site in the Americas is an amazing accomplishment and serves to further recognize Dana Point and the whales and dolphins that live and visit here the recognition they deserve, as well send a message to the world that Dana Point is also a place that protects and responsibly watches cetaceans."

### How Dana Point Became a Whale Heritage Site

The criteria for acceptance is incredibly challenging, focusing on protection, sustainability, education, research, public access, and awareness, as well as requiring a community effort that furthers the purpose of a Whale Heritage Site.

Dana Point Whale Watching Company has received tremendous support from the community, including community leaders, academia, government representatives, and local non-profits.

In 2020, Dana Point was one of eight candidate destinations from around the world. The World Cetacean Alliance states that "Each site is unique, providing and contributing in different ways to the criteria for becoming certified. During the award process, the sites have been receiving a wealth of tailored support from the WCA to aid them in achieving their goal of certification as a world-class whale or dolphin watching destination!"