

Celebration of Conservation

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FROM: Dave Weller
TO: Virtual Team Leaders and Science Team
SUBJECT: Meet the Gray Whale Science Team

Dear Virtual Team Members!

Greetings from the 2017 gray whale count at the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse. My colleagues on the observer team this week include:

Susan Chivers – Susan has been part of the calf count since it started in 1994! Yes, that’s right, 24 years. Her favorite part of being at the lighthouse is seeing gray whale calves as they swim along side their mothers. “They are very uncoordinated and a little goofy”. The other things she really likes about being at the lighthouse is the natural beauty of the site, the fresh air and being so close to the ocean.

Morgan Lynn – Morgan has been part of the survey team since the beginning in 1994 and has also done aerial photogrammetry and surveys along the same coastline. He likes the fact that the site provides an unparalleled ability to see and count the whales on their migration. Although sometimes the weather can be a little challenging, overall the vast majority of days allow for great observations. The partially isolated nature of the site allows for more immersion and focus on both the whales and nature in general.

Brittany Hancock-Hanser – Brittany has been part of the team for 10 years. Her favorite part about being at the lighthouse is the amazing beauty of this historic site. This work also reminds her of why she got into the field of marine biology and allows her to get out of the laboratory for a couple of weeks!

The weather today is VERY windy with gusts up to almost 50 miles per hour. Can you see the whitecaps in the photograph? These ocean conditions make seeing gray whales very difficult.

The whales are there, though we might not have any luck seeing them today. We’ll try again tomorrow.

Dr. Dave

Dr. David Weller, Research Wildlife Biologist
NOAA Fisheries, Southwest Fisheries Science Center
La Jolla, California
seamail@whaletimes.org

