

Celebration of Conservation

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SEAMAIL™

Piedras Blancas Lighthouse Coordinates

Latitude: 35.6848° N

Longitude: 121.2866° W

FROM: Dave Weller
TO: Virtual Team Leaders and Science Team
SUBJECT: Hello Virtual Science Team Members!

Dear Virtual Team Members,

Welcome to our Celebration of Conservation and greetings from the 2017 gray whale calf count at the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse. My name is Dr. David Weller. I'll be your guide to learning about gray whales.

During our Celebration of Conservation Mission, you will also meet scientists who study elephant seals and a small porpoise called the vaquita.

I have studied gray whales off California, Mexico and Russia for almost 20 years. As a marine mammal biologist, I spend about 3 months a year on small boats or perched on coastal cliff tops conducting research.

This time of year, our Gray Whale Science Team is at a remote field station on the central California coast. We live in a lighthouse that was built in 1875. It is called the Piedras Blancas Light Station. The lighthouse is on a small point of land that juts out into the Pacific Ocean.

Here, we study the gray whale population and its migration along the eastern North Pacific coast. The goal of our job is to count every mother-calf pair that passes by our observation station. Gray whale mother-calf pairs swim very close to shore along this part of California. That makes it easy for us to count them.

I'll share with you about the whale counts and why we look for mothers and calves. You'll also hear about the weather, the equipment, how we count the whales and more.

Can you find the Pacific Ocean on a map or globe? Now can you find the California coastline? If you know how, use the latitude and longitude at the top of the page to find out exactly where the Gray Whale Science Team watches whales.

I hope you enjoy your learning about some amazing marine mammals and being part of our Virtual Research Team.

Stay tuned,

Dr. Dave

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

