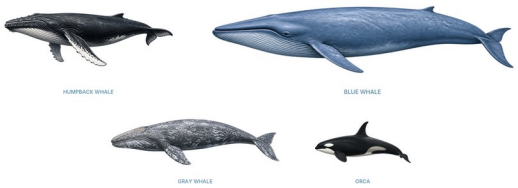
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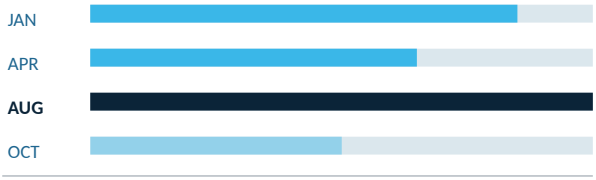
CALIFORNIA · NORTH PACIFIC (USA)

# Monterey Bay, California

*Humpback, blue, gray and fin whales and orca · year-round*




SIGHTING PROBABILITY




BEST MONTH
August

SEASON
Year-round

§ 01 INTRODUCTION

Monterey Bay, on California's central coast, owes its extraordinary diversity of cetaceans to the Monterey Submarine Canyon, which brings deep, nutrient-rich water very close to shore.

It is one of the few places in the world with sightings almost all year: gray whales migrate past the bay in winter (peaking in mid-January) and spring, while humpback and blue whales dominate summer and autumn, with July to September as the best window, when humpbacks are seen almost daily.

§ 02 ETHICS

## Whale-watching ethics

NOAA sets minimum approach distances within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, a federally protected area. Operators based at Monterey's wharf and in Moss Landing follow these rules and usually carry naturalists on board. Avoid any boat that gets closer than allowed or actively chases the animals.

§ 03 IN THE FIELD

## Practical tips

01
Book ahead in high season (July–September), when humpbacks are seen almost daily.

02
Bring several layers — Pacific wind and fog cool things down quickly, even in summer.

03
January is the best window to see the gray whale migration without waiting for summer.

04
March–May is the best time to see orcas, which hunt gray whale calves in the bay.

05
A 100-400mm zoom — useful both for nearby humpbacks and for the more distant blue whales.

## Want to go beyond this guide?

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