

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Point Cabrillo Light Station State Historic Park Hosts Whale Festival for Two March Weekends

MENDOCINO, Calif. — For the premier whale watching location along the Mendocino Coast check out the bluffs at Point Cabrillo. The Point Cabrillo Light Station was established in 1909 and celebrates its centennial this year in June. The lighthouse stands on a point of land extending westward into the Pacific Ocean, which was selected by the U.S. Lighthouse Service so that the light would be most visible to shipping on the hazardous coast of Mendocino. This same attribute makes Point Cabrillo a preeminent location from which to watch the annual migration of the Gray whales from the lagoons of the Baja Peninsula in Mexico to their summer feeding grounds in the Arctic Ocean.

A wonderful opportunity for family fun awaits visitors during Whale Festival 2009 at the Point Cabrillo Light Station in Mendocino, March 7 and 8, and March 21 and 22, 2009, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. In addition to a grandstand view of the annual Gray whale migration, a saltwater aquarium, and marine science education, Point Cabrillo Lightkeepers Association (PCLK) volunteer docents will highlight Light Station history and local culture with visitor presentations at the Lighthouse, and other locations around the park. A period museum showing how Lightkeepers and their families lived in the 1930's will be open in the restored First Assistant Lightkeeper's Residence.

Games and art activities for children include a life-size gray whale jigsaw puzzle, chalk drawing, face painting, and fish printing. The Marine Mammal Center will provide demonstrations and information on our local denizens of the deep! The Mendocino Coast Audubon Society will have a booth and offer bird walks in the park.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary, our local lightkeepers, will offer safe boating tips, equipment displays and more along with the U.S. Coast Station Noyo River.

Weather permitting, Docents will also lead walks to nearby Frolic Cove and relate the story of the Boston Owned Clipper Brig "Frolic", wrecked off the cove in July 1850, bound from China to San Francisco with a valuable cargo of Chinese merchandise for the Gold Rush miners and their families.

The lighthouse gift shop will also be open with original artwork, informative books, and unique gifts. Hot drinks and cookies will be available for sale in the lighthouse lobby.

ABOUT GRAY WHALES

Every spring, the California Gray whales journey with their newborn calves from the protected lagoons of western Baja to their ancestral feeding grounds in the cold waters of the Bering Sea. The whales migrating past Point Cabrillo belong to the Eastern Pacific Gray Whale population of roughly 18,000 to 23,000 individuals. These figures vary year to year, but represent a strong recovery of the population since attempts to ban hunting of the Grays were initiated by international treaty in 1937. The Eastern Pacific Gray whales pass by Point Cabrillo twice, on their southward journey between the months of November and February, and again going north between February and May. Newly pregnant females lead the northward migration, followed by males, and the last to leave Baja are usually females with babies.

DIRECTIONS TO THE LIGHT STATION

The Point Cabrillo Light Station & Preserve is two miles north of Mendocino and six miles south of Fort Bragg. Take the Point Cabrillo Drive exit from Hwy 1 and follow the signs. Festival activities are an easy half-mile walk from the parking area. Handicapped parking is available. A \$3 per vehicle donation will be requested to support the PCLK's educational programs. Bring warm, windproof clothing. We have binoculars to share. The Point Cabrillo Light Station State Historic Park is a unit of the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The Light Station is managed by the Point Cabrillo Lightkeeper's Association under a concession contract with State Parks.

For a schedule of presentations and additional information, please visit www.pointcabrillo.org, or call the Mendocino Coast Chamber of Commerce at 800 726-2780 or 707 961-6300.

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