

Oregon coast whales draw crowds

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Visitors from across the United States have flocked to Oregon to watch the annual migration of more than 18,000 grey whales heading toward Mexican waters.

The Portland Oregonian said that since last year's migration drew nearly 11,000 interested people, about 450 trained volunteers will be on hand this year to assist attendees in locating the 30-ton mammals as they swim by.

While only 350 grey whales were spotted making the majestic journey last year due to bad weather, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration scientists reported an 8 percent increase in the mammal group's population last year.

The report prompted high hopes for this year's annual event, which only two years ago saw more than 2,000 whales heading towards Mexico to enjoy the nation's warmer waters, the Oregonian said.

"We're expecting this year to be one of the best years ever," Whale Watching Center head Morris Grover explained to the paper. "We've already been seeing whales in the past week or two, so we're hoping the weather is good for viewing."

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