



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thar she blows...Gray Whales Make a Splash in Class

**April 2015:** Classrooms across the country will celebrate the recovery of gray whales in the eastern North Pacific when they join researchers from the [Southwest Fisheries Science Center](#) (SWFSC)/NOAA Fisheries Service and [WhaleTimes](#), Inc. to learn more about gray whale research through the *Gray Whales: Celebration of Conservation* education program.

The *Gray Whales: Celebration of Conservation* highlights the astounding success of the gray whale recovery and current research to monitor the gray whale population. In 2014, researchers counted 431 newborn calves. The story of the eastern gray whales, from endangered to thriving, is a beacon of hope for other conservation efforts. Once nearly extinct, conservation efforts lead to the population rebounding and its eventual removal from the endangered species list in 1994. Today, about 20,000 of these bus-sized beauties thrive along the Pacific Coast of North America. That's a definite cause for celebration!

*Celebration of Conservation* creates a connection between students and SWFSC/NOAA biologists. Students join SWFSC biologists at the Piedras Blancas (California) field station. Students receive daily emails, updates, and photographs sent from the scientists studying the whales. Researchers even take time to answer students' questions.

"Through the *Celebration of Conservation* program we share daily reports, personal observations, and our ideas about how changes in the number of gray whale calves born each year may be linked to climate variables in the Arctic," says Wayne Perryman, biologist and leader of the Cetacean Health and Life History Program at the SWFSC. "This program helps students and other interested people follow scientific results in real time before they are published."

This is the third year SWFSC scientists have invited classrooms 'into' the gray whale research station. Students learn about the importance of monitoring and counting mother-calf pairs, photo identification of individual whales, and more. As students discover more about gray whale research, they can ask questions and participate in activities inspired by the scientists' emails and research.

"Connecting students with ocean research is an important goal of WhaleTimes," said Ruth Musgrave, director of WhaleTimes. "It makes ocean science and exploration real, meaningful, memorable, and fun for students."

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*WhaleTimes - Ocean Science in Action!*

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WhaleTimes, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that brings ocean animals and science to life, inspiring students to explore and learn more. Since 1995, WhaleTimes has been a quality marine science resource for children, sharing scientific data and encouraging students' love of the ocean through programs such as, [Hagfish Day](#), [Creep into the Deep](#), and [Fintastic Friday: Giving Sharks a Voice](#).

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