



Oregon State
University

Marine Mammal Institute Baja Gray Whale Expedition February 26–March 6, 2019 Itinerary

Tuesday, February 26

The Royal Polaris is available for boarding after 3 p.m. Arrive any time **3–5 p.m.** to drop off your luggage, get your room assignment, meet your hosts, and see the boat. **5 p.m.:** Wine and cheese reception, boat orientation, **mandatory safety orientation.** Dinner is on your own; we'll be happy to make suggestions! **10:30 p.m.:** Everyone must be on board. **11 p.m.:** Vessel sails. We will pass by the large bait tanks in the harbor, which are a magnet for seabirds and shorebirds.

Wednesday, February 27

A full day of travel. We will pass by Todos Santos, a small island with a harbor seal colony and nesting birds. Excellent views from the boat.

Thursday, February 28

Arrive at Isla San Benitos Oeste. We'll spend half a day here, hiking around the island (3-mile loop). As with all of our island visits, hikes are led by our skilled naturalist at a casual pace, and you can do as little or as much as you'd like. Highlights of this island are the elephant seal rookery, nest burrows of Cassin's auklets, nesting osprey, the lighthouse, and the seasonal fishing village. Learn about desert ecology from our expert.

Friday, March 1, through Sunday, March 3

San Ignacio Lagoon. Whale watching from pangas (Mexican skiffs), beach walks and beachcombing on both east and west shores, and dawn birdwatching in the mangroves. Depart San Ignacio with the tide on Saturday. There will be multiple opportunities for whale watching throughout our stay here.

Monday, March 4

Arrive at Isla Cedros. Board skiffs to see California sea lion and elephant seal rookeries, then land on a different part of the island to hike up a canyon to a waterfall, which may be dry some years. The hike is lovely, but the last third becomes somewhat challenging when the path goes over some large boulders.

Tuesday, March 5

Arrive at Isla San Martin. View harbor seals and their pups in a lagoon, and see a breakwater formed of lava boulders.

Wednesday, March 6

Return to San Diego Harbor; check through U.S. Customs. Plane departures will be possible after 12:30 p.m.

In San Ignacio Lagoon: During our stay in the lagoon, all passengers will have several opportunities to go out in pangas for whale watching. Remember that the whales choose how close they wish to come to the pangas; though you may not be able to touch a whale, extremely close views are very common. Spy hops are frequent, breaches are also seen, and some passengers are privileged to see surface mating activity.