











Monterey Bay Marine Mammal Spotting Guide


More than 30 species of marine mammals live in or pass through Monterey Bay. Mammals that live in the ocean range in size from the furry, five-foot-long sea otter to the enormous blue whale, a hundred feet long. Here are a few you might spot on a local whale watching trip.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marine Mammal	Cool Facts	Spotting Season(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue whale 	Lunging open-mouthed at schools of shrimplike krill, this baleen whale can engulf and strain four tons of food daily.	Summer and Fall
<input type="checkbox"/> Gray whale 	Unlike other baleen whales, the gray whale eats bottom-living crustaceans. The whale sucks in a mouthful of mud and strains it through the baleen to remove the prey.	Winter and Spring
<input type="checkbox"/> Humpback whale 	Humpback whales travel between their Arctic feeding grounds and tropical breeding grounds. Some migrate to Hawaii and some to Mexico; a few visit both sites in different years.	Summer and Fall
<input type="checkbox"/> Minke whale 	As agile as a porpoise, it can leap from the water in a graceful arc or ride the bow wave of a passing ship.	Summer and Fall
<input type="checkbox"/> Orca (killer whale) 	Orcas live in tight-knit family groups, or pods, of two to thirty individuals. With squeals and moans, pod members keep in touch.	All year
<input type="checkbox"/> Sperm whale 	Diving a mile or more below the surface, the sperm whale makes clicking noises to echolocate for prey. When it finds a shark or giant squid, the whale stuns it with a blast of sound and swallows it whole.	Summer and Fall
<input type="checkbox"/> Common dolphin 	Striking geometric patterns and yellowish side patches make this the most colorful dolphin. This coloring earned it other names, like "hourglass," "crisscross" and "saddleback" dolphin.	All year
<input type="checkbox"/> Pacific white-sided dolphin 	Resident pods of hundreds of white-sided dolphins streak through Monterey Bay. They swim in formation with other dolphins and sea lions, sometimes leaping from the water in spirited somersaults.	All year
<input type="checkbox"/> Dall's porpoise 	This stocky porpoise has a small dorsal fin and tiny flippers, but it's a spectacular swimmer. Moving like a hydroplane, it races through the water, leaving behind a "rooster tail" of spray when it surfaces for air.	All year


California sea lion At mating time, the male sea lion barks and bellows to establish his territory and gather a harem of females. Never giving ground, not even to eat, the bull defends his turf from male intruders. All year



Harbor seal Harbor seals don't migrate far from home. They hunt fishes, squids and octopuses near shore, using their large eyes and sensitive whiskers to help them locate prey. All year



Sea otter For warmth, the sea otter relies on its thick fur coat with 600,000 hairs per square inch. The otter spends nearly half its waking hours grooming its fur coat to keep it waterproof. All year



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