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Whale Season started in the Colombian Pacific

Suddenly, Nuquí, Bahía Solano, Málaga, Gorgona and Utría, see how 40 tons emerge hastily from the bottom of the ocean and disappear again into the depths in seconds.

Beaches, cliffs and bays become the natural bleachers to see this unique spectacle of nature. The place is the perfect venue to watch the whales and their calves swim in a safe, and especially respectful way. It is important to explain that the activity of whale watching has to be respectful of the space these beautiful animals need, as they are vulnerable mammals and their survival depends highly on tourists' conduct.

In Colombia, from Nariño all the way to Chocó, in the Pacific Ocean, one can see the arrival of the whales every year between July and November.

Humpback whales swim in every ocean in the world. However, the quality of the water, its depth and temperature, as well as the wind and environment features, have an influence on their presence in the Colombian Pacific every year.

Patience is one of the characteristics tourists have to have when they see whales; sometimes they can spend hours on end without ever seeing one of these cetaceans nearby.

Influence on the state of the ocean. There are more chances to see them when the waters are calm and the sun is not completely out in full force, in other words, during the early hours of the morning or late at night.

History

According to the investigations on the topic and the bibliography, between July and August 1920 the first humpback whales arrived to bear their offspring at Malaga Bay. Decades later,

after whale watching was established in California as a tourist activity, the first sights occurred from ships in Malaga Bay in 1994, while Nuquí and Bahía Solano registered the first sights in 1997.



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Mammals gradually make their arrival between July and November. Generally, males quickly make their way south to Chile or Antarctica after having fulfilled their breeding duties. Instead, females can stay up to four months waiting for their offspring to adapt and be ready to start the long journey to the south of the continent.

Observation spots

From the ground, it is important to have a good set of binoculars on hand, in addition to the already mentioned patience. This practice is seen as an advantage for tourists who do not want to go too far into the ocean, and even by the whales themselves, as it reduces the pressure tourists can put on them.

Whale watching from on board boats is tourists' highest demand. While on the ocean, the whales can be followed from a minimum distance of 200 meters to be able to appreciate their swimming and movements. Different groups of whales can be watched; mothers and calves, courtship and singing groups.

Whale watching recommendations

It is worth considering that the Colombian Pacific region is very rainy and, although the weather has an influence on whales being seen, or not, it is always a good idea to take a raincoat or watertight plastic cover to protect personal documents and electronic devices.

Recommendations:

- A hat for the sun
- Always wear a life vest
- Bring binoculars
- Use UV filter sunglasses
- Wear sunscreen
- Always keep re-hydrating drinks and light food
- A bag for the garbage
- Anti-slipping shoes
- A good photographic camera
- Binoculars and GPS to identify routes and paths

Other animals that can be seen

Undoubtedly, whales are the biggest attraction for tourists; nonetheless, the Colombian Pacific is so diverse, it allows you to admire other animal species like the pelican, the bottle-nosed dolphin, the speckled dolphin, tuna and sea turtles.

How do you get there?

Nuquí (Chocó): You can reach the town of Nuquí by air from the interior of the country, connecting through Medellín and Quibdó. There is also access by ocean from the port of Buenaventura, although the trip can take up to 24 hours.

Bahía Solano (Chocó): Access from the interior of the country is by air, connecting via Medellín and Quibdó. There are several flights landing in José Celestino Mutis Airport in Bahía Solano or Ciudad Mutis.

Buenaventura (Valle del Cauca): Gerardo Tobar López airport has a local direct flight coming from Bogota every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. The main road by land is the one coming from Cali.

Tumaco (Nariño): You can fly from Cali or Bogotá every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. By land there is a very good road coming in from Pasto. By sea you can reach Tumaco from the

port of Buenaventura, on an eight-hour boat ride.

For more information on whale watching in the Pacific

- visit: [Humpback whales in the Colombian Pacific.](#)