

Eastern North Pacific Gray Whale Population



Chukchi Sea

Alaska

CANADA

Bering Sea

Gulf of Alaska

Long Migration

Eastern North Pacific gray whales have the longest migration of any mammal. They travel 10,000 to 12,000 miles every year.

Summer feeding in the Arctic: May to November

Gray whales feed in the Arctic in summer, consuming sea-bottom amphipods and other organisms living in and above the sediment in the Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort Seas, building fat for their long migration. Gray whales eat primarily in summer.

Southward migration: November to February

The whales usually travel within 2.5 miles of the shore. Pregnant females go first, followed by adult males and other adult females. Juveniles migrate last, and some may not reach Mexico before turning back north again.

Northward migration: February to May

Newly pregnant females go first followed by adult males, other females, and immature whales. Mothers with calves remain a month or two longer while calves gain blubber and strength before their long journey north.

Winter in Mexico: January to March

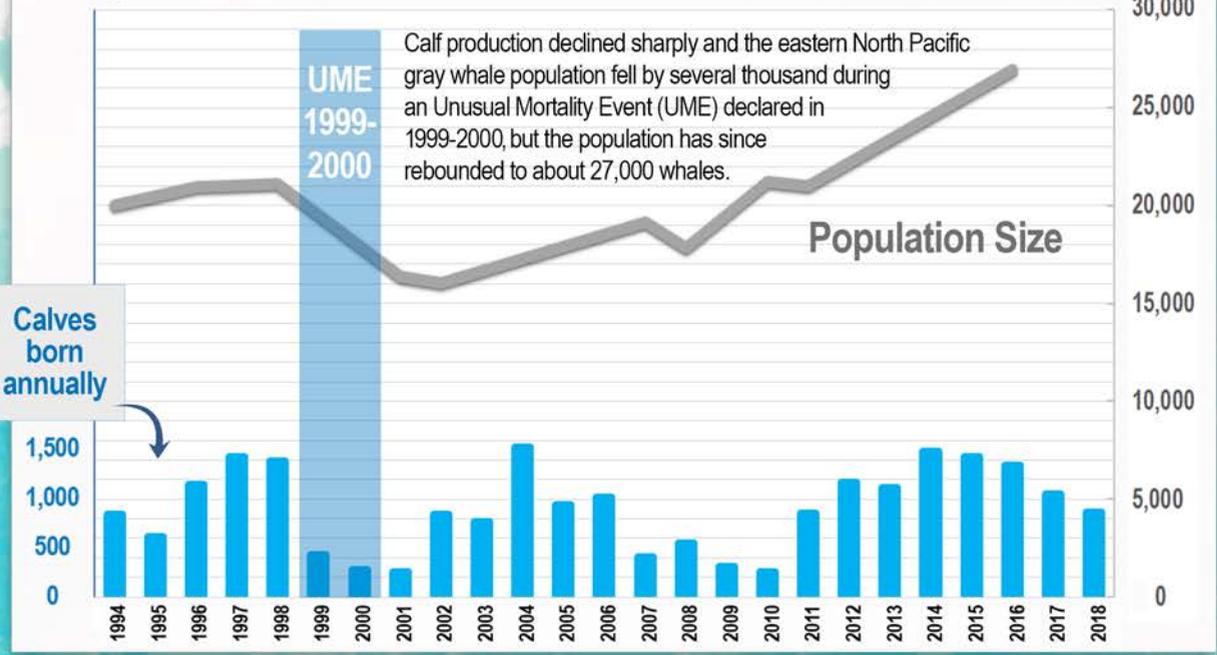
Gray whales frequent the Mexican coast including the Baja Peninsula in winter. Calves are born in the warm shallow lagoons.

UNITED STATES

MEXICO

- Baja Peninsula
- Scammon's Lagoon
- San Ignacio Lagoon
- Magdalena Bay Lagoon

Population Size & Annual Calf Production



UME
1999-
2000

Calf production declined sharply and the eastern North Pacific gray whale population fell by several thousand during an Unusual Mortality Event (UME) declared in 1999-2000, but the population has since rebounded to about 27,000 whales.

Calves born annually



NOAA
FISHERIES