Rec and Parks

Baja Adventure Is Near

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium's annual Baja California whale-watching adventure now taking reservations.

Seeing whales up close is a feature of the Baja whale-watching trip.

You're invited to join Cabrillo Marine Aquarium March 6 – 14, 2015, for a trip that truly is the journey of a lifetime! During this nine-day ocean voyage, the adventure will spend three days anchored in San Ignacio Lagoon, where friendly gray whales and their curious calves swim within arm's length of the skiffs.

The trip will also visit Todos Santos Island and land on San Benito, Cedros and San Martin Islands, where guests will enjoy naturalist-led hikes on these remote, offshore islands that are home to elephant seals, endangered Guadalupe fur seals, a multitude of birds, diverse geological formations and a wide range of native vegetation.

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium's experienced naturalists, including experts on gray whales and other marine mammals, birds, native island plants, and marine biology, will lead hikes and give shipboard presentations to add to the educational aspect of the trip. Each passenger will receive an illustrated natural history guide containing information about animals sighted and locations visited.

Cabrillo's Larry Fukuhara on a whale-watching adventure.

The 113-foot *Royal Polaris* out of San Diego will provide comfortable accommodations, a roomy galley/lounge and a friendly crew that furnishes hardy, flavorful meals. This trip is priceless, but the cost per person is $2,550, not including a $150 gratuity for the boat crew. For more information visit the Cabrillo Website: www.cabrillomarineaquarium.org, or to reserve your spot call Larry Fukuhara at (310) 548-7562 x223.

The Aquarium is a Rec and Parks facility and is at 3720 Stephen M. White Dr. in San Pedro.

Zoo

Story courtesy Zoo; Photos by Tad Motoyama and Ian Recchio, Zoo

Snake Babies!

Zoo's LAIR celebrates an abundance of snake babies.

Southwest speckled rattlesnake babies.

The Los Angeles Zoo has recently welcomed a large number of snake babies, all born recently on exhibit in the Desert LAIR building. While it is now breeding season for these snakes in the wild, they are able to successfully breed at the Zoo because of their habitat, a state-of-the-art facility that mimics the natural environment and seasonal changes of the Southwest desert. Thanks to special features like the controlled temperature and large skylight of the habitat, several species of snakes are able to thrive and ultimately reproduce as they would in nature.

Among the snake species recently born, the Zoo announces a litter of five Rattleless rattlesnakes. This venomous pitviper species is critically endangered and can be found on only one tiny island called Isla Santa Catalina in the Gulf of California just off the east coast of the state of Baja California Sur, Mexico. This small and swift rattlesnake is known for its most distinctive characteristic – it lacks a rattle.

Another exciting addition is a litter of seven Southwest speckled rattlesnakes. These venomous snakes are found only in remote areas of Southern Arizona and Baja, Mexico. In demand at zoos across the country, these white snakes tell an interesting evolutionary tale as they have evolved to match the white granite rocks found in the mountains they reside to avoid predators.

An adult Southwest speckled rattlesnake.

An adult rattleless rattlesnake.

An adult sidewinder rattlesnake.

The last addition is five sidewinder rattlesnakes, a venomous pitviper species that isn't particularly rare or endangered but is quite popular in zoo collections across the country. Guests may find them interesting to watch due to their unique, sidewinding method of locomotion.

All of the babies are being taken care of off-site in the Zoo's reptile holding facility until they are able to be sent to zoos across the country. The parents can currently be seen on exhibit in Desert LAIR daily.

The Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens is in Griffith Park at the junction of the Ventura (134) and Golden State (5) freeways. Admission is $19 for adults and $14 for children ages 2 to 12. The Zoo is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. For information, call (323) 644-4200 or visit the L. A. Zoo Website at www.lazoo.org.