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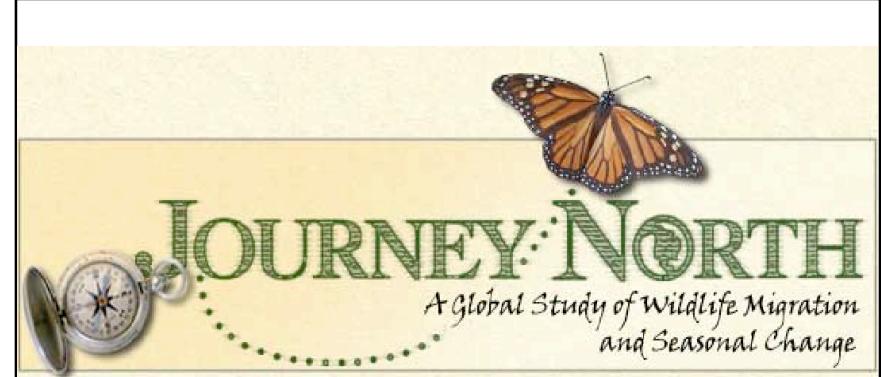


Photo © Keith Jones

## Whale Watching at the Gray Whale Nursery!

by Jane Duden

## A Tour of Ojo de Liebre, Baja, Mexico

In this booklet, join Journey North's Jane Duden on a day of whale watching in one of Mexico's famous gray whale nurseries. Jane traveled to Mexico's Baja California to visit the "Ojo de Libre" lagoon nursery. It's about 9 hours by car from San Diego, CA.



The location of Laguna Ojo de Libre is marked in red. Baja California is the earth's longest and narrowest peninsula. It is more than 300 miles long and only about 60-70 miles across.

This is a welcome sign after the long, dry drive. Let's go see the whales!



At the entrance to the beach for whale watching we see a greeting on the building: "Welcome to Laguna Ojo de Liebre," it says in Spanish.



How much does it cost to visit?

A whale skeleton in front of Visitor Center/Restaurant reminds us that gray whales are **B I G**.



Photo © Journey North

*Which bones do you see that are similar to yours?*

This boat is called a *panga*. It holds 10 people and the driver, who is well-trained and careful around the whales.



Photo © Keith Jones

These are rules for whale watchers. Why is each rule important?

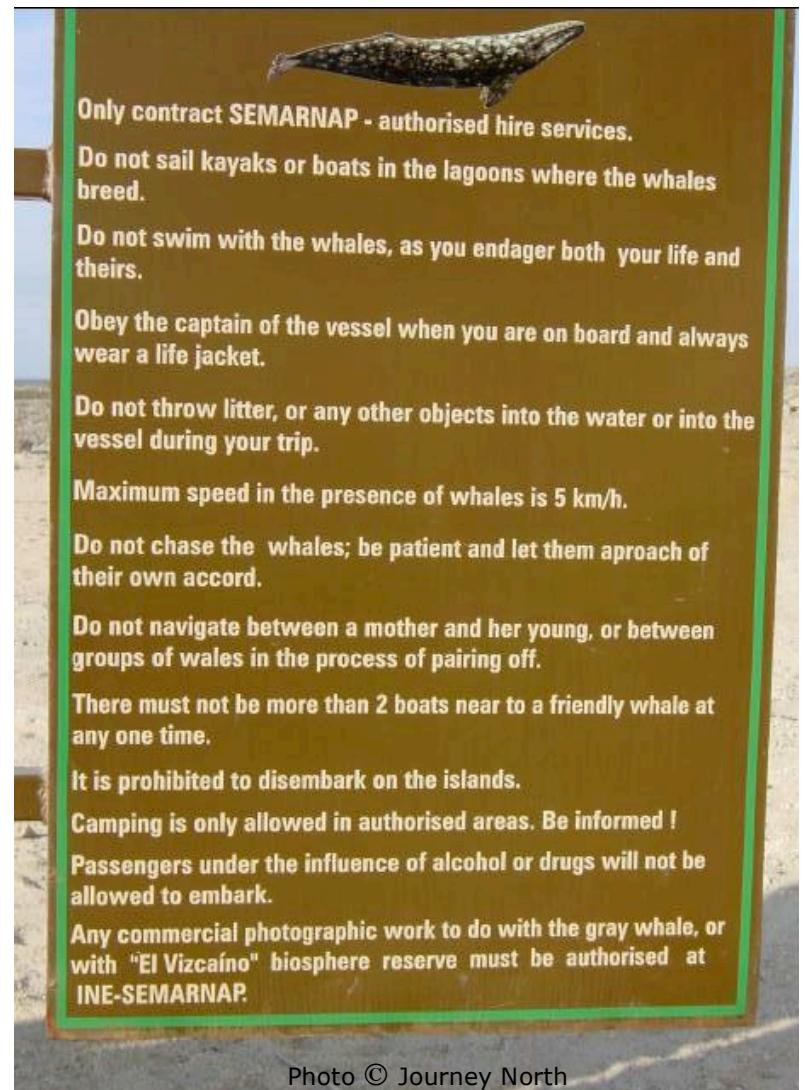


Photo © Journey North

We wade in shallow water to get into our panga. Farther out, the water is about 30-40 feet deep.



Photo © Journey North

Look! The first sign of a whale! Do you see the glassy area at the surface of the water? It is called a "footprint." It shows where a whale just went down.



Photo © Journey North



Photo © Keith Jones



Photo © Keith Jones

The whale is much closer now! A gray whale is about the same size and weight as 10 big elephants. One whale is about 45 feet long and weighs about 35 tons.



Photo © Keith Jones

This friendly whale lets us touch her. Her skin feels like smooth, wet rubber.



Those white patches you see are called **barnacles**. A big whale can carry over 200 pounds of barnacles! Once they have settled on "their" whale, these small crustaceans spend their entire lives in the same place.



Photo © Keith Jones

Mom and baby come near the boat!



Photo © Keith Jones

The whale is still close, but swimming away. How can you tell?



Photo © Keith Jones

Our boat heads back to the Visitor Center after a wonderful day.



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