



## West Coast Vancouver Island's Pacific Rim Whale Festival Celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Year with Record Number of Educational, Cultural and Culinary Events, March 19-27, 2011

*Tofino, BC, February 9, 2011* – Tourism Tofino and the Pacific Rim Whale Festival Society today unveiled the extensive calendar of events planned for the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Whale Festival ([www.pacificrimwhalefestival.com](http://www.pacificrimwhalefestival.com)) being held on the west coast of Vancouver Island from March 19-27, 2011.

Hosted by the coastal communities of Tofino and Ucluelet and the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, the Pacific Rim Whale Festival marks the official opening of the annual grey whale migration and the area's prime whale watching season. With more than 90 educational, cultural and culinary events, the Pacific Rim Whale Festival welcomes nature enthusiasts, wildlife watchers and art, music and food lovers from around the world.

"Our annual Whale Festival inspires, educates and entertains guests of all ages," said Jenn Maychin, Pacific Rim Whale Festival Coordinator. "The festival's extensive calendar of events — many of them free— pays tribute to local culinary and artistic traditions, draws attention to the area's unique natural environment and, of course, celebrates the annual migration of grey whales headed north to their summer feeding grounds."

Pacific Rim Whale Festival 2011 highlights include:

**Whale Festival Button Events:** For a suggested \$2.00 donation, guests receive a colourful Whale Festival Button designed by local student artists providing free access to selected events. <http://www.pacificrimwhalefestival.com/buttons>

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**March 19, 11:00 am: Ucluelet Aquarium Opening Day:** Raising the awareness of local marine biodiversity and promoting respect for the ocean environment, the aquarium offers many educational events throughout the festival.

**Location: Ucluelet Aquarium, Front Street waterfront promenade**

[www.uclueletaquarium.org](http://www.uclueletaquarium.org)

**Admission: Opening day is free. Regular admission, child \$3.50, adult \$5.50**

**March 20, 11:00 am – 1:30 pm: 15th Annual Chowder Chow Down:** Twelve acclaimed local chefs compete for the People’s Choice and Judges’ Choice awards while attendees sample, compare and vote for their favorite chowder creations.

**Location: Ucluelet Community Centre**

**Admission: \$10 adult, \$5.00 child, \$25.00 per family (2 adults and up to 4 children)**

**March 20, 2:30 – 4:30 pm: Remote Passages Marine Excursions - Whale Watching Station & Interpretive Loop:** Interactive land-based viewing through spotting scopes with local naturalists.

**Location: Amphitrite Light House & Wild Pacific Trail, Ucluelet**

**Admission: Button Event – free admission with a 2011 Whale Festival button**

**March 23, 7:30 pm: 6th Annual Martini Migration:** Local mixologists compete for the coveted title of the best Whale Festival Martini and guests compete for best “dressed for the fest” costume awards.

**Location: Tofino Community Centre**

**Admission: \$45.00 (Adults only)**

**March 24, 25 – Jamie’s Whaling Station Maritime Kids Day in Ucluelet and West Coast**

**Aquatic Safaris Kids Day in Tofino :** Fun and educational activities for kids of all ages.

Marine touch tanks, gumboot painting, recycled crafts, live concert with Bobs and Lolo of Treehouse fame. Made possible by Parks Canada, Bamfield Marine Science Centre, Ucluelet Aquarium, the Raincoast Education Society.

**Locations: March 24 – Ucluelet Community Centre; March 25<sup>th</sup> – Tofino Community Centre**

**Admission: Button Event – free admission with a 2011 Whale Festival button**

**March 24, 25 – Traditional Cedar Weaving Workshops:** Ucluelet First Nations share traditional techniques and history. Participants take home a woven treasure.

**Locations: TBA**

**Admission: Button Event – free admission with a 2011 Whale Festival button**

**March 24, 7:00-12:00: Black Rock Oceanfront Resort Presents Barnacle Blues with Jim Byrnes Live!**

An intimate evening of music featuring the moving musical talents of acclaimed actor, blues master and two-time Maple Blues Award winner for Male Vocalist of the Year, Jim Byrnes. Advanced tickets are recommended (\$40) and include gourmet savories and sippers. Location: **Black Rock Oceanfront Resort** [www.blackrockresort.com](http://www.blackrockresort.com)

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**About the Pacific Rim Whale Festival** [www.pacificrimwhalefestival.com](http://www.pacificrimwhalefestival.com)

The Pacific Rim Whale Festival celebrates the continued protection and annual return of migrating Pacific grey whales to the coastal waters of the communities of Tofino, Ucluelet and Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. An estimated 20,000 grey whales make the journey each year from the Baja Peninsula's breeding and calving lagoons in Mexico toward their summer feeding grounds in the Bering and Chukchi Seas near the Arctic.

**Pacific Rim Whale Festival Supporters** <http://www.pacificrimwhalefestival.com/sponsor>

Supported by volunteers, business sponsorships, an array of local education and research organizations and in its 25<sup>th</sup> successful year, the Pacific Rim Whale Festival's fundraising efforts benefit local marine field-based research initiatives, which in turn support the whales.

**General Festival Info & Events Inquiries Contact**

Jenn Maychin

Festival Coordinator

Email [info@pacificrimwhalefestival.com](mailto:info@pacificrimwhalefestival.com)

Phone: 250-726-7798

**Media Contact**

Lynda Kaye

Kaye Public Relations for Tourism Tofino

Email: [lynda@kayepr.com](mailto:lynda@kayepr.com)

Phone: 250-725-2035

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