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Fest honours gentle giants



Tofino-Ucluelet, B.C.: From March 15 to 23, the 22nd annual Pacific Rim Whale Festival celebrates the migration of 20,000 grey whales past the western coast of Vancouver Island.

They're known as gentle giants. They are the objects of our curiosity, affection and wonder when we see them surface for a few quick seconds, but the beloved whales continue to face extinction or elimination in some parts of the world.

With the belief that knowledge of our past will clear a path toward the future, the Pacific Rim Whale Festival pays homage to the whale and its continued protection through education.

The festival faces the facts of whaling in an "Everything you wanted to know about whaling, but were too afraid to ask" session with Nuu-chah-nulth ethnographer and artist, Ron Hamilton. Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations hereditary whaling Chief Elmer Frank will make a rare public speaking appearance at the festival's closing ceremonies on March 23, joined by the Khowutzun Tzinquaw Dancers from the Vancouver Island's lush Cowichan Valley.

Hands-on marine life education and whale identification activities abound with experts summoned from the Vancouver Aquarium, Royal B.C. Museum and Parks Canada for this nine-day agenda to

educate, inspire, and raise the spirit while sending out the underlying message of conservation.

The festival is nine days filled with over 75 events in Tofino, Ucluelet and the Pacific Rim Nature Reserve. For more information visit www.pacificrimwhalefestival.com.

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