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Pacific Rim Whale Festival on Island west coast this month

The Brant geese aren't the only creatures heading back to British Columbia as the weather begins to warm up.

The arrival of an estimated 22,000 grey whales off the coast of B.C. will be celebrated March 15 to 23 with the 22nd annual Pacific Rim Whale Festival in Tofino and Ucluelet.

The festival, say organizers, is nine days filled with over 75 fun and educational events in the host communities, as well as the Pacific Rim Nature Reserve.

The festival takes a strong stand against the practice of whaling and this year features a lecture by Nuu-chah-nulth ethnographer and artist, Ron Hamilton, titled, everything you wanted to know about whaling, but were afraid to ask.

The festival features hands-on marine life education and whale identification activities with experts arriving from the Vancouver Aquarium, Royal BC Museum and Parks Canada.

Free public viewing stations will be available at Amphitrite Point Lighthouse in Ucluelet and at the Wickaninnish Centre in Pacific Rim National Park.

For more information, visit www.pacificrimwhalefestival.com.