

## Tour Report Baja's Ultimate Whale Safari 11 - 19 March 2026

Common dolphin



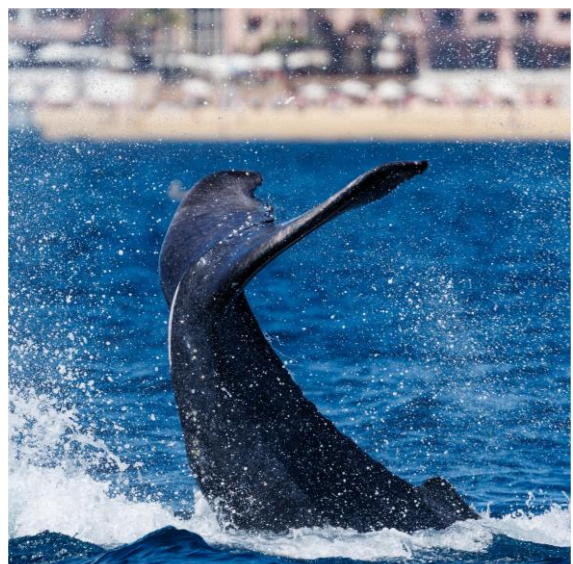
Mobula ray



Grey whale



Humpback whale



Compiled by Chris Breen

**Tour Leader: Chris Breen**

**Wednesday 11 March 2026**

**Day 1:**

Arrive Cabo San Lucas, Mexico

*Weather: clear sunny skies, a light wind 29°C*

The flight from Mexico City arrived into San Jose del Cabo later than planned and the group was met at the airport and transferred to Hotel Casa Bella where Chris was waiting to greet everybody. It had been a long journey from London and the group was weary but very pleased to have arrived.

Although the official check-in isn't until much later in the day, Barbara (the wonderful owner of Casa Bella) had already organised all of the rooms to be ready for the group to check in immediately. It was a free afternoon but Chris gave the group a bit of an orientation in respect of places to go exploring and things to



see along the way, and everyone agreed to meet in the hotel gardens at 5.30 pm so that Chris could run through the trip in a bit more detail.

Hotel Casa Bella is an oasis of calm in what is an otherwise busy and growing town. Set away from the marina, but only five minutes' walk, and opposite a lovely public square, Casa Bella was a family home and is now run by Barbara who grew up here. There is a small swimming pool (more of a plunge pool, but most welcome on hot days!), and lots

of greenery which makes it great for birds, and the perfect starting point for our trip. Throughout the afternoon, there were gila woodpeckers calling and flying in and out of a nest in a dead palm tree, house finches, house sparrows, XXX oriole and white-winged dove, and turkey vultures were passing overhead regularly.

Most of the group went down to the marina, some had lunch nearby and a couple just stayed and enjoyed the tranquillity of the garden.

At 5.30 pm, everyone gathered in the garden and Chris went through the plan for the week showing a few images that he had taken over the past couple of visits and talked through the logistics of tomorrow's excursion.

At 6.30 pm, as a group, we ambled across the square to Mi Casa, a lovely outdoor Mexican restaurant. The service was good; the food was good and the local band of Mexican singers and guitarists were keen to play for us. Everyone had a delicious meal and then returned to the hotel for an early night... well most people... a couple went to a very nice restaurant next to the hotel for a pre-bedtime drink to celebrate the first evening of the holiday!

**Thursday 12 March 2026**

**Day 2:**

Whale-watching from Cabo and drive to La Paz

*Weather: clear skies, a light wind and 28°C*

A few of the group were up fairly early (recovering from jetlag!) and were sat either on the terrace or in the gardens of the hotel enjoying tea or coffee and a pastry.

Everyone had a leisurely morning and by 11.30 am everyone was checked out of their rooms and had moved next door to the See Creatures office and were checking in for the first full day of our expedition. Natalia - our guide for the week - was there to meet us and was as excited as everyone else about getting out on the water and looking for humpbacks. All of our bags were tagged to be taken up to La Paz and then we went the short distance by minibus to Marina Del Rey where we met our captain and boarded our whale-watching boat - *Blessing 1*.

*Blessing 1* is a medium-sized manoeuvrable panga with powerful engines, a sun cover and a nice bow area to move to in the event of seeing humpbacks or other interesting things to photograph. Natalia gave everyone a briefing as to how the trip might unfold and then we left the marina. There were a lot of other boats heading out to sea and a huge cruise ship moored offshore. Our first stop was to look at the arch which marks the southern-most land point of the peninsula, where Natalia spoke to us about the geology of this part of the coast. A few photos taken we began heading out to sea and realised that there was a mother and young humpback close-by. Almost immediately the young one breached, breached again, and then did a third (half) breach. What a way to start... and then the mother launched herself out of the water to show the young one how to do it properly. It all happened so quickly that although most of the group saw it, no one



managed to get any photos or video. It was, however, a great thing to witness.

The youngster then began swimming off but was doing a series of huge, powerful tail slaps, repeatedly hitting the water and making massive splashes as it did so. But, whilst we watched this taking place for a short period we all felt uncomfortable with the number of other boats around and decided to head out to sea to look for our own whales.

It was quite windy and the sea was quite choppy but as we motored out, we managed to get a good look at a green turtle and also a shark (unidentified), and we were of course continuously scanning for humpbacks. We saw a pair of fairly distant blows (most likely to be two males travelling together) that we went towards but which then fluked and disappeared never to be seen again! We carried on for some time without success and then a couple in the group saw a blow which we went towards. We watched the whale for a few minutes as it breathed and moved through the water before fluking and diving. Now it was time to head back to the marina, but not before making a slight detour to see a whale that a number of other boats were looking at. We saw it blow a couple of times and then had to return to the marina as our time was up.



Once back, we bid farewell to the captain and then went back to See Creatures by minibus for a quick pitstop before beginning our journey north. As we drove north towards Todos Santos Chris said to keep an eye out for whale blows in the ocean and a number of people saw them - it is a good 'minibus tick' to have! We arrived at our hotel just before 6 pm.

At 7 pm everyone gathered in the lounge (drink in hand) and Chris did a short presentation about humpback whales and Natalia gave everyone a briefing about our activities for tomorrow. Dinner on the terrace followed and then it was time to retire for the night.

Friday 13 March 2026

### Day 3:

Swimming with whale sharks & boarding Gallant Lady

*Weather: clear skies 27°C*

It was a clear-sky day in La Paz and most of the group were at breakfast at around 7.30 am. Everyone was ready and in the lobby decked out in swimwear and ready to put on wetsuits at the dock – which was a short drive away. Armed with mask, snorkel, fins we walked the short distance along the jetty to our panga, and after a short briefing from Natalia (and our captain Danny) we headed out to the whale shark zone – en route making sure to register with the ‘whale shark police’ before entering the zone.



Natalia had been told that there were a number of whale sharks near the boundary of the whale-shark refuge but none of us were expecting to see nine or ten of them schooling and feeding there. It was fabulous. A number of the group (though by no means everyone!) were keen to get into the water with the whale sharks so we carried on into the refuge and after a few minutes found a shark to swim with. There were already a few other boats in the whale shark zone and there was clearly no shortage of whale sharks to swim with!

The water is warm and the visibility, although not crystal clear, was very good, and the whale sharks were busy. This is exciting because there was clearly plenty of plankton for them to feed on, and there were clearly plenty of whale sharks feeding. The routine for the next couple of hours was to be ready with mask, snorkel and fins on. And, at the call of the captain or Natalia, to jump into the water and swim to Natalia who would be with the whale shark. It is an incredibly exciting, well-controlled and utterly wonderful experience, to be able to be in the (warmish) water with the biggest fish in the sea.

We spent 10 or 15 minutes with our first shark each small group taking it in turns to get in the water and spend time with it. Some were better at snorkelling than others and some got better views than others, but over the course of our time in the whale shark zone everyone who wanted to get in the water had fantastic views and a fabulous experience... Natalia's guiding expertise was a big part of this.

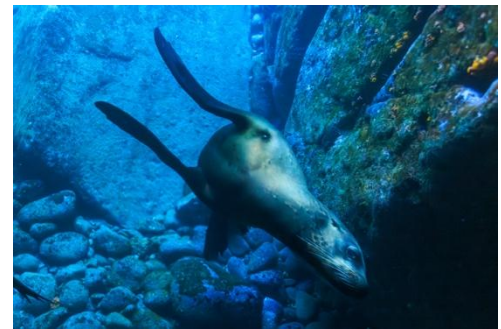
Sadly, our time was up though and it was time to leave the refuge but as we motored out we witnessed something that neither Chris (who has visited the area many times), nor Natalia (who had been a dedicated whale shark guide) had ever seen before which was a whale shark feeding frenzy. We counted at least 18 whale sharks that were feeding in the warm shallow waters and cruising slowly back and forth hoovering up the microorganisms in the water. They were not even slightly interested in the two or three boats around, all they wanted to do was take in as much food as possible. What a sight, what an experience - Baja is full of surprises!

It was finally time to go and get to another boat that was going to take us north to Los Islotes where there is a big sea lion colony. After about 30 minutes, we were boarding the boat, there were sandwiches and cold drinks waiting and we began heading north. The magnificent scenery of Espiritu Santo Island was on our right-hand side as we headed north, and after a couple of hours we arrived at the tiny little archipelago known as Los Islotes just off the northern tip of Espiritu Santo.



The captain and Natalie assessed the sea conditions, and everyone got ready and jumped into the water. With Natalia at the front and Chris at the back, we swam as a group towards the rocks - staying a safe distance away - and watched, and listened to, the California sea lions. Some of them jumped into the water and swam around us, but it was fabulous just watching them and listening to them calling loudly and swimming back and forth along the shore.

hear sea lions playing in the background and as we swam out of the cave a couple of sea lions swam in under us. Then sadly, it was time to return to our skiff, and the boat. Once aboard we were about to head south but we could see that the mobula rays were jumping so our boat driver got closer to them and we spent 30 minutes or more photographing them and watching them as they launched themselves into the air. It is a magical sight and a very special 'Baja' experience.



Natalia led us into a cave where we could

We sailed south for 45 minutes or so before pulling into a cove where Gallant Lady was moored awaiting our arrival. Once onboard we were greeted by Gere our Captain, Ivan the second in command, Nubia our host, Enrique the chef..... Gere introduced himself, gave an orientation of the vessel and we were shown to our cabins, and after a safety briefing it was time for dinner and bed. It was the best day so far.

**Saturday 14 March 2026**

#### **Day 4:**

Whale watching aboard Gallant Lady

*Weather: clear skies with a light wind and 29°C*

It is always wonderful waking up in Baja California and seeing the sunrise - somehow it is even more wonderful in the Sea of Cortez. The apricot-coloured light before the sun rises above the horizon casts a very special light on the rocks which is reflected in the sea, and once the sun comes over the horizon (which seems to do remarkably quickly) the colours become much richer. A couple of the group were up on the bow in time to see it.

Continental breakfast was available from 6.30 am onwards and then we were out on deck looking for whales. It was quiet to begin with, but we had the first couple of blows at around 8.30 am. In the distance, Natalia had seen a blow and then a second blow which, once we got a little closer we could clearly see as being a pair of blue whales - and probably a mother and calf. Not all of the group saw them initially and those that did mostly saw blows rather than the whale itself but, before 9 am, everyone had had excellent sightings of both of the whales. We were with these two blue whales for 30 minutes or more before they disappeared and we moved on to see what else



was in the area.

It wasn't long before we saw another blow, and then a second, but these weren't so large and were from a pair of humpbacks. Two humpbacks, mum and young, cruising along together. It was obvious when we first saw them that they were mum and young, not only because of an obvious size difference, but because their bodies appeared to be touching. First one fluked - a huge river of water draining from the back of the flukes as they glinted in the morning sunlight. And then the second - just not quite so much water before it disappeared into the ocean.

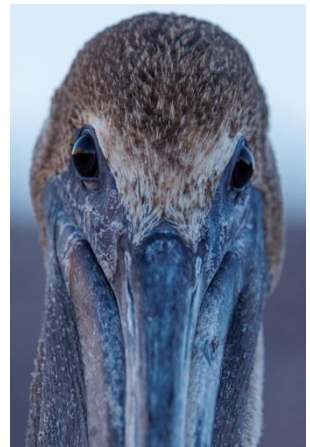


We timed their dives, which went from nine-minute dives with five minutes at the surface to ten-minute dives with two or three minutes at the surface.

Incredibly, we were with this pair for over an hour and a half before we felt it was time to move on.

Lunch was at 12.30 pm, and it was followed by an excellent presentation about whale sharks from Natalia.

Despite many eyes on the look out, this afternoon was quiet from the point of view of whales, but at about 4.30 pm it was time to head to our evening anchorage, so we turned and made our way into the bay at Agua Verde. We all jumped into the zodiac and made our way over to the beach and once there, some of the group went for a short walk, some swam and some walked over the sandbar to another bay to photograph pelicans feeding. The pelican (clearly a modelling star!) wandered along the beach to see the photographers and pose right next to them, even trying to nibble at Chris's shoe.



Everyone was back on the beach by about 6 pm though where the Gallant Lady crew had set a table up with all different cheeses, fruits, biscuits, wines and beers. There was a wonderful, laid-back, happy atmosphere on the beach which was a great way to end what had been a tremendous day.

Back on board there was time for a shower before another delicious dinner. Natalia briefed everyone in respect of tomorrow's timetable which Chris followed by reading a wonderful piece by Simon Barnes about his first ever sighting of a blue whale. And then, for most at least, it was time for bed.

**Sunday 15 March 2026**

### **Day 5:**

Whale watching aboard Gallant Lady

*Weather: mostly clear skies and 27°C*

A review of previous trip reports may reveal that I have said this before (!) - but I think today was one of the best days I have ever had in Baja California.

Quite a few of the group were up before sunrise and on the upper deck as the colours began to change. Continental breakfast was ready at 6.30 am and the captain upped the anchor at about 7 am and we sailed out of Agua Verde bay and headed north for a while to go looking for whales. However, the day began with some sleepy bottlenose dolphins but it began 'hotting up' shortly after 9 am when our spotter plane went overhead and confirmed to the captain that it had seen a fin whale nearby. We had already begun heading south at that stage and the fin whale was to our north so we turned around and immediately headed north - it didn't take long to find it.



It was very relaxed and clearly feeding and moving in a fairly erratic pattern and not following a particular course (which was fine with us!). We were clearly able to see its enormous size and huge blow, and the very differently shaped dorsal fin to the blue whales that we were looking at yesterday. It gave us some fabulous viewing and we were with it for over an hour before turning again and heading south in the general direction of La Paz.

Not long after heading south we were distracted again - and distractions in this part of the world are always good - this time by a pod of around 20 bottlenose dolphins that came to the boat and clearly wanted to play. They aren't as fast or as playful as other dolphins, but they were the stars of this morning's show, riding the bow wave and swimming at high speed alongside our boat. It was finally time to leave the dolphins, go inside for another delicious lunch and continue south.

Quite a few of the group went straight back out on deck after lunch to keep an eye out for cetaceans, and although we perhaps had over an hour without a sighting, as we approached the Mechudo Corridor we saw a huge pod of common dolphins on the horizon, so the captain heading directly towards them. From a few kilometres away, we could see them swimming at high speed and leaping in the waves. As soon as they heard our boat they turned and came towards us as fast as they could. Swimming on the bow, down the sides of the boat, leaping over the waves at the back of our boat, it was as if they had never seen a boat before - it was the most exciting thing they had ever witnessed, and of course, for us it was massively exciting too.



The captain was exceptional, speeding the boat up, slowing it down, and keeping the dolphins interested in us as much as we were interested in them. After an hour of being with them, we thought they would become bored and swim off into the distance, but they still wanted to play.

After a couple of hours, the colours in the sky were beginning to change and the sea was turning golden, and they were still with us. At about three hours of incredible dolphin watching, the sun was setting, but the dolphins were still playing and we were still enthralled, but by now we were really in the golden hour. The colours were simply sensational. One side of Gallant Lady, the colours of the ocean were a rich shade of dark blue complemented by a bright golden colour, and on the other side of the boat, the colours were a more subtle pink and purple. It was simply stunning. The crew were all out taking video and photographs because of course the dolphins were still with us. But it was Mother's Day, and the time had come to thank Mother Nature for today's riches, and to go inside for dinner.



What an incredible end to an incredible day.

**Monday 16 March 2026**

**Day 6:**

To San Ignacio Lagoon by light aircraft

*Weather: mostly clear skies with a light wind and 26°C*

It has been an exciting day today, and great fun for all sorts of reasons. Most of the group were up and awake quite a bit earlier than our 6 am continental breakfast and ready to leave our wonderful home for the next exciting part of the adventure. After breakfast, the bags we were taking to San Ignacio were taken from our rooms and transferred to the minivan which was waiting to take us to La Paz Airport. Natalia was leaving us temporarily because, due to available seats on our charter, she had to travel to San Ignacio by bus (!).

The airport was a 45-minute drive away and after half an hour or so at the airport we were taken through the very simple security procedures and walked across to our waiting Cessna Caravan. Boarding was straightforward (a simple clamber up a couple of steps!) and within minutes we were airborne. As we flew across La Paz bay everyone was keeping an eye out for whale sharks in the ocean below, but there was nothing obvious below us.

The Baja Peninsula is a parched and rugged land that is traversed by few tracks and even fewer roads. On a searingly hot day like it has been today, it looks as impenetrable now as it probably did to the early settlers here, and access to San Ignacio Lagoon by air probably saved a couple of days of road travel. We had set off a little later than planned from La Paz and so we arrived at San Ignacio at around 11ish. We were greeted by the manager of the camp – Stein – armed with a tray of champagne. After a quick 'comfort' break, we all bundled into some waiting vehicles and drove us the short distance to Tio Timo at the lagoon side.

After a short briefing, we had a delicious brunch and then collected our life-jackets before being shown to our tents, and at 1 pm we departed for the first of two consecutive whale-watches, each of 90 minutes but separated by a 30-minute break on a sandy lagoon beach on the west side.

We had the very first grey whales of the trip – San Ignacio being the place they come to at this time of year to breed and calve. Over the course of the two sessions we had them swimming very close to the boats for an extended period of time, we had some fabulous spy-hopping and even had a couple of the adults breaching. When our time was finally up we returned to camp, leaving the sanctuary as it closed at 5 pm and headed back to camp as the heat was dissipating from the sun.



So our total number of cetacean species stood at five - humpback, blue and fin whale, together with bottlenose and common dolphin.



We arrived back in camp at around 5 pm and after a shower and freshening up went to the Dive Bar for a drink. This lovely conversion of an old American yellow school bus sits on the edge of the lagoon in a beautiful sunny spot.

Dinner was at 6.30 pm and was followed by a talk about grey whales by one of the local naturalists, Gilma. And by then everyone was ready for bed ... even though it was only about 8 pm! Tomorrow is another day – and with any luck we will have some more exciting whale encounters 😊

**Tuesday 17 March 2026**

### **Day 7:**

Whale-watching in San Ignacio Lagoon

*Weather: mostly clear skies with the odd snow shower, a light wind and 27°C*

Baja California really is a wonderful place, and a huge part of that is San Ignacio Lagoon, which is just full of wonders... and whales. We had breakfast at 6.30 am and went out for our morning (double) whale-watch at 7.45 am. Split between two boats as on our previous excursions, we headed the 20 minutes or so out to the whale-watching zone keeping our eyes open for birds and dolphins as we went. Unlike yesterday afternoon which was quite choppy, this morning the water was smooth and calm.



There were quite a few boats out in the lagoon, and everyone was eagerly awaiting a grey whale sighting. Thankfully, it wasn't too long before we saw first a mum and calf, and then a single adult (almost certainly a female). None of the whales were playful whales, but we were able to watch them for an extended period of time before they disappeared below the surface in the direction of the lagoon entrance. And then the dark clouds came, and the rain followed, first a light drizzle, and then pounding rain. We all got absolutely soaked – but there were whales nearby, the rain stopped and everything was ok with the world, except that our first whale-watch had now ended and it was time to go to the beach for a 20-minute break before setting off again.



After a comfort break, a slurp of water, a handful of trail mix and a look at some of the shoreline birds (including long-billed curlew, willet, grey plover and a few white ibises) it was time to head back to the whale zone to see what else it had to offer. And, predictably, there were a few more whales to be seen – a couple more mum and calf pairs and a very distinctive single adult with a large white patch to the rear of its right flank (known locally as Blanco). Royal and elegant terns were flying overhead and in the distance, we could see a truly gigantic flock of pelicans and cormorants fishing in

what must have been an equally gigantic bait ball under the water's surface.

The time came to return to camp and we had lunch at midday-ish and then headed back out onto the water. As ever, the whale watching was magnificent with spy-hopping and the occasional breach, as well as plenty of time with whales close by the boats – though not as close as before!

Back in camp, it was time for a shower, a drink at the bar and dinner. This was followed by a talk about migration from Matteo, and then it was time to retire for the night.

**Wednesday 18 March 2026**

**Day 8:**

Whale-watching in San Ignacio Lagoon

*Weather: clear for much of the day and 26°C*

Today was another great day – how can it not be at San Ignacio? We were all up for the usual early breakfast followed by whale-watching at 7.45 am. The sea was fairly calm as we set out and both of our boats were looking hard for whales. We saw a whale blow within 30 minutes or so of kick off and had tremendous views first of one mum and calf, and then a second. The first of these pairs had apparently been very curious and 'friendly' yesterday, but today they were busy travelling up and down the lagoon, exercising their muscles before heading off to their feeding grounds in the Arctic. We have all been amazed at how time seems to evaporate when there are whales around, and far too soon it was time to take our half-time break on the sandy beach.

Back out in the lagoon for our second whale-watch was a little quieter as there was less tidal movement and the whales seemed to be down for longer. However, the water was glassy flat and for the past 30 minutes or so we were moving parallel to an adult that was slowly heading towards the breakers at the mouth of the lagoon. She (since it is most likely at this time of year that the adults in the lagoon are female) was particularly skinny after her long migration south, and then having already spent a few months in the lagoon without food. We were all hoping very much that she would make it north without being apprehended by orcas.



Of course, there were plenty of bottlenose dolphins around, and one boat even caught sight of a green turtle briefly as it came up for breath. Our time in the sanctuary had come to an end and it was time to get back to camp for another delicious lunch before we were ready to set off for the final afternoon activity of the trip.

The afternoon excursion was quieter than the morning but we still had excellent views of an adult female close to the boat and managed to stay with it for about half of our time in the sanctuary which was great, but then the whale-watching for the day was over and we returned to camp for a sundowner drink and dinner. A few of the group stayed up after dinner and sat by the fire looking at the stars and chatting about the day before heading off to bed... as sadly tomorrow is a final full day!

**Wednesday 18 March 2026**

**Day 8:**

Whale-watching in San Ignacio Lagoon

*Weather: mostly clear skies (overcast early in the day) and 27°C*

It is funny how the days of this trip seem to have been building up to a tumultuous crescendo, and our whale watch this morning was the crescendo!



As usual we were all up for breakfast at 6.30 am followed by whale-watching at 7.45 am. The sea was fairly calm as we set out and both of our boats were looking hard for whales – but we all had a very good feeling about it – there was great ‘whale karma’! Typically, it wasn’t long before we found a whale – a single adult, most likely to be a female and we watched it for a few minutes before finding a mother and calf. This particular pair seemed to be set on heading out of the lagoon and they passed by pretty quickly making a bee-line for the breakers. Maybe in fact this was their departure for the north – who knows...

But our captain had received a radio message to say that there was a very friendly mother and calf in a different part of the lagoon, together with a few other boats, we headed over to it. The ‘pangeros’ (panga drivers) have a very strict code of conduct amongst themselves to ensure that no one harasses the whales, or interrupts what the whales are doing, but they will wait and watch to see if the whales are interested in

coming up to the pangas – and this young calf was very interested. In fact when we arrived, there were already a couple of pangas nearby and we watched as it made its way to each panga, apparently trying to peep in to see what was going on, while the mum stayed a fair distance away but was spy-hopping every now and then (perhaps to keep an eye on what her baby was up to).

Much to the woops of happiness and joy from the various pangas, this went on for 45 minutes or more with the pangas taking it in turns to enjoy the company of the young whale, by splashing and rubbing it, and then reversing away so that another panga could have a turn. Each of the pangas was touched by the apparent intimacy of the young whale and I think that everyone's lives were enriched by the experience. But it was over all too soon and we had to go to the sandbar for our half-time break. It was a noisy break as there was so much chatter about what an incredible experience everyone had just had.

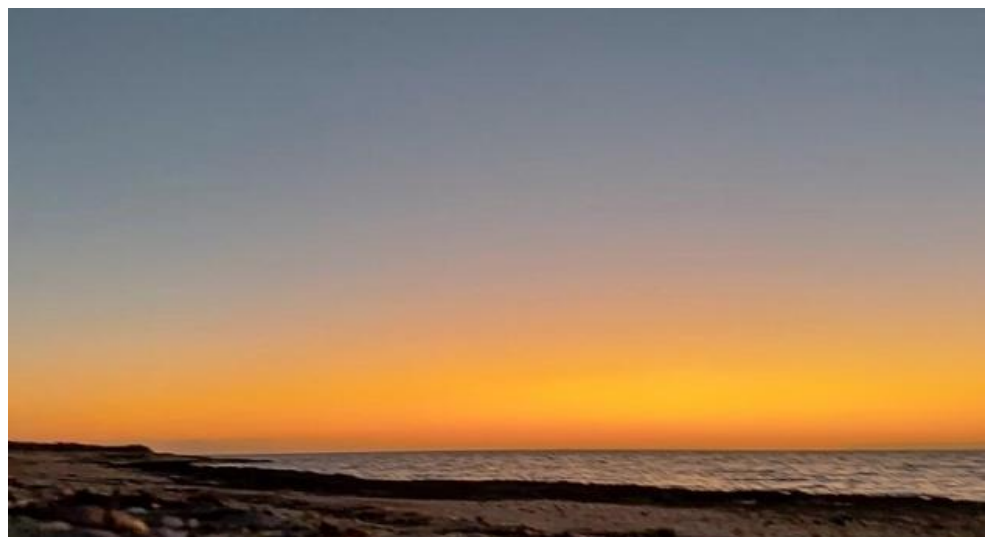
Although our second whale watch was also good because we had a couple of adult whales, it couldn't match our earlier experience – but no one minded at all, every trip out is different, and the experience earlier had been exceptional.

Back at camp, it was time for lunch and a short break to download images and catch our breath before we were ready to set off for the final afternoon activity of the trip. Again, we had a couple of great flukes from an adult male as well as a couple of breaches which were wonderful, but nothing that could match this morning's excitement.

On our ride back to camp, we went slowly to look at pelicans, cormorants and gulls that were gathering on the water in large numbers (the light was wonderful as we were drawing towards sunset). Back at camp we had time for a shower and a pre-dinner drink at the Dive Bar. A couple of the group set up their iPhones to take time-lapse pictures of our final sunset, and then we all went for dinner.



After dinner, we settled our bills and a few of the group sat by the fire at the Dive Bar and chatted about what a wonderful trip we've had. It really has been utterly memorable in so many ways.



Thursday 19 March 2026

**Day 9:**

Final whale-watch before returning to Cabo

*Weather: mostly clear skies with a light wind and 24°C*

This was the perfect final morning's whale watch which began about three minutes after arriving into the whale-watch zone with a sighting of a mum and calf. The was the one that has been named by the guides 'Mayonnaise' and is very friendly. Today was no exception. He (or she!) came up to the boat immediately it saw us. It had been travelling with its Mum and as soon as it saw our boat, it split from its Mum and came directly to us. It nudged our boat and systematically worked its way from the front of the boat to the back with its head as high to the boat as possible – curious as to what was in it. Everyone was utterly delighted our final whale watch simply couldn't have been any better. In fact, there were a number of boats nearby and it came up to all of the boats to see who or what was in each of them. It was wonderful.

As ever our time came to an end rather sooner than we would have liked and it was time to leave, but this time we weren't returning to camp we were going directly to the airstrip by boat. We arrived in perfect time at 9.45 am, and our bags and shoes were there to greet us. The plane scheduled to fly us south arrived a few minutes later.

We departed right on time at 10.30 am and flew south across this rather desolate peninsula and arrived perfectly on time at 12.30 pm and were reunited with our bags from La Paz. Sadly, though the trip was at an end. It was a short drive to the domestic terminal, where Chris said farewell to everyone as they then had to board their flights to Mexico City and Europe.

Baja California really is one of the most amazing places on the planet!



Images by Chris Breen

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# Checklist for Baja's Ultimate Whale Safari



The bird list is set in taxonomic order based on the 'The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America' by David Allen Sibley.  
 The cetacean list is set in taxonomic order based on the 'Field Guide to Whales, Dolphins & Porpoises' by Mark Carwardine.  
 Most common species in San Ignacio denoted by asterisk

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9
	<b>BIRDS</b>									
	<b>Grebes</b>									
1	Western grebe	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>						✓	✓	
	<b>Storm-Petrels</b>									
2	Least storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma microsoma</i>				✓				
	<b>Pelicaniformes</b>									
3	Brown pelican*	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Brown booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>			✓					
5	Blue-footed booby	<i>Sula nebouxii</i>		✓	✓					
6	Magnificent frigatebird*	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
	<b>Cormorants</b>									
7	Brandt's cormorant*	<i>Urile penicillatus</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
8	Double-crested cormorant*	<i>Nannopterum auritus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<b>Wading Birds</b>									
9	Great blue heron*	<i>Ardea herodias</i>							✓	✓
10	Reddish egret	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>				✓		✓	✓	✓
11	Snowy egret*	<i>Egretta thula</i>						✓		
12	White-faced ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>							✓	
13	White ibis*	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>					✓	✓	✓	

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	<b>Swans, Geese &amp; Ducks</b>									
14	Surf scoter*	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<b>Diurnal Raptors</b>									
15	Turkey vulture*	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Osprey*	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>			✓		✓	✓		✓
	<b>Plovers, Oystercatchers, Stilts &amp; Avocets</b>									
17	Semi-palmated plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>						✓	✓	
	<b>Sandpipers</b>									
18	Lesser yellowlegs*	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>		✓						
19	Long-billed curlew*	<i>Numenius americanus</i>					✓	✓	✓	
20	Marbled godwit*	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>						✓	✓	
21	Willet*	<i>Catotrophorus semipalmatus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	
22	Sanderling*	<i>Calidris alba</i>						✓		
	<b>Skuas, Jaegers &amp; Gulls</b>									
23	Pomarine jaeger	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>							✓	
24	California gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>	✓	✓						
25	Herring gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓	✓						
26	Western gull*	<i>Larus occidentalis</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓
27	Heermann's gull*	<i>Larus heermanni</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓
28	Yellow-footed gull			✓	✓	✓	✓			
	<b>Terns &amp; Skimmers</b>									
29	Caspian tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>		✓						✓
30	Royal tern*	<i>Sterna maxima</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<b>Pigeons and Doves</b>									
31	White-winged dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	✓							
32	Common ground-dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>		✓						
	<b>Woodpeckers</b>									
33	Gila woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>	✓	✓						

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	<b>Wrens</b>									
34	Cactus wren	<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>	✓	✓						
	<b>Finches &amp; Old World Sparrows</b>									
35	House finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	✓							
36	House sparrow*	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓							
	<b>MAMMALS</b>									
1	Grey whale*	<i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Blue whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>			✓					
3	Fin whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>				✓				
4	Humpback whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				
5	Common bottlenose dolphin*	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Common dolphin (formerly short-beaked & long-beaked)	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>				✓				
7	California sealion	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓