



<<<Title>>>

<<<Operation>>>

<<<Address1>>>

<<<Address2>>>

Dear <<<Dr./Mr./Ms. Operator>>>,

As a whale-watching operator in the Channel Islands region, we would like to invite your participation in the “Economic Valuation of Whale Watching Operations in the Santa Barbara Channel” survey. This survey is being conducted in a partnership between the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management (Bren School), University of California-Santa Barbara, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Each operation in the region will receive the same invitation and all information provided will be anonymous and confidential.

Your participation in this survey is extremely important. The data collected will provide critical information to researchers and resource managers within NOAA’s National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS), to better understand the value and importance of whales to local excursion and wildlife tour businesses. This information will ultimately be used to inform current and future discussions related to whale protection efforts in the Santa Barbara Channel.

This survey is being conducted by graduate students at the Bren School, one of the nation’s leading environmental graduate programs. These students take an interdisciplinary approach to environmental problem-solving through the integration of science, management, law, economics, and policy. This survey is part of a broader research project exploring the feasibility of implementing a sustainable shipping speed reduction program in the Santa Barbara Channel. This will be accomplished by evaluating the social, ecological and economic costs and benefits of reduced shipping speeds for improved whale conservation and air.

The student researchers are committed to collaborating with local operators, professionals, academics and industries to ensure stakeholder engagement and accurate data collection. As a local operator, we recognize that the success of your business is linked to the presence of whales in the Channel. Your participation in the survey will ensure the consideration of your operation in this analysis and significantly enhance the quality of this research, and management decisions based upon it.

We would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this important research initiative.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven D. Gaines".

Steven D. Gaines

Dean, Bren School of Environmental Science & Management
University of California, Santa Barbara