

# Whaling on the *Red Rooster III*

BY LARRY BROWN  
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The *Red Rooster III* hosted Whale Encounter Expeditions out of beautiful, tranquil Magdalena Bay, partnering with the local Cooperatives specializing in these encounters. The *Rooster* was our Mother Ship — or floating hotel — for four nights. And, local captains and their pangas were our expedition vessels. Yes, you are at water level, eye to eye with these giant, magnificent animals.

**OMG! - Extraordinary**

This is not just whale watching that can be done along the California coast during the great migrations on large boats offering whale watching trips, which are great. During our long range fishing trips, we frequently encounter whales making their long migrations between Alaska and the Bering Sea to the famous calving grounds of Baja California. But the *Red Rooster* adventures are different. These are *whale encounters*, whale-human bonding. It is amazing. You are eyeball to eyeball with massive, but gentle, curious creatures. The mothers offer you their adored calves with total trust. It is life altering.

**Gentle, Friendly Giants**

Whales lead extraordinarily long lives. They have extremely large brains and have memories like an elephant. They form very close bonds and mourn their kin well after they have passed. Many of these whales have experienced and remember the genocide of commercial whaling, and just 40 years ago would avoid encounters with boats and evil humans. But since the cessation of whaling, these whales have come to accept that humans are no longer dangerous and have come to trust us, even with their young calves.

Experiencing the tenderness the mother whales show to their

calves is heart warming. Experiencing the Momma whale cradle her calf next to your panga so her baby can feel your touch and love for them will be seared in your brain forever. If you have not yet taken this expedition, be sure to put it on your bucket list.

We were cavorting with gray whales, (*Eschrichtius robustus*), which are the most curious and friendly whales. They are medium-sized whales with the males checking in at 45 feet long, longer than a city bus. The females are slightly larger. The males average 16 tons but the females can weigh as much as 30 to 40 tons. They can live 80 to 100 years and their top speed is 15 KM/H. They are baleen or filter feeders, scooping up tons of tiny fish or plankton to maintain their girly figures. Their perilous migration from the icy arctic seas to the warm lagoons of Baja Sur, Mexico and back again can be a 14,000-mile journey. It is the longest migration of any mammal on earth.

In addition to the gray whales, other whales making long migrations are humpback, blue, right and pilot whales. Long range fishermen see all of these whales during the migration south and north. The blue whale is the largest at about 175 tons, or 350,000 pounds. The Statue of Liberty weighs only 150 tons. Picture a 12-story building, and you get the picture. We also see orcas, or killer whales, which are the primary predator for these other migratory whales.

The *Red Rooster* "Mexican Riviera Cruise" offered whale watching, fishing, ecology, beach combing, massages and facials, bird watching, star gazing, romantic sunsets and sunrises, gorgeous moon rises and gourmet 5-Star dining. It would have been an amazing adventure even if there were no whales, but of course,

there were hundreds of whales everywhere. *Oh, and did I say gourmet dining?*

**5-Star Gourmet Dining**

Food is a big priority on long range fishing boats. You can't control or guarantee good fishing or the weather, but you can guarantee great service and food. Some long range anglers return home bragging and raving about the cuisine we enjoy on these boats. Some anglers take more photos of the meals than of the fish. Chefs Mike and Fernando aboard the *Rooster* are among the best.

Their repertoire includes seared ahi, grilled scallops, amazing steaks and prime rib, rack of lamb, the world's best BBQ ribs (that will convert a vegan), chicken marsala, amazing pork dishes (pulled pork, carnitas, pork chops and pork loin) and grilled yellowtail, dorado, wahoo or tuna that we catch while fishing, just to name a few. And you will enjoy sashimi, poke and sushi from the freshest and best fish on planet earth. Regular anglers are still blown away by this cuisine, but our non-fishing spouses and kids were totally "gob smacked." And yes, the chefs always cater to guests with food allergies and dietary restrictions with an equally beautiful, gourmet alternative. It was a great opportunity for long range anglers to have their wives and kids experience a long range fishing boat, with the phenomenal service and food we anglers are guaranteed all the time.

**A Birder's Paradise**

Along the banks of the bay are healthy mangrove forests teeming with life. Birds are everywhere, flying, soaring and diving for fish or just perched on the tops of the mangrove trees or pristine sand dunes in back of the mangroves. Magdalena Bay is a natural reserve for birds with its thousands of islands, channels and estuaries and billions of small baitfish. It is a birder's paradise. There are more than 100 species of birds, according to National Geographic, and nearly all can be seen from the deck as you slowly glide through the channels. There are bald and golden eagles, peregrine falcons, northern harriers, osprey, vultures, crested caracara, hawks, king fishers, six species of herons, four species of egrets, four different terns, frigates, ducks and teals, pelicans, plovers, ibis, all different gulls, cormorants, boobies, etc., etc., etc.

There is no concern about sea sickness. It was like a lake. My wife gets seasick on a dock looking at a boat and she had no problem at all. Bahia Magdalena is an expansive bay, totally protected from the open ocean. There are no ocean swells or waves. The incoming and outgoing tides are mesmerizing, more like a river



WHALE WATCHING, UP CLOSE AND VERY PERSONAL.



WHALES IN MAG BAY.



GRAY WHALES IN MAG BAY.

flowing past the mangroves. These tidal flows are the source of amazing abundance of life.

Petting whales was on my "once in a lifetime" bucket list to do ONCE, but Marie and I have already decided to join one of the expeditions again next year. It looks like most of the other guests will be signing up again too. Newcomers are advised to book asap.

**Join the *Red Rooster* Riviera Mag Bay 2023 Cruise**

Join the *Red Rooster III* for an epic adventure, exploring the inland waterways of the western coast of the Baja Peninsula. In Magdalena Bay and Lopez Mateo, you will have a chance to get up close and personal with gray whales as they reach the point in their migration when they give birth to their calves and begin teaching them to socialize. You may choose to fish in the bay and mangroves for yellowtail, grouper, snook, croaker, spotted

bay bass, bonefish, halibut, pargo and snapper. You will have an opportunity to visit the local villages and enjoy fresh seafood including famous chocolate clams, crabs, lobster, shrimp, abalone and oysters. You may choose to swim, hike or try out a paddle board during the various stops enroute between Puerto Chale and Lopez Mateo. You may want to schedule a massage or facial onboard or relax with a cocktail on deck. There are abundant bird watching opportunities, star gazing and sunsets and sunrises to enjoy. Whatever your interest, the crew of the *RRIII* is ready to help make this an unforgettable vacation.

If you want to go "whaling" on the *Red Rooster III* next year, there is very limited space available, so call the *Red Rooster* office NOW and submit your name. These spots will sell out fast. Call Maria at 619-224-3857 to book or for more information.



MARIE BROWN petting Big Mama.

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