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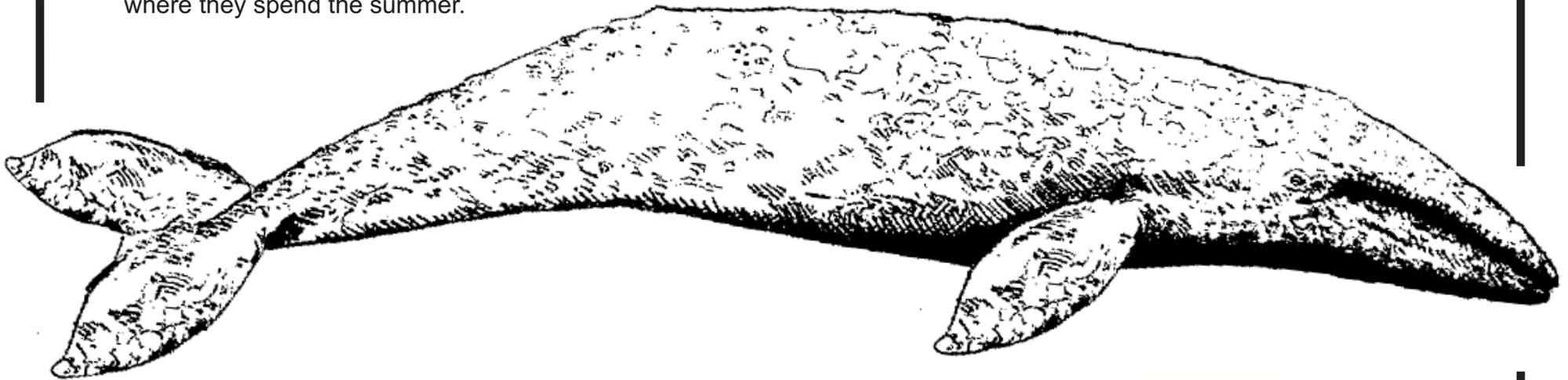
www.capitolmuseum.ca.gov/kidszone

California's Gray Whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*)

Measuring 35 to 50 feet in length and around 20 to 40 tons in weight, the California gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) is identified by its mottled gray color and low hump in place of a dorsal fin. Gray whale feed mainly on small crustaceans along the ocean bottom in the western Bering Sea where they spend the summer.

From December through February, the whales can be seen traveling southward in small groups along the California coast on their way to the bays and lagoons of Baja California where mating occurs and the females calve.

In March and April, they once again travel north following the shoreline. The whales cover approximately 6,000 to 7,000 miles each way. It is believed that memory and vision aid them on their long migration. The California gray whale was designated the State Marine Mammal in 1975.



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