

The Western Flyer Returns to California After 100-Day Voyage

Cargo Includes Scientific Data, Community
Stories and Student Discovery

BY THE WESTERN FLYER TEAM

On Tuesday, June 24, the storied wooden vessel Western Flyer returned home after a 100-day, 4,700-mile expedition retracing the legendary 1940 journey of John Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts to



Mexico's Gulf of California. This, however, was no reenactment. Eighty-five years later, the Flyer set out with a new kind of crew: students, scientists, educators, artists, and community partners, united by a shared mission: to spark curiosity through science, education, and storytelling.

As the boat pulled into Moss Landing, a small crowd gathered to welcome the vessel home, a modern echo of its first return from the Gulf, this time carrying data and stories instead of specimens.

"Bringing the Western Flyer back to the Gulf wasn't just about retracing a voyage. It was about building something new with students, communities, and

scientists on both sides of the border," said Sherry Flumerfelt, Executive Director of the Western Flyer Foundation. "We saw students light up at the micro-

Photo of two local men, one unidentified (left) and Leopoldo Perpuli (right), with John Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts during their bighorn sheep hunt, as described in Chapter 16 of The Log from the Sea of Cortez. Gifted to the Western Flyer crew by the children of Leopoldo Perpuli on May 11, 2025.

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scope, researchers discover new collaborations, and people show up with open hearts. That's the real legacy and it's still unfolding."

Throughout the expedition, the Western Flyer, spent 100 days at sea, covering 4,700 miles, made 22 stops, bringing hands-on education and outreach to 16 coastal communities, collaborated with 65 institutions, including universities, government agencies, conservation organizations, and schools, engaged 700 students aboard for tours, reached over 10,000 people through public events, and to keep the crew going? A total of 315 pots of coffee, 1,000 eggs, 100 pounds of potatoes, and 50 loaves of bread.

At 43 different research sites, students, scientists and educators worked side by side, deploying oceanographic instruments, exploring seamounts, towing plankton nets, and documenting everything from nudibranchs in mangroves to the surprise return of Humboldt squid. From piloting remotely operated vehicles to conducting intertidal surveys, from observing whales to examining the tiniest plankton, the science was hands-on, collaborative, and locally grounded, revealing not only the Gulf's hidden stories but also new possibilities for the next generation.

Not all cargo was physical, and none of it was biological. Instead of jars of preserved specimens, like those collected in

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New Promotion for BCS at a National Level

Bragging about our state's natural attractions

BY ELLA DRAKE

The Tourism Atlas of Baja California Sur, a digital platform offering geo-referenced information on the state's attractions, will be showcased at the upcoming Statistics and Geography Forum for States and Municipalities in Oaxaca.

Following the First Regular Session of the State Committee on Statistical and Geographic Information of Baja California Sur, the project was reviewed and evaluated by various working groups.

The Tourist Atlas of Mexico, a national public registry, features detailed information on the country's natural and cultural tourist assets. Its goal is to promote Mexico's tourism resources, making them easily accessible to tourists and industry professionals. The platform includes interactive maps detailing attractions, natural areas, and tourism development zones, offering comprehensive information on destinations, services, and programs.

The Statistics and Geography Forum, set for November in Oaxaca, will spotlight tools like the Tourist Atlas, highlighting best practices in statistical and geographic data. The Atlas remains a vital resource for showcasing Mexico's diverse tourism offerings to domestic and international audiences. ✨

THE WESTERN FLYER...

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1940, the Flyer returned with data, stories, and friendships forged across borders.

In plazas along sunlit docks and aboard the Western Flyer, the crew connected with conservationists, fishermen, scientists, artists and students, all eager to share knowledge, histories, and hopes for their communities and the sea.

Alongside research results and field notes came unexpected treasures: hand-carved wooden boats from Santa Rosalía, stu-

dent artwork inspired by Steinbeck's *The Pearl* and *Of Mice and Men* from San José del Cabo, and a handmade doll from Cabo Pulmo, offered for safe passage.

"I've captained a lot of boats, but nothing like this," said Captain Paul Tate. "The history, the science, the students, the community, this voyage had a different kind of weight. You could feel it in your bones."

From 35-knot gusts rounding Point Conception to bioluminescent dolphins streaking through the bow wake under a blood moon, the journey offered more than just science or scenery. There were nights of laughter in tight quarters, quiet mid-watches beneath starlit skies, and moments that connected the present to the past in ways no one expected.

In Puerto Escondido, near Loreto, the crew was welcomed by the children of Leopoldo Perpuli, the guide who led Steinbeck and Ricketts into the hills in Chapter 16 of *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*. In an unforgettable moment, Captain Tate shared a toast with Perpuli's son Fidencio, using a barnacle-covered shot glass salvaged from the original 1940 voyage. The family also presented an inscribed photo of their father with Steinbeck and Ricketts, now proudly displayed in the Flyer's galley. Steinbeck wrote in *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*: "This trip had dimension and tone. It was a thing whose boundaries seeped through itself and beyond into some time and space that was more than all the Gulf and more than all our lives."

"You could feel it," Tate said. "That sense of something larger than us, echoing back from the past and reaching somewhere new. The communities we connected with, from major cities to remote fishing villages, brought a depth of collaboration and generosity that added a new dimension, one Steinbeck and Ricketts could never have imagined. And now we get to explore that 'somewhere new' together." ✨

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Our Cows are Glowing!

With New Neon Colored Necklaces

BY A.S. VALEN

Driving on Baja highways sometimes presents challenges not often seen in other places around the world, especially if driving at night.

Cows don't give a damn about traffic or speed, when they want to cross to the other side, they just do it.

For this reason, the Municipal Office of Rural Development decided to deliver more than 200 fluorescent necklaces to farmers in the Santiago and Miraflores districts, free of charge.

These are the areas where more cattle are located, and they just walk freely around the area looking for food.

The distribution of these fluorescent collars aims to reduce accidents involving livestock, especially at night. In addition, signs are being installed urging the public to drive with caution in areas with a high presence of animals.

This action is the result of a collaboration with the Costa Palma Foundation, which promoted the initiative to benefit local farmers. The main objective is to prevent

the presence of livestock on the roads and thereby prevent accidents that can put human and animal lives at risk it was explained.

The Director of Rural Development announced that the distribution of collars will continue to be carried out to more livestock farmers in the municipality as part of a comprehensive road safety strategy. ✨



Todos Santos AA Meetings

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11a.m.—12 noon.

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