

California news in brief

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Body

California gray whales heading south to Baja

Whales are migrating along the **California** coast.

California gray whales will be traveling up and down the coast from Alaska to Baja **California** through June in the longest annual migration of any marine mammal, a round trip of 12,000 miles. The peak of the winter migration is in late January.

The whales spend summers in the Bering Sea where the days are more than 20 hours long. Phytoplankton, or microscopic algae, proliferate with the increased light, creating an abundance of food.

When the days begin to shorten, the whales head for the Gulf of **California**. Some will mate in the warm, protected waters, while females impregnated the year before will give birth to 17-foot calves.

MADERA

Symbol of north state, a cedar, knocked down

County supervisors are considering replacing a fallen tree that marked the geographic start of Northern **California**.

The cedar was knocked down in a rainstorm Monday morning and blocked several lanes for hours. It stood next to a palm tree representing Southern **California** in the median of Highway 99 south of Madera.

PLACERVILLE

Man who police believe killed his son, kills self

An El Dorado County man suspected of fatally shooting his son earlier this week killed himself after being surrounded by sheriff's deputies, authorities said Thursday.

Roy Clayton confronted a 25-year-old man at a rural El Dorado County home Thursday morning, threatening him with a gun and demanding food and help, said sheriff's Lt. Marc Adams.

The man escaped and called 911. Shortly after deputies arrived at the house, Clayton shot himself with a .45-caliber handgun, Adams said. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

SAN DIEGO**Giant panda cub makes public debut, is thriving**

Su Lin, a 21-week-old giant panda cub, made her public debut Thursday at the San Diego Zoo.

Zookeeper Lisa Bryant said Su Lin is precocious and ``very curious." She is climbing and trying to stand on her head, a common activity for panda cubs.

During her weekly health exam on Wednesday, zookeepers found Su Lin in good health, weighing in at 15.6 pounds and measuring 2 1/2 feet in length.

Su Lin -- whose name means ``A Little Bit of Something Very Cute" -- was born Aug. 2.

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