



Photo of Earl Richmond:
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Santa Barbara Marine Mammal Center



"Where the Earth Breathes and Giants Are Born"

**The Need for Conservation Awareness,
Preservation and Protection**

Project Principals

Blue whale populations once numbered 300,000 individuals. Whaling records reveal that over 29,000 blue whales were slaughtered in the Antarctic alone, in a single year. Today, researchers estimate the total world population of blue whales to be less than 10,000 individuals. It is difficult to imagine that in this day and age the world's largest living creature is now under new threats of extinction.

**Earl Richmond – Production Director/
President Richmond Productions, Inc.**, California Richmond Productions, Inc. is in its 26th year of producing scientific-based conservation programs. In 1994 Earl began his specialty in filming blue whales, and has worked with a variety of researchers, institutions and television companies. Earl's footage and assignments with blue whales includes, National Geographic Television, National Geographic Channel, The BBC, Animal Planet, Tokyo Broadcasting Systems Television, the Disney Channel, the Aquarium of the Pacific, Scripps Institute of Oceanography, Cascadia Research Collective, and CICIMAR-IPN, Mexico.

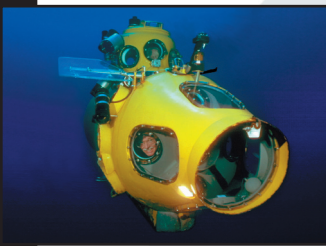
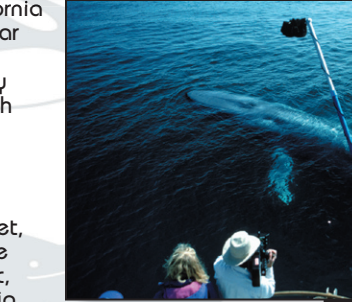


While no human has witnessed the birth of a blue whale, researchers for many years have documented blue whales

**Dr. Diane Gendron – Lead Researcher/
Professor** in the Department of Marine Biology and Fisheries, Lab. Ecology of Marine Mammals, Centro Interdisciplinario de Ciencias Marinas La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico.

nursing and rearing their young along a secluded section of Baja's coastline in the Gulf of California. The Gulf of California is the only region in the world that blue whales are known to consistently rear their young. Today, researchers have tracked individuals and generations returning to this region to feed and rear their young. This same critical

habitat for blue whales is now being considered for development. Plans include marinas, high rise hotels and access roads to a region that knows no human contact other than an occasional passing fisherman's panga.



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she has extended her long term study on blue whales in Mexico initiated in 1988, from using well-established observational techniques (photo-identification of individuals) to developing new techniques based on skin and blubber tissue such as stable isotope studies, fatty acid profiles, genetic, and organochlorine contaminants. All these studies are being conducted through collaboration with other Mexican Universities and they form part of Master and Doctoral thesis for many students.

The blue whale is just beginning to show signs of recovery after 40 years of protection from hunting. The key to their survival certainly means protecting their nursery grounds.

The resulting program is targeted at both U.S. and Mexico audiences for distribution to conservation managers, public aquariums and television audiences. Venues such as these will reach well over a million viewers. For example, the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California, has given its endorsement for use of the program for their High Definition (HD) Theater. Of the 1.3 million people who visit the aquarium each year, 300 to 400 thousand people attend the HD Theater.



Collaborative work between lead researcher Dr. Diane Gendron and Richmond Productions, Inc., are underway in creating a scientific-based conservation documentary program on blue whales and their threatened habitat. This program will

Partial funding from Richmond Productions, Inc. and Dr. Diane Gendron's research contributions through CCIMAR-IPN & CONACYT has been provided. We are seeking matching funds of an additional \$60,000 to make this conservation program a reality and reach the greatest audience possible.

take the viewer on a journey of discovery into the secret realm of the blue whale and give us new insight into their critical habitat and the need for resource protection.



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