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New Bedford Whaling Museum seeing significant visitor increases

By James Bessette - 06/03/2025



THE NEW BEDFORD Whaling Museum's visitation numbers in the first quarter of 2025 increased by 16.2% year over year, including seeing its highest visitor count in more than a decade. / COURTESY NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM

NEW BEDFORD – The New Bedford Whaling Museum's visitation numbers have seen some substantial increases of late, including having its highest visitor count in more than a decade.

According to the nonprofit, the number of total visitors to the museum in the first quarter of 2025 was up by 16.2% across all categories from 2024. Those figures include a 27.9% increase in school groups visiting the museum from this point last year.

Additionally, visitation at the museum post-pandemic has skyrocketed by 380% and its annual fund has increased by 35% over the last 10 years, the museum says. Some factors resulting in this growth include consistent marketing, proactive work by museum officials to attract field trips and homeschooled students and investing in exhibits and programs, the museum says.

“While we can point to certain tactics that led to this success, what it comes down to is that we offer an incredible experience that resonates with visitors of all ages and backgrounds,” Museum CEO Amanda McMullen said in a statement.

The museum also hosted three traveling exhibitions in 2024, which reached more than 58,000 people around the country, expanding the reputation of the region, the museum said.

The museum is “looking forward to exciting times ahead,” including breaking ground on a new expansion project, McMullen said in a statement.