

WHALES





Types of whales



whale - **КИТ**

[weɪl]



beluga whale - **белуха**

[bɪ'lu:gə weɪl]



southern right whale -
ЮЖНЫЙ КИТ

['sʌðən raɪt weɪl]



sperm whale - кашалот

[spɜ:m weɪl]



**bowhead whale -
гренландский кит**

['bəʊhed weɪl]



blue whale - синий кит

[blu: weɪl]



humpback whale -
горбатый кит

[ˈhʌmpbæk weɪl]



grey whale - серый кит

[ɡreɪ weɪl]



fin whale - финвал

[fɪn ˈveɪl]



smooth whale -
гладкий кит

[smu:ð weɪl]



orca/killer whale -
косатка

['ɔ:kə]/['kɪlə weɪl]

Whale



Beluga whale



The beluga whale is an Arctic and sub-Arctic cetacean. It is one of two members of the family Monodontidae, along with the narwhal, and the only member of the genus *Delphinapterus*. It is also known as the white whale, as it is the only cetacean to regularly occur with this colour; the sea canary, due to its high-pitched calls; and the melonhead, though that more commonly refers to the melon-headed whale, which is an oceanic dolphin.

The beluga is adapted to life in the Arctic, so it has anatomical and physiological characteristics that differentiate it from other cetaceans. Amongst these are its all-white colour and the absence of a dorsal fin, which allows it to swim under ice with ease. It possesses a distinctive protuberance at the front of its head which houses an echolocation organ called the melon, which in this species is large and deformable. The beluga's body size is between that of a dolphin and a true whale, with males growing up to 5.5 m long and weighing up to 1,600 kg. This whale has a stocky body. Like many cetaceans, a large percentage of its weight is blubber (subcutaneous fat). Its sense of hearing is highly developed and its echolocation allows it to move about and find breathing holes under sheet ice.

Belugas are gregarious and form groups of 10 animals on average, although during the summer, they can gather in the hundreds or even thousands in estuaries and shallow coastal areas. They are slow swimmers, but can dive to 700 m below the surface.

They are opportunistic feeders and their diets vary according to their locations and the season. The majority of belugas live in the Arctic Ocean and the seas and coasts around North America, Russia and Greenland; their worldwide population is thought to number around 200,000. They are migratory and the majority of groups spend the winter around the Arctic ice cap; when the sea ice melts in summer, they move to warmer river estuaries and coastal areas. Some populations are sedentary and do not migrate over great distances during the year.

Its body is round, particularly when well fed, and tapers less smoothly to the head than the tail. The sudden tapering to the base of its neck gives it the appearance of shoulders, unique among cetaceans. The tail-fin grows and becomes increasingly and ornately curved as the animal ages. The flippers are broad and short—making them almost square-shaped.

The adult beluga is rarely mistaken for any other species, because it is completely white or whitish-grey in colour. Calves are usually born grey, and by the time they are a month old, have turned dark grey or blue grey. They then start to progressively lose their pigmentation until they attain their distinctive white colouration, at the age of seven years in females and nine in males. Unlike other cetaceans, the belugas seasonally shed their skin. During the winter, the epidermis thickens and the skin can become yellowish, mainly on the back and fins. When they migrate to the estuaries during the summer, they rub themselves on the gravel of the riverbeds to remove the cutaneous covering.

Southern right whale



The southern right whale is a baleen whale, one of three species classified as right whales belonging to the genus *Eubalaena*.

Like other right whales, the southern right whale is readily distinguished from others by the callosities on its head, a broad back without a dorsal fin, and a long arching mouth that begins above the eye. Its skin is very dark grey or black, occasionally with some white patches on the belly. The right whale's callosities appear white due to large colonies of cyamids (whale lice). It is almost indistinguishable from the closely related North Atlantic and the North Pacific right whales, displaying only minor skull differences. It may have fewer callosities on its head than North Atlantic and more on its lower lips than the two northern species. The biological functions of callosities are unclear, although the primal role has been considered to be for protection against predators.

An adult female is 15 m and can weigh up to 47 tonnes, with the larger records of 17.5–18 m in length and 80 tonnes or up to 90 tonnes (89 long tons; 99 short tons) in weight, making them slightly smaller than other right whales in the Northern Hemisphere. The testicles of right whales are likely to be the largest of any animal, each weighing around 500 kg. This suggests that sperm competition is important in the mating process.

Right whales do not normally cross the warm equatorial waters to connect with the other species and (inter)breed: their thick layers of insulating blubber make it difficult for them to dissipate their internal body heat in tropical waters. However, based on historical records and unconfirmed sightings in modern periods, *E. australis* transits may indeed occur through equatorial waters. Moreover, a stranding of a 21.3 m (71 feet) long right whale at Gajana, northwestern India in November 1944 was reported, however, true identity of this animal is unclear.

The proportion and numbers of molten-coloured individuals are notable in this species compared with the other species in the Northern Hemisphere. Some whales remain white even after growing up.

Life span is not clear although whales seem to reach over 100 years old.

Sperm whale



The sperm whale or cachalot is the largest of the toothed whales and the largest toothed predator. It is the only living member of the genus *Physeter* and one of three extant species in the sperm whale family, along with the pygmy sperm whale and dwarf sperm whale of the genus *Kogia*.

The sperm whale is a pelagic mammal with a worldwide range, and will migrate seasonally for feeding and breeding. Females and young males live together in groups, while mature males (bulls) live solitary lives outside of the mating season. The females cooperate to protect and nurse their young. Females give birth every four to twenty years, and care for the calves for more than a decade. A mature sperm whale has few natural predators, although calves and weakened adults are sometimes killed by pods of killer whales (orcas).

Mature males average 16 metres (52 ft) in length but some may reach 20.7 metres (68 ft), with the head representing up to one-third of the animal's length. Plunging to 2,250 metres (7,382 ft), it is the third deepest diving mammal, exceeded only by the southern elephant seal and Cuvier's beaked whale. The sperm whale uses echolocation and vocalization as loud as 230 decibels (re 1 μ Pa m) underwater. It has the largest brain on Earth, more than five times heavier than a human's. Sperm whales can live 70 years or more.

Bowhead whale



The bowhead whale is a species of baleen whale belonging to the family Balaenidae and the only living representative of the genus Balaena. It is the only baleen whale endemic to the Arctic and subarctic waters, and is named after its characteristic massive triangular skull, which it uses to break through Arctic ice. Other common names of the species are the Greenland right whale or Arctic whale. American whalers called them the steeple-top, polar whale, or Russia or Russian whale.

Bowheads have the largest mouth of any animal representing almost one-third of the length of the body, the longest baleen plates with a maximum length of 4 m and may be the longest-lived mammals, with the ability to reach an age of more than 200 years. The bowhead was an early whaling target. Its population was severely reduced before a 1966 moratorium was passed to protect the species. Of the five stocks of bowhead populations, three are listed as "endangered", one as "vulnerable", and one as "lower risk, conservation dependent" according to the IUCN Red List. The global population is assessed as of least concern.

The bowhead whale has a large, robust, dark-coloured body and a white chin/lower jaw. It has a massive triangular skull, which it uses to break through the Arctic ice to breathe. Inuit hunters have reported bowheads surfacing through 60 cm of ice. It also possesses a strongly bowed lower jaw and a narrow upper jaw. Its baleen is the longest of that of any whale, at 3 m, and is used to strain tiny prey from the water. The bowhead whale has paired blowholes, at the highest point of the head, which can spout a blow 6.1 m high.

Blue whale



The blue whale is a marine mammal belonging to the baleen whale suborder Mysticeti. Reaching a maximum confirmed length of 29.9 meters (98 feet) and weight of 173 tonnes (190 tons), it is the largest animal known to have ever existed. The blue whale's long and slender body can be various shades of grayish-blue dorsally and somewhat lighter underneath.

There are currently five subspecies of blue whale, recognized by the Society for Marine Mammalogy's Committee on Taxonomy: *B. m. musculus* in the North Atlantic and North Pacific, *B. m. intermedia* in the Southern Ocean, *B. m. breviceuda* (the pygmy blue whale) in the Indian Ocean and South Pacific Ocean, *B. m. indica* in the Northern Indian Ocean, and *B. m. unnamed* subsp. in the waters off Chile. The blue whale diet consists almost exclusively of euphausiids (krill).

The blue whale is the largest known animal. In the International Whaling Commission (IWC) whaling database, 88 individuals longer than 30 m were reported, including one up to 33.0 m, but problems with how the measurements were made suggest that measurements longer than 30.5 m are somewhat suspect. The Discovery Committee reported lengths up to 102 ft (31.1 m); however, the longest scientifically measured (e.g., from rostrum tip to tail notch) individual blue whale was 98 ft (29.9 m). Female blue whales are larger than males. Hydrodynamic models suggest that a blue whale could not exceed 108 ft (33 m) due to metabolic and energy constraints.

Humpback whale



The humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) is a species of baleen whale. It is one of the larger rorqual species, with adults ranging in length from 12–16 m (39–52 ft) and weighing around 25–30 t (28–33 short tons). The humpback has a distinctive body shape, with long pectoral fins and a knobbly head. It is known for breaching and other distinctive surface behaviors, making it popular with whale watchers. Males produce a complex song lasting 10 to 20 minutes, which they repeat for hours at a time. All the males in a group will produce the same song, which is different each season. Its purpose is not clear, though it may help induce estrus in females.

Found in oceans and seas around the world, humpback whales typically migrate up to 25,000 km (16,000 mi) each year. They feed in polar waters, and migrate to tropical or subtropical waters to breed and give birth, fasting and living off their fat reserves. Their diet consists mostly of krill and small fish. Humpbacks have a diverse repertoire of feeding methods, including the bubble net technique.

Like other large whales, the humpback was a target for the whaling industry. The species was once hunted to the brink of extinction; its population fell by an estimated 90% before a 1966 moratorium. While stocks have partially recovered to some 80,000 animals worldwide, entanglement in fishing gear, collisions with ships and noise pollution continue to affect the species.

Grey whale



The gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*), also known as the grey whale, gray back whale, Pacific gray whale, or California gray whale, is a baleen whale that migrates between feeding and breeding grounds yearly. It reaches a length of 14.9 meters (49 ft), a weight of up to 41 tonnes (90,000 lb) and lives between 55 and 70 years, although one female was estimated to be 75–80 years of age. The common name of the whale comes from the gray patches and white mottling on its dark skin. Gray whales were once called devil fish because of their fighting behavior when hunted. The gray whale is the sole living species in the genus *Eschrichtius*, which in turn is the sole living genus in the family *Eschrichtiidae*. This mammal is descended from filter-feeding whales that appeared at the beginning of the Oligocene, over 30 million years ago.

The gray whale is distributed in an eastern North Pacific (North American), and an endangered western North Pacific (Asian), population. North Atlantic populations were extirpated (perhaps by whaling) on the European coast before AD 500, and on the American coast around the late 17th to early 18th centuries. Even so, on May 8, 2010, a sighting of a gray whale was confirmed off the coast of Israel in the Mediterranean Sea, leading some scientists to think they might be repopulating old breeding grounds that have not been visited for centuries. In May and June 2013, a gray whale was sighted off the coast of Namibia – the first confirmed in the Southern Hemisphere. The round-trip journey of one gray whale has set a new record for the longest mammal migration, covering a distance of more than 22,000 kilometres across the Pacific Ocean. Her migration has shown new insight into how endangered species are making drastic changes in their life style.

Fin whale



The fin whale also known as finback whale or common rorqual and formerly known as herring whale or razorback whale, is a cetacean belonging to the parvorder of baleen whales. It is the second-largest species on Earth after the blue whale. The largest reportedly grow to 27.3 m long with a maximum confirmed length of 25.9 m (85 ft), a maximum recorded weight of nearly 74 tonnes (73 long tons; 82 short tons), and a maximum estimated weight of around 114 tonnes (112 long tons; 126 short tons). American naturalist Roy Chapman Andrews called the fin whale "the greyhound of the sea ... for its beautiful, slender body is built like a racing yacht and the animal can surpass the speed of the fastest ocean steamship."

The fin whale's body is long and slender, coloured brownish-grey with a paler underside. At least two recognized subspecies exist, in the North Atlantic and the Southern Hemisphere. It is found in all the major oceans, from polar to tropical waters. It is absent only from waters close to the pack ice at the poles and relatively small areas of water away from the open ocean. The highest population density occurs in temperate and cool waters. Its food consists of small schooling fish, squid, and crustaceans including copepods and krill.

Like all other large whales, the fin whale was heavily hunted during the 20th century. As a result, it is an endangered species. Over 725,000 fin whales were reportedly taken from the Southern Hemisphere between 1905 and 1976; as of 1997 only 38,000 survived. Recovery of the overall population size of southern subspecies is predicted to be at less than 50% of its pre-whaling state by 2100 due to heavier impacts of whaling and slower recovery rates.

Smooth whale



Orca



Killer whale



The killer whale, also known as an orca (*Orcinus orca*), is a toothed whale belonging to the oceanic dolphin family, of which it is the largest member. Killer whales have a diverse diet, although individual populations often specialize in particular types of prey. Some feed exclusively on fish, while others hunt marine mammals such as seals and other species of dolphin. They have been known to attack baleen whale calves, and even adult whales. Killer whales are apex predators, as no animal preys on them. A cosmopolitan species, they can be found in each of the world's oceans in a variety of marine environments, from Arctic and Antarctic regions to tropical seas, absent only from the Baltic and Black seas, and some areas of the Arctic Ocean.

Killer whales are highly social; some populations are composed of matrilineal family groups (pods) which are the most stable of any animal species. Their sophisticated hunting techniques and vocal behaviours, which are often specific to a particular group and passed across generations, have been described as manifestations of animal culture.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature assesses the orca's conservation status as data deficient because of the likelihood that two or more killer whale types are separate species. Some local populations are considered threatened or endangered due to prey depletion, habitat loss, pollution (by PCBs), capture for marine mammal parks, and conflicts with human fisheries. In late 2005, the southern resident killer whales, which swim in British Columbia and Washington state waters, were placed on the U.S. Endangered Species list.