Cetaceans 4th Grade Curriculum Lesson 3—Researching Individual Whale and Dolphin Species[1]

Maia Patterson McGuire and Ruth Francis-Floyd[2]

Description

Students will play a modified game of bingo to learn about individual cetacean species.

Objectives

By the conclusion of these activities, students will:

- Be able to recognize some common cetacean species
- Be able to list a characteristic (biology or natural history) of at least one of these animals

What You Will Need

- Copies of cetacean fact sheets (one copy of each fact sheet)
- Bingo cards (pages 3-2 to 3-32; one per student) and bingo markers (you could use small foam pieces or paper cutouts—anything that the students can use to cover the squares on their bingo sheets. If bingo sheets are laminated, dry erase or washable markers could be used. A sheet of "bingo chips" is provided on page 3-32; this can be copied and given to students to cut out and use to cover the squares on their bingo cards)
- Bingo call sheet (pages 3-33 to 3-34)
- Optional: PowerPoint bingo presentation (there are two versions, corresponding to call sheets 1 and 2) and ability to project this (these can be downloaded from https://www.flseagrant.org/education/cetaceans/)

Standards

Florida Sunshine State Standards

Language Arts

- **LAFS.4.RI.1.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Strategy

1. Give each student one of the cetacean fact sheets. If there are fewer than 16 students or groups, some students/groups should receive two fact sheets so all fact sheets are distributed. If there are more than 16 students, you can either group the students or make additional copies of fact sheets.
2. Give each student one of the bingo cards (and one of the bingo chip sheets on page 3-32, if needed). If bingo chip sheets are used, give students time to cut out the squares before starting the game.
3. Explain that the class will be playing a game of bingo, but with a twist. Instead of the caller (the teacher) simply calling out the name of a whale or dolphin, sometimes they will be calling out a clue. The students will need to read their fact sheets to see if the clue matches the whale or dolphin on their fact sheet. If it does, they need to raise their hand and tell the class the name of their whale or dolphin. At that time, students who have that animal on their bingo cards can cover it.
4. The bingo cards have some cetaceans listed for which there are no fact sheets. The teacher will simply call the name of those animals, rather than a clue.
5. Explain that the first objective is to get five whales lined up in a row. Once someone has five in a row (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally), they should call out, "Bingo." You will then continue the game until someone has their entire card covered (all 16 spaces.) Alternately, you can play until each person has achieved a bingo.
6. There is a printed and a PowerPoint version of the bingo call sheet(s). It may be best to use the provided PowerPoint presentation(s) to allow the students to see the information that is being read as well as a picture of the cetacean. Use the clues until someone calls out, "Bingo." Once someone calls, "Bingo," check the whales that they have covered. Remind everyone not to clear their cards yet and continue with the clues until someone has achieved the next bingo.
7. Note that there are 30 unique bingo cards for this activity and two unique "call lists" in case the class wishes to repeat the game (or if the teacher wants to offer to repeat it as a reward for the class later in the school year)!

Cetacean Bingo

Card 1.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Sei whale	Common dolphin	Pygmy sperm whale	Orca/killer whale	False killer whale
Northern right whale dolphin	Beluga whale	Minke whale	Bowhead whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin
Short-finned pilot whale	Blue whale	FREE	Humpback whale	Bryde's whale
Spinner dolphin	North Atlantic right whale	Bottlenose dolphin	Gray whale	Sperm whale
Cuvier's beaked whale	Harbor porpoise	Fin whale	Chinese river dolphin	Risso's dolphin

Card 2.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Narwhal	Spinner dolphin	Orca/killer whale	Northern bottlenose whale	Sei whale
Bottlenose dolphin	Risso's dolphin	North Atlantic right whale	Vaquita	Pygmy sperm whale
Dwarf sperm whale	Fin whale	FREE	Sperm whale	Minke whale
Beluga whale	Humpback whale	False killer whale	Bryde's whale	Common dolphin
Gray whale	Short-finned pilot whale	Bowhead whale	Chinese river dolphin	Northern right whale dolphin

Card 3.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Northern right whale dolphin	Sperm whale	Bowhead whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin	North Atlantic right whale
Pygmy sperm whale	Minke whale	Narwhal	Beluga whale	Common dolphin
Bottlenose dolphin	Orca/killer whale	FREE	Chinese river dolphin	Bryde's whale
Atlantic spotted dolphin	Vaquita	Risso's dolphin	Sei whale	Fin whale
Dwarf sperm whale	Rough-toothed dolphin	False killer whale	Spinner dolphin	Short-finned pilot whale

Card 4.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Bowhead whale	Gray whale	Orca/killer whale	False killer whale	Harbor porpoise
Short-finned pilot whale	Sei whale	Dwarf sperm whale	Chinese river dolphin	Common dolphin
Northern bottlenose whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin	FREE	Sperm whale	Rough-toothed dolphin
Fin whale	North Atlantic right whale	Northern right whale dolphin	Narwhal	Blue whale
Vaquita	Bottlenose dolphin	Spinner dolphin	Pygmy sperm whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin

Card 5.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Rough-toothed dolphin	Gray whale	Short-finned pilot whale	Blue whale	Orca/killer whale
False killer whale	Spinner dolphin	Sperm whale	Cuvier's beaked whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin
Chinese river dolphin	Narwhal	FREE	Harbor porpoise	Fin whale
Common dolphin	North Atlantic right whale	Bottlenose dolphin	Beluga whale	Pygmy sperm whale
Dwarf sperm whale	Risso's dolphin	Humpback whale	Minke whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin

Card 6.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Fin whale	False killer whale	Pygmy sperm whale	Orca/killer whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin
Sei whale	Blue whale	Rough-toothed dolphin	Northern bottlenose whale	Common dolphin
Bottlenose dolphin	Beluga whale	FREE	Northern right whale dolphin	Pacific white-sided dolphin
Risso's dolphin	Dwarf sperm whale	Vaquita	North Atlantic right whale	Minke whale
Sperm whale	Narwhal	Gray whale	Cuvier's beaked whale	Humpback whale

Card 7.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Bryde's whale	Bottlenose dolphin	Blue whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin	Dwarf sperm whale
Narwhal	Pygmy sperm whale	Cuvier's beaked whale	Orca/killer whale	Rough-toothed dolphin
Bowhead whale	Northern right whale dolphin	FREE	Sei whale	Vaquita
Chinese river dolphin	Common dolphin	Short-finned pilot whale	Fin whale	Spinner dolphin
Gray whale	Beluga whale	Minke whale	Northern bottlenose whale	Harbor porpoise

Card 8.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Humpback whale	Sperm whale	Sei whale	Risso's dolphin	Spinner dolphin
Beluga whale	Fin whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin	Vaquita	Common dolphin
Blue whale	North Atlantic right whale	FREE	Rough-toothed dolphin	Bottlenose dolphin
False killer whale	Bowhead whale	Chinese river dolphin	Cuvier's beaked whale	Minke whale
Pygmy sperm whale	Gray whale	Short-finned pilot whale	Orca/killer whale	Dwarf sperm whale

Card 9.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Vaquita	False killer whale	Spinner dolphin	Orca/killer whale	Blue whale
Rough-toothed dolphin	Pygmy sperm whale	Sei whale	Risso's dolphin	Cuvier's beaked whale
Short-finned pilot whale	Humpback whale	FREE	Northern bottlenose whale	Dwarf sperm whale
Bryde's whale	North Atlantic right whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin	Chinese river dolphin	Fin whale
Common dolphin	Atlantic spotted dolphin	Beluga whale	Gray whale	Minke whale

Card 10.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Sei whale	Chinese river dolphin	Short-finned pilot whale	Spinner dolphin	Bowhead whale
Beluga whale	Risso's dolphin	Fin whale	Common dolphin	Northern bottlenose whale
Pacific white-sided dolphin	Bryde's whale	FREE	Cuvier's beaked whale	Vaquita
Pygmy sperm whale	North Atlantic right whale	Rough-toothed dolphin	Sperm whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin
Humpback whale	False killer whale	Northern right whale dolphin	Narwhal	Gray whale

Card 11.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Atlantic spotted dolphin	Short-finned pilot whale	North Atlantic right whale	Sperm whale	Humpback whale
Minke whale	Beluga whale	Vaquita	Orca/killer whale	Bottlenose dolphin
Dwarf sperm whale	Spinner dolphin	FREE	Fin whale	Harbor porpoise
Rough-toothed dolphin	Common dolphin	Bowhead whale	False killer whale	Northern right whale dolphin
Northern bottlenose whale	Blue whale	Bryde's whale	Gray whale	Pygmy sperm whale

Card 12.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Rough-toothed dolphin	Gray whale	Spinner dolphin	Minke whale	False killer whale
Pacific white-sided dolphin	Beluga whale	Northern right whale dolphin	Risso's dolphin	Atlantic spotted dolphin
Humpback whale	Cuvier's beaked whale	FREE	Vaquita	Short-finned pilot whale
Bottlenose dolphin	Northern bottlenose whale	Pygmy sperm whale	Blue whale	Bryde's whale
Chinese river dolphin	Dwarf sperm whale	North Atlantic right whale	Orca/killer whale	Sei whale

Card 13.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Vaquita	Beluga whale	Orca/killer whale	North Atlantic right whale	Pygmy sperm whale
Harbor porpoise	Cuvier's beaked whale	Gray whale	False killer whale	Northern bottlenose whale
Short-finned pilot whale	Bottlenose dolphin	FREE	Risso's dolphin	Sperm whale
Humpback whale	Minke whale	Fin whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin	False killer whale
Bryde's whale	Common dolphin	Rough-toothed dolphin	Northern right whale dolphin	Pacific white-sided dolphin

Card 14.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Gray whale	Bottlenose dolphin	Common dolphin	Dwarf sperm whale	False killer whale
Minke whale	Fin whale	Sei whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin	Pygmy sperm whale
Bryde's whale	Bowhead whale	FREE	Vaquita	Short-finned pilot whale
Blue whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin	Sperm whale	Northern bottlenose whale	Harbor porpoise
Rough-toothed dolphin	Chinese river dolphin	Narwhal	North Atlantic right whale	Beluga whale

Card 15.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Risso's dolphin	Spinner dolphin	Gray whale	Bryde's whale	Rough-toothed dolphin
Fin whale	Northern bottlenose whale	Vaquita	Common dolphin	Atlantic spotted dolphin
Pacific white-sided dolphin	Northern right whale dolphin	FREE	Short-finned pilot whale	Narwhal
Bowhead whale	Sperm whale	Blue whale	Bottlenose dolphin	False killer whale
Sei whale	Dwarf sperm whale	Pygmy sperm whale	Cuvier's beaked whale	North Atlantic right whale

Card 16.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Spinner dolphin	Sperm whale	Harbor porpoise	Sei whale	Vaquita
North Atlantic right whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin	Northern bottlenose whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin	Fin whale
Risso's dolphin	Chinese river dolphin	FREE	Minke whale	Cuvier's beaked whale
Humpback whale	Narwhal	Bottlenose dolphin	False killer whale	Blue whale
Gray whale	Orca/killer whale	Short-finned pilot whale	Beluga whale	Northern right whale dolphin

Card 17.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Atlantic spotted dolphin	North Atlantic right whale	Beluga whale	Humpback whale	Blue whale
Northern bottlenose whale	Harbor porpoise	Bottlenose dolphin	Pygmy sperm whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin
Common dolphin	False killer whale	FREE	Bowhead whale	Vaquita
Rough-toothed dolphin	Orca/killer whale	Bryde's whale	Short-finned pilot whale	Dwarf sperm whale
Fin whale	Risso's dolphin	Minke whale	Sei whale	Northern right whale dolphin

Card 18.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Minke whale	Sei whale	Bottlenose dolphin	Harbor porpoise	Fin whale
Narwhal	Cuvier's beaked whale	Chinese river dolphin	Pacific white-sided dolphin	False killer whale
Orca/killer whale	Bryde's whale	FREE	Risso's dolphin	Short-finned pilot whale
Sperm whale	Bowhead whale	Rough-toothed dolphin	North Atlantic right whale	Pygmy sperm whale
Gray whale	Blue whale	Spinner dolphin	Vaquita	Humpback whale

Card 19.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Risso's dolphin	Northern right whale dolphin	Bowhead whale	Chinese river dolphin	Sperm whale
Vaquita	North Atlantic right whale	Bottlenose dolphin	Atlantic spotted dolphin	Bryde's whale
Blue whale	Harbor porpoise	FREE	Pygmy sperm whale	Fin whale
Narwhal	Spinner dolphin	Cuvier's beaked whale	Orca/killer whale	Northern bottlenose whale
Dwarf sperm whale	Humpback whale	Rough-toothed dolphin	Short-finned pilot whale	Minke whale

Card 20.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Bottlenose dolphin	Narwhal	North Atlantic right whale	Vaquita	Orca/killer whale
Risso's dolphin	Northern bottlenose whale	Dwarf sperm whale	Chinese river dolphin	Blue whale
Short-finned pilot whale	Harbor porpoise	FREE	Humpback whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin
Gray whale	False killer whale	Fin whale	Northern right whale dolphin	Rough-toothed dolphin
Sperm whale	Spinner dolphin	Cuvier's beaked whale	Beluga whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin

Card 21.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Fin whale	Northern right whale dolphin	Blue whale	Minke whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin
Northern bottlenose whale	Short-finned pilot whale	North Atlantic right whale	Sperm whale	Sei whale
Cuvier's beaked whale	Pygmy sperm whale	FREE	Bryde's whale	Common dolphin
False killer whale	Gray whale	Risso's dolphin	Orca/killer whale	Beluga whale
Spinner dolphin	Harbor porpoise	Pacific white-sided dolphin	Bowhead whale	Narwhal

Card 22.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Sperm whale	Cuvier's beaked whale	Short-finned pilot whale	Common dolphin	Minke whale
False killer whale	Chinese river dolphin	Northern right whale dolphin	Bowhead whale	Beluga whale
Orca/killer whale	North Atlantic right whale	FREE	Northern bottlenose whale	Fin whale
Gray whale	Humpback whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin	Bottlenose dolphin	Dwarf sperm whale
Blue whale	Harbor porpoise	Pygmy sperm whale	Spinner dolphin	Sei whale

Card 23.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Bowhead whale	Narwhal	Orca/killer whale	False killer whale	Blue whale
Short-finned pilot whale	Common dolphin	Bottlenose dolphin	Sperm whale	Blue whale
Humpback whale	Sei whale	FREE	North Atlantic right whale	Beluga whale
Northern right whale dolphin	Northern bottlenose whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin	Chinese river dolphin	Fin whale
Minke whale	Vaquita	Gray whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin	Bryde's whale

Card 24.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Dwarf sperm whale	Blue whale	Cuvier's beaked whale	Fin whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin
False killer whale	Sei whale	Northern bottlenose whale	Common dolphin	Beluga whale
Spinner dolphin	Gray whale	FREE	Pygmy sperm whale	Harbor porpoise
Short-finned pilot whale	Bottlenose dolphin	Bowhead whale	Risso's dolphin	Rough-toothed dolphin
Chinese river dolphin	Humpback whale	Northern right whale dolphin	Minke whale	Bryde's whale

Card 25.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Common dolphin	Gray whale	Sperm whale	Minke whale	False killer whale
Dwarf sperm whale	Short-finned pilot whale	Northern bottlenose whale	Spinner dolphin	Chinese river dolphin
Northern right whale dolphin	North Atlantic right whale	FREE	Bowhead whale	Vaquita
Pacific white-sided dolphin	Humpback whale	Beluga whale	Bottlenose dolphin	Risso's dolphin
Atlantic spotted dolphin	Bryde's whale	Rough-toothed dolphin	Cuvier's beaked whale	Fin whale

Card 26.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Pygmy sperm whale	Gray whale	Minke whale	Bryde's whale	Sei whale
Atlantic spotted dolphin	Rough-toothed dolphin	Bowhead whale	Chinese river dolphin	Beluga whale
North Atlantic right whale	Fin whale	FREE	Blue whale	Sperm whale
Harbor porpoise	Humpback whale	Vaquita	Narwhal	Short-finned pilot whale
Dwarf sperm whale	Bottlenose dolphin	False killer whale	Northern right whale dolphin	Spinner dolphin

Card 27.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Blue whale	Sei whale	Fin whale	Dwarf sperm whale	Narwhal
Northern bottlenose dolphin	Northern right whale dolphin	Bowhead whale	Rough-toothed dolphin	Spinner dolphin
North Atlantic right whale	Beluga whale	FREE	Minke whale	Harbor porpoise
Common dolphin	Cuvier's beaked whale	Pygmy sperm whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin	Bryde's whale
Humpback whale	Chinese river dolphin	Short-finned pilot whale	Risso's dolphin	Orca/killer whale

Card 28.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Risso's dolphin	Dwarf sperm whale	Blue whale	Sperm whale	Bottlenose dolphin
Rough-toothed dolphin	Narwhal	Fin whale	Common dolphin	Atlantic spotted dolphin
Cuvier's beaked whale	False killer whale	FREE	North Atlantic right whale	Northern right whale dolphin
Short-finned pilot whale	Sei whale	Bowhead whale	Chinese river dolphin	Beluga whale
Vaquita	Spinner dolphin	Humpback whale	Pygmy sperm whale	Pacific white-sided dolphin

Card 29.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Harbor porpoise	Sei whale	Cuvier's beaked whale	Fin whale	Rough-toothed dolphin
Chinese river dolphin	Short-finned pilot whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin	Dwarf sperm whale	False killer whale
Bowhead whale	Gray whale	FREE	Common dolphin	Sperm whale
Risso's dolphin	Beluga whale	Spinner dolphin	Bottlenose dolphin	Orca/killer whale
Pacific white-sided dolphin	Northern bottlenose whale	Northern right whale dolphin	Minke whale	Pygmy sperm whale

Card 30.

CETACEAN BINGO				
Harbor porpoise	Sei whale	Cuvier's beaked whale	Fin whale	Rough-toothed dolphin
Chinese river dolphin	Short-finned pilot whale	Atlantic spotted dolphin	Dwarf sperm whale	False killer whale
Bowhead whale	Gray whale	FREE	Common dolphin	Sperm whale
Risso's dolphin	Beluga whale	Spinner dolphin	Bottlenose dolphin	Orca/killer whale
Pacific white-sided dolphin	Northern bottlenose whale	Northern right whale dolphin	Minke whale	Pygmy sperm whale

BINGO CHIPS (cut out and use to cover spaces on your card)				
				
				
				
				
				

Call List for Cetacean Bingo Game

List 1

1. This whale has one of the longest known migrations of any mammal, traveling about 10,000 miles. [Answer: Gray whale]
2. Dwarf sperm whale
3. This whale comes to warm Florida waters to have its babies (calves) every winter. It can sometimes be seen from the beaches of northeast Florida. [Answer: North Atlantic right whale]
4. This small mysticete only grows to about 30 feet long and is found in all oceans. It is not currently endangered but is protected in US waters by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. [Answer: Minke (*MIN-key*) whale]
5. Individual whales of this species can be identified by the white markings on their flippers and on the underside of their tail flukes. [Answer: Humpback whale]
6. Northern bottlenose whale
7. Harbor porpoise
8. Vaquita (*vah-KEY-tah*)
9. Northern right whale dolphin
10. This unusual odontocete hunts squid and octopus. It has grooves in its throat to help suck in prey. [Answer: Cuvier's (*COO-vee-yays*) beaked whale]
11. Until about 1965, whalers killed up to 30,000 of these endangered mysticetes each year. These whales are now protected, but there is a small amount of tribal hunting in Greenland. [Answer: Fin whale]
12. These small odontocetes have long, slender snouts and are easily recognized because they jump out of the water and spin their bodies around several times before re-entering the water. [Answer: Spinner dolphin]
13. Atlantic spotted dolphin
14. This whale is the biggest animal that has ever lived. It is larger than the largest dinosaur. [Answer: Blue whale]
15. This whale is born dark gray but becomes snowy white as it matures, so it is often called "the white whale." [Answer: Beluga (*buh-LOO-guh*) whale]
16. This whale has a bracket-shaped marking behind its eye, which looks like the gill of a fish. [Answer: Pygmy sperm whale]
17. This dolphin is commonly seen throughout the coastal waters of Florida. It is important to remember that feeding this dolphin can be harmful to the animal and is illegal. [Answer: Bottlenose dolphin]
18. Bowhead whale
19. Pacific white-sided dolphin
20. This rare dolphin species may be extinct. A live animal has not been seen since 2002. [Answer: Chinese river dolphin]
21. Risso's (*RIH-z-ohs*) dolphin
22. Males of this species grow a single elongated tusk that may be many feet long. This structure is thought to be the basis of the mythical unicorn horn. [Answer: Narwhal (*NAR-wull*)]
23. This large odontocete is easily recognizable due to its large, bulbous melon head. Its body is black or dark brown, and it has a large gray "saddle" behind the dorsal fin. [Answer: Short-finned pilot whale]
24. This whale is the largest of the odontocetes. [Answer: Sperm whale]
25. Common dolphin
26. Bryde's (*BROO-duss*) whale
27. This whale was given its name because it has been known to kill other whales and even great white sharks. [Answer: Orca/killer whale]
28. Rough-toothed dolphin
29. False killer whale
30. Sei (*SAY* or *SIGH*) whale

List 2

1. These dolphins are commonly found in zoos and aquaria. One female has lived in an aquarium at Marineland, Florida, for more than 58 years. [Answer: Bottlenose dolphin]
2. Northern right whale dolphin
3. Sei (*SAY* or *SIGH*) whale
4. These whales can be recognized by the big white growths (callosities) on their heads. Unique patterns of callosities are used to identify individual animals. [Answer: North Atlantic right whale]
5. Atlantic spotted dolphin
6. Males of this whale species have two small teeth that stick out of the lower jaw, which they use for fighting. [Answer: Cuvier's (*COO-vee-yays*) beaked whale]
7. This whale is famous for its songs. Males repeatedly sing 10- to 20-minute songs for hours on end. Individual whales can be identified by their unique songs. [Answer: Humpback whale]
8. Bryde's (*BROO-duss*) whale
9. Calves of this whale species can gain weight at a rate of 10 pounds per hour. [Answer: Blue whale]
10. Rough-toothed dolphin
11. This whale's tongue is half yellow or white and half mottled black. [Answer: Fin whale]
12. These mysticetes are fast swimmers; they can swim up to 21 miles per hour. [Answer: Minke (*MIN-key*) whale]
13. Northern bottlenose whale
14. Common dolphin
15. These whales have white barnacles on their heads, and may also have orange crab-like animals called cyamids on their bodies. [Answer: Gray whale]
16. Risso's (*RIH-z-ohs*) dolphin
17. Vaquita (*vah-KEY-tah*)
18. This whale is the same type as the famous Moby Dick. Adult males have been documented occasionally striking boats for unknown reasons, causing very severe damage. [Answer: Sperm whale]
19. False killer whale
20. Pacific white-sided dolphin

21. Historically, this dolphin inhabited the Yangtze River in China. Sadly, it is now believed to be extinct. [Answer: Chinese river dolphin]
22. This whale is severely threatened by climate change. As more Arctic ice melts, ship traffic in its home range increases. This whale is at a greater risk of being hit by ships. [Answer: Narwhal (*NAR-wull*)]
23. Harbor porpoise
24. Bowhead whale
25. This small-toothed whale usually travels in large groups of 20 to 90 animals. These whales are involved in "mass stranding" events along the Florida coastline every few years. Some of these stranding events may involve more than 100 animals coming onshore at the same time. [Answer: Short-finned pilot whale]
26. A few of these whales are kept in captivity. Some of these have lived in Florida for more than 40 years. [Orca/killer whale; Bottlenose dolphin could be another correct answer, but you have already called a clue for bottlenose dolphins.]
27. Dwarf sperm whale
28. This is the only whale that has a flexible neck and the ability to move its head up and down, and side to side. Scientists believe this ability helps it to hunt for prey on the bottom in shallow areas. [Answer: Beluga (*buh-LOO-guh*) whale]
29. When startled or frightened, this whale can release large amounts of reddish-brown liquid, or "ink," to confuse predators. [Answer: Pygmy sperm whale]
30. These dolphins travel in very large groups, sometimes up to several thousand animals. They can be seen jumping out of the water and spinning over and over again. [Answer: Spinner dolphin]

Cetacean Fact Sheets

These fact sheets were developed for use with lessons in the *Cetaceans 4th Grade Curriculum*, using the most current data available at the time (2013). However, as research continues on these animals, the data in these fact sheets may become outdated. Teachers should check the NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources website (https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/about/office-protected-resources) for the most current information. Additional information was obtained from fact sheets on the American Cetacean Society website (https://www.acsonline.org/fact-sheets) and the following scientific journal articles:

Garde, E., M. P. Heide-Jørgensen, S. H. Hansen, G. Nachman, and M. C. Forchhammer. 2007. "Age-specific growth and remarkable longevity in narwhals (*Monodon monoceros*) from West Greenland as estimated by aspartic acid racemization." *Journal of Mammalogy* 88(1): 49–58. https://doi.org/10.1644/06-MAMM-A-056R.1

Ponganis, P. J. 2011. "Diving mammals." *Comprehensive Physiology* 1: 517–535. doi: 10.1002/cphy.c091003

Stewart, R. E. A., S. E. Campana, C. M. Jones, and B. E. Stewart. 2006. "Bomb radiocarbon dating calibrates beluga (*Delphinapterus leucas*) age estimates." *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 84: 1840–1852.

Photo/Image Sources

See individual images for credits. Whale illustrations by Garth Mix were provided by NOAA Fisheries. Thanks to Jonathan Shannon (NOAA Fisheries) for providing several photographs for these fact sheets.

Beluga Whale (Pronounced: buh-LOO-guh)



Figure 2. Beluga whale.
Credit: Greg Hume

Common Name: Beluga whale

Scientific Name: *Delphinapterus leucas*

Type of Whale: Toothed (odontocete)

Maximum Length: 16 feet (5 meters)

Maximum Weight: 3,300 pounds (1,500 kilograms)

How long can they live? Up to 79 years*. (*Beluga age estimates are obtained by counting growth lines in their teeth. Research published in 2006 by Stewart et al. showed that previous estimates of two growth lines per year were incorrect, and belugas actually have one growth line per year. Many sources quote the lifespan of belugas as 30 to 50 years, but those estimates are based on the assumption of two growth lines per year. The 2006 paper estimates a lifespan of 77 to 79 years for belugas.)

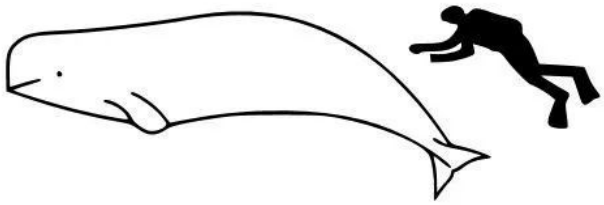

Figure 3. Beluga whale/human size comparison.
Credit: Chris_huh

Where do they live? Belugas live in the cold, polar arctic and subarctic areas near Alaska, Canada, and Russia. They can be seen swimming near icebergs when water temperatures are near freezing. Beluga whales can move from the ocean into rivers. Most marine cetaceans cannot survive for very long in fresh water. Belugas prefer very shallow coastal waters to the open ocean.

Special Characteristics: Belugas are also called white whales. Calves are dark gray when born. The gray color fades over time; the whales become snow white when mature. Belugas do not have a dorsal (back) fin.

What type of prey do they eat? Many types of fish, but they also eat shellfish (clams and mussels), shrimp, squid, octopus, and even crabs.

What type of predator might eat them? Killer whales and polar bears both will eat belugas. Belugas can be trapped by ice, making it easier for a polar bear to get them. Belugas that are trapped by ice can also suffocate.

What are the human threats? Humans have hunted beluga whales for their thick skin, which has been used for leather. Shipping, oil and gas production and transport, commercial fishing gear, pollution, habitat destruction, and noise are all threats to belugas.

Are they endangered? Although global estimates of beluga whales exceed 60,000 animals, there is one subpopulation that is considered highly endangered. The belugas of Cook Inlet have had their population reduced, and only about 280 animals are believed to remain there. All cetaceans are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Fun Facts: Belugas are the only cetaceans that can move their necks. The neck vertebrae of most whales are fused (joined together), but this is not the case for belugas. Scientists think the belugas' ability to move their necks may help them hunt for prey in very shallow water. Belugas are also called "canaries of the sea" because of the sounds they make. Unlike other whales and dolphins, belugas' melons move visibly when they are singing. As much as 40% of a beluga whale's weight is blubber!

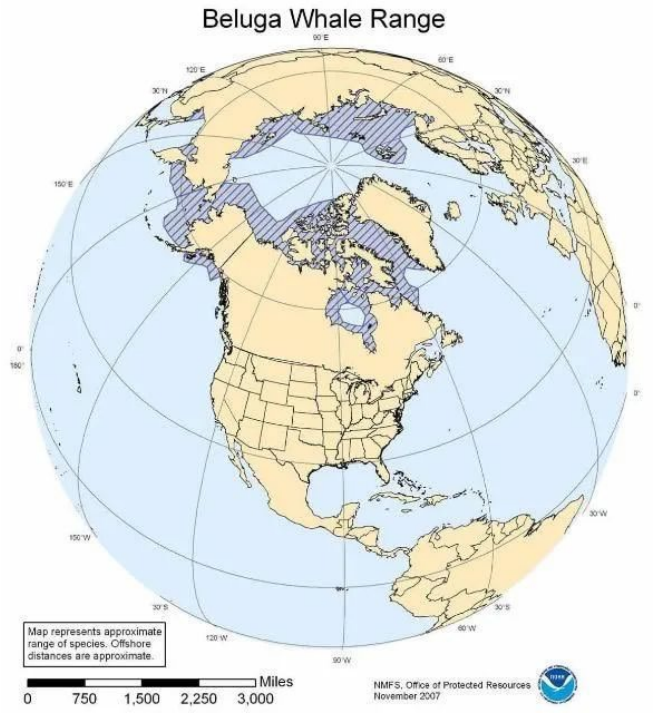

Figure 4. Beluga whale range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Blue Whale



Figure 5. Blue whale
Credit: NOAA Fisheries

Common Name: Blue whale

Scientific Name: *Balaenoptera musculus*

Type of Whale: Baleen (mysticete)

Maximum Length: A blue whale 108 feet (33 meters) long was reported in waters near Antarctica. Whales in the North Atlantic and North Pacific Oceans reach about 88 feet (27 meters) in length.

Maximum Weight: 330,000 pounds (150,000 kilograms)



Figure 6. Blue whale/human size comparison.
Credit: Garth Mix and Chris_huh

How long can they live? At least 40 years, but possibly up to 90 years.

Where do they live? Blue whales can be found anywhere in the ocean; however, most sightings occur in colder waters.

Special Characteristics: Blue whales have long, slender bodies. They are mottled gray, but they appear blue when seen through the water. Their heads look wide and flat when viewed from above.

What type of prey do they eat? Krill (shrimp-like animals that are about the size of a jelly bean).

What type of predator might eat them? Killer whales have been documented attacking a blue whale off the coast of Baja California. Many blue whales in the Pacific seem to have scars that suggest attacks by killer whales. In the North Atlantic, blue whales have also been hurt or killed after accidentally getting trapped in ice.

What are the human threats? Ship strikes and entanglement in commercial fishing gear are the main threats to blue whales. Noise and disturbance by whale watching boats are also possible threats.

Are they endangered? Yes. Blue whales are considered endangered throughout their range. Population estimates range from about 4,000 to 6,000 animals worldwide.

Fun Facts: Blue whale calves may grow 2 inches (5 centimeters) a day and gain 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms) in an hour. Blue whales are the largest animals to ever live, bigger than even the biggest dinosaur. Blue whales can hold their breath for up to 50 minutes and can dive to depths of 330 feet (100 meters).

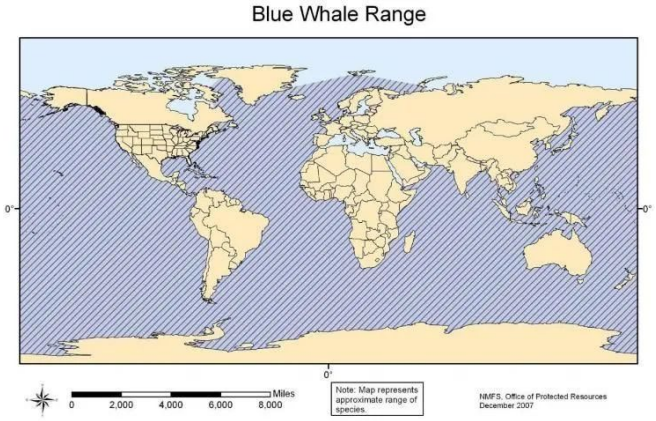

Figure 7. Blue whale range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Humpback Whale



Figure 8. Humpback whale.
Credit: NOAA

Common Name: Humpback whale

Scientific Name: *Megaptera novaeangliae*

Type of Whale: Baleen (mysticete)

Maximum Length: 48 feet (14.6 meters)

Maximum Weight: 80,000 pounds (36,287 kilograms)



Figure 9. Credit: Garth Mix and Chris_huh

How long can they live? Scientists estimate humpbacks can live 40 to 50 years.

Where do they live? Humpback whales can be found in every ocean. Most humpback populations migrate to cold temperate waters during the summer to feed and move to warm tropical waters in the winter for breeding and calving.

Special Characteristics: Humpback whales can be easily recognized by their very large white flippers.

What type of prey do they eat? Krill (small, shrimp-like animals) and very small fish.

What type of predator might eat them? Orcas (killer whales).

What are the human threats? Historically, humans were the humpback's most significant predator. Whalers hunted them heavily until the whales were protected in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, main threats include entanglement in fishing gear, ship strikes, and harassment by whale watching boats. Some nations are also proposing to start hunting them again.

Are they endangered? Yes, humpbacks are considered endangered throughout their range.

Fun Facts: Humpback whales are famous for their unique singing behavior. Adult male humpback whales sing songs that last an average of 10 to 20 minutes. They will repeat the same song over and over for many hours. Different populations of whales can be identified by their unique songs. The purpose of the singing behavior is not understood, but some scientists think it may have to do with mating behavior. Individual humpback whales can be identified by the pattern of white markings on the underside of the tail fluke. Humpback whales can hold their breath for up to 20 minutes and can dive to depths of up to 500 feet (150 meters).

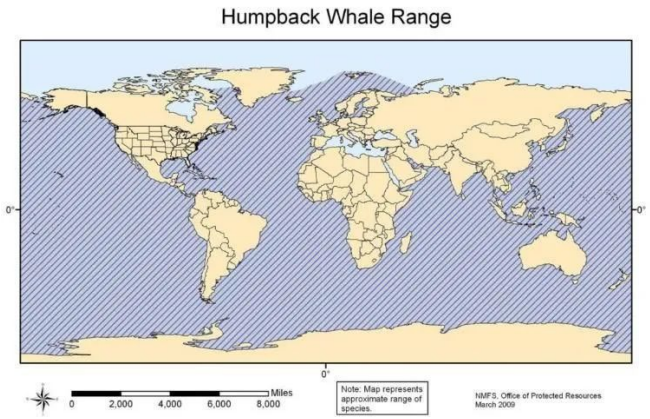

Figure 10. Humpback whale range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Orca/Killer Whale



Figure 11. Orca/killer whale.
Credit: NOAA AFSC

Common Name: Orca or Killer whale

Scientific Name: *Orcinus orca*

Type of Whale: Toothed (odontocete)

Maximum Length: 30 feet (9 meters)

Maximum Weight: 12,000 pounds (5,600 kilograms)



Figure 12. Orca (killer whale)/human size comparison.
Credit: Garth Mix and Chris_huh

How long can they live? Males: up to 60 years. Females: up to 90 years.

Where do they live? Killer whales are found in every ocean, but they prefer colder waters. They are usually found in northern temperate waters within 500 miles (800 kilometers) of shore.

Special Characteristics: Killer whales have distinctive black and white coloration. They have gray or white patches behind their dorsal fins. These patches are called saddles.

What type of prey do they eat? Fish (they love salmon) or other marine mammals, including seals and very large whales.

What type of predator might eat them? In rare instances, great white sharks may be able to take a killer whale. However, wildlife filmmakers have recently shown killer whales attacking and killing a large great white shark.

What are the human threats? Main threats include contaminants in the water (e.g., pesticides), human overfishing of the whales' prey items, ship collisions, and oil spills. Other threats may include noise, entanglement in fishing gear, and harassment by whale watching boats.

Are they endangered? One small population of killer whales living near Puget Sound, Washington, is considered endangered. All other killer whales, like all cetaceans, are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Fun Facts: There are three kinds, or ecotypes, of killer whales: **Resident**, **Transient**, and **Offshore**. The **Resident** killer whales tend to live in coastal waters and eat fish. These whales love to eat salmon when the fish return to the rivers to spawn. The **Transient** whales hunt in the open sea and eat other marine mammals. These are the only whales that are capable of hunting in packs, and for this reason, they have been called "the wolves of the sea." By hunting as a team, they are able to kill and eat much larger whales. The **Offshore** killer whales are not well understood, but scientists think that these whales are also fish eaters. Killer whales can hold their breath for up to 15 minutes and can dive to depths of 825 feet (250 meters).

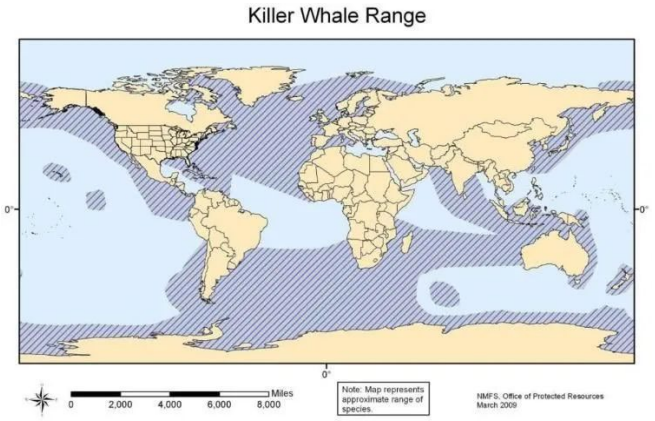

Figure 13. Killer whale range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

North Atlantic Right Whale



Figure 14. North Atlantic right whale.
Credit: NOAA

Common Name: North Atlantic right whale

Scientific Name: *Eubalaena glacialis*

Type of Whale: Baleen (mysticete)

Maximum Length: 55 feet (16.7 meters)

Maximum Weight: 140,000 pounds (63,500 kilograms)



Figure 15. North Atlantic right whale/human size comparison.
Credit: Garth Mix and Chris_huh

How long can they live? We have very little data on the lifespan of these whales, but scientists estimate they may live up to 50 years.

Where do they live? The North Atlantic right whale lives along the Atlantic coast of North America. Females and young animals swim to waters off the coasts of Georgia and Florida during the winter. However, it is not clear where the adult males go in the winter. Right whales travel to the Bay of Fundy to feed during the summer months.

Special Characteristics: Right whales develop big white growths called callosities on their heads. The pattern of callosities is unique to each animal, and these patterns are used to recognize specific individuals. A catalog of these animals is maintained. Almost every North Atlantic right whale is recognizable as an individual.

What type of prey do they eat? Zooplankton (very tiny animals that live in the planktonic soup). Many types of zooplankton are larval fish or very tiny, shrimp-like animals.

What type of predator might eat them? Sharks will feed on carcasses of North Atlantic right whales. It seems doubtful that they could eat a healthy adult. However, calves may be at risk, especially if they are sick or injured.

What are the human threats? Ship collisions and entanglement in fishing gear are the major threats to North Atlantic right whales. Noise may also affect these whales.

Are they endangered? Yes. These whales are critically endangered. There may be as few as 340 left.

Fun Facts: Right whales are called "right whales" because they were the "right" whale to hunt. They move slowly and are often found close to shore. When killed, the carcass would float rather than sink, making it much easier to harvest from small boats.

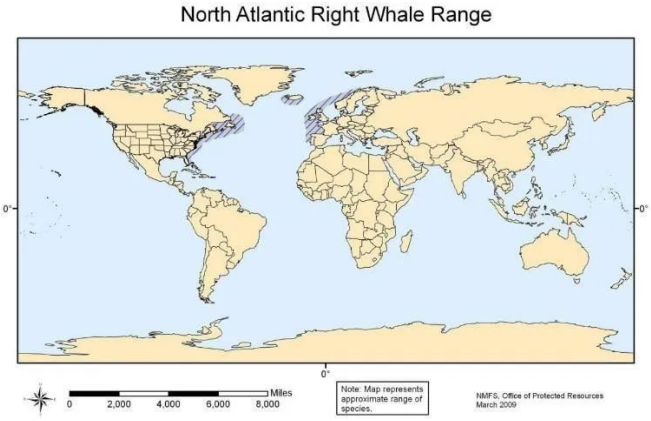

Figure 16. North Atlantic right whale range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Bottlenose Dolphin



Figure 17. Bottlenose dolphin.
Credit: Allison Henry, NOAA/NEFSC

Common Name: Bottlenose dolphin

Scientific Name: *Tursiops truncatus*

Type of Whale: Toothed (odontocete)

Maximum Length: Up to about 9 feet (2.8 meters) in Florida coastal waters



Figure 18. Bottlenose dolphin/human size comparison.
Credit: Garth Mix and Chris_huh

Maximum Weight: In Florida, the maximum weight is about 600 pounds (about 280 kilograms). Offshore bottlenose dolphins may be much larger and heavier.

How long can they live? The oldest documented wild bottlenose dolphin is 67 years old (as of 2017); it is in Sarasota Bay, Florida. The oldest bottlenose dolphin in captivity lived to be 61 years old at Marineland Dolphin Adventure in Florida.

Where do they live? Bottlenose dolphins are found worldwide in tropical and temperate waters. There are coastal and offshore populations.

Special Characteristics: Bottlenose dolphins always appear to be smiling because of their anatomy. They have no control over this expression.

What type of prey do they eat? Fish

What type of predator might eat them? Sharks

What are the human threats? Accidental injury and death because of entanglement in recreational and commercial fishing gear, exposure to pollutants and toxins, and direct harvest (in Japan and Taiwan).

Are they endangered? No. However, all cetaceans are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Fun Facts: These are the dolphins most commonly seen performing at zoos and aquariums. Many parks allow visitors to swim with bottlenose dolphins. They have also been the stars of many TV shows and movies, including *Flipper* and *Dolphin Tale*. Baby dolphins have a few hairs on their rostrum that they lose shortly after birth. Bottlenose dolphins can hold their breath for up to 8 minutes and can dive to depths of 1,250 feet (390 meters).

Bottlenose dolphins use a feeding strategy called "fish whacking" where they strike a fish with their tail flukes and knock it out of the water before eating it.

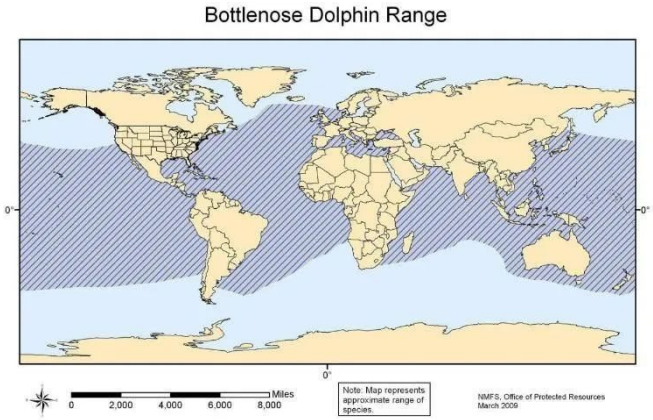

Figure 19. Bottlenose dolphin range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Acknowledgment

The authors thank Dr. Randy Wells, Sarasota Dolphin Project, for review and comment.

Sperm Whale



Figure 20. Sperm whale.
Credit: Christin Khan, NOAA/NEFSC

Common Name: Sperm whale

Scientific Name: *Physeter macrocephalus*

Type of Whale: Toothed (odontocete)

Maximum Length: Male sperm whales can grow to 52 feet (16 meters), making them the largest toothed whale. Females, while also very large, are smaller with a maximum length of about 36 feet (11 meters).



Figure 21. Sperm whale/human size comparison.
Credit: Garth Mix and Chris_huh

Maximum Weight: A large male sperm whale can weigh 90,000 pounds (40,823 kilograms). A large female is much smaller, weighing in at only 30,000 pounds (13,607 kilograms).

How long can they live? Up to 70 years.

Where do they live? Sperm whales can be found in all oceanic waters. They are deep water animals and are rarely found close to shore or in water less than about 984 feet (300 meters) deep. They are occasionally found in deep waters around some oceanic islands, including Hawai'i. Females and young whales tend to stay in warmer tropical and subtropical waters, but adult males may be found near pack ice in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

Special Characteristics: Sperm whales have a single blowhole located on the left side of their heads rather than in the center. Their blow is easily recognized as left of center.

What type of prey do they eat? Giant squid, sharks, skates, and fish.

What type of predator might eat them? Adult sperm whales are probably not preyed on by other animals. Young or sick animals may be at risk of attack by sharks. There is a documented case of a sperm whale being hunted and killed by killer whales off the coast of California.

What are the human threats? Humans hunt sperm whales in some parts of the world. Ship strikes and entanglement in fishing gear are possible threats. Noise may also affect sperm whales.

Are they endangered? Yes, sperm whales are still considered endangered, but the species seems to be recovering.

Fun Facts: The famous book *Moby Dick* was about a white sperm whale. Adult male sperm whales occasionally attack ships for unknown reasons and can cause catastrophic damage. The sperm whale is an extremely deep-diving whale, diving down more than 7,400 feet (2,250 meters). These whales can hold their breath for up to two hours!

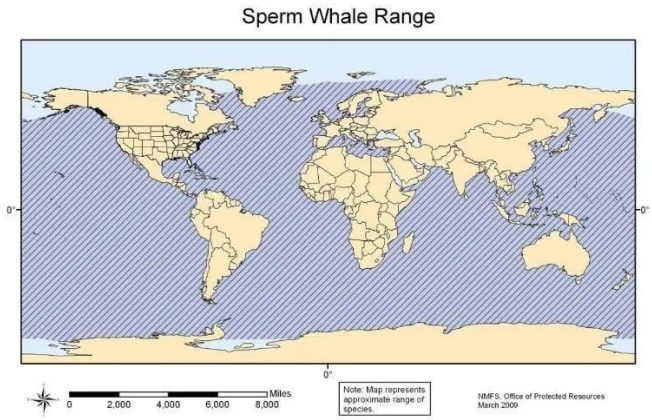

Figure 22. Sperm whale range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Narwhal (Pronounced: NAR-wull)



Figure 23. Narwhal.
Credit: Kristin Laidre/NOAA

Common Name: Narwhal

Scientific Name: *Monodon monoceros*

Type of Whale: Toothed (odontocete)

Maximum Length: Males: 15 feet (4.6 meters); Females: 13 feet (4 meters)

Maximum Weight: Males**:** 3,500 pounds (1,600 kilograms); Females: 2,000 pounds (900 kilograms)



Figure 24. Narwhal/human size comparison.
Credit: Chris_huh

How long can they live? 115 years

Where do they live? Arctic Ocean

Special Characteristics: Male narwhals have an elongated tusk, which is actually a tooth that grows through the front of the jaw. Adult narwhals typically have a spotted pattern. Narwhals have no dorsal fin, which may make it easier for them to swim underneath ice.

What type of prey do they eat? Arctic cod (fish), flatfish, squid, and oceanic shrimp.

What type of predator might eat them? Orcas (killer whales), walruses, and polar bears.

What are the human threats? Climate change is the main threat to narwhals. Most scientists agree that human activity is accelerating climate change. As ice in the Arctic melts, more ships enter Arctic waters. This increases the narwhals' risk of being hit by ships. Exploration for oil drilling is another threat to narwhals.

Are they endangered? No. However, all cetaceans are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Fun Facts: The narwhal's long, spiral tusk may be the inspiration for the myth of the unicorn. Narwhals have a thick layer of blubber. They migrate offshore in the fall, perhaps so they will not be trapped by near-shore ice in the winter. Male narwhals probably use their tusks to fight other males over a female whale. The narwhal can hold its breath for up to 20 minutes and may be able to dive to a depth of 3,300 feet (1,000 meters).

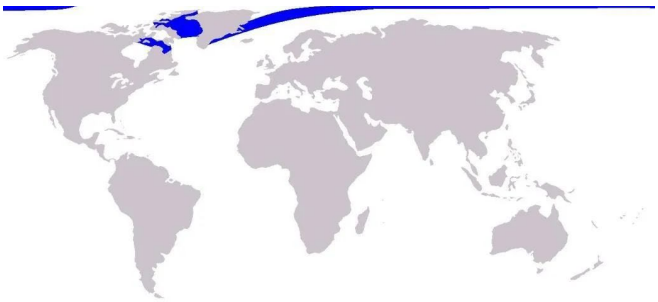

Figure 25. Narwhal range.
Credit: Pcb21/Wikimedia Commons

Pygmy Sperm Whale

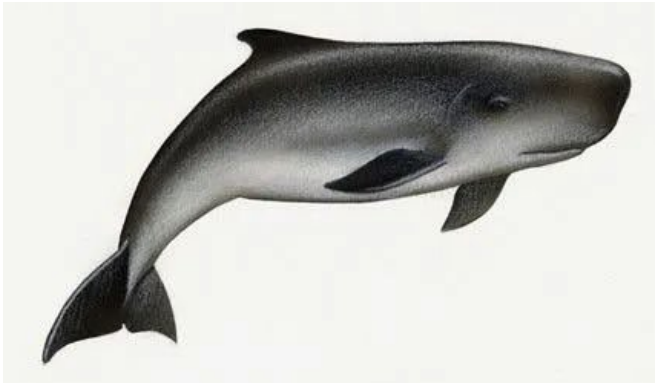

Figure 26. Pygmy sperm whale.
Credit: NOAA

Common Name: Pygmy sperm whale

Scientific Name: *Kogia breviceps*

Type of Whale: Toothed (odontocete)

Maximum Length: 11.5 feet (3.5 meters)

Maximum Weight: 1,000 pounds (450 kilograms)

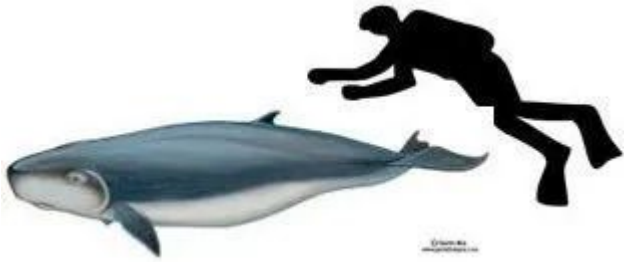

Figure 27. Pygmy sperm whale/human size comparison.
Credit: Garth Mix and Chris_huh

How long can they live? Not known

Where do they live? In temperate and tropical waters worldwide (Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans).

Special Characteristics: Pygmy sperm whales have a bracket-shaped marking resembling a fish's gill behind the eye. Pygmy sperm whales have no teeth in their upper jaws.

What type of prey do they eat? Squid, octopus, crabs, shrimp, and fish.

What type of predator might eat them? Unknown, but sharks will prey on stranding animals.

What are the human threats? On occasion, pygmy sperm whales are accidentally caught in commercial fishing nets and hit by ships. Some stranded pygmy sperm whales have had plastics and other garbage blocking their guts. Human noise may interfere with pygmy sperm whale behavior.

Are they endangered? No, but they commonly strand along the southeastern US coast.

Fun Facts: When pygmy sperm whales feel threatened, they can eject reddish-brown liquid (referred to as "ink") into the water to help them escape from predators. Pygmy sperm whales can probably dive to at least 1,000 feet (300 meters) in search of food.

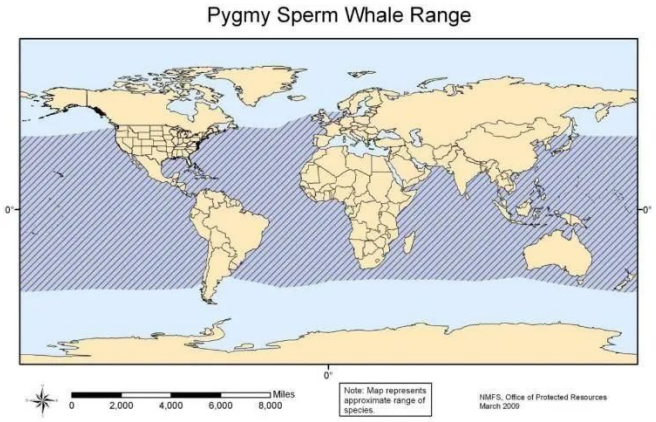

Figure 28. Pygmy sperm whale range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Cuvier's Beaked Whale (Pronounced: COO-vee-yays)



Figure 29. Cuvier's beaked whale.
Credit: Garth Mix

Common Name: Cuvier's beaked whale

Scientific Name: *Ziphius cavirostris*

Type of Whale: Toothed (odontocete)

Maximum Length: 23 feet (7 meters)

Maximum Weight: 6,800 pounds (3,100 kilograms)

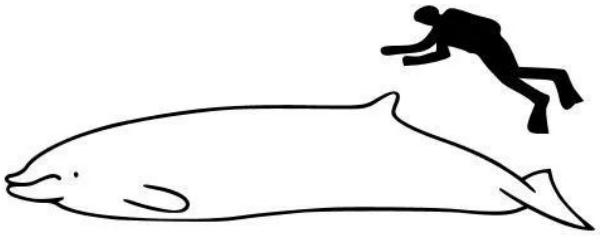

Figure 30. Cuvier's beaked whale/human size comparison.
Credit: Chris_huh

How long can they live? Estimates are from 25 to 60 years.

Where do they live? Cuvier's beaked whales are found in most oceans and seas, except the polar regions.

Special Characteristics: The jawline is slightly upturned, giving the whale a "smiling" appearance. The lower jaw sticks out beyond the upper jaw. Males have two small, cone-shaped teeth that stick out of the lower jaw and are often used for fighting. Coloration ranges from dark gray to reddish-brown. The whales are often covered with scratches and scars.

What type of prey do they eat? Mostly squid and octopus, sometimes fish and crustaceans.

What type of predator might eat them? Unknown, but sharks will prey on stranding animals.

What are the human threats? Entanglement in fishing gear, ship strikes, and possible trauma from acoustic sources (noise). Cuvier's beaked whales are sometimes caught by Japanese whaling operations that are hunting other beaked whales.

Are they endangered? No. However, all cetaceans are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Fun Facts: Cuvier's beaked whales use a pair of grooves in their throats to help them suck in their prey. They can dive down to 6,200 feet (1,888 meters) and hold their breath for up to 95 minutes. Cuvier's beaked whales are sometimes called "goosebeak" whales.

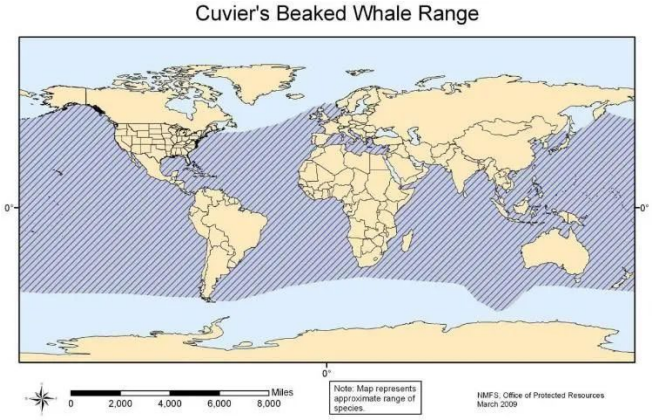

Figure 31. Cuvier's beaked whale range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Minke Whale (Pronounced: MIN-key)



Figure 32. Minke whale.
Credit: NOAA

Common Name: Minke whale

Type of Whale: Baleen (mysticete)

Maximum Length: 33 feet (10 meters)

Maximum Weight: 20,000 pounds (9,200 kilograms)

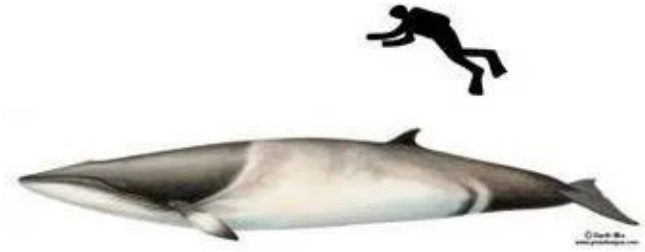

Figure 33. Minke whale/human size comparison.
Credit: Garth Mix and Chris_huh

How long can they live? Scientists estimate minke whales can live up to 47 years.

Where do they live? Minkes are found in all oceans, although they are rarely observed in the tropics. They seem to prefer icy waters.

Special Characteristics: Minke whales vary in body size, patterns, coloration, and baleen based on geographic location.

What type of prey do they eat? Small schooling fish (capelin, cod, herring, pollock) or krill (small, shrimp-like plankton); sometimes copepods (plankton).

What type of predator might eat them? Orcas (killer whales)

What are the human threats? Minkes are sometimes hunted by whalers. Minkes may be accidentally trapped in

commercial fishing gear. Underwater noise may interfere with the ability of minke whales to communicate.

Are they endangered? No. However, all cetaceans are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Fun Facts: The minke whale is also known as the little piked whale. Minkes are fast swimmers and can reach speeds of 16 to 21 miles per hour (26 to 33 kilometers per hour). Minke whales can dive for up to 15 minutes. At sea, minke whales are curious and may approach vessels, especially stationary ones. Minke whales migrate seasonally.

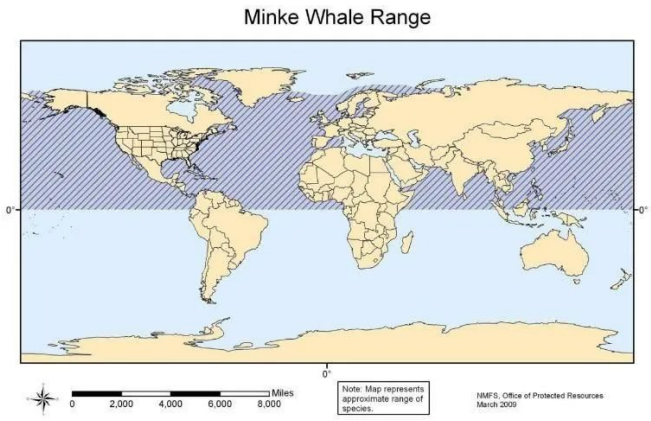

Figure 34. Minke whale range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Fin Whale



Figure 35. Fin whale.
Credit: NOAA/NEFSC

Common Name: Fin whale

Scientific Name: *Balaenoptera physalus*

Type of Whale: Baleen (mysticete)

Maximum Length: 78 feet (24 meters) in the Northern Hemisphere; 88 feet (27 meters) in the Southern Hemisphere

Maximum Weight: 160,000 pounds (72,500 kilograms)



Figure 36. Fin whale/human size comparison.
Credit: Garth Mix

How long can they live? Scientists estimate they may live up to 100 years.

Where do they live? Fin whales are found in every ocean, but they seem to prefer temperate and polar waters.

Special Characteristics: The fin whale is light gray to brownish-black on its back and sides. These whales may have lighter-colored bands that start behind the blowholes, curve back towards the tail, then turn back towards the eye. The right side of the lower jaw is white or creamy yellow, while the left side is mottled black; this coloring is repeated on the baleen, but reversed on the tongue.

What type of prey do they eat? Small, shrimp-like animals called krill or euphausiids; schooling fish

What type of predator might eat them? Orcas (killer whales)

What are the human threats? From 1935 to 1965, whalers killed as many as 30,000 fin whales each year. The whales are now protected from hunting except for a small amount of tribal hunting in Greenland. Other threats include collisions with boats, entanglement in fishing gear, reduced prey supply due to overfishing, and disturbance from noise.

Are they endangered? Yes.

Fun Facts: Fin whales can eat up to 2 tons (4,400 pounds or 2,000 kilograms) of food a day. They can dive up to 1,800 feet (550 meters) and can hold their breath for up to 30 minutes. The age of fin whales can be estimated by counting the layers of waxy buildup in the ear canal.

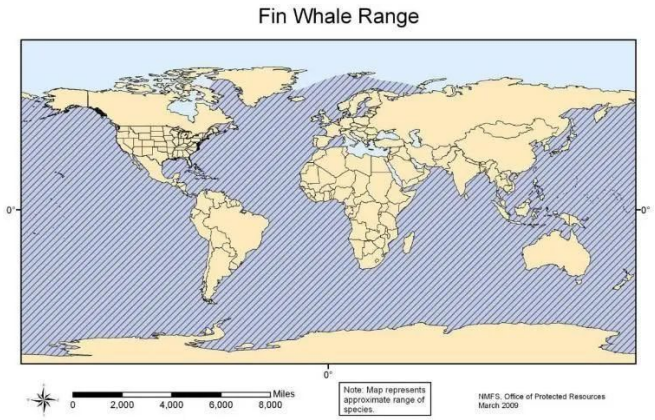

Figure 37. Fin whale range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Chinese River Dolphin



Figure 38. Chinese river dolphin.
Credit: Alessio Marrucci

Common Name: Chinese river dolphin

Scientific Name: *Lipotes vexillifer*

Type of Whale: Toothed (odontocete)

Maximum Length: 8 feet (2.5 meters)

Maximum Weight: 500 pounds (220 kilograms)

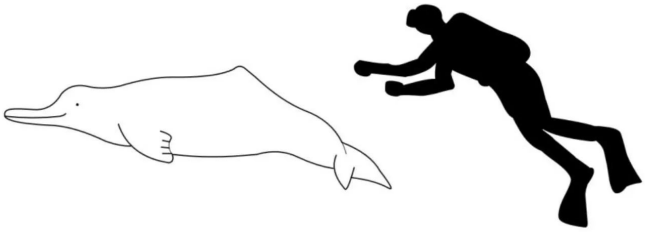

Figure 39. Chinese river dolphin/human comparison.

How long can they live? Possibly up to 25 years (based on an individual in captivity).

Where do they live? Historically, these dolphins were found in the middle to lower reaches of the Yangtze (*Yang-see*) River. More recently, human development along the river has greatly reduced the habitat range.

Special Characteristics: The Chinese river dolphin is pale blue to gray on its back. It has very small eyes.

What type of prey do they eat? A variety of freshwater fish species.

What are the human threats? Chinese river dolphins are caught in fishing gear or killed by electrofishing (a technique that uses electricity to stun fish before they are caught). Other threats include pollution, river development projects, collisions with vessels, and loss of prey. Underwater explosions used to enlarge river channels have killed some dolphins.

Are they endangered? Yes. A survey conducted in 2006 failed to find a single Chinese river dolphin and concluded that this species may be extinct. The last sighting of a live Chinese river dolphin was in 2002.

Fun Facts: This dolphin was regarded as the goddess of protection by Chinese fishermen and boatmen in the Yangtze River region. It is also known as the Yangtze river dolphin, baiji, white-flag dolphin, and whitefin dolphin.

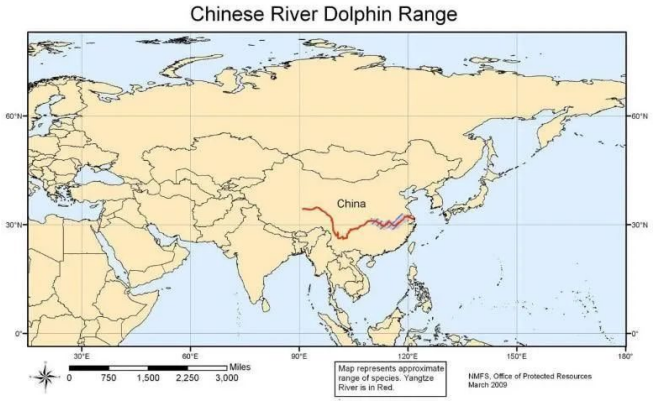

Figure 40. Chinese river dolphin range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Short-Finned Pilot Whale



Figure 41. Short-finned pilot whale.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries/Adam Ü

Common Name: Short-finned pilot whale

Scientific Name: *Globicephala macrorhynchus*

Type of Whale: Toothed (odontocete)

Maximum Length: 24 feet (7.3 meters)

Maximum Weight: 6,600 pounds (3,000 kilograms)

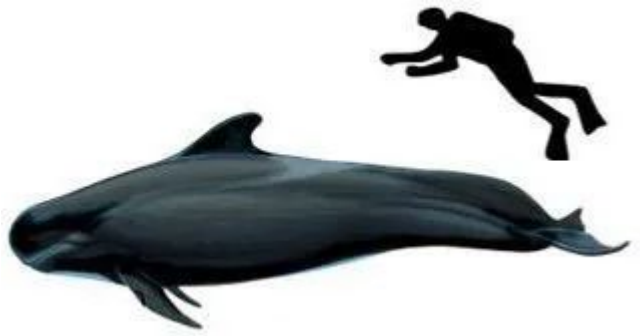

Figure 42. Short-finned pilot whale/human size comparision.

How long can they live? Up to 63 years

Where do they live? They are typically found in deeper waters throughout tropical and subtropical areas of the world.

Special Characteristics: Short-finned pilot whales have a bulbous melon head with no noticeable beak. These whales are black or dark brown with a large gray "saddle" behind the dorsal fin.

What type of prey do they eat? Mostly squid, some octopus, and fish in deep water (1,000 feet/300 meters or more).

What type of predator might eat them? Unknown, but sharks will prey on stranding animals. Pilot whales are often involved in mass strandings (up to several hundred whales at a time).

What are the human threats? Pilot whales get entangled, hooked, and captured by different kinds of commercial fishing gear. There are pilot whale fisheries in Japan and the Lesser Antilles. Ships can hit pilot whales.

Are they endangered? No. However, all cetaceans are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. These whales are involved in "mass stranding" events along the Florida coastline every few years. Some of these stranding events may involve more than 100 animals coming onshore at the same time.

Fun Facts: Short-finned pilot whales are the second largest species in the dolphin family (after the orcas or killer whales). Pilot whales are very social animals and are most often found in groups of 20 to 90 whales. Pilot whales are exhibited in many aquariums and zoos.

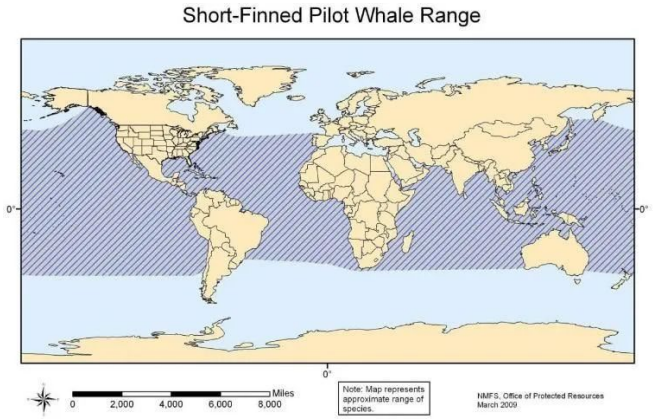

Figure 43. Short-finned pilot whale range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Spinner Dolphin



Figure 44. Spinner dolphin.
Credit: NOAA/Southwest Fisheries Science Center

Common Name: Spinner dolphin

Type of Whale: Toothed (odontocete)

Maximum Length: 7 feet (2 meters)

Maximum Weight: 170 pounds (77 kilograms)

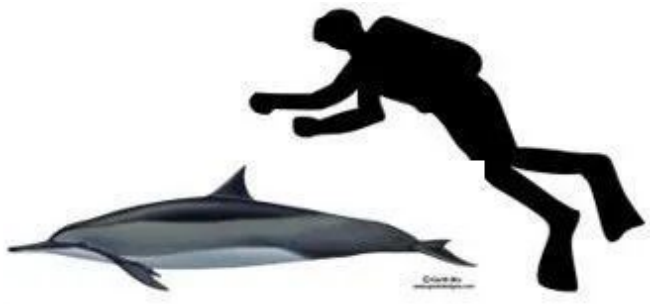

Figure 45. Spinner dolphin/human size comparison.
Credit: Garth Mix

How long can they live? Unknown

Where do they live? Spinner dolphins are found in all tropical and subtropical oceans.

Special Characteristics: Spinner dolphins have long, slender snouts or beaks. They are known for leaping out of the water and spinning (up to four revolutions) as many as 14 times in a row.

What type of prey do they eat? Midwater fishes and deepwater squid.

What type of predator might eat them? Sharks, orcas (killer whales), and possibly false killer whales, pygmy killer whales, and pilot whales.

What are the human threats? Spinner dolphins are often trapped and drowned in yellowfin tuna nets.

Are they endangered? No. However, the eastern Pacific population of spinner dolphins is considered depleted due to impacts from tuna fishing. All cetaceans are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Fun Facts: Spinner dolphins are often seen in groups of several hundred to several thousand animals. They feed mostly at night and rest during daylight hours.

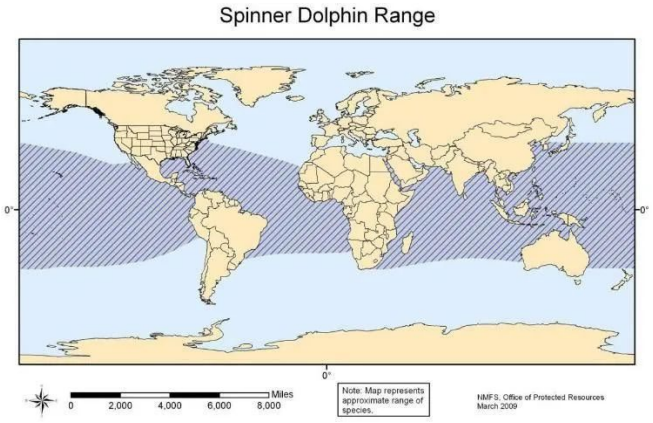

Figure 46. Spinner dolphin range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

Gray Whale



Figure 47. Gray whale.
Credit: Merrill Gosho, NOAA

Common Name: Gray whale

Scientific Name: *Eschrichtius robustus*

Type of whale: Baleen (mysticete)

Maximum Length: 50 feet (15 meters)

Maximum Weight: 80,000 pounds (35,000 kilograms)

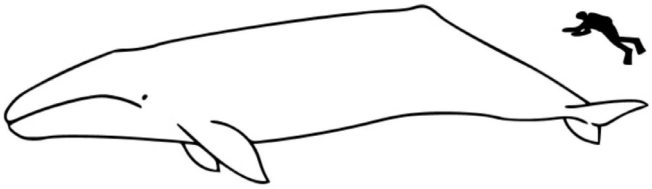

Figure 48. Gray whale/human size comparison.

How long can they live? Up to 80 years

Where do they live? Gray whales live in shallow coastal waters of the North Pacific Ocean.

Special Characteristics: Gray whales have a mottled gray body, with small eyes located just above the corner of the mouth. They do not have a dorsal fin, but they have a "dorsal hump" about two-thirds of the way back on the body, as well as a series of small bumps known as "knuckles" between the dorsal hump and the tail. Gray whales commonly have white barnacles and orange crab-like animals called cyamids on their bodies.

What type of prey do they eat? Small, shrimp-like amphipods that live in mud on the seafloor.

What type of predator might eat them? Orcas (killer whales).

What are the human threats? Before the mid-1930s, gray whales were hunted commercially. Modern-day threats include collisions with boats, entanglement in fishing gear, disturbance from ecotourism and whale watching, and disturbance from noise.

Are they endangered? Only the western Pacific population of gray whales is listed as endangered.

Fun Facts: A gray whale's tail flukes are more than 15 feet (3 meters) wide. Whalers once called gray whales "devil fish." Gray whales make one of the longest annual migrations of any mammal—they travel about 10,000 miles (16,000 kilometers) round trip. Gray whales are frequently visible from shore. Some will approach small boats and allow humans to touch them. A gray whale can hold its breath for about 25 minutes and can dive to depths of about 550 feet (170 meters).

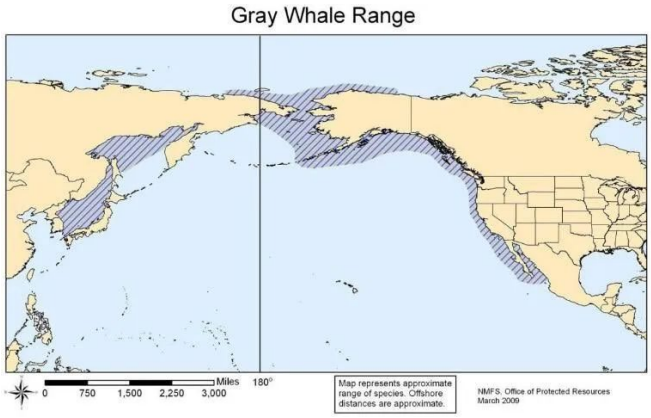

Figure 49. Gray whale range.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources

[1] This document is VM228, one of a *Cetaceans 4th Grade Curriculum* series of the Veterinary Medicine—Large Animal Clinical Sciences Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date June 2019. Revised January 2023 and January 2026. Visit the Ask IFAS website at https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/ for the currently supported version of this publication.

[2] Maia P. McGuire, associate program leader for Extension initiatives 1-4; Ruth Francis-Floyd, professor and UF/IFAS Extension veterinarian, UF College of Veterinary Medicine and School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences, Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences Program; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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