



All About Whales

Mammalia: Cetacea: Odontoceti (toothed whales)

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN

Tursiops truncatus

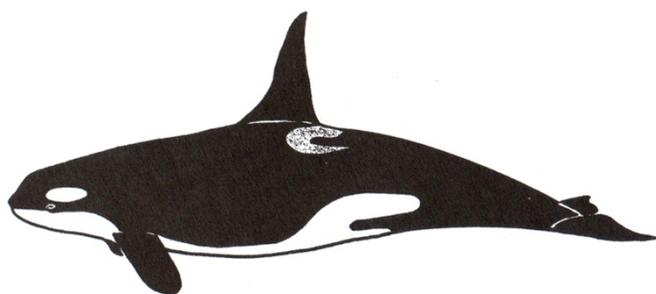


The bottlenose dolphin is a type of marine mammal that is found both offshore and in coastal waters. They occur in tropical and temperate oceans worldwide. The body is stout but streamlined, varying from dark grey at the top near the dorsal fin to very light

grey and almost white on the underside. They can grow to just over 13 feet (4 meters) and weigh an average of 660 pounds (300 kg). Bottlenose dolphins feed on small fish, crustaceans, and squid with cone-like pointed teeth. They search for food using a form of sonar, called echolocation. Rapid clicks are emitted through the fatty tissue in their forehead, called a melon. The clicks bounce off prey and reflect back to the animal. Their specialized lower jaw transmits the sound to their brain where an acoustic picture is created. Bottlenose dolphins live about 45 to 50 years. Female bottlenose dolphins mature at around 5 to 13 years of age and males mature at 9 to 14 years. Gestation is 12 months and births can occur at any time of year.

KILLER WHALE (ORCA)

Orcinus orca



The killer whale is a type of marine mammal that is found both offshore and in coastal waters. Also known as the orca, it is the largest dolphin. Males typically range from 20 to 26 feet (6 to 8 meters) and females are generally smaller, ranging from

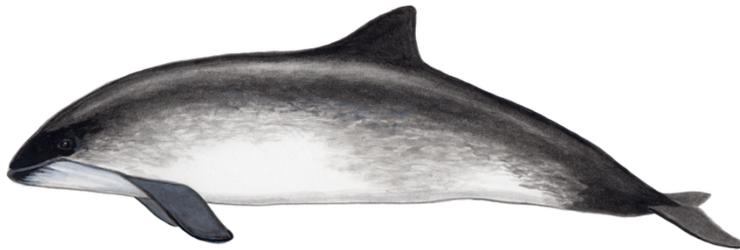
16 to 23 feet (5 to 7 meters). Killer whales are the most cosmopolitan of all whales as they occur in all the worlds' oceans. The body is stout but streamlined with a striking black and white color pattern. Some killer whales feed exclusively on fish, while others feed on marine mammals such as seals, sea lions, walruses and even large whales. The orca is the ocean's top predator. There are many different types of killer whales, defined as "ecotypes", each with its own natural history. In the North Pacific, three ecotypes occur: Residents, Transients and Offshores. The Residents are primarily found in the Pacific Northwest and feed on salmon. The Transients prey on marine mammals such as sea



lions and whales. The Offshores are the least known, but appear to prefer fishes and sharks. Female killer whales live about 50 years, with a maximum of 80–90 years. Males live around 29 years, with a maximum of 50–60 years. Female killer whales mature at around age 15 and males mature at the age of 15 but do not typically reproduce until age 21. Gestation is from 15 to 18 months and mothers calve, with a single offspring, about once every 5 years.

HARBOR PORPOISE

Phocoena phocoena



The harbor porpoise is a type of marine mammal that lives in coastal waters.

Harbor porpoise occur in the North Pacific, North Atlantic, and Black Sea in temperate and subarctic

waters. The robust upper body is a dark grey with slightly speckled, lighter grey sides. The underside is much whiter, with grey stripes running along the throat from the underside of the body. Adults of both sexes grow to 4 to 6 feet (1 to 2 meters). The harbor porpoise is one of six species of porpoise and is one of the smallest marine mammals. Harbor porpoise feed on fishes such as herring, cod, whiting, squid, pollock, and sardines. They reach sexual maturity at approximately 3 to 4 years. Calves are 27 to 35 inches at birth (70 to 90 cm). The gestation period is about 11 months, and the calving interval is usually every 2 years. Calves nurse for up to 8 months.

RISSO'S DOLPHIN

Grampus griseus



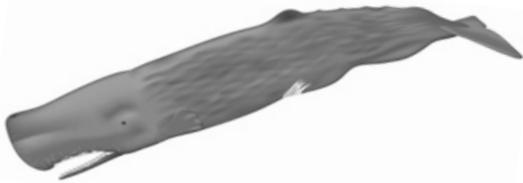
The Risso's dolphin is a type of marine mammal that lives in offshore waters. Risso's dolphins occur worldwide in temperate and tropical waters. The robust body is dark gray with extensive white scarring. Adult Risso's

dolphins bodies are typically heavily scarred, while calves have little or no scarring. They can reach lengths of approximately 8.5 to 13 feet (2.6 to 4 meters). Risso's dolphin feed almost exclusively on squid but at times also eat fish and krill. Feeding occurs mainly at night when their prey is closer to the surface. They are capable of diving to at least 1,000 feet (300 m) and can hold their breath for about 30 minutes. The gestation

period is approximately 13 to 14 months. Females become mature at ages 8 to 10, and males at age 10 to 12. Females reproduce typically every 2 years.

SPERM WHALE

Physeter macrocephalus



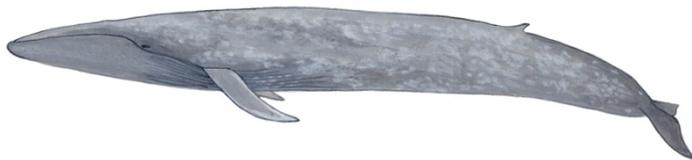
The sperm whale is a type of marine mammal that is found in the open ocean. Sperm whales occur from the poles to the equator and are found in all the oceans. The distinct body is not likely to be confused with any other species. The large, block-shaped head can be one-quarter to one-third of the entire length of the animal. The S-shaped blowhole is located

near the front of the head and shifted to the left. This gives rise to a distinctive thick, forward-angled spray. The sperm whale is the largest of the toothed whales and the largest toothed predator. Mature males average 52 feet (16 meters) in length but some may reach 68 feet (20.7 meters). Sperm whales feed on large squid and are the deepest diving mammal and can dive down to 9,800 feet (3 kilometers). They use a clicking vocalization, a form of echolocation and communication, which may be as loud as 230 decibels underwater, making it the loudest sound produced by any animal. It also has the largest brain of any animal on Earth. Females give birth every four to twenty years, and care for the calves for more than a decade. Sperm whales can live for more than 60 years. From the early eighteenth century, this species was a prime target of whalers. The head of the whale contains a liquid wax called spermaceti, from which the whale derives its name. Spermaceti was used in lubricants, oil lamps, and candles. Ambergris, a waste product from the digestive system, is still used as a fixative in some perfumes. Moby Dick, the great white whale, is a sperm whale.

Mammalia: Cetacea: Mysticeti (baleen whales)

BLUE WHALE

Balaenoptera musculus



Blue whales are the largest of all whales, as well as the largest living animal that has ever lived on Earth. In the Northern Hemisphere, the largest blue

whale reported is 85 feet, and in the Southern Hemisphere individuals may reach almost 110 feet in length. They are found worldwide, but in the north Pacific they migrate from northern summer feeding grounds in Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea to their winter calving grounds by Baja California and the Sea of Cortez. Recently blue whales have

been observed feeding on krill during the summer in the Santa Barbara Channel. Blue whales feed almost exclusively on krill and can eat over 4 tons a day. They feed by taking in tons of water, and filtering out the food with its baleen. The blue whale has 260 to 400 baleen plates about three feet long on each side of the upper jaw. The throat has 55 to 94 grooves. When relaxed, the blue whale takes a breath every 15 seconds for 5 to 20 minutes before its long dive of 5 to 20 minutes. Blue whale calves drink 100–150 gallons of milk a day.

FIN WHALE

Balaenoptera physalus



The Fin whale is a type of baleen whale that lives in offshore waters. Fin whales occur in all the world's oceans ranging from the polar to the

tropical seas. The body is long and slender with a brownish-gray color on the dorsal surface and a white ventral surface. The left side of the head is dark gray, while the right side has a complex pattern of contrasting light and dark markings. The unique right lower jaw is white or light gray and thus is called the "right mandible patch." Fin whales can reach up to 89.5 feet (27.3 meters) long. Fin whales feed on small schooling fish, squid, and crustaceans including copepods and krill. Mating occurs in temperate seas during the winter, followed by an eleven month to one year gestation period. Females reproduce every 2 to 3 years. Females reach sexual maturity at between 6 and 12 years of age.

GRAY WHALE

Eschrichtius robustus



The gray whale is a type of marine mammal that is found both offshore and in coastal waters. They are distributed in an eastern North Pacific (North American) population and a

critically endangered western North Pacific (Asian) population. The body is a dark slate-gray color with gray patches and white mottling. They reach a length of 49 feet (14.9 meters). Gray whales feed mainly on benthic crustaceans. They feed by turning on its side and scooping up sediments from the sea floor. The baleen acts like a sieve (or filter) to capture small sea animals, including amphipods. They feed in the northern waters of Alaska during the summer and travel south to Mexico in the winter. Gray whales travel south annually to Mexico to give birth in lagoons. Each October, small groups of whales start a two- to three-month, 5,000 to 6,800 mile (8,000 to 11,000 km) trip south. This

round trip of 9,900 to 14,000 miles (16,000 to 22,000 km) is believed to be the longest annual migration of any mammal. By late December to early January, they arrive in the calving lagoons of Baja Mexico. These first whales to arrive are usually pregnant mothers looking for the protection of the lagoons to give birth, along with single females looking for mates. By mid-February to mid-March, most of the population has arrived in the lagoons, including nursing, calving and mating whales. Nursing gray whale calves drink 190 to 300 gallons of 53% fat milk per day. Gray whales live between 55 and 70 years.

HUMPBACK WHALE

Megaptera novaeangliae



The humpback whale is a type of marine mammal that is found both offshore and in coastal waters. Humpback whales occur in all oceans around the world and

typically migrate up to 16,000 miles (25,000 kilometres) each year. The body is distinct, with unusually long pectoral fins and a knobby head. One of the larger rorqual species, adults range in length from 39 to 52 feet (12 to 16 meters) and weigh approximately 79,000 pounds (36,000 kilograms). Humpback whales are an acrobatic species known for breaching and slapping the water with its tail and pectorals. The humpback whale has distinct patterns on the tail flukes used to identify individuals. Humpback whales feed on krill and small fish. They feed by taking in tons of water, and filtering out the food with its baleen. They have 270 to 400 darkly colored baleen plates on each side of their mouths. Humpbacks also have a diverse range of feeding methods, including the bubble net feeding technique. Humpbacks feed in the summer in cold waters, and migrate to tropical waters to breed and give birth in the winter. During the winter, they fast and live off their fat reserves. They can live up to 48 years. Male humpback whales produce a complex song lasting 10 to 20 minutes.

MINKE WHALE

Balaenoptera acutorostrata



The minke whale is a type of baleen whale that lives in offshore waters. Minke whales occur in all oceans, though they are rarely observed in the tropics. The slender and streamlined body is counter-

shaded-black to dark gray on top, white below. Males can reach approximately 26 to 31

feet (8 to 9 meters), while females average 27 to 33 feet (8 to 10 meters). The minke whale is the smallest of the rorqual whales. Minke whales feed on small schooling fish and krill. They will also eat copepods in certain areas. Breeding typically occurs in the summer months. Sexual maturity is reached at 7 or 8 years and the gestation period is 10 to 11 months. Females reproduce typically once every two years. Calves are 10 feet (3 meters) at birth. The life span of the minke whale is believed to be about 50 years.

For more information on marine mammals and other marine life, be sure to visit our the “Marine Life” page of CMA’s website: <http://www.cabrillomarineaquarium.org/exhibits/marine-life.asp>

