



Cabrillo  
Marine  
Aquarium

# FISHIN' FOR F.A.Q.'S

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## Baleen Whales

### FUN FACTS

The largest mammals in the ocean, the baleen or mysticete whales, are giant filter feeders straining small crustaceans, fish, and plankton from the water.



Gray whales are unique bottom feeders and migrate along the California coast each year, moving from the Bering Sea in the north to the lagoons of Baja California in the south, to mate and give birth, and then back north again to feed.

### Just for Laughs

**Q. Have you ever seen a fish cry?**

**A. No, but I've seen a whale blubber!**

**Q. How many types of whales are there in the ocean?**

**A.** According to the Society for Marine Mammalogy, there are 14 recognized species of baleen whales and 76 species of toothed whales.

**Q. What is the largest whale on the planet?**

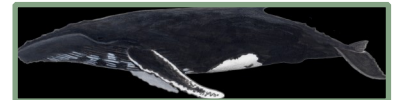
**A.** Blue whales are the largest whales, they can be more than 100 feet long (30 m) and upwards of 200 tons (181,436 kg). Their tongues can weigh as much as an elephant and their heart can weigh upwards of 1300 pounds (600 kg). The heart can be compared to a small car. It pumps up to 187 gallons (708 l) of blood with every beat.



**Q. Where did the Humpback whale gets its name?**

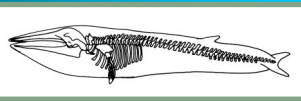
**A.** The Humpback whale was given its common name because of the shape of its dorsal (back) fin and the way it looks when it is diving.

Its scientific name, *Megaptera*, means "large-winged" and refers to its long, white, wing-like flippers that can be measured as long as one-third of its entire body length. The flukes (tail) can be 18 feet (5.5m) wide.



### AT CMA

Check out the massive Gray whale skeleton



Located in the Susanne Lawrenz-Miller Exhibit Hall

**Q. Can whales live a long time?**

**A.** Yes, believe it or not—a fin whale discovered in Antarctica is believed to have lived over 100 years! Finback whales can weigh over 110 tons (220,000 lbs), reach an impressive length of 85 ft. (26m), and is capable of bursts of speed of up to 23 mph (37 km/hr).



## Fast Facts on a Local Species



**Common name:** Pacific Gray Whale

**Scientific name:** *Eschrichtius robustus*

**Range:** north of Alaska in the Bering and Chukchi Seas to the waters of Baja California, Mexico.

**Size:** adults can measure over 45 feet in length and weigh over 40 tons

**Diet:** small crustaceans such as amphipods, and tube worms found in bottom sediment

**Life cycle:** gestation is 12-13 months; and adults can reach maturity at 5 to 11 years of age

**Average lifespan:** average lifespan is difficult to estimate, possibly upwards of 50 years

**Natural predators:** Killer whales, also known as Orcas

**Conservation Status:** Gray whales were removed from the Endangered Species List in 1994