

Whales – 2 types

Baleen Whales – largest animal to ever live on Earth is the blue whale: 30m long and 150,000kg

- filter feeders that eat plankton krill and small fish
- baleen are overlapping plates of fibrous proteins (that look like giant combs)



- some, like Humpbacks, have corquals or pleats in their throat that expand with large quantities of water.



- baleen whales push large quantities of water through baleen and strain their food out then swallow it
- others, like the Right whale, swim slowly with their mouths open at the surface and strain the water
- and some, like the Grey whale, bottom-feed and suck up sediments and filter out their food

Toothed Whales – the Killer whale is the fastest mammal in the sea

- includes all other whales, that have peg-like teeth



- active hunters, they catch prey like fish, seals, penguins and squid
- normally swallow their food whole
- largest is the Sperm whale and it can dive to 3,200m (10,400 ft) but on average goes to 1200m (4000 ft).
- smallest is the Narwhal (5 m), the males have an elongated front tooth that looks like a unicorn horn



Logging is when a whale lies still at the surface of the water, resting with its tail hanging down.

Staying warm in cold water

- many of these creatures possess thick layers of fat called blubber
- can be as thick as 60 cm in some whales
- blubber prevents internal heat from being lost through their skin.
- even in the tropics, warm bodies naturally lose heat to water. Also many dive deep where the water is colder

Whale Migration

- Many whales live in family groups called Pods and travel from feeding grounds to breeding grounds



- Humpbacks migrate from the cold Atlantic waters near Iceland to the Caribbean Sea



- Gray whales migrate from the Arctic Ocean around Alaska to near the Bay peninsula



Dolphins and Porpoises are grouped with Toothed whales



- Dolphins have an elongated snout and can swim faster than porpoise
- most dolphins eat fish and squid, but larger dolphins eat other marine mammals
- Common dolphins can hold their breath for about 15 minutes
- they communicate using a series of clicks and other sounds
- the sounds are produced in the dolphins airway then focused by a fatty bump in their forehead called the melon
- they use echolocation to maneuver and locate food
- they receive the "echo" (or return signal) through their lower jaw bone which is connected to its middle ear.



Seals and Sea Lions

- Inhabit all oceans



- there are about 30 species
- most eat fish and squid some eat mollusks and crustaceans

differences between the two:

- sea lions have longer forelimbs and can prop themselves up and walk on land
- seals use their powerful back flippers for swimming whereas sea lion use their forelimbs more
- sea lions have external ear flaps, seals do not

Walrus

- found only in polar polar seas
- have two large tusks
- they use their tusks for digging for mollusks on the sea floor and hauling themselves onto ice



- males have longer tusks than females
- they use their sensitive stiff whiskers to locate clams and mussels



- they can dive to 90 meters (295 ft)

Sea Otter - compared to most marine mammals, the otter has only recently adapted to living in the ocean



- they are the smallest marine mammal
- most otters are found in the Pacific on the American west coast
 - also, commonly found in giant kelp forests
- Otters swim to the bottom and locate a mollusk, crustacean or sea urchin and returns to the surface with it and a rock. It floats on its back, places the rock on its chest and smacks the shellfish open on it.

- they feed very often to maintain their energy needs
- they will also eat fish and snails that live on the kelp
- Otters do not have blubber, but they do have very thick fur which they groom frequently to help stay warm

Manatees and Dugongs

- commonly referred to as a sea cow, but are distant relatives of elephants



- they have a large upper lip that they use to grab vegetation similar to an elephant using its trunk
- they live in warm coastal waters and eat sea grass
- Manatees have a rounded tail and Dugongs have a triangular one.

Polar Bears

- the most terrestrial marine mammal



- they live on ice flows and shorelines in the northern polar region
- PBs have dense fur and blubber to keep them warm
- their prey of choice are seals, they can stalk a seal sunning itself on the ice due to their white camouflage
- PBs will also eat fish, birds, or plants dependant on season
- Besides a mother and her cubs, PBs are solitary animals

