

Coral's Story

The true adventures of a real humpback whale



Have a whale of
a time with my
activity book!

WDC { WHALE AND
DOLPHIN
CONSERVATION

My name is Coral and I'm an adult male **humpback whale**. I'm about 40 feet (12 meters) long and weigh almost 40 tons.

In 1986, I was born in the warm, tropical waters of the **West Indies**, where I continue to spend my winter and breed. Each year, I migrate to the colder waters of the **Gulf of Maine, off the East Coast of the USA**, to feed. Along the way, I face many threats. You can help me and my friends live safely in the oceans.

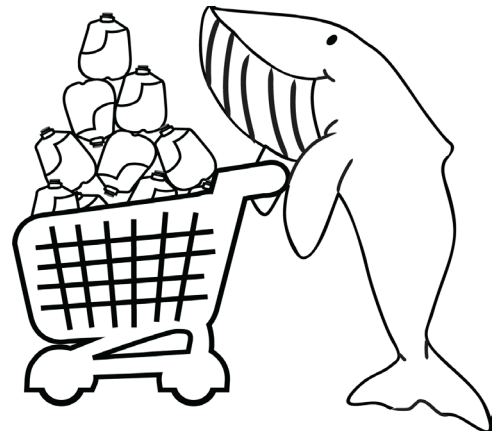


Scientists refer to all **whales, dolphins and porpoises** as **“cetaceans”** (from the Latin word *“Cetus”* meaning *“large sea animal”* and the Greek word *“Kotos”* meaning *“sea monster”*). Although whales are large sea creatures, we are definitely not monsters!

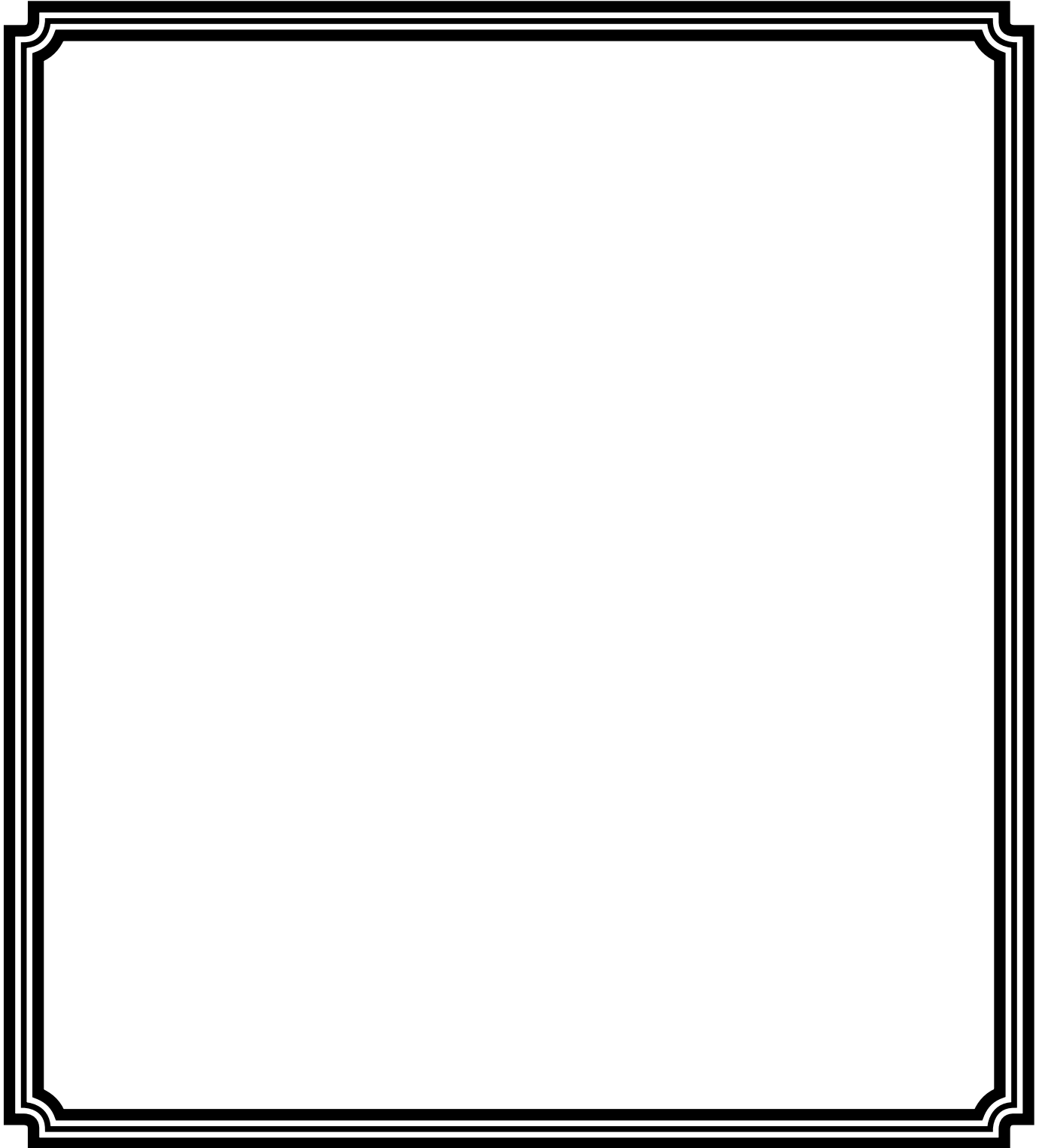
Like you, we are **mammals**, and share similar traits with humans:

- We are **warm-blooded** (meaning we can maintain our body temperature at about 99°F {37°C}).
- We **give birth to live young** and **feed our newborns milk** produced by our moms.
- We **breathe air** from the atmosphere through our lungs.
- We **have hair** (mostly whiskers on our faces).
- We have a **similar skeleton**. The bones of our front flippers include the bones of your arms and hands!

Like all newborn mammals, I drank milk when I was born. You most likely drank 0.08-0.3 gallons (0.3-1.25 liters) of milk each day when you were a baby. My mom, Silver, nursed me and I drank 40-60 gallons (150-180 liters) each day! I stayed with her for most of my first year and she looked after me and kept me safe.



**CAN YOU DRAW ANOTHER MAMMAL
IN THE FRAME BELOW?**



Take this page out when you're done to hang up somewhere special!



All cetaceans can be divided into two groups:

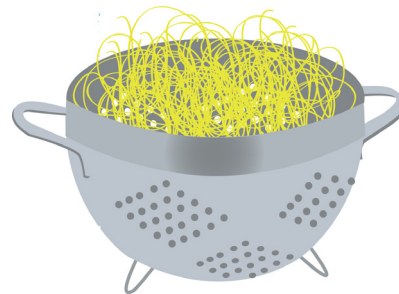
odontocetes or **toothed whales** and ***mysticetes*** or **baleen whales**.

Toothed whales have teeth and one visible blowhole (nostril), and include dolphins, porpoises, orcas, and sperm whales.

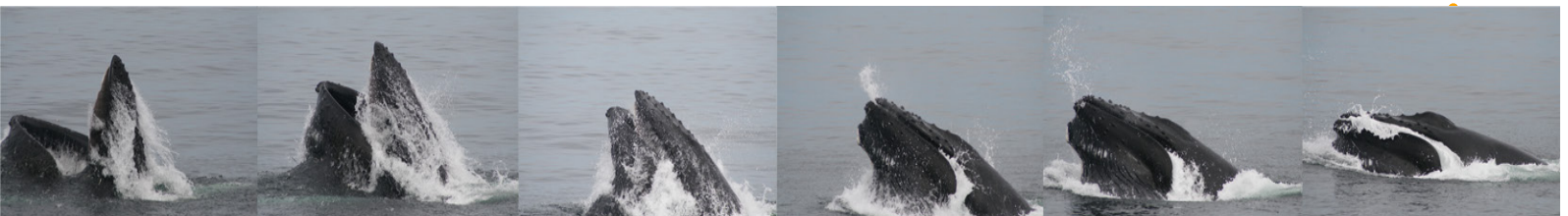
Baleen whales include most of the large whales like my family of humpback whales. I don't have teeth. Instead, I have baleen plates which help me filter my food from the sea water. You can also see both of my blowholes (nostrils).

As a *mysticete*, I have about 600 hairy plates of baleen that hang down from my upper jaw, like teeth on a comb. Baleen is made out of the same protein (keratin) as your fingernails and hair, but I don't scratch with my baleen.

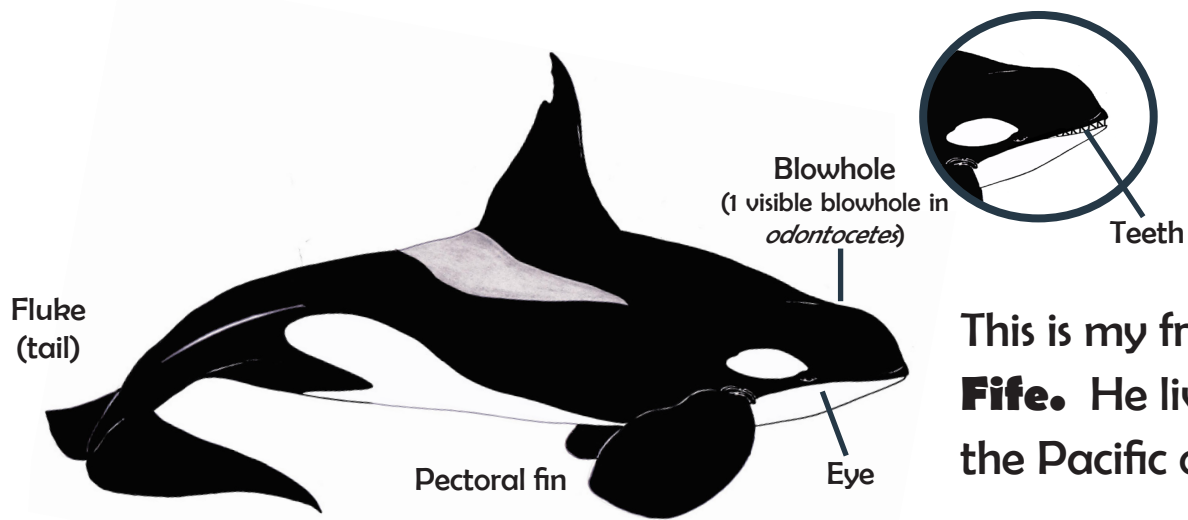
Instead, I use it to strain plankton and fish from the sea water. Since the food I eat is very small, I eat about one ton of it each day in the summer!



^ Baleen whales strain their food just like we strain spaghetti!



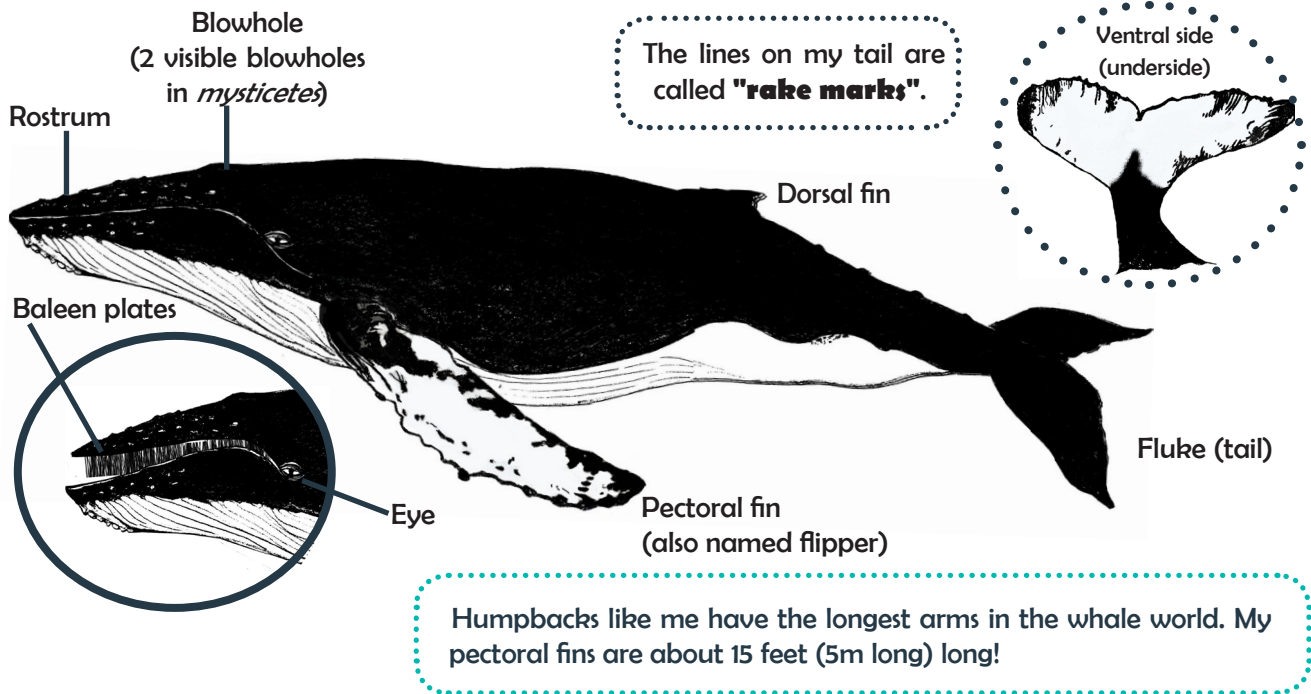
Feeding sequence of a humpback whale: Can you see the water straining through the baleen and out the sides of my friend's mouth?



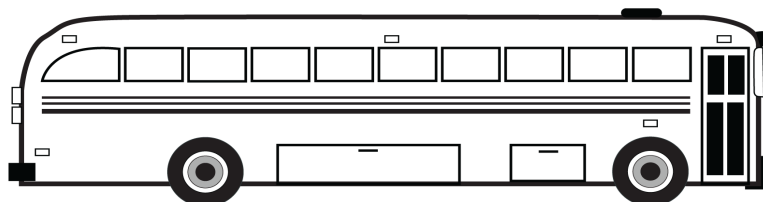
This is my friend **Fife**. He lives in the Pacific ocean.

Orcas are ***odontocetes*** or **toothed whales**. They are the biggest dolphins in the world!

Toothed whales use their melon (rounded forehead) for **echolocation** which enables them to “*see*” things using sounds.



Humpback whales are 40 feet (12 meters) long! This is as long as a school bus!

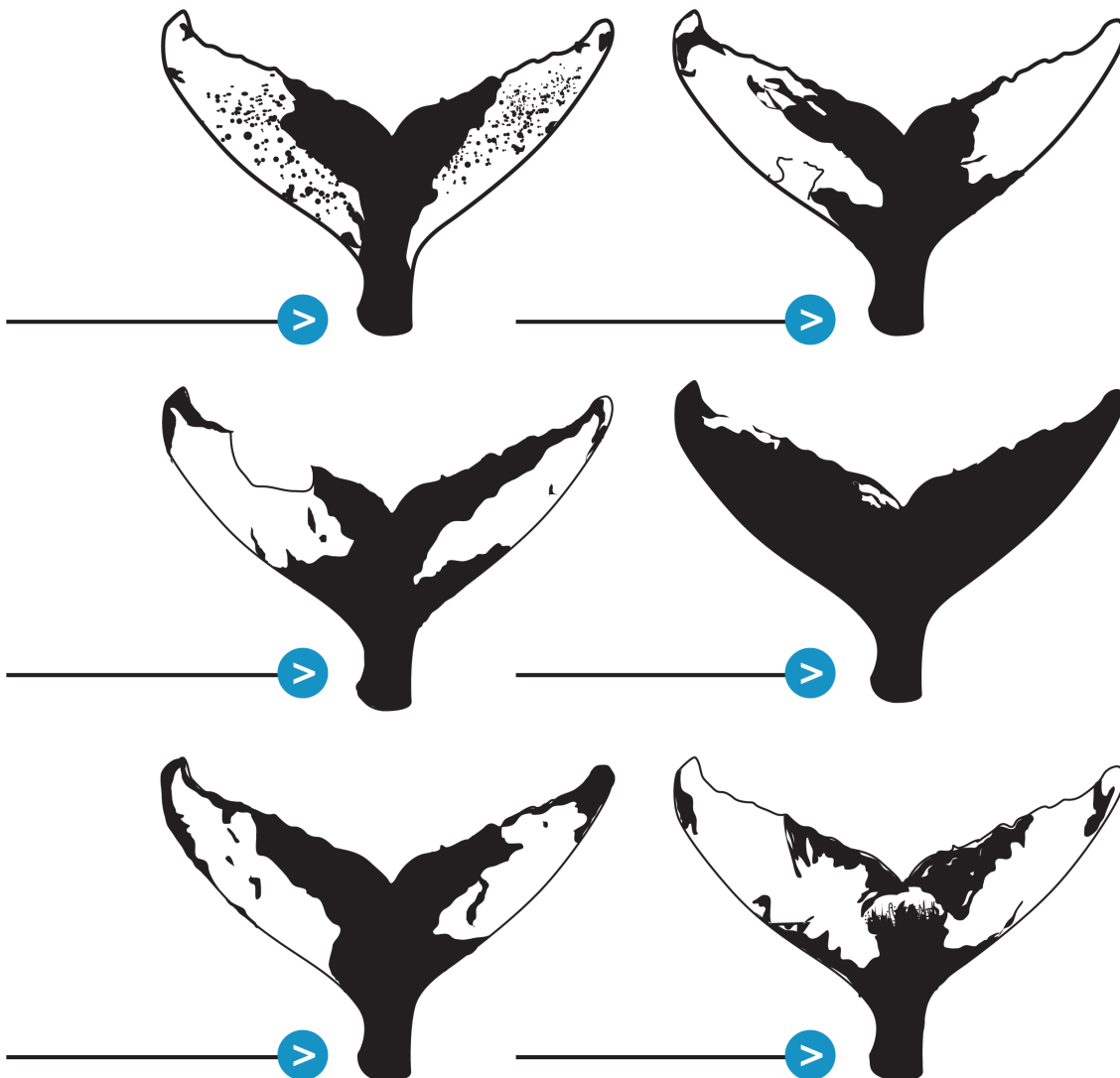


When I was still a calf, I was attacked by a group of orcas. My mom saved me, but I ended up with rake marks (orca tooth scars) on my fluke. I will keep these scars for my entire life and researchers identify me by these marks, together with other marks on my tail.

Similar to human fingerprints, humpback whales are born with a unique pattern on the ventral (underside) of our fluke. Researchers use these marks to identify individuals and learn about them. Most humpbacks are named for their fluke design, like looking at shapes in clouds.

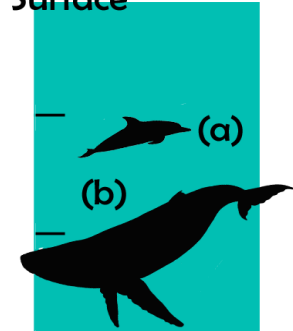
Can you match the whale names to the fluke patterns on their tail?

MIDNIGHT, TWISTER, 57, DALMATIAN, WALRUS, EXCLAIM



Which two bubbles are exactly the same?

Surface



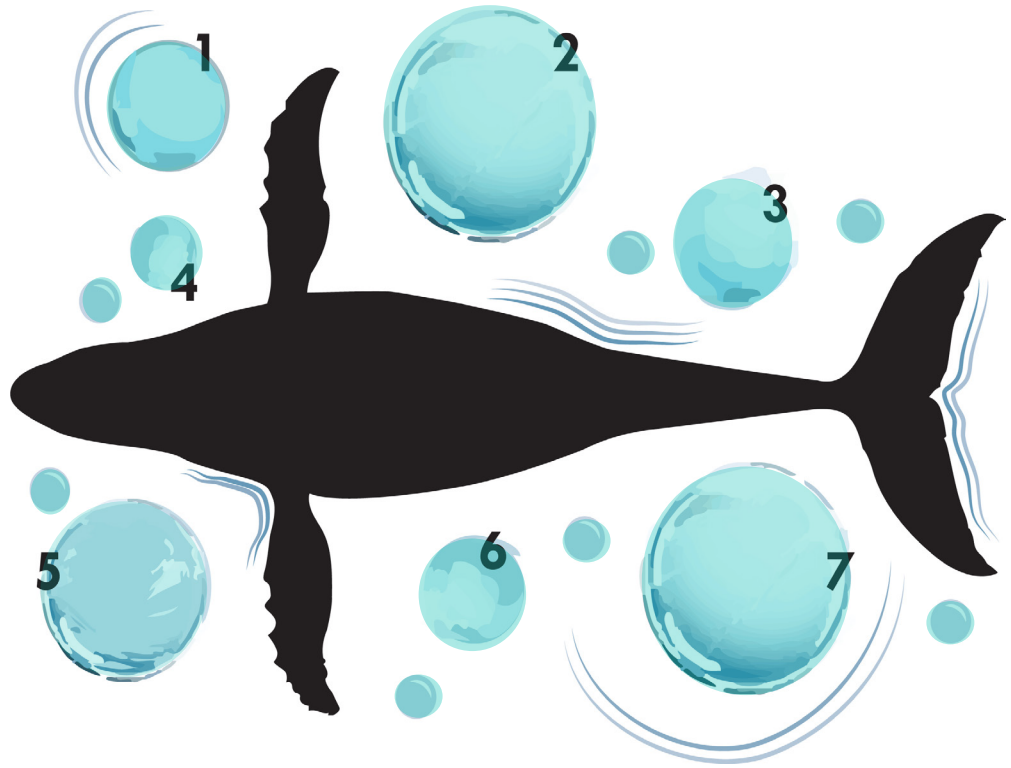
1000 m/3250 feet



2000 m/6500 feet



3000 m/9750 feet



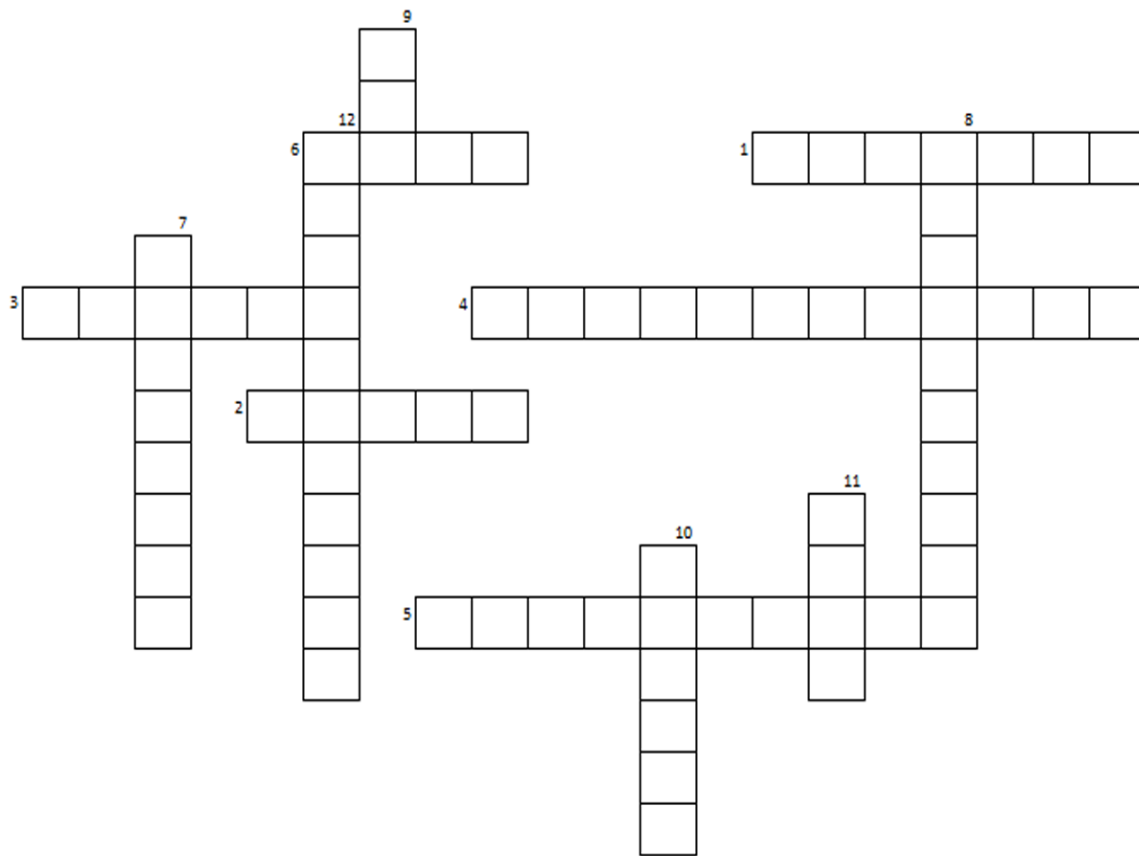
Fun Feeding Facts

1. I eat nearly one ton of fish every day during the summer.
2. I use bubbles to corral small fish into a bait ball before I eat them.
3. I chew my food with my stomach!
4. Humans have no idea how I find my food!

Swimmer & Diver

Can you guess which of the cetacean silhouettes to the left belongs to a humpback whale like me? Write the correct letter below!

Do you think I'm one of the best cetacean divers? Why or why not?



Across

1. Like humans, whales are _____ (they breathe air, have hair, are born alive, and are warm-blooded) .
2. You just read a story about me. Do you remember my name?
3. What are the hairy plates in my mouth that I use to filter my food called?
4. My dolphin friends use sound to “see” things. It’s called _____.
5. I was born in the waters of the _____.
6. My friend Fife is an _____, the biggest dolphin in the world.

Down

7. My pectoral fins are also called my _____.
8. The group that includes all baleen whales is called _____.
9. As mammals whales breath _____ from the atmosphere.
10. What was my mom’s name?
11. My fluke is also called my _____.
12. The group that includes all dolphins and porpoises is called _____.

What threats do I face?

Human Disturbance:

Disturbance can be caused by people that want to get too close to me. If I have to spend my time avoiding curious people, I have less time to eat, rest and socialize. Human activities such as building structures in the ocean, military exercises and seismic testing can also disturb me.



Captivity:

Taking my dolphin and orca friends out of the wild takes them away from their families. They have to perform tricks and they get tired and upset. They often get sick and don't live very long when they are put in captivity.

Vessel Strikes:

Ships and other boats that travel across my ocean home often go very fast and I can't get out of their way. About 15% of my humpback friends in the Gulf of Maine have been struck by passing vessels.



Climate Change:

Climate change is dramatically changing my home. When the ocean temperature rises, it's harder for my food to survive so it's harder for me to survive.

Chemical Pollution:

Chemicals end up in the ocean from air pollution or from rivers and land that dump them in the ocean. They get into my food and can make me sick.



Prey Depletion:

Humans sometimes like to eat the same food as my whale friends. But when they take too much of it, none is left for us and my friends can starve.

Bycatch/ Entanglement in Fishing Gear:

Humans have become much better at catching fish by using nets and fishing lines that last a long time. Unfortunately, my whale and dolphin friends sometimes get caught in the nets and lines and drown.



Habitat Degradation:

When lots of humans use the coastal waters, it can reduce the quality of the water, ocean plants, plankton, and fish, making it hard for us to survive there too.



Whaling:

While commercial whaling largely stopped in 1986, some countries, like Japan, Iceland and Norway, still hunt whales.

Marine Debris:

Trash from land often ends up in the ocean. Sometimes my whale and dolphin friends get stuck in it. Some of my friends eat it by mistake and it fills their stomach so they can't eat healthy food, leaving them to starve.

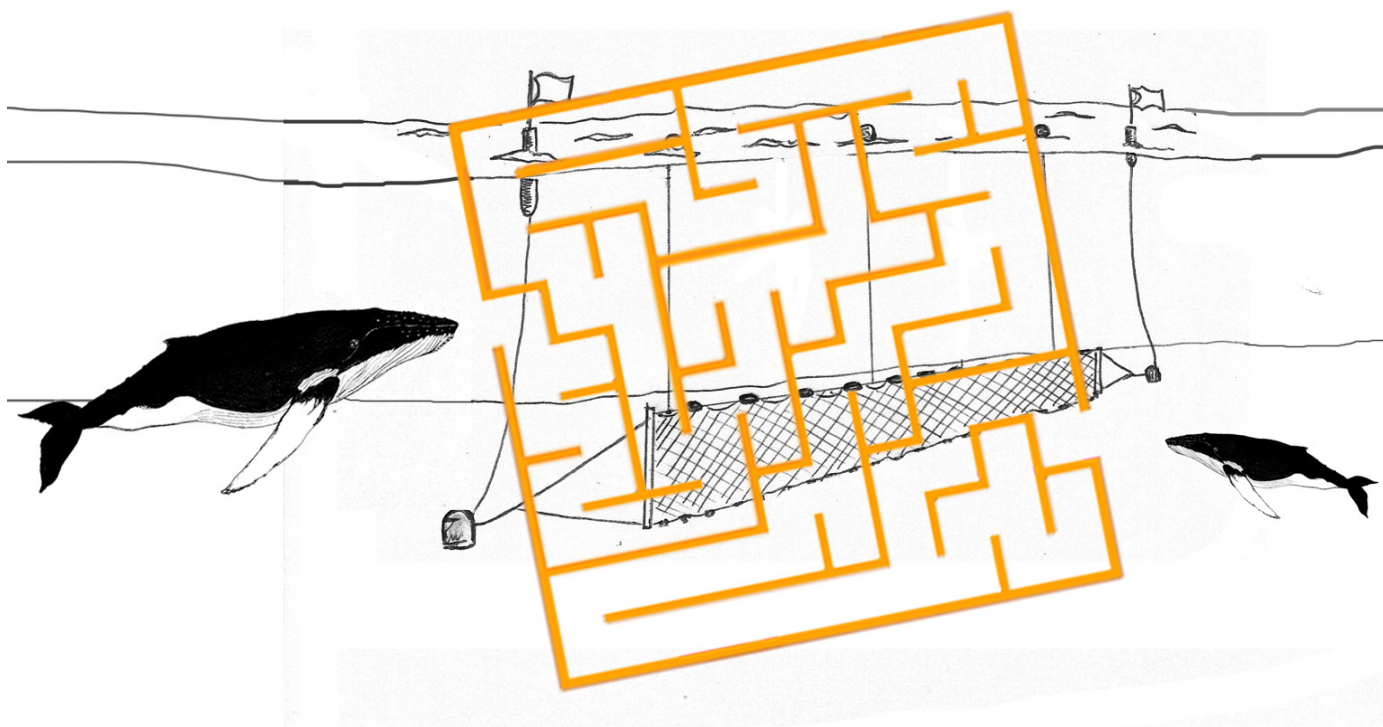


Noise Pollution

Loud noises make it hard for me to hear my friends and find my food. It really stresses me out. If it's too loud, it can actually kill me.

Just one of these conditions makes me feel less safe, but often we are faced with several of these threats and it creates a **MUCH BIGGER PROBLEM!!!!**

Can you help this baby whale navigate through the maze to be safe with her mom?



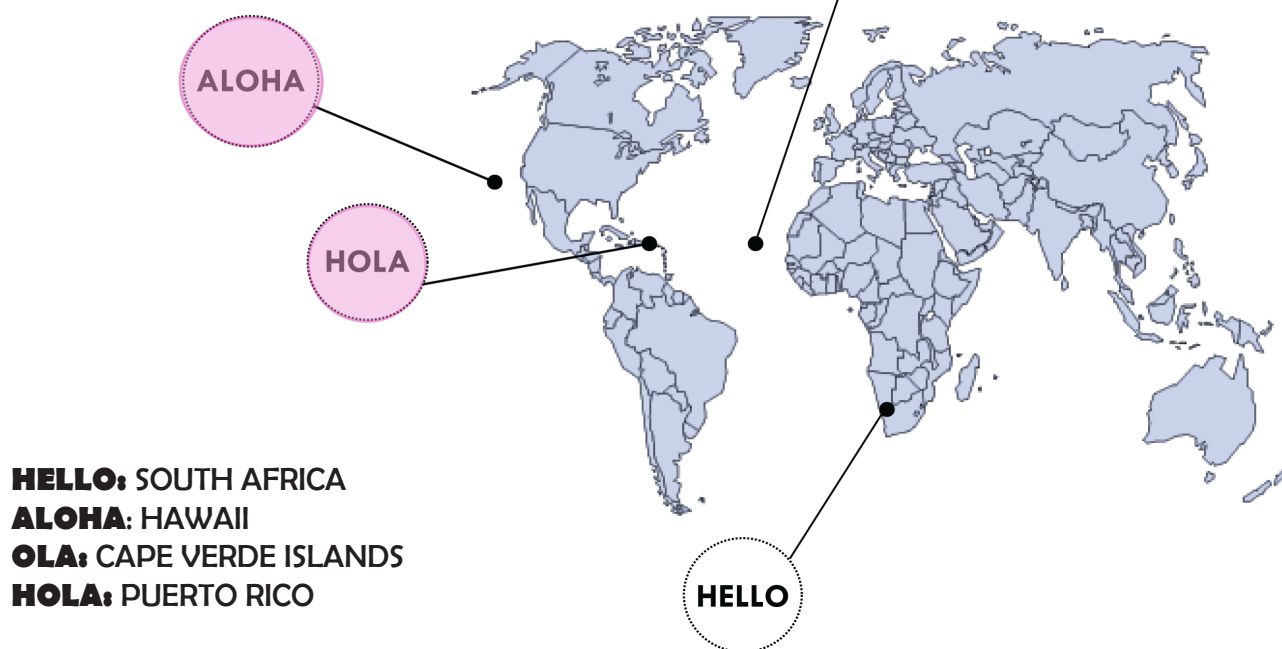
Sing a Song!

Do you like to sing? I do! All male humpback whales love to sing, especially when we are in our tropical breeding areas. Just like people in different countries have their own way of saying hello, humpbacks sing different songs in different areas. Did you know that while we all sing, my friends in Hawaii, South Africa and the Cape Verde Islands all sing different versions of the song that I sing off of Puerto Rico?

Can you match these countries with their greetings?

Germany	Bonjour
Australia	Guten Tag
Russian Fed.	Apakhabar
France	Dobry dyen
USA	G'day
Brunei	Hello

How do you wish someone a good day?



HELLO: SOUTH AFRICA

ALOHA: HAWAII

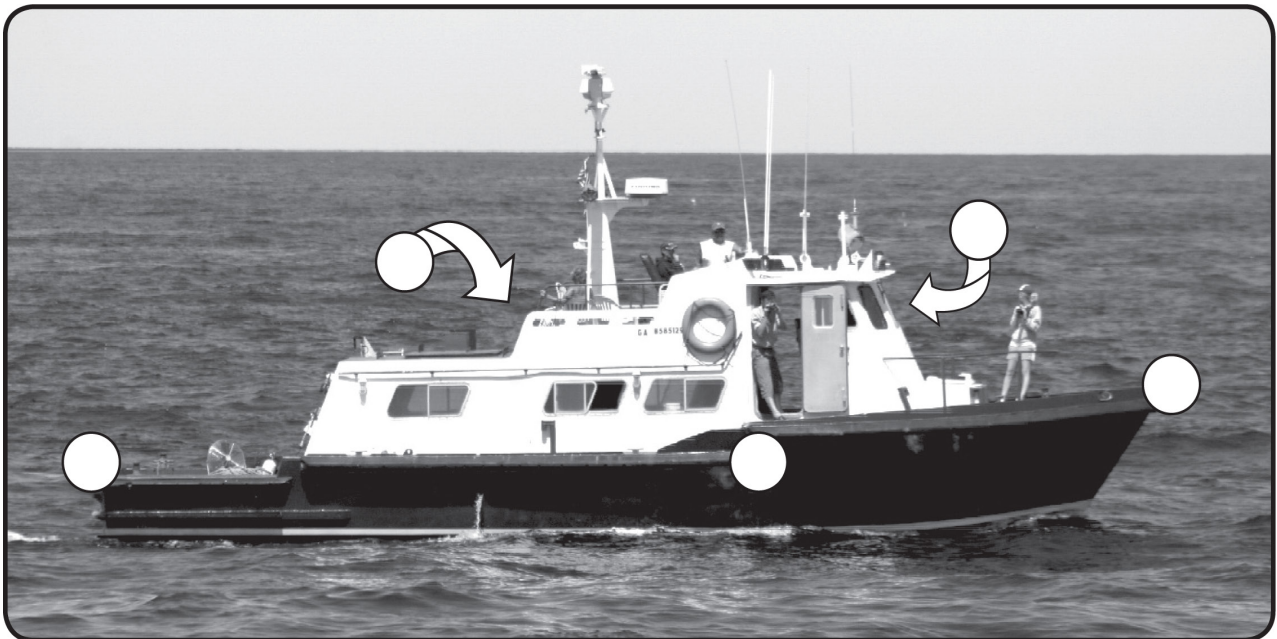
OLÁ: CAPE VERDE ISLANDS

HOLA: PUERTO RICO

You're at the Helm!

As you know, whales and humans share the oceans. Sometimes boats are going so fast that whales barely have time to get out of the way! Sadly, some whales I know have been hit by boats. To make our shared oceans safer, boats need to slow down or avoid areas important to whales. So if you see a spout, please watch out and slow down.

In the waters of several countries who are concerned about whales, boats have to slow their speed in some areas to protect my friends.



Can you label the parts of the boat above?

1. Wheelhouse (room where the captain drives the boat)
2. Starboard (right side of the boat)
3. Port (left side of the boat)
4. Stern (back of the boat)
5. Bow (front of the boat)

DALMATIAN

See my spots



57



EXCLAIM

My exclamation point!



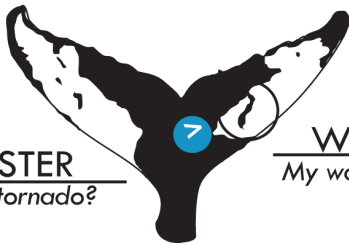
MIDNIGHT

Dark as night



TWISTER

See my tornado?



WALRUS

My walrus whiskers



Crossword

Across:

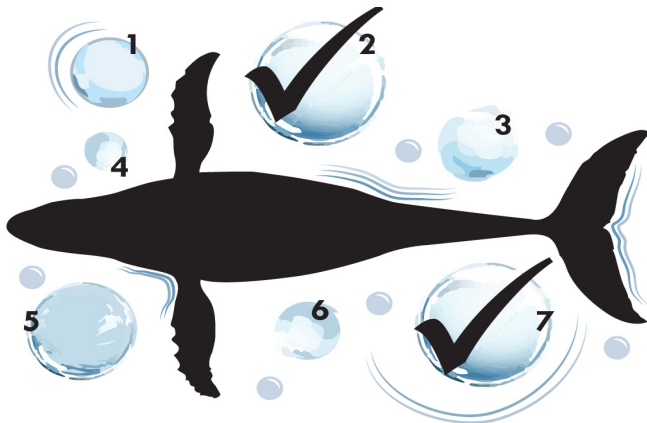
1. MAMMALS
2. CORAL
3. BALEEN
4. ECHOLOCATION
5. WEST INDIES
6. ORCA

Down

7. FLIPPERS
8. MYSTICETE
9. AIR
10. SILVER
11. TAIL
12. ODONTOCETES

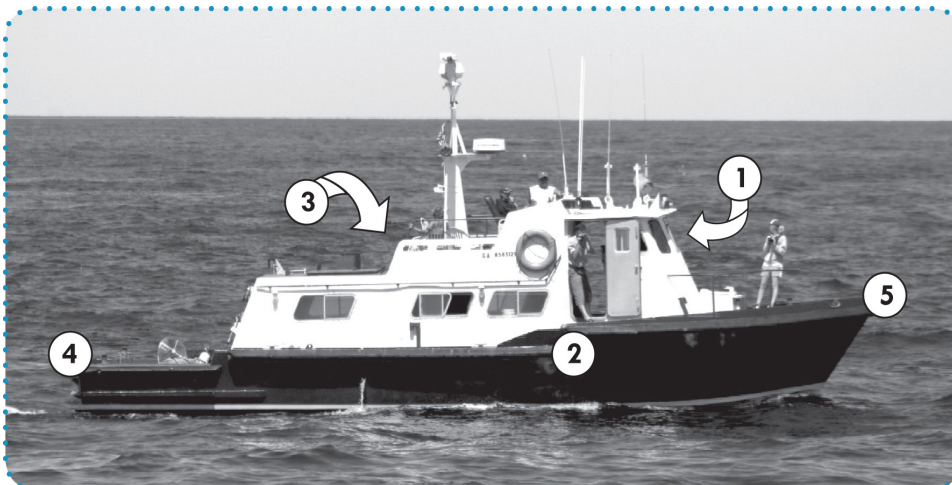
Countries and their greetings

Germany	Bonjour
Australia	Guten Tag
Russian Fed	Apakhabar
France	Dobry dyen
USA	G'day
Brunei	Hello

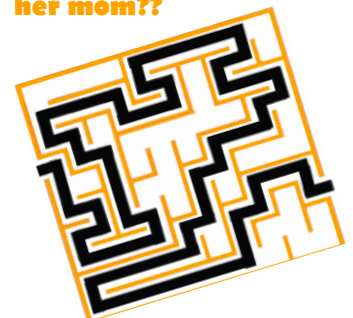


Swimmer & Diver

1. (b)
2. The best diver is the Sperm whale (e)



Can you help this baby whale navigate through the maze to be safe with her mom??





Coral is a male humpback whale who was born in 1988 to his mother, Silver. His story is one of a survivor. Silver protected her new calf when he was attacked by orcas as a newborn and now he bears only scars, or rake marks, on his fluke as a reminder. In 1991, Silver succumbed to an entanglement in fishing gear, a fate Coral nearly suffered when he became entangled in gear in 2005. Luckily, Coral was able to free himself from the gear. No one knows for sure how he acquired the scar he bears behind his blowhole, but perhaps it is another reminder of the harsh realities of the life he faces in an ocean he shares with humans. Despite all of this, Coral remains one of the most sociable whales we have ever observed and, when spotted on whale watches, he is often seen swimming with other whales. Coral's determination serves as a beacon of hope to us all, and stands as a reminder that **the choices we make every day can make a difference, and help save whales like Coral.**





You can adopt Coral!

**We'll send you monthly
updates about Coral & his
family, and we'll let you know
when we see him throughout
the year!**



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