

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Big Blue Whale

By Guy Belleranti



## Preview

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The blue whale is large in length and weight. Most grow 80 feet (25 meters). Some reach 100 feet (30 meters). That's the length of three school buses.

Adult blue whales can weigh over 150 tons (136,000 kilograms). That's as much as 30 adult male African elephants.

And speaking of big, a blue whale's heart is the size of a small car!

Some blue whales stay in the same location year-round. However most migrate long distances to colder waters to feed and to warmer waters to breed and give birth. Some travel alone.

Others travel in pairs or small groups. They use calls and songs to communicate with blue whales often hundreds of miles away.

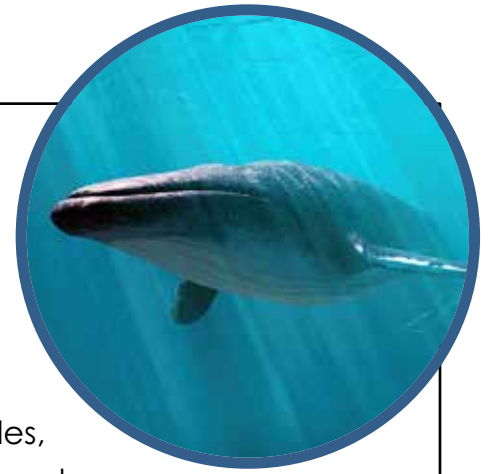
Since these whales are so large, you might think they have a lot of teeth. However, blue whales have no teeth! Instead they have stiff hairlike structures

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called baleen. The whale brings water into its mouth and small shrimp-like animals called krill are trapped in the baleen and swallowed. This is called filter feeding. Adult blue whales eat up to 8,000 pounds (3,600 kilograms) of krill every day. That's the weight of two average cars!

A newborn blue whale calf is also super large. It is over 20 feet (6 meters) long and weighs 5,000 to 6,000 pounds (2,270–2,720 kilograms).

fishing gear, and collisions with ships are three. A more widespread danger for whales, and all ocean creatures, is pollution. Millions of tons of plastic trash enter the ocean every year. Whales, sea turtles, seabirds, and fish swallow or become trapped in it. Some of the plastic breaks down into the poisonous chemicals from which it was made



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Unfortunately, like many animals, blue whales are now endangered. At one time there were 350,000 blue whales swimming the oceans. But in the early 1900s the whaling industry began hunting them for their oil. Today, only 10,000 to 25,000 remain. Thankfully, the International Whaling Commission banned all commercial whaling in 1966. In most places it is illegal to hunt or even hurt a blue whale.

However, blue whales still face dangers. Ship noise, entanglement with

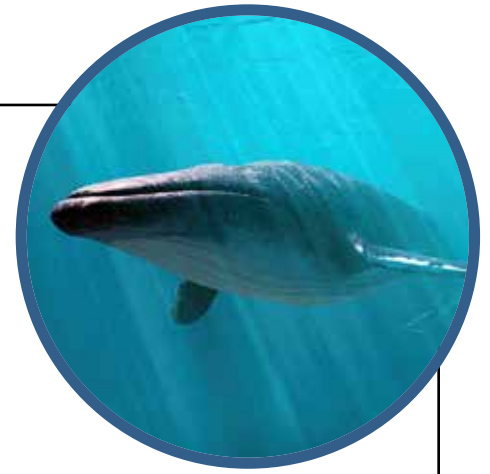


	Length	Weight
newborn blue whale calf	over 20 feet (6 meters)	5,000–6,000 pounds (2,270–2,720 kilograms)
6 to 7 months old blue whale calf	50 feet (15 meters)	50,000 pounds (22,680 kilograms)
adult blue whales	80–100 feet (25–30 meters)	over 150 tons (136,000 kilograms)

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- Which of the following is *not* true about blue whales?
  - They can be found in all oceans except the Arctic.
  - The biggest threat they face is the whaling industry.
  - Newborn blue whales weigh more than the average car.
  - Adults can weigh more than 30 elephants.
- According to the text, the number of blue whales alive today is closest to which percent of their population before 1900?
  - 5%
  - 15%



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4. Why did people mostly hunt blue whales? \_\_\_\_\_  
When was it banned? \_\_\_\_\_

- Which is true about baby blue whales?
  - Pollution doesn't affect them.
  - It takes a year to double their size.
  - They are called cows.
  - They drink over 100 gallons of milk daily.

6. Would you be afraid to go boating near blue whales? Why or why not?  
Support your answer using at least one fact from the article.

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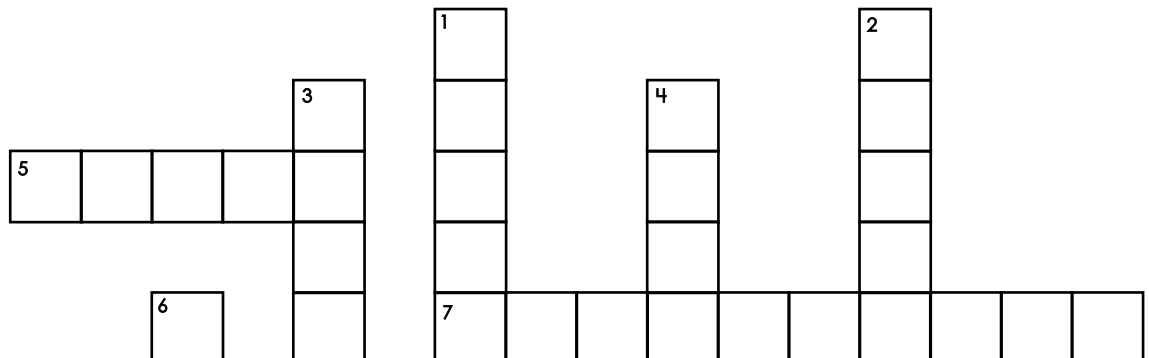
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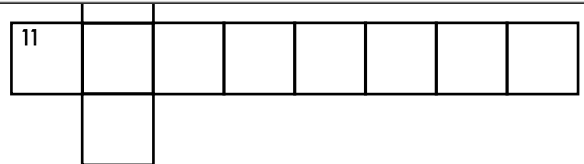


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# Preview

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**Down:**

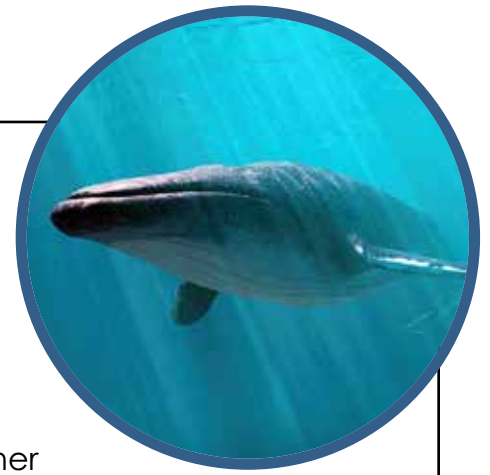
- 1. preserving or protecting wildlife
- 2. to separate, especially solids from liquid
- 3. group of people with a common goal
- 4. getting caught in something
- 6. hairlike structures used to strain water

**Across:**

- 5. shrimp-like animal eaten by blue whales
- 7. at risk of becoming extinct
- 8. done for a profit
- 9. to move from one place to another
- 10. a crash or hit
- 11. large businesses working on one thing

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# The Big Blue Whale



In the article, "The Big Blue Whale," you learned about the biggest animal on earth, blue whales. They are mammals.

Depending on how it's measured, the smallest mammal is either the bumblebee bat or the Etruscan shrew. Using the internet, research and describe one of these species. Make sure to give information about its size, where it lives, and what it eats. How does it compare to a blue whale? Write the address of any website you use on the back of this page.

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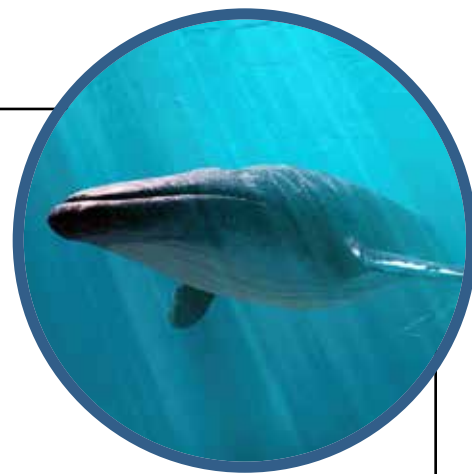
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## ANSWER KEY

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1. Which of the following is *not* true about blue whales?
- a. They can be found in all oceans except the Arctic.
  - b. The biggest threat they face is the whaling industry.**
  - c. Newborn blue whales weigh more than the average car.



6. Would you be afraid to go boating near blue whales? Why or why not?  
Support your answer using at least one fact from the article.

**Answers will vary. Examples are: No, because they have baleen instead of teeth and can't bite you. // Yes, because they weigh over 150 tons and could hurt you accidentally.**

## ANSWER KEY



# The Big Blue Whale



1. preserving or protecting wildlife
2. to separate, especially solids from liquid
3. group of people with a common goal
4. getting caught in something
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