

Blue Whale



The blue whale is the largest animal on the planet, weighing as much as 200 tons (approximately 33 elephants). The blue whale has a heart the size of a Volkswagen Beetle. Its stomach can hold one ton of krill and it needs to eat about four tons of krill each day. They are the loudest animals on Earth and are even louder than a jet engine. Their calls reach 188 decibels, while a jet reaches 140 decibels. Their low frequency whistle can be heard for hundreds of miles and is probably used to attract other blue whales.

Giants of the Ocean: Whale Facts

At the top of the food chain, whales play a vital role in the overall health of the environment. WWF documents and protects critical feeding and breeding areas, and migration routes of whales. We also work to help shift shipping lanes to limit noise and other disruptions for whales and other marine species.

WHY THEY MATTER



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Whales are at the top of the food chain and have an important role in the overall health of the marine environment. During the 20th century, the blue whale was an

important whaling target and even after it was protected, and commercial whaling stopped in 1966, exploitation efforts by the former Soviet Union persisted.



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Like other large whales, blue whales are threatened by environmental change including habitat loss and toxics. Blue whales can also be harmed by ship strikes and by becoming entangled in fishing gear. Although commercial whaling no longer represents a threat, climate change and its impact on krill (shrimp-like crustaceans), blue whales' major prey, makes this cetacean particularly vulnerable.

WHAT WWF IS DOING



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PROTECTING THROUGH POLICY

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) is the body charged with regulating whaling and addressing the vast number of other threats to whales, dolphins and porpoises in our oceans such as shipping, climate change, and bycatch. WWF works to make the IWC more effective in reducing all these threats to whales.

SATELLITE TRACKING

Southern Chile's Gulf of Corcovado is an important feeding area for blue whales. However, it is also home to the country's abundant salmon farms and utilized by artisanal and industrial fisheries. Collectively they create multiple threats to whales, from marine debris to bycatch to vessel strikes. WWF is using satellite tags to see what specific routes are used by the whales and which areas are used the most often. This information will help inform decisions about protected areas, to prevent interactions between whales and salmon farms or wild-caught fisheries.

