

Whale



Everyone knows about whales, right? Here are some interesting facts that you may not know:

- Whales are mammals – and are descendants of land-living mammals.
- They are cetaceans – as are dolphins and porpoises. These are all considered to be highly intelligent.
- Whales are the closest living relative to the hippo.
- The “Killer Whale” has the word “whale” in its name, but is actually a type of dolphin.
- Whales have ears – and communicate in sounds called “whale songs.”

Whales, being mammals, breathe air into their lungs, milk their young, and are warm-blooded. They also have hair, but not much. Like cattle, the males are called bulls, the females are called cows, and the young ones are called calves.

They breathe air through the “blowhole” on their head. Whales can stay underwater with one big breath for a long period of time – in fact, some have been noted to stay under as long as two hours with one breath!

The blue whale is the largest living animal. It is about 100 feet long and can weigh 150 tons!

Under a whale’s skin is a thick layer of blubber to help keep it warm, and help it store a lot of energy. For many years people would catch whales to get the oil from the blubber, as well as whale meat for food. Today there are laws against whaling, although some countries are still

allowed to catch whales. The numbers of whales had gone down dangerously for many years, but is very slowly going back up. Scientists think that whales can live as long as 100 years, but most live between 30-90 years.