

Humpback whale

Megaptera novaeangliae

Global Threats



blowhole (1 in porpoises and dolphins and 2 in baleen whales)

Dorsal fin

flukes

flippers

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Other Names: Hump-backed whale

Length (m/ft): 17-19m/ 55-60ft

Weight (kg/lbs): 25,000-30,000kg/ 55,000-66,000lbs

Distinctive Markings: One of the easiest whales to identify as they have exceptionally long flippers that can measure up to 5 meters in length. They have a slender, knobbly head and lower jaw and a large dark grey or blue-black stocky body. Before diving, they raise their flukes out of the water making it easy to identify individuals as all have a unique black and white pigmentation on their undersides.

Behaviour: The most energetic of the large whales, humpback whales may breach, lobtail and flipper slap at the surface. They also like to lie on their side or back, holding one or both flippers in the air. Showing little fear of boats, humpback whales may be highly inquisitive and readily approach slow-moving or stationary vessels. They are slow swimmers, with dives usually lasting between 3 and 9 minutes. Humpback whales migrate in winter to breeding grounds in warmer waters where males sing complex songs to attract a mate. In the summer and autumn they migrate to cooler waters to feed where they eat prey such as fish and krill, sometimes by bringing them to the surface in a 'bubble cloud', and then swimming through the cloud with their mouth open. Individuals can travel at a speed of 25 km/h or more.

The present poster was specially edited for the **Responsible Whale Watching and Conservation Workshop** held in Bequia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in October 21st - 24th, 2014. This was conducted by **Fundación Cethus** from Argentina with the auspices of the **Animal Welfare Institute (AWI)**, **Cetacean Society International (CSI)**, **OceanCare** and **Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC)** in collaboration with the **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Trust**.