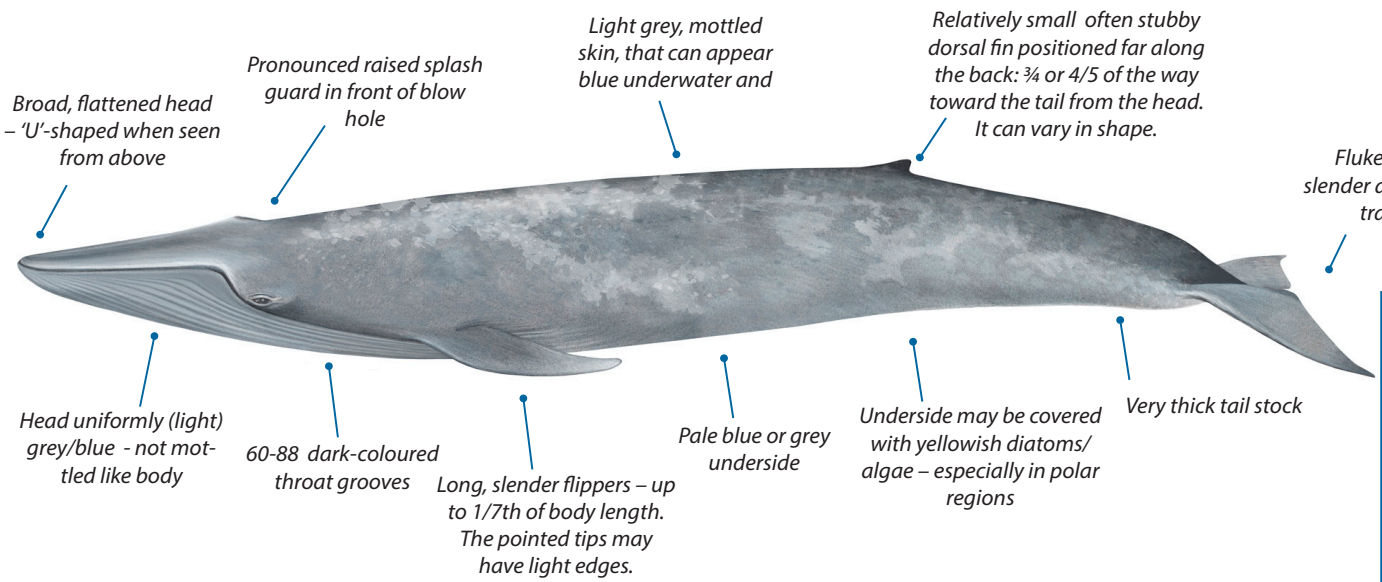


Blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*)

Distribution: Worldwide (see map below and full list of countries in the detailed species account online at: <https://www.handbook.iwc.int/en/species/blue-whale>)

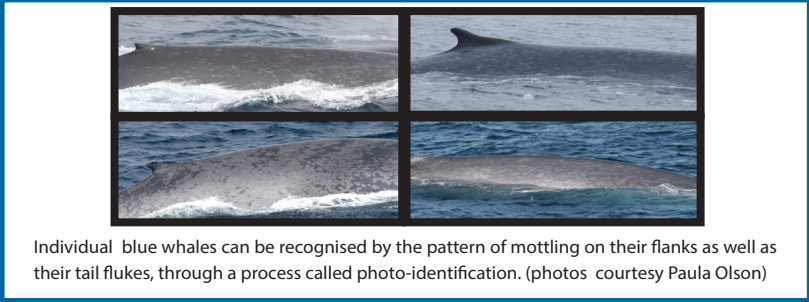
True Blue Whale
 Adult length: 23-30m
 Adult weight: up to 180,000kg
 Newborn: 6-7m /2000 – 3000kg

Pygmy Blue Whale
 Adult length: maximum 25m
 Adult weight: up to 180,000kg
 Newborn: 4.5-6m /900-1000kg

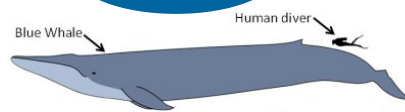


Threats: Habitat loss, ship strikes, climate change
 Habitat: Continental shelf, offshore
 Diet: Krill, small schooling fish


IUCN Conservation status:
 Blue Whale: **Endangered**
 Antarctic Blue Whale: **Critically Endangered**
 Pygmy Blue Whale: **Data deficient**



Fun Facts

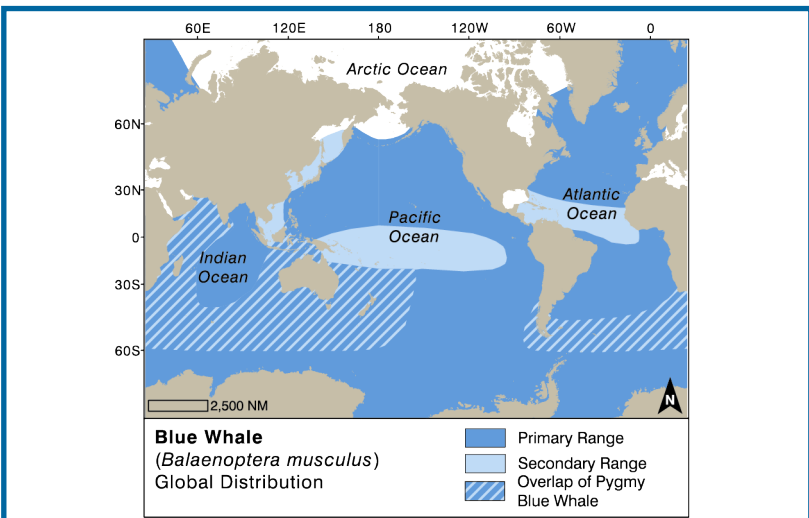


- Blue whales are the largest animal to have ever lived on the planet (bigger than dinosaurs!).
- A blue whale calf can gain 90 kg per day from drinking the mother's rich milk.
- An adult blue whale's heart is the size of a small car, and a child could crawl through its arteries.
- Blue whales are the only whale in the genus *Balaenoptera* that lifts its tail flukes regularly when diving.



Blue whales in almost every ocean basin feed predominantly on small shrimp-like crustaceans called krill: Photo credit: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Antarctic_krill_\(Euphausia_superba\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Antarctic_krill_(Euphausia_superba).jpg)

A blue whale's blow can be 10-12 m high, making it visible from a long distance. This is a pygmy blue whale off the coast of Australia: Photo courtesy of Chris Johnson



Blue whale global distribution. Adapted by Nina Lisowski from Jefferson, T.A., Webber, M.A. and Pitman, R.L. (2015). "Marine Mammals of the World: A Comprehensive Guide to Their Identification," 2nd ed. Elsevier, San Diego, CA. Copyright Elsevier: <http://www.elsevier.com>

There are currently five recognised sub-species of blue whale that occur in different parts of the world. *B. m. musculus*, Northern blue whale, *B. m. intermedia*, Antarctic blue whale, *B. m. indica*, Northern Indian Ocean blue whale – these three are considered "True" blue whales. There are also *B. m. brevicauda*, Pygmy blue whale, and *B. m. un-named subspp.*, Chilean blue whale.