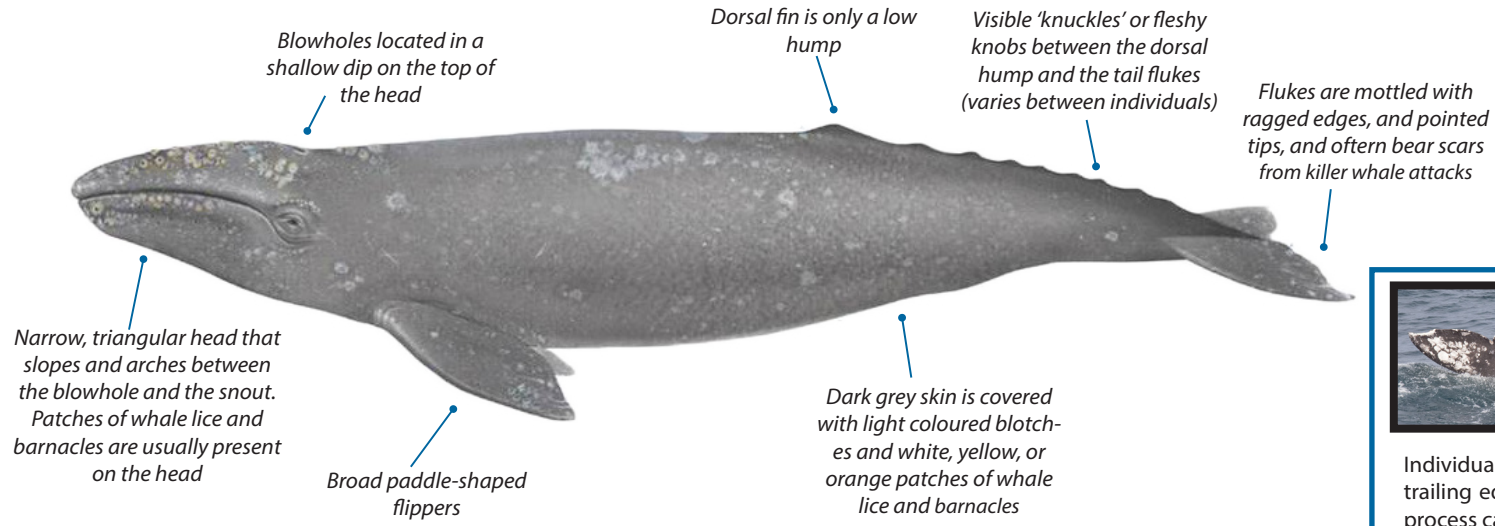




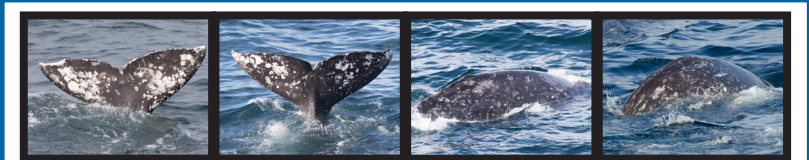
# Gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*)

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

Adult length: 11-15 m  
Adult weight: up to 45,000 kg  
Newborn: 4.6-4.9m /680-920 kg



Threats: Entanglement, habitat loss, ship strikes, climate change  
Habitat: nearshore  
Diet: amphipods/planktonic crustaceans  
IUCN Conservation status: **Least Concern**  
Western sub-population: **Critically Endangered**

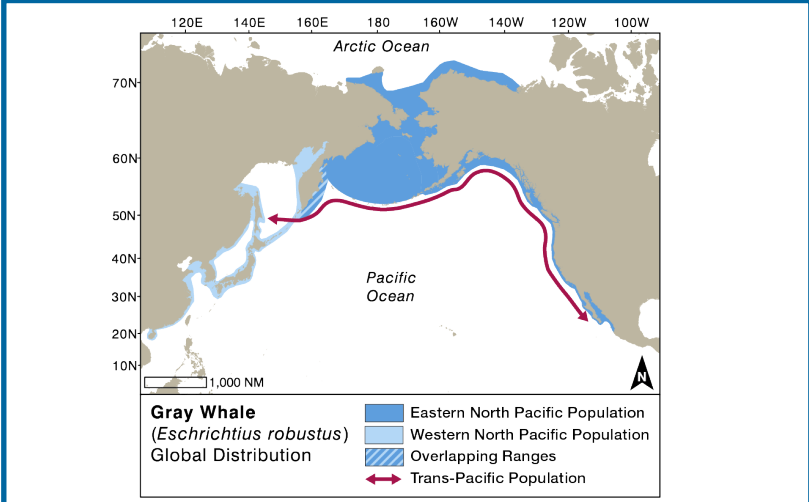


Individual gray whales can be recognised the patterns and serrations on the trailing edges of their tail flukes or their flanks and dorsal humps through a process called photo-identification. IWC Archive photos.

## Fun Facts

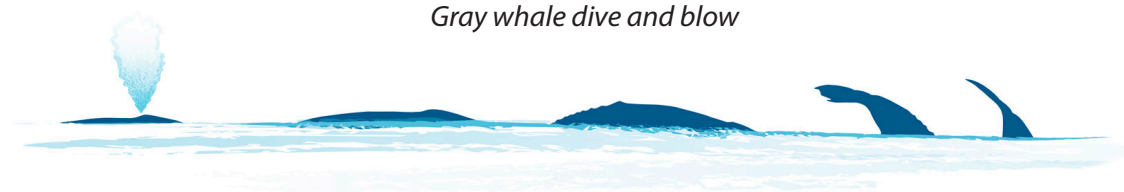
- Gray whales make the longest known migration of any mammal – a round trip of up to 20,000km that spans 55 degrees of latitude.
- Just as the majority of humans are right-handed, studies have shown that over 90% of gray whales show a preference for rolling onto their right sides rather than their left when they feed.

Gray whales are known to spy hop – raising their head out of the water as if too look around above the surface, like this whale in Mexico. The photo also shows the typical patches of whale lice on the head: Photo courtesy of Chris Johnson



Gray whale distribution. Adapted by Nina Lisowski from Würsig, B., Theewissen, J.G.M. and Kovacs, K.M. Editors (2018) "Encyclopedia of Marine Mammals", 3rd ed. Academic Press, Elsevier: San Diego, CA. Copyright Elsevier: <http://www.elsevier.com>

## Gray whale dive and blow



Gray whales are found only in the North Pacific. Originally the whales found on the Eastern and Western sides of the Pacific were thought to possibly comprise different sub-species, but satellite tagging and photo identification studies have proven that there is regular movement across the ocean and exchange between these populations.