| **Feature/Aspect** | **PHP 5.6** | **PHP 7** | **PHP 8** |
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| **Scalar Type Declarations** | No scalar type declarations. | Introduced scalar type declarations (**int**, **float**, **string**, **bool**). | Added support for stricter return type declarations and introduced **mixed** type. |
| **Return Type Declarations** | No return type declarations. | Introduced return type declarations for functions and methods. | Added support for more precise return types such as **static**, **self**, and **parent**. |
| **Nullable Types** | No support for nullable types. | Introduced nullable types using **?** syntax. | Enhanced support for union types, allowing more flexibility in type declarations. |
| **Error Handling** | Uses traditional error handling with **try-catch** for exceptions. | Improved error handling with the introduction of the **Throwable** interface and the **try-catch** block for both exceptions and errors. | Added the **throw** expression, allowing the throwing of exceptions in expressions. |
| **Spaceship Operator** | Not available. | Introduced the spaceship operator (**<=>**) for combined comparison. | No significant changes. |
| **Anonymous Classes** | Not available. | Introduced support for anonymous classes. | No significant changes. |
| **Closure Call** | Limited support for **$this** in closures. | Improved support for **$this** in closures. | No significant changes. |
| **Generator Return Expressions** | No support for value return from generators. | Added support for returning values from generators using the **return** keyword. | No significant changes. |
| **Performance** | Generally slower compared to PHP 7 and 8. | Significant performance improvements, making PHP 7 faster than PHP 5. | Continued performance enhancements in PHP 8, further optimizing execution speed. |
| **Just-In-Time Compilation (JIT)** | Not available. | Introduced JIT compilation in PHP 8, improving overall performance. | JIT compilation is available, providing additional performance benefits for certain workloads. |
| **Attributes (Annotations)** | Not available. | Introduced attributes (metadata) in PHP 8. | Attributes continue to be supported for adding metadata to classes, methods, and properties. |
| **Union Types** | No support for union types. | Introduced union types, allowing more flexibility in type declarations. | Union types are further enhanced, providing more expressive type hinting. |
| **Match Expression** | Not available. | Introduced the **match** expression in PHP 8, providing a more powerful and concise alternative to **switch**. | No significant changes. |
| **Null Coalescing Operator (??)** | Not available. | Introduced the null coalescing operator (**??**) for concise null-checking. | No significant changes. |