

Blue Whale

The **blue whale** (*Balaenoptera musculus*) is a [marine mammal](#) and a [baleen whale](#). Reaching a maximum confirmed length of 29.9 meters (98 ft) and weighing up to 199 tonnes (196 long tons; 219 short tons), it is the [largest animal known ever to have existed](#).^{[3][a]} The blue whale's long and slender body can be of various shades of greyish-blue on its upper surface and somewhat lighter underneath. Four [subspecies](#) are recognized: *B. m. musculus* in the North Atlantic and North Pacific, *B. m. intermedia* in the Southern Ocean, *B. m. brevicauda* (the [pygmy blue whale](#)) in the Indian Ocean and South Pacific Ocean, and *B. m. indica* in the Northern Indian Ocean. There is a population in the waters off Chile that may constitute a fifth subspecies.

In general, blue whale populations migrate between their summer feeding areas near the poles and their winter breeding grounds near the tropics. There is also evidence of year-round residencies, and partial or age/sex-based migration. Blue whales are [filter feeders](#); their diet consists almost exclusively of [krill](#). They are generally solitary or gather in small groups, and have no well-defined social structure other than mother–calf bonds. Blue whales vocalize, with a [fundamental frequency](#) ranging from 8 to 25 Hz; their vocalizations may vary by region, season, behavior, and time of day. [Orcas](#) are their only natural predators.

The blue whale was [abundant in nearly all the Earth's oceans](#) until the end of the 19th century. It was hunted almost to the point of extinction by [whalers](#) until the [International Whaling Commission](#) banned all blue whale hunting in 1966. The [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#) has listed blue whales as [Endangered](#) as of 2018. It continues to face numerous man-made threats such as [ship strikes](#), [pollution](#), [ocean noise](#), and [climate change](#).^[1]

Source - [wikipedia - Blue Whale](#)