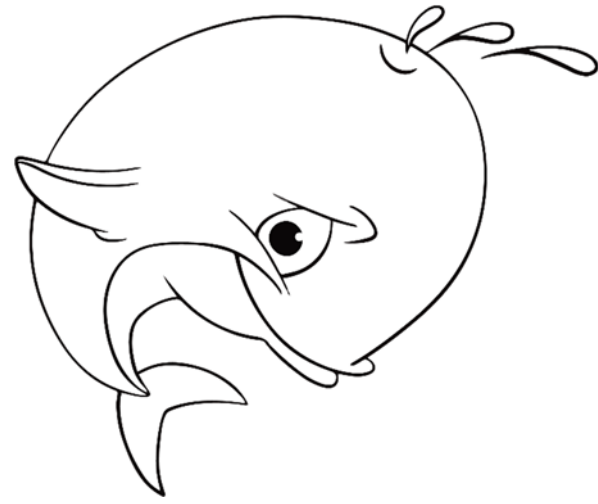


Name _____

Whales: Giants of the Ocean

Whales are majestic and enormous creatures that call the ocean their home. They are not fish; they are mammals, just like us, but they are specially adapted to live in the water. Let's explore the world of whales and discover more about these incredible marine animals!



What Whales Look Like

Whales come in various shapes and sizes. Some, like the blue whale, are the largest animals on Earth, reaching up to 100 feet long! Others, like the orca, are smaller but still quite large. Whales have streamlined bodies that help them glide smoothly through the water. They have a blowhole on top of their head, which they use to breathe air. When they exhale, it creates a spout of water and mist that can be seen from a distance.

Where Whales Live

Whales live in oceans all around the world. Some species prefer colder waters near the poles, while others inhabit warmer tropical seas. Whales are excellent swimmers and can travel long distances during their migrations. They often travel in groups called pods, which can include family members.

What Whales Eat

Whales have diverse diets depending on their species. Some, like the blue whale, are filter feeders and consume tiny plankton and krill. Others, like the killer whale, are carnivorous and eat fish, seals, and even other whales. Whales use their baleen plates or teeth to capture and consume their prey.

Breathing and Communication

Whales need to come up to the surface to breathe air. They can hold their breath for varying amounts of time, depending on the species. Whales also communicate with each other through a range of sounds, including clicks, whistles, and songs. These vocalizations help them coordinate within their pods and find food.

Whale Migration

Whales are known for their incredible migrations. They travel thousands of miles each year between their feeding and breeding grounds. During these long journeys, they face many challenges, such as predators and changing ocean conditions.

Whale Conservation

Whales are essential for the health of the ocean ecosystem, but they have faced threats like hunting and pollution. Many countries and organizations have put in place protections to help whale populations recover. Whale watching, where people observe these giants in their natural habitat, has become a popular and responsible way to appreciate these amazing animals.

Name _____

Whales: Giants of the Ocean

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What is the largest animal on Earth?
2. How do whales breathe?
3. What do whales use to capture and consume their prey?
4. Why do whales communicate with each other?
5. What are some threats that whales have faced, and how are they protected today?