

# Blue Whale

*Balaenoptera musculus*



## Species Description

The Blue Whale is a mottled grey, long, slender baleen whale (up to 29 m long), with a small dorsal (back) fin, and pointed pectoral fins. It has a long, flat v-shaped head with a ridge near the blow hole. The blue whale is a filter feeder that has large baleen plates in its upper jaw used to filter krill from the water, and numerous pleated grooves along its throat that allow it to expand. Females, males and juveniles are similar in appearance, although females are larger.



**Key ID Features:** \*very long and slender \*v-shaped head \*ridge near blow hole

## STATUS



Endangered COSEWIC

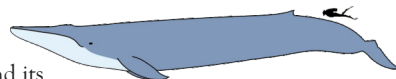
Endangered SARA

The Blue Whale is found in all oceans on the planet. It is usually observed in coastal and offshore waters during the spring, summer and fall in the North Atlantic and is thought to migrate south in the winter. About 250 Blue Whales occur in Atlantic Canada.



## Interesting Points

- Largest animal ever known.
- Its heart is the size of a car and its tongue weighs more than an elephant!
- Young drink 400 litres of milk/day.



Size comparison of a human and Blue Whale

## Threats

- Impacts of historical whaling.
- Acoustic disturbance.
- Ice entrapment.
- Food availability changes due to climate change.
- Chemical contaminants.
- Vessel collisions and disturbance.
- Fishing gear entanglement.
- Toxic algal blooms and toxic spills.



Blue Whale skeleton. About 100 people can fit into its mouth, yet it eats one of the smallest animals on the planet (krill).

Learn how you can help on page 136.

## Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

**Contact:** DFO Species at Risk 1-866-891-0771 or [xmarsara@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:xmarsara@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

**Info:** [www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes), [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca)

**Sighting Reports:** [xmarwhalesightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:xmarwhalesightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

**Stewardship:** Report distressed or dead marine mammals to MARS: 1-866-567-6277