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WHALES!

The Gentle Giants

Robyn P. Watts

KNOWLEDGE
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Reading Recovery Level: 17

Word Count: 1712

Content: Description, Explanation.

ACARA F-10 References:

Learning Areas:

English; Humanities and Social Sciences; Science; Health and Physical Education.

General Capabilities:

Literacy; Critical and Creative Thinking; Personal and Social Capability.

Cross Curriculum Priorities:

Sustainability

Author Bio:

Robyn Watts is the co-founder of Knowledge Books and Software. She has written numerous educational books in the sciences, food technology and literacy. Robyn was a science teacher prior to publishing. She has a science degree and an educational diploma from The University of New England, Australia.

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Teacher Notes:

Whales, dolphins, and porpoises are some of the most important and fascinating mammals living in the oceans and rivers of our world. Join the author as she discovers where whales came from, what they eat, where they migrate, and why we need to do everything we can to protect them.

Discussion points for consideration:

1. What types of whales, dolphins, and porpoises live in your part of the world?
2. Why is it important to try and save all the cetaceans from extinction?
3. Why is the whale watching industry so important to both people and whales?

Difficult words to be introduced and practised before reading this book:

porpoise, dolphin, cetaceans, California, extinct, Vaquita, scientists, Amazon, echolocation, temperature, mammals, disappeared, amazing, ancestors, surface, baleen, sieve, filter, crustaceans, algae, carbon dioxide, fertilise, kilometres, migration, routes, America, Australia, journey, Antarctica, identified, environment.

Acknowledgement of the First Nations' People:

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

Contents

1. What are Whales?
2. What Did Whales Come From?
3. Whales are Mammals
4. What Do Whales Eat?
5. Where Do Whales Go?
6. Can Whales Talk?
7. Looking After Whales
8. Why We Need Whales

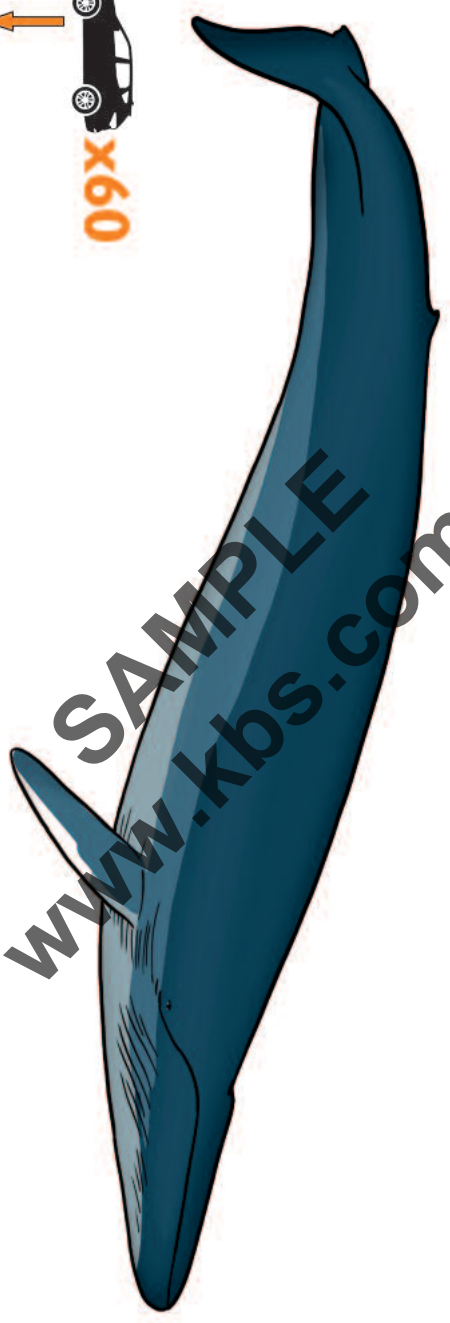




1. What are Whales?

Whales, porpoises, and dolphins are special animals. Whales are cetaceans. Some cetaceans are the largest animals on Earth.

The Blue Whale can be over 33 metres long. Cetaceans can weigh up to 100 tonnes. This is about the same size as 60 Land Cruisers!



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Some cetaceans are very small whales. These small whales are also important for the oceans. The smallest porpoise is a Vaquita. The Vaquita lives in the Gulf of California. There are only 10 to 20 Vaquita left in the world. It needs to be saved before it becomes extinct.

Humans can help the Vaquita by not fishing and using gill nets where the Vaquita live. We also need to protect their food. Scientists need to study the Vaquita to see if they can live safely in other waters. How would you try to save the Vaquita?

How can we save the little Vaquita?





Whales, dolphins, and porpoises are found in oceans and rivers all over the world. The smaller ones often live in rivers. Many types of dolphins live only in rivers.

The Amazon River has its own dolphins. Dolphins also live in the Ganges River in India. These dolphins are blind. They find fish by bouncing off sounds. This is called echolocation.





2. What Did Whales Come From?

The first whales were small land mammals that looked like a deer. Over millions of years, they changed into giant sea mammals. Fossils from this time show these changes.

The early fossils show mammals that lived partly in water. Later fossils show how their limbs changed to form flippers. The back legs disappeared, leaving just a small bone. Scientists believe that all cetaceans came from this small deer-like mammal.

