

# Blue Whales

Blue whales are the largest animals currently on Earth. These whales can grow up to 100 feet long and weigh up to 200 tons (400,000 pounds). Just what do these large animals eat?

Their diet consists only of tiny shrimp-like animals called krill. After taking a big gulp of sea water, the blue whale's massive tongue forces the water out of its mouth through its baleen\*. Only the krill is left behind and swallowed. A blue whale can eat up to four tons of krill in a single day.

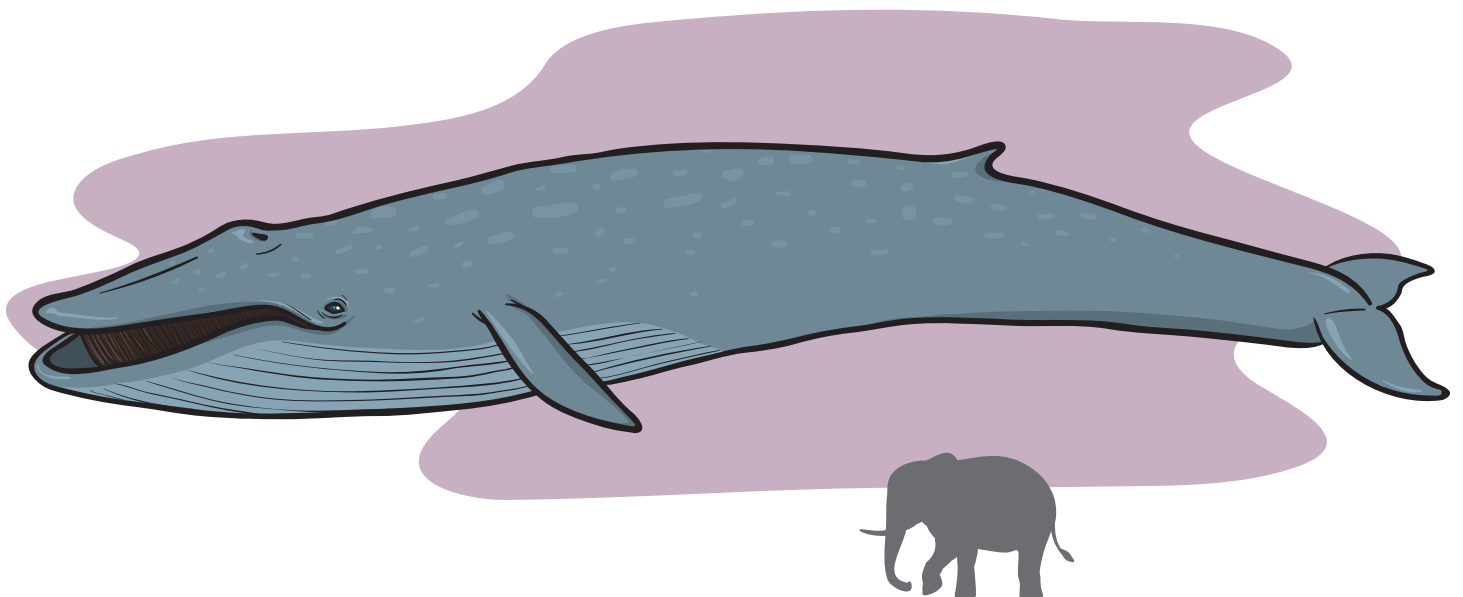
Blue whales have been found in every ocean of the world. Since whales live in the ocean they are marine animals. They swim in small groups but are usually found alone or in pairs. The blue whale will spend most of its time feeding in polar waters. During winter you will find blue whales migrating towards the equator. Animals migrate, or move to a different place, for many reasons. Blue whales migrate to eat and have their young in warmer waters.

Blue whales are endangered. This means they are threatened by extinction\*. During the early 1900s people would hunt for the blue whale to use its oil for lamps and other things. The blue whale can live up to ninety years.

Interesting facts: Blue whale calves can weigh up to three tons at birth. That's the same weight as an adult blue whale's tongue!

*\*baleen: a hard substance in the mouths of some whales that is attached to their jaw and hangs down and "locks" together.*

*\*extinction: When an animal goes extinct, that means it is no longer anywhere in the world. They have all died out.*



A blue whale compared to an adult elephant.

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Use the information from the article to answer the following questions. Use complete sentences when needed.

1. Krill are \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Large fish
- B. Tiny animals
- C. A type of bird

2. Fill in the blanks to complete this sentence. Blue whales can grow up to

\_\_\_\_\_ long and weigh up to \_\_\_\_\_.

3. TRUE or FALSE: Blue whales are only found in the Pacific Ocean. Circle one.

4. Match the words with their definition.

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Extinction | A hard substance in the mouths of whales that is attached to their jaw and hangs down and “locks” together. |
| Migrate    | When an animal has all died out and can no longer be found anywhere in the world.                           |
| Baleen     | Animals moving to a different place.  |

5. A blue whale can live to be how old? Answer this question in a complete sentence.

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