



# PANGAEA EXPLORATION

## WHALES OF THE EASTERN NORTH ATLANTIC

FIELD SPOTTING GUIDE

FLUKES, FLIPPERS AND SPOUTS



## Blue Whales (*Balaenoptera musculus*)

- \* Length: 20-30 m, Weight: 110-190 tons.
- \* Largest animal ever to live on Earth.
- \* Baleen whale, filtering plankton and krill in enormous amounts.
- \* Huge spout can reach 6 -9 m with 3-5 breaths before deep diving, for 7+ min. Occasionally, they lift their fluke.
- \* N. Atlantic for summer feeding, migrate south for winter breeding.

## Humpback Whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)

- \* Length: 13-17 m, Weight: 25-40 tons.
- \* Baleen whale with barnacles visible growing on head.
- \* Playful, often slap surface, roll over, leap out of water. Can make bubble nets to trap fish.
- \* Long spouts with 3-4 breaths before deep diving for 5-7 min at a time. Nearly always fluke, pattern different and used to ID.
- \* Summer in N. Atlantic for feeding, migrate to Caribbean breeding grounds in winter.





## Minke Whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*)

- \* Length: 7-10 m, Weight: 8-10 tons.
- \* Smallest of the baleen whales, and likely most abundant.
- \* N.Atlantic minkes have white diagonal stripes across flippers, while Southern relatives have plain black flippers.
- \* Spout 3-4 times before diving, stay submerged 3-5 min, but can stay longer.
- \* Bends back before diving instead of raising fluke, sometimes leap.



## Fin Whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*)

- \* Length: 20-25 m, Weight: 50-80 tons.
- \* Baleen whale, similar in appearance to Minke Whale but twice the size.
- \* Right jaw is pale, while the left jaw is dark.
- \* Powerful spout 4-6 m, breathing cycle 3-5 times. Rarely raise fluke before diving, and stay submerged for 5-10 min.



## Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*)

- \* Length: 12-18 m, Weight: 30-50 tons.
- \* Sleep vertically and exhibit REM sleep activity.
- \* Regularly dives for ~30 min to 400m to feed, can dive over 1 hour to 1,000m for giant squid.
- \* Spout from left side of head, with about 20 breaths before raising fluke and diving.
- \* Most seen in N. Atlantic in summer are bulls, which have lost the competition for females and returned from the south.



## Long-finned Pilot Whale (*Globicephala melas*)

- \* Length: 4-8 m, Weight: 2-5 tons.
- \* Submerge for 5-10 min at a time to depths of 30-60m, but may stay longer may dive as deep as 600 m. Small fluke usually seen when diving.
- \* Highly social, living in large family groups led by dominant female. When one strands, the pod will follow.
- \* Very active, frequently breach and spyhop to see surroundings.



## **Sowerby's Beaked Whale (*Mesoplodon bidens*)**

- \* Length: 4-5m, Weight: 1-2 tons.
- \* Difficult to distinguish between species of beaked whale and challenging to see at surface- more is known from strandings.
- \* Only males have teeth: a single pair in the lower jaw called tusks, probably used to fight other males.
- \* Can dive to 1,500m to feed, uses suction to suck prey in and swallow whole.



## **Bottlenose Whales (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*)**

- \* Length: 7-9 m, Weight: 6-8 tons.
- \* Brownish in color, toothed whale. Deep divers for food.
- \* Spout is low and hard to spot, with 3 -4 breaths before diving. Can remain submerged for 30-60 min.
- \* Rarely fluke, but sometimes leap out of the water.
- \* Found in deeper waters in wintertime, closer to shore in the summer.

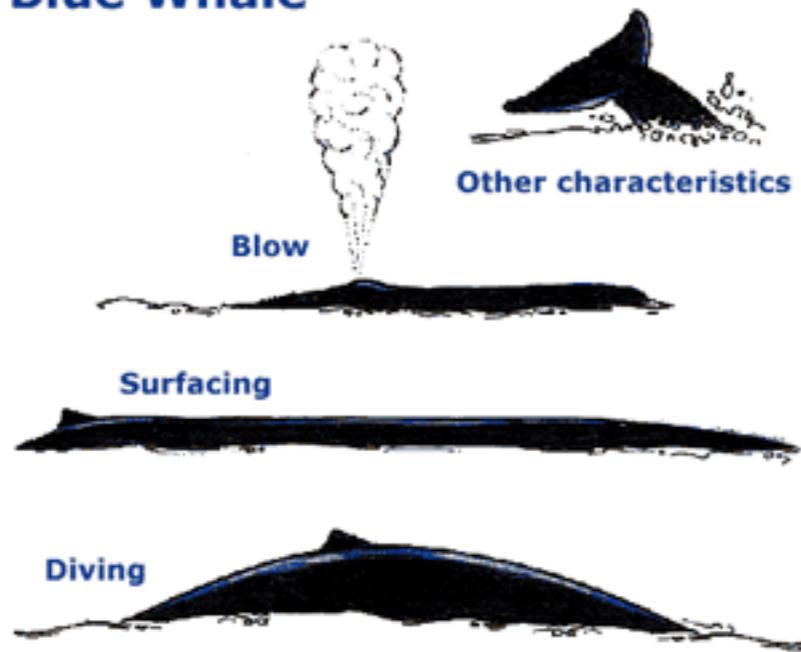


## Orca Whale (*Orcinus orca*)

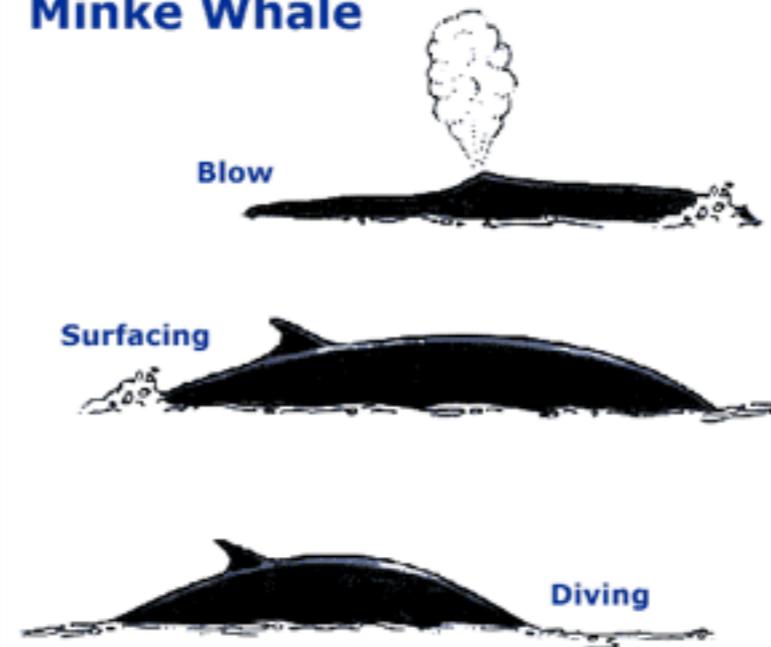
- \* Length: 6-9 m, Weight: 3-9 tons.
- \* Fast swimmers, remain submerged for up to 20 minutes, but usually surface in 5 minute periods. The breathing cycle is 3-4 consecutive times before diving.
- \* Travel in pods, with males temporarily leaving during mating season.
- \* Three known types: "residents" specialize on fish, "transients" specialize on marine mammals, and "offshore," specialize on fish, possibly sharks.
- \* Closer to shore in summer, preferring deeper waters during winter months.

# Quick Look Whale Guide

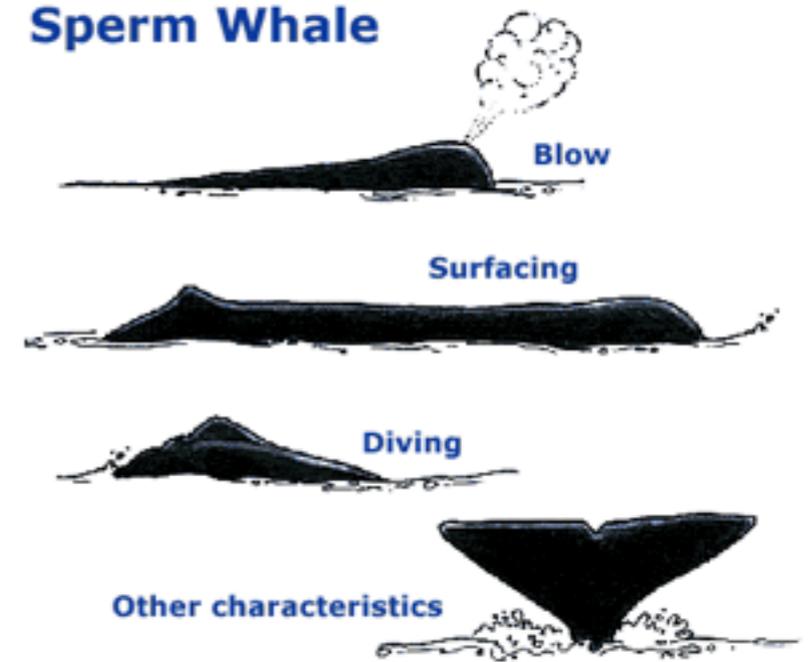
## Blue Whale



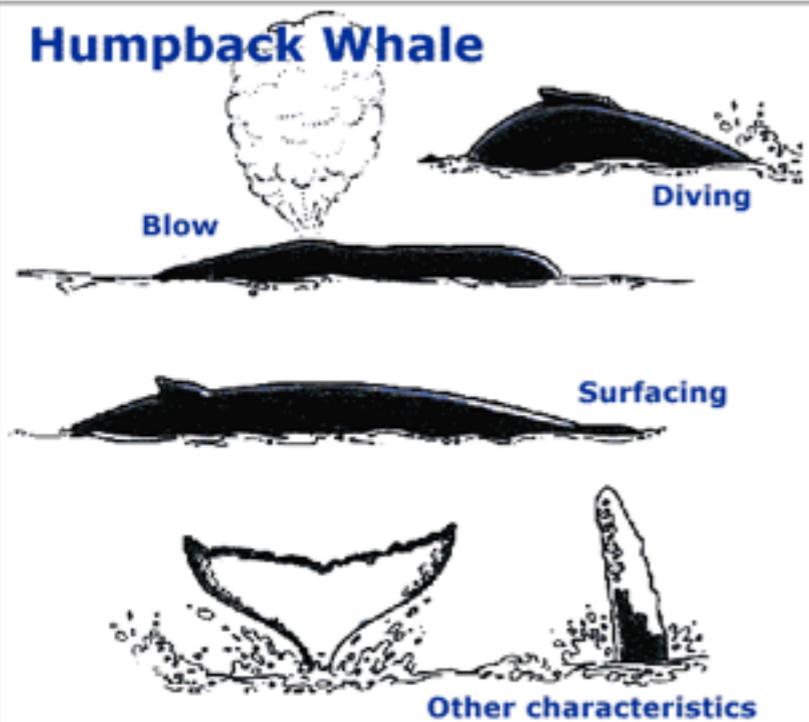
## Minke Whale



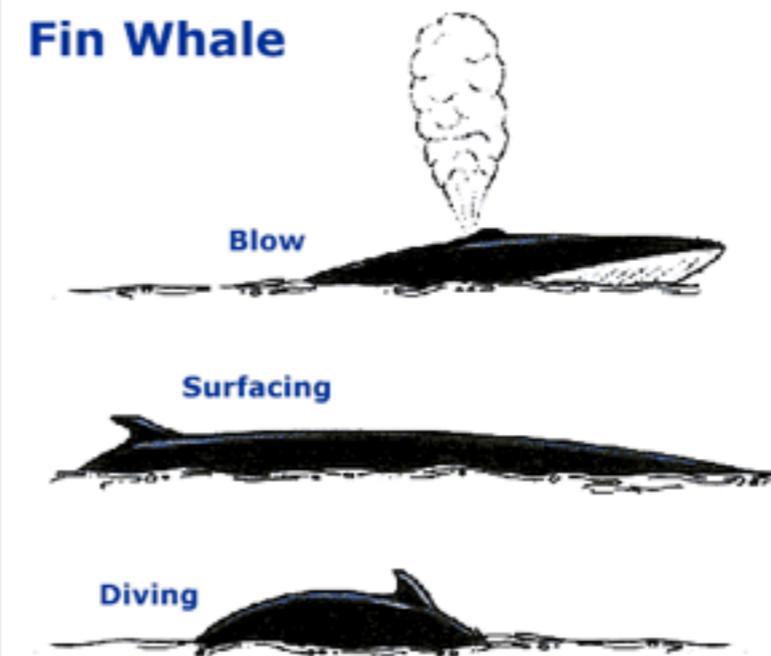
## Sperm Whale



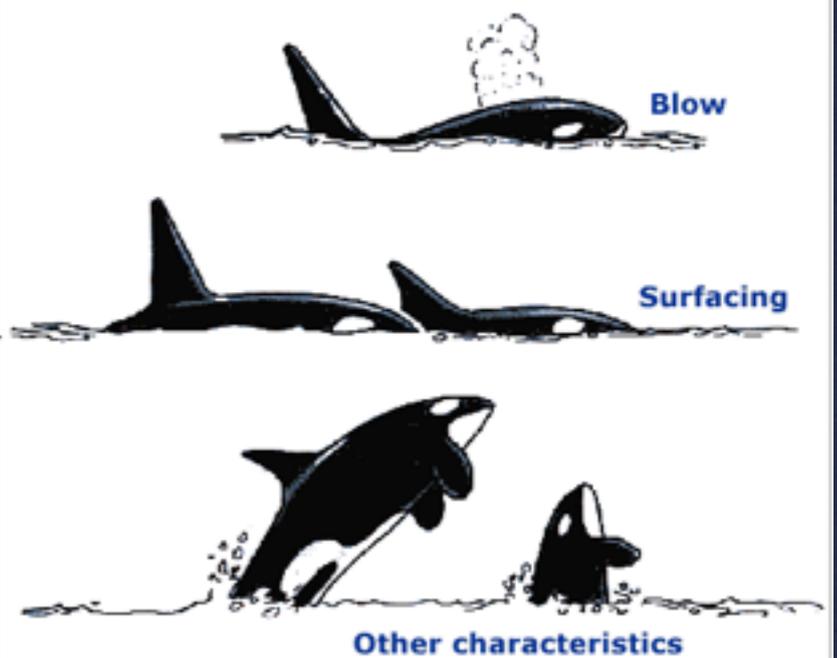
## Humpback Whale



## Fin Whale



## Killer Whale



# Additional Resources

- English-Swedish Cetacean Dictionary
- Whales of Iceland guide
- North Atlantic Killer Whale ID Project



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