

The Cycle of
Baleen Whales



SBMM
Santa Barbara Maritime Museum

What is a Baleen Whale?



Baleen Whale:

A whale that has bristly plates made of keratin (the same protein that makes up our fingernails) instead of teeth.

Use: Baleen is used to collect shrimp-like krill, plankton, and small fish from the sea. These plates filter prey from seawater inside their mouths.

Baleen Whales: blue, bowhead, right, humpback, minke and gray whale

THE POOP LOOP

STEP ONE

Whales poop.



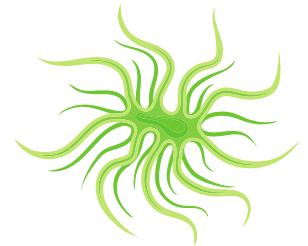
STEP TWO

Their iron-enriched poop helps create phytoplankton through photosynthesis.



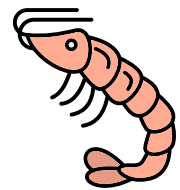
STEP THREE

Krill feed on phytoplankton.



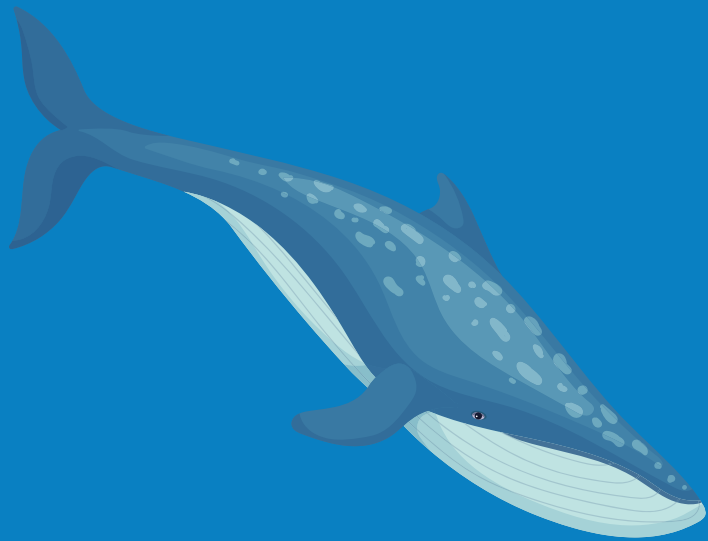
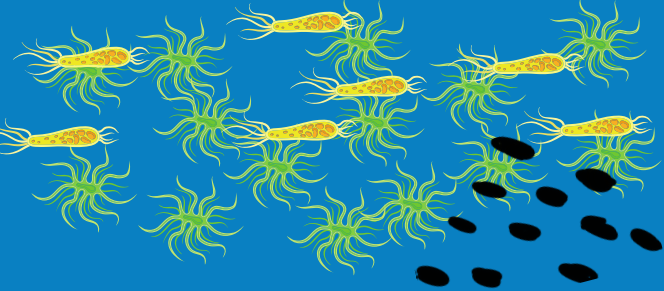
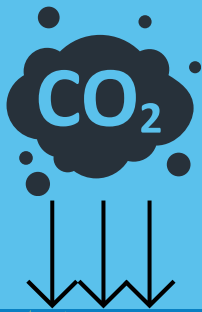
STEP FOUR

Whales feed on the krill.

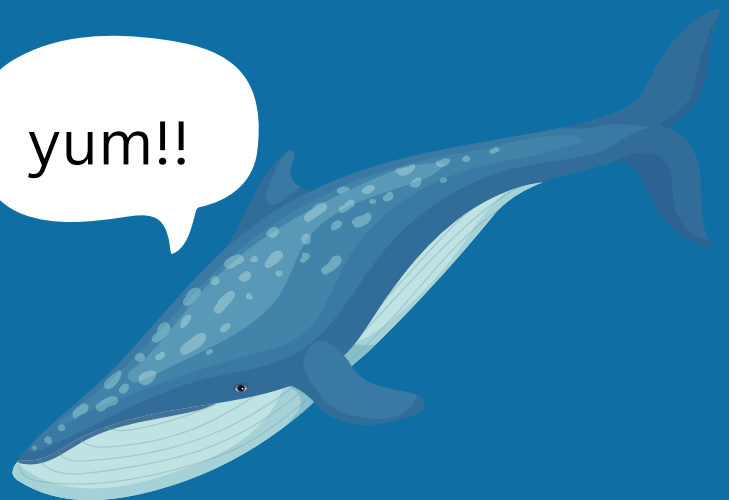


This incredible marine cycle (The Poop Loop) creates the air we breathe. How cool is that?

Whales absorb carbon in their bodies. When they die, they take that carbon out of the atmosphere for centuries. They sink with 33 tons of carbon to the bottom of the ocean.



"The Poop Loop"



Common Baleen Whales of the SB Channel

Minke Whale

Balaenoptera acutorostrata

Quick Facts

WEIGHT About 20,000 pounds

LENGTH About 35 feet

LIFESPAN Up to 50 years

THREATS Entanglement in fishing gear, climate change, ocean noise, vessel strikes, whaling

REGION Alaska, New England/Mid-Atlantic, Pacific Islands, Southeast, West Coast



Gray Whale

Eschrichtius robustus

Quick Facts

WEIGHT About 90,000 pounds

LENGTH 42 to 49 feet

LIFESPAN Unknown

THREATS Climate change, disturbance from whale watching activities, entanglement in fishing gear, habitat impacts, ocean noise, vessel strikes

REGION Alaska, West Coast, Foreign



Humpback Whale

Megaptera novaeangliae

Quick Facts

WEIGHT About 80,000 pounds

LENGTH About 60 feet

LIFESPAN 80 to 90 years

THREATS Entanglement in fishing gear, vessel strikes, vessel-based harassment, ocean noise

REGION Alaska, New England/Mid-Atlantic, Pacific Islands, Southeast, West Coast, Foreign



Blue Whale

Balaenoptera musculus

Quick Facts

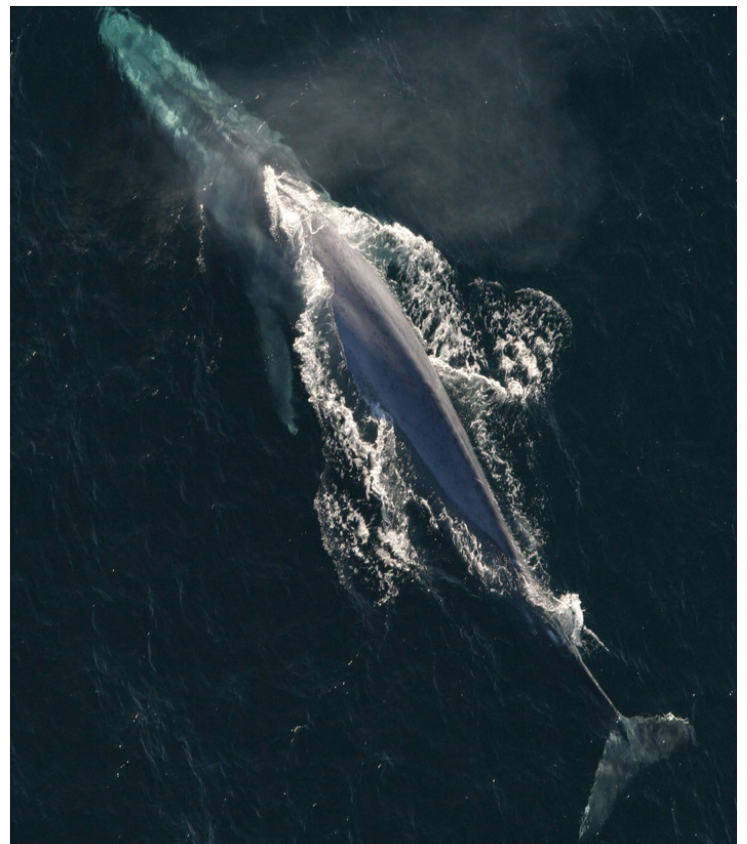
WEIGHT About 330,000 pounds

LENGTH About 110 feet

LIFESPAN 80 to 90 years

THREATS Entanglement in fishing gear, ocean noise, vessel strikes

REGION Alaska, New England/Mid-Atlantic, Pacific Islands, Southeast, West Coast



Fill in the Blanks

Write the whale's weight, length, and lifespan in the correct box.

	Weight	Length	Lifespan
Minke			
Gray			
Humpback			
Blue			



At Home Whale Art

Watch marine biologist Holly Lohuis talk about whales while you create your own underwater art with step-by-step instructions.





SBMM

Santa Barbara Maritime Museum

113 Harbor Way, Suite 190, Santa Barbara, CA 93109

WHALES ARE SUPERHEROES!



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Museum staff to fill out - customer can keep booklet

Date Used: _____ SBMM Staff Initials: _____