

# Respect

Did you know that the Blue Whale is the largest animal on earth? Bigger than the dinosaurs were! Now it commands respect. How can we save the Blue Whale?

**Blue whale**  
*Balaenoptera musculus*  
→ 100-150 tons

The largest living animal, and on par with the largest animals that ever lived. Incomplete fossils of several dinosaurs suggest they might have been marginally longer and heavier. The largest blue whale on record was 108 feet long and was estimated to weigh 170 tons.

Range is worldwide; migrates to warmer waters in winter. Northern hemisphere whales average 75-80 feet; southern whales reach 90-100 feet. Commonly travel in pairs. Cruising speed is 12 mph; can sprint up to 30 mph.

Feeds on krill and other small animals by filtering through a series of overlapping plates in its mouth that substitute for teeth. Can consume up to 4 tons a day.

Pre-whaling population has been estimated at 220,000-350,000. Today there are 5,000-10,000 in southern hemisphere; 3,000-4,000 in north.

Phil Loubere, The Register

**Gray whale**  
*Eschrichtius robustus*  
30-40 tons

Inhabits shallow waters of North American Pacific coast, migrating from Bering Sea in summer to Baja California breeding areas in winter. A small population lives along Asian Pacific coast as well. North Atlantic population is extinct.

Mottled appearance is due to large numbers of parasitic crustaceans, whale lice and barnacles on its skin.

Usually travels in groups of 2-3, moving at 3-6 mph. Can stay submerged up to 15 minutes.

Feeds on small crustaceans in ocean floor by sifting sediment through its mouth plates.

Existing population worldwide is 19,000-23,000.

**City bus**  
5-15 tons

Proportions are approximate due to foreshortening

Sources: American Cetacean Society, BBC, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, MarineBio.org, Orange Coast College

Sometimes people throw garbage where they shouldn't.

Show **respect** and help by:

