

# GRAY WHALE



- Gray whales are found only in the Pacific Ocean, and they have one of the longest migrations of any mammal. During the summer, they live in the Arctic. In the fall, they travel to Baja California, Mexico, where they enter lagoons to give birth and mate.
- These whales are gray with white patches, which mostly consist of areas where barnacles and lice have attached themselves to the whales. In fact, they carry over 400 pounds of barnacles and whale lice.
- Female gray whales usually give birth every two to three years, and their pregnancies last twelve months. Newborn calves average 16 feet in length and weigh about 1,500 pounds.

# SEA OTTER



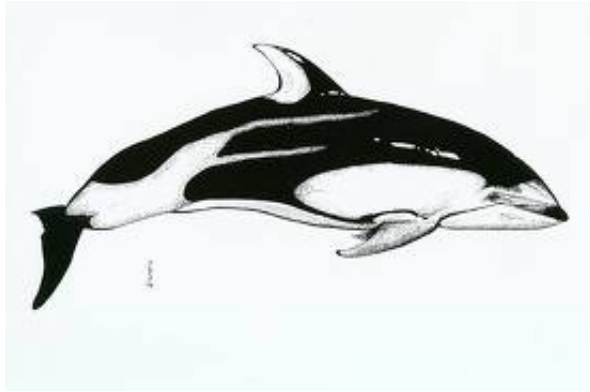
- Sea otters inhabit shallow coastal areas and prefer places with kelp. The kelp acts as an anchor that the sea otters use to wrap themselves in when they are resting. The current California population numbers around 2,800 and is found from Half Moon Bay to Morro Bay. There is a much larger population in Alaska.
- Sea otters are members of the weasel family. At 850,000 hairs per square inch, they have the thickest fur of any mammal. Sea otters in California are a threatened species due to past over hunting for their beautiful fur.
- Females give birth to one pup, and their pregnancies last four to five months. When born, the pups weigh from three to five pounds. The pups' fur traps so much air that they actually cannot dive under water. When mothers leave the pups wrapped in kelp to hunt, pups bob on the surface of the ocean like a cork.

# ELEPHANT SEAL



- Northern elephant seals are found in the North Pacific. With the exception of breeding seasons and molting periods, elephant seals live well off shore, commonly descending to over 5,000 feet below the ocean's surface.
- Elephant seals are well named because adult males have large noses that resemble an elephant's trunk. Adult males may grow to over 13 feet in length and weigh up to 4,500 pounds. The females are much smaller at 10 feet in length and 1,500 pounds.
- Each winter elephant seals arrive at their breeding beaches in Mexico and California. During this time, dominant males will often inflate their noses and produce a noise that sounds like a drum. Females give birth to the pups they have been carrying since last year. Pups weigh 75 pounds or more and are about four feet in length. The pups nurse for about 28 days, generally gaining about 10 lbs a day.

# PACIFIC WHITE-SIDED DOLPHIN



- Pacific white-sided dolphins are found in cold, temperate waters of the North Pacific Ocean from North America to Asia. They become most abundant in shallow, shelf waters off southern California from November to April and then off Oregon/Washington in May.
- These dolphins are medium-sized, reaching up to 8 feet in length. They have a small and unnoticeable beak, unlike bottlenose or common dolphins.
- Pacific white-sided dolphins are gregarious and often found in large groups of tens, hundreds and sometimes thousands. They are fast, acrobatic and playful and are one of the species commonly found bow-riding off boats. It is thought that female Pacific white-sided dolphins give birth every other year and gestation lasts about twelve months. Newborn calves are about 3 feet in length.

# CALIFORNIA SEA LION



- California sea lions are found from Vancouver Island, British Columbia to the southern tip of Baja California in Mexico.
- Males reach 850 pounds and seven feet in length. Females grow to 220 pounds and up to six feet in length. At around five years of age, males develop a bony bump on top of their skull called a sagittal crest.
- California sea lions are known for their intelligence, playfulness, and noisy barking. They are very social animals, and groups often rest closely packed together. California sea lions breed mainly on offshore islands. Pups weigh 13 to 20 pounds and nurse for six to twelve months. Mothers recognize pups on crowded rookeries through smell and vocalizations.

# ORCA (KILLER WHALE)



- Orcas, or killer whales, are the largest of the dolphins. They feast on marine mammals such as seals, sea lions, and even whales, employing teeth that can be four inches long. They also eat fish, squid, and seabirds. Orcas often frequent cold, coastal waters, but they can be found from the polar regions to the Equator.
- Killer whales hunt in pods, family groups of up to 40 individuals. Pods use effective, cooperative hunting techniques that some liken to the behavior of wolf packs.
- Orcas are protective of their young, and other adolescent females often assist the mother in caring for them. Mothers give birth every three to ten years, after a 17-month pregnancy.

# BELUGA WHALE



- Beluga whales are common in the Arctic Ocean's coastal waters, though they are found in subarctic waters as well.
- Belugas are also called white whales, and their unusual color makes them one of the most familiar and easily distinguishable of all the whales. White whales are smallish, ranging from 13 to 20 feet in length. They have rounded foreheads and no dorsal fin.
- Belugas generally live together in small groups known as pods. They are social animals and very vocal communicators that employ a diversified language of clicks, whistles, and clangs. Calves are born gray or even brown and only fade to white at around five years of age.

# HUMPBACK WHALE



- Humpback whales are found in all oceans to the edges of polar ice, and they follow definite migration paths from their summer feeding grounds to warmer waters in the winter. Humpbacks are among the most endangered whales.
- The humpback whale was given its name because of the shape of its dorsal (back) fin and the way it looks when the animal is diving. Acrobatic humpbacks regularly breach (jump out of the water), stroke each other, and slap the water with their flippers and flukes. Humpbacks are best known for their haunting vocalizations or "singing."
- Females give birth every two or more years. Pregnancies last for 12 months. The calves nurse for eight to eleven months. When weaned, the calves are 24-27 feet long.



# BLUE WHALE



- Blue whales have been found in every ocean of the world, but they are considered an endangered species. The 2,800 blue whales that feed along the California coast make up the largest concentration of blue whales in the world.
- Blue whales are long and streamlined. The blue whale is about as long as three school buses, and its heart alone is as large as a small car!
- Females give birth to calves every two to three years. When born, the blue whale calf is about 23 feet long and weighs 5,000 to 6,000 pounds. The milk of a nursing blue whale mother contains 35 to 50% milk fat and allows the calf to gain weight at a rate of up to 250 pounds a day! At six months of age and an average length of over 52 feet, the calf is weaned.