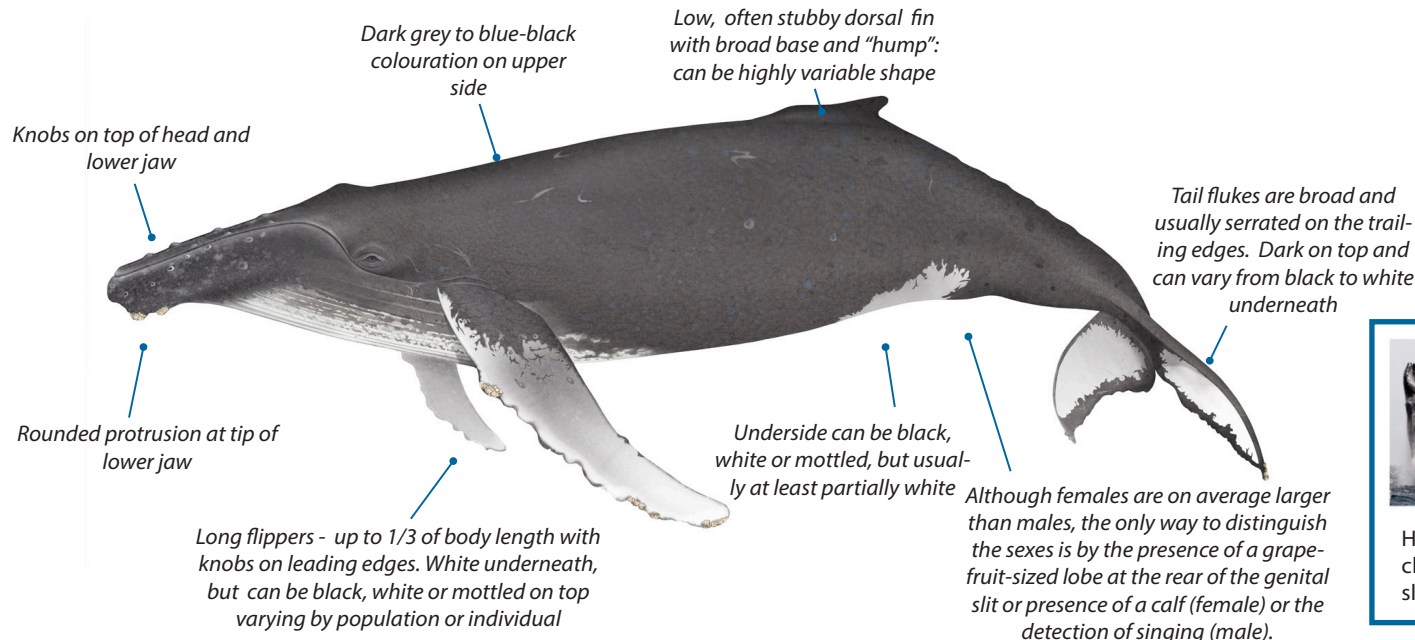


Humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)

Distribution: Worldwide (see map below and full list of countries in the detailed species account online at: <https://www.handbook.iwc.int/en/species/humpback-whale>)

Adult length: 11.5-15m
 Adult weight: 25-30 tonnes
 Newborn: 4-4.5 m, 1-2 tonnes



Threats: Entanglement, habitat loss, ship strikes, climate change

Habitat: Nearshore, continental shelf

Diet: Small schooling fish, krill

IUCN Conservation status: **Least Concern**

Arabian Sea populations: **endangered**

Oceania populations: **endangered**




Humpback whales are famous for their "surface active" behaviour, which can include "breaching" (leaping clear of the water), pectoral fin (flipper) slapping, and tail slapping. The splash of a breach can be seen from a distance of several kilometres.

Fun Facts



Male humpback whales produce complex songs, which are heard almost exclusively on the breeding grounds.

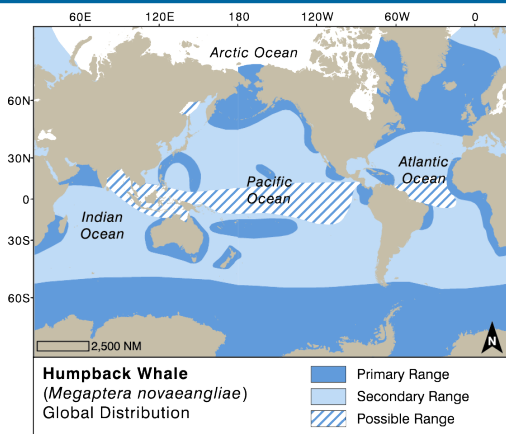


Humpback whale males engage in aggressive competitive behaviour, vying for access to females on the breeding grounds



Photos courtesy of the Environment Society of Oman

Individual humpback whales can be recognised by the serrations and black and white patterns on the underside of their tail flukes, through a process called photo-identification. Some whales in well-studied populations have been re-sighted over periods of up to over 40 years.



Bryde's whale global distribution. Adapted by Nina Lisowski from Jefferson, T.A., Webber, M.A. and Pitman, R.L. (2015). "Marine Mammals of the World: A Comprehensive Guide to Their Identification," 2nd ed. Elsevier, San Diego, CA. Copyright Elsevier: <http://www.elsevier.com>

Humpback whales perform the longest migrations of any mammal, with some individuals moving over 8,000km between the cold, nutrient rich waters where they feed in the summer, and the tropical waters where they mate and give birth in the winter. Because Northern and Southern Hemisphere seasons are 6 months out of phase, Northern and Southern Hemisphere populations are unlikely to ever meet on their tropical breeding grounds. The Endangered Arabian Sea humpback whales are the only population to feed and breed in the same area.

Humpback whale surfacing

