

Baleen In-Between [MC]

Adapted from Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Grades: K-2

Time: 45 minutes to 1 hour

Goals: To describe the two feeding mechanisms of marine mammals and understand the human interaction with their food supplies.

Objectives:

Students will be able to: identify marine mammal species of the Atlantic coast; describe two morphological features whales use to feed; demonstrate feeding abilities of two different whale species; and understand how food supplies are being depleted by humans.

Key Words:

Toothed

Migration

Skimmers

Baleen

Krill

Gulpers

Marine mammals

Squid

Background Information:

Adapted from Enchanted Learning

Whales feed in two different ways: by using teeth and by using baleen. Toothed whales hunt for food such as squid, fish, and other marine mammals like seals and sea lions. Baleen whales will filter the water for their food of crustaceans, small fish, and other plankton.

Toothed whales tend to be smaller in size than baleen whales and will use a more direct feeding tactic to consume their prey. They can be found in large aggregations or pods and some of these pods will be used as hunting parties when they are feeding. Their feeding tactic begins with echolocation to find their prey. Echolocation is similar to sonar, where the whales will send out a high-pitched sound into the water. When it hits a prey species, it will reverberate back to the whales. They will follow these sound waves until they have reached their prey. Once prey has been located, they will work as a team to hunt down and kill their food.

Baleen whales are much larger in size and tend to be less social, forming smaller pods or swimming alone. Their mouths are equipped with large plates called baleen. These plates are made of keratin, the same substance that our hair and fingernails are made of, and can strain the water for small fish and crustaceans, like krill. Baleen whales have several different feeding tactics, which include gulping, skimming, and bottom feeding. Gulping is a technique where the whale will lunge to the surface, mouths open, and gulp as much water and plankton as they can. Skimming involves keeping their mouths open at the surface and moving their body along slowly, while their mouths fill with water and food. Bottom feeding involves more suction on the sea floor, where whales are picking through the mud for their food.

Directions: Find and circle the words from the word bank below.

ocean fountain humpback baleen migrate warm
 dolphins backbone plankton flipper snout oxygen

l	t	g	g	z	c	r	z	p	n	n	w	e	m	s
q	b	v	b	q	h	v	j	l	i	e	h	a	z	z
s	n	o	u	t	m	f	j	a	a	g	e	i	r	b
y	b	a	c	t	d	l	y	n	t	y	y	l	x	m
d	o	l	p	h	i	n	s	k	n	x	o	m	a	a
b	s	e	r	o	n	y	m	t	u	o	z	c	b	b
k	a	j	c	a	v	i	k	o	o	v	u	v	u	v
i	t	c	e	t	g	c	y	n	f	h	k	n	v	j
g	y	c	k	r	a	z	w	y	i	g	v	c	k	t
n	o	p	a	b	r	e	p	p	i	l	f	i	q	y
k	x	t	p	g	o	n	o	y	r	q	h	y	l	h
v	e	m	e	n	c	n	q	i	p	m	t	j	r	d
l	u	n	r	s	b	u	e	q	t	h	i	w	z	i
h	i	l	p	v	g	a	d	l	w	x	j	g	d	g
l	b	t	m	m	y	n	h	c	g	k	l	m	s	e