

The Whale's Journey

The whale's tummy rumbled, his mouth opened wide

The whale in our story is a type of baleen whale called a humpback whale. Humpbacks feed mainly on the surface and are gulp feeders, taking in large mouthfuls of water, closing their mouth part way and filtering the water out through the baleen. The food (or plastic) cannot pass through the baleen and is swallowed whole.

The cold ice-capped sea

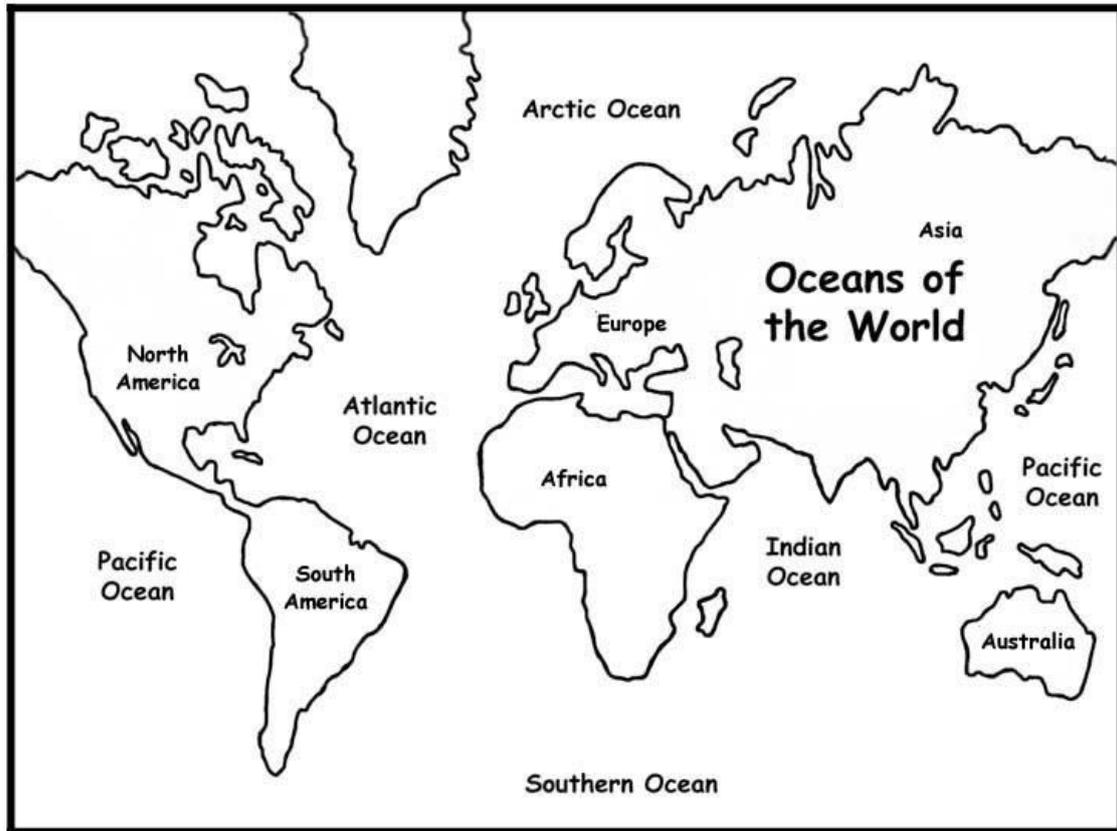
Humpbacks feed on tiny shrimp called krill which are found in the icy waters of the Arctic and Antarctic. Scientists aren't sure why they travel so far from their feeding grounds. Some think it is because their newborn calves need the warmer waters. Some think they migrate to escape predation by killer whales as they can defend themselves and their young more easily in the warmer shallow water.

Whatever the reason, humpback whales don't travel fast (only 3-5 MPH) but they can travel for 24 hours a day and it takes them between 3 weeks and 2 months! They seldom eat while they are travelling and live off their body fat stores. Humpback whales migrate around 5000km on average, one of the longest migratory journeys of any mammal on Earth.

We sailed the blue ocean with turtles and rays

Have a look on the internet at the migratory journey of the humpback whale. Make a note of where they start. Which way do they go? What countries do they pass on the way? Where do they end up? Hint: there is more than one group of humpback whales. Can you find more than one route?

On the map below, draw the path of a humpback's journey and mark on some of the countries and sights they might see on the way past. Would they pass any of the other groups of humpback whales? (new song time!)



Imagine you are a humpback whale. Write a travel log of your journey. Where do you start and why are you travelling? Use your map above. What places and sights do you see along the way? What adventures do you have? What other creatures do you meet? Do you have an encounter with Killer Whales? What happens!

WHALE LOG	
Date:	_____
Place:	_____
Today we...	_____

