WHALES OF HERVEY BAY

MIGALOO

#1210 in PWF's catalog, known worldwide as Migaloo, was confirmed to be 100% white by PWF researchers in 1993, with an estimated age at that time of 5-7 years, and in 1998, they recorded him singing—a behaviour specific to male humpbacks. Genetic testing in 2004 confirmed Migaloo is male, and a 2011 study identified him as a true albino.

NALA

#0502 in PWF's catalog, known locally as Nala has become a beloved celebrity in the Hervey Bay whale watching community. Known for her exceptional mothering skills, Nala has been sighted by PWF researchers in 13 different years, 11 of which she was accompanied by a calf. Over the years, she's had at least 14 calves, showcasing her rare ability to conceive in consecutive years, known as postpartum estrus.

Can you see the differences in the markings and pigmentation patterns on these tail flukes?

IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUAL WHALES

Each humpback whale has a unique pattern of marks and v on its tail flukes. Since 1984, researchers at the Pacific Whale Foundation have been photographing these marks to identify and monitor individual whales and populations in East Australia.

Join us in tracking Australia's humpback whales through Pacific Whales Foundation's Adopt a Marine Animal Program. Visit **PacificWhale.org/adopt** for more info.

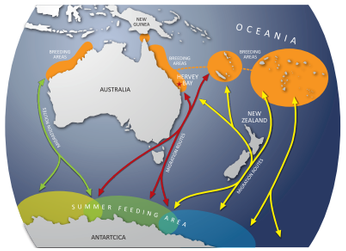
PROTECTING WHALES

During the 1950s and early 1960s, humpback whales along Australia's eastern coast were hunted to near extinction. Thanks to protective measures, the East Australia humpback whale population has recovered and is increasing at a rate of over 10% each year.

HERVEY BAY

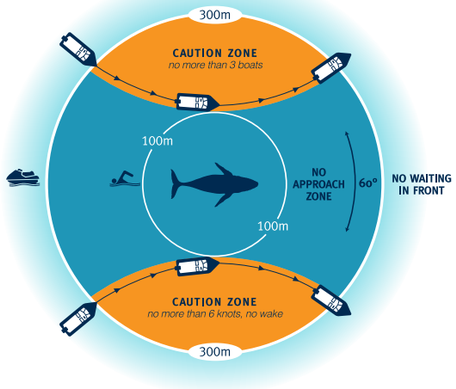
Part of Great Sandy Marine Park and one of the world's finest whale-watch locations

More than 30,000 humpback whales migrate each year along Australia's eastern coast between their winter breeding areas near the equator and their summer feeding areas near Antarctica. Over 30% of this population is believed to stop in Hervey Bay between mid-July and early November. The large number of whales in this relatively small area results in extraordinary whale watching.



RESPONSIBLE WHALE WATCHING

Help protect Hervey Bay's humpback whales by engaging in responsible boating and whale watching. Under the National Standards, it is against the law to approach humpback whales closer than 100m by any means or to operate jet skis within 300m of a whale. Aircraft must remain at least 300m away from a whale, and helicopters must remain 500m away and not hover above a whale.



ABOUT PACIFIC WHALE FOUNDATION

Research activities conducted under permit authorised by the Queensland government.

Pacific Whale Foundation is an international nonprofit organisation working to protect cetaceans and the ocean through science and advocacy. We work worldwide to reduce the impacts of human activity on cetaceans and to promote responsible eco-tourism.

Since 1984, our researchers have used a variety of techniques to study humpback whales in East Australia. Our findings have been shared with government agencies, the International Whaling Commission's Scientific Committee, and the scientific community through peer-reviewed publications and reports, playing a key role in shaping management and conservation efforts.

Learn more at **PacificWhale.org/what-we-do/research/research-locations/australia/**

PACIFIC WHALE FOUNDATION
ECO-ADVENTURES AUSTRALIA
PO BOX 7149, Urangan, QLD 4655
For more information visit **PacificWhale.com.au**
CALL: **1 800 454 310**

PACIFIC WHALE FOUNDATION
ECO-ADVENTURES AUSTRALIA

WHALE

WATCHING GUIDE

HUMPBACK WHALES OF HERVEY BAY

© Bryant Austin

WINTER: A TIME FOR MATING AND CALVING

Breeding occurs during winter when the whales are in warmer water areas near the Great Barrier Reef. It may also occur along the migratory route. While many calves are seen each year, researchers have only documented whales giving birth a handful of times.

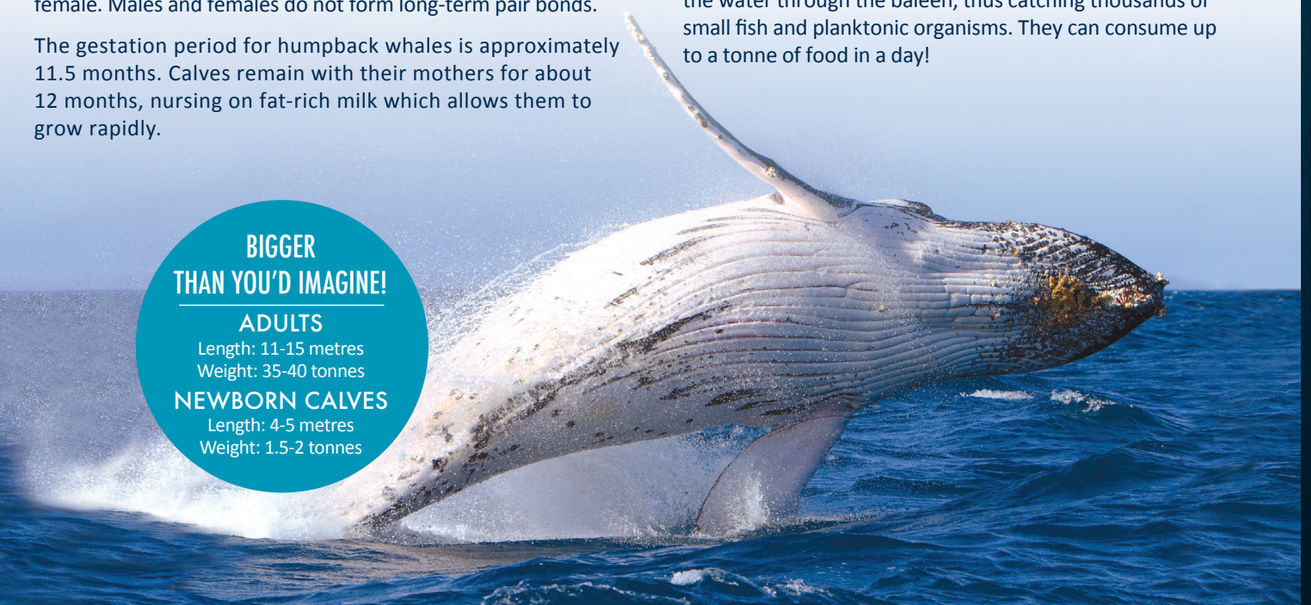
Competitive groups are whales competing for the closest position to a mature female whale, in hopes of being selected by the female for mating. These groups often display high-energy behaviours such as breaching, head lunging, peduncle throws, and rapid swimming at the surface. Competition groups often gain or lose members and can persist for many hours, as the strongest males strive to hold the closest position to the female. Males and females do not form long-term pair bonds.

The gestation period for humpback whales is approximately 11.5 months. Calves remain with their mothers for about 12 months, nursing on fat-rich milk which allows them to grow rapidly.

SUMMER: A TIME FOR FEEDING

Australia's humpback whales devote their summer months to feeding on krill and small schooling fish such as capelin, pilchards or herring found in cool waters near Antarctica. Generally, the whales do not feed while in their winter breeding grounds or in Hervey Bay. However, Pacific Whale Foundation's researchers have documented whales feeding mid-migration in the chilly waters off Eden NSW from late August to mid-October.

Humpback whales have no teeth. Instead, they have rigid strips of baleen (made of keratin, a material similar to human fingernails) hanging from their upper jaw. Humpback whales take in large amounts of both food and water, and then strain the water through the baleen, thus catching thousands of small fish and planktonic organisms. They can consume up to a tonne of food in a day!



BIGGER THAN YOU'D IMAGINE!

ADULTS
Length: 11-15 metres
Weight: 35-40 tonnes

NEWBORN CALVES
Length: 4-5 metres
Weight: 1.5-2 tonnes

WHALE BEHAVIOURS

Humpback whales engage in a variety of high-energy behaviours. To understand the significance and purpose of whale behaviours, scientists consider factors such as the season, location, and other whales in the vicinity.

HEAD SLAP
Lunging head-first out of the water, the whale pounds its massive, sometimes partially engorged mouth on the water's surface.

BLOW
A blow occurs as a whale exhales and inhales at the surface. A bushy cloud of water vapour is produced above the animal's head during exhalation.

FLUKE UP DIVE
The humpback brings its tail flukes above the surface of the water. It is called a "fluke up" dive if the flukes are brought straight into the air, so that the entire ventral (underneath) surface of the flukes is exposed.

BREACH
The whale propels itself out of the water, clearing the surface with two-thirds of its body or more. As the whale rises above the water, it often throws one pectoral fin out to the side and turns in the air on its longitudinal axis. Following a breach, other whales can often be observed breaching in the distance, indicating a possible form of communication.

LONGER THAN YOU'D THINK!

HUMPBACK WHALE BREATHING RATES
Swimming: every 6-8 min
Resting: every 20-60 min
Singing: up to 1 breath/hr

PEC SLAP
The whale rolls sideways at the surface, slapping a pectoral fin against the water. Sometimes whales lay on their backs slapping both fins down on top of the water.

SPY HOP
The whale rises relatively straight up out of the water rather slowly, maintains its head above the surface to just below the eye, often turns 90 - 180 degrees on its longitudinal axis, and then slips back below the surface.

TAIL SLAP
This forceful slapping of the tail fluke against the surface of the water can be carried out while the whale is lying either upright or inverted in the water. The resulting sound can be heard underwater, and may be a form of communication.

PEDUNCLE THROW
The rear portion of the body, including both the caudal peduncle and the flukes, is thrown up out of the water then brought down sideways, either on the surface of the water or on top of another whale.

SINGING
Sometimes described as resembling "barnyard" noises, humpback whale songs are actually complex, orderly components of a song that are repeated for extended periods. Only males "sing" and whale songs primarily occur in breeding and calving areas.