

## Migration

- Humpback whales migrate annually from polar feeding grounds (Antarctica) to tropical calving and mating areas (Tropical North Queensland).
- The east coast population migrates up to 10,000km (5,000km in each direction) every year between Antarctica and the Great Barrier Reef. It is the longest migration of all whales.
- Hervey Bay is the only genuine stop-over during the east coast migration with up to 7,000 whales choosing to stop and play in the bay's calm and safe waters.

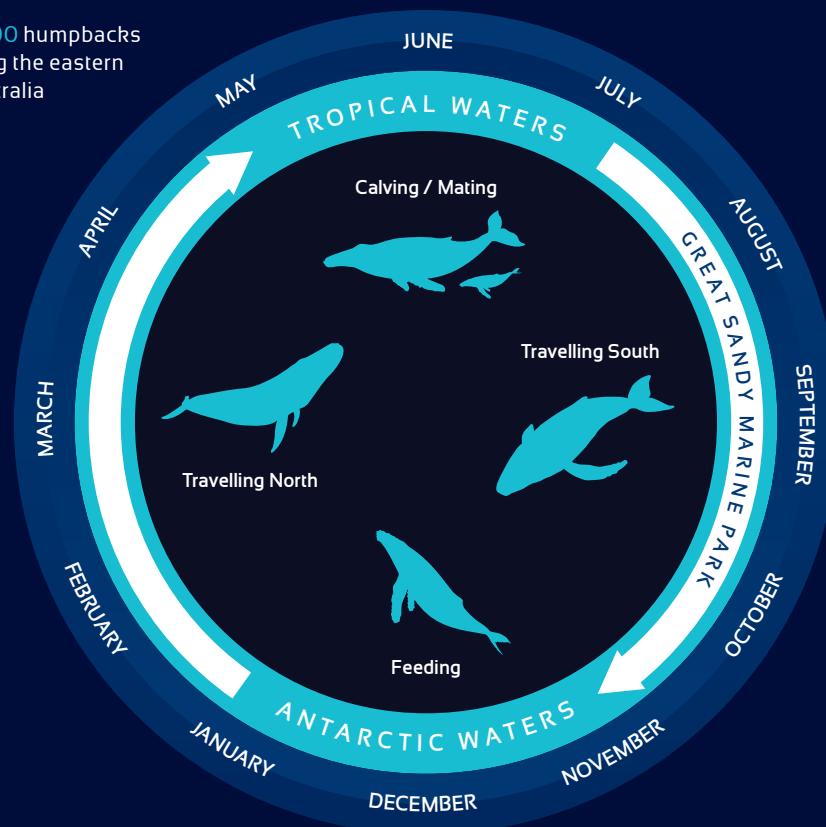
## The Great Sandy Marine Park

- The Great Sandy Marine Park is situated off the coast of Queensland and was created to manage and protect marine species, ecosystems and habitats.
- There is a whale management zone in the Hervey Bay area which protects migrating humpback whales from the start of July to the end of November each year.

At least 17,000 humpbacks migrate along the eastern coast of Australia every year.

Annual migration covers 10,000km (5,000km each way) between June - November.

It is the longest migration of all whales.



# Junior WHALE WHISPERER



## Humpback Whale Fast Facts

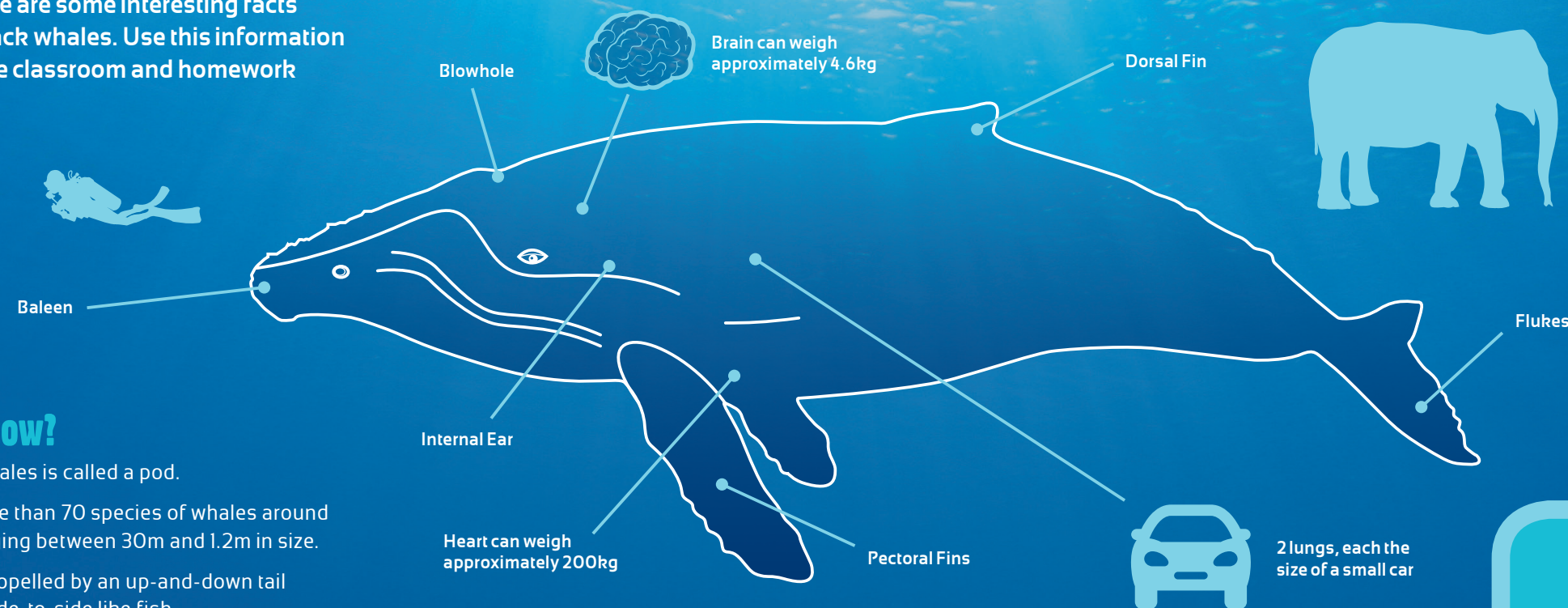
[www.whalesherveybay.com.au](http://www.whalesherveybay.com.au)

Program run by:





To help you become an accredited Junior Whale Whisperer, here are some interesting facts about humpback whales. Use this information to complete the classroom and homework activity sheet.



### Did you know?

- A group of whales is called a pod.
- There are more than 70 species of whales around the world ranging between 30m and 1.2m in size.
- Whales are propelled by an up-and-down tail motion, not side-to-side like fish.
- Whales are more closely related to humans than fish, as they are air breathing warm-blooded mammals.
- They fit within the same category as dolphins – a group called Cetaceans – and possess the following adaptations for aquatic life: streamlined, smooth bodies with few hairs; no external ears; flipper-like forelimbs for manoeuvring; and a layer of insulating blubber.

### Humpback whales

- The scientific name for humpback whales is 'Megaptera Novaeangliae' meaning great wings because of their huge wing-like flippers.
- The east Australian humpback population is increasing steadily at about 10 per cent each year and is estimated at around 17,000 in 2014.
- Humpback whales can hold their breath up to 40 minutes.

### How big are they?

- Humpback whales are the fifth largest animal on this planet and weigh between 30–50 tonne.
- Each humpback whale is equivalent to 11 elephants or 600 humans.
- Adult female humpback whales grow up to 15m, slightly longer than adult male humpback whales.
- Humpback whale arteries are large enough for humans to crawl through!

### Feeding

- Krill, plankton and small fish are the main sources of food for humpback whales.
- Humpback whales do not have teeth; instead they have baleen which filters food from water.
- In Antarctica where the food is plentiful, whales can eat up to two tonnes of krill a day! During migration they don't feed at all and live off their own body fat.

### Breeding

- Humpback whales migrate to the warm tropical waters to mate and give birth as the Antarctic waters are too cold for newborn calves.
- At birth, calves are approximately 4–5m long and weigh more than one tonne (1,000kg).
- Mother whales feed their calves hundreds of litres of milk each day.
- Calves are nursed until they are one year old and approximately 8m long.
- Pods of mothers and calves are often escorted by an adult male during migration.
- On the trip south, mother humpbacks often stop, rest and play in Hervey Bay. They use their time in the calm waters of the bay to teach newborn calves survival skills for the deeper, colder waters of Antarctica.

### SPY HOP:

A spy hop is when a humpback will rise almost straight out of the water so its eyes are just clear of the water surface, before slipping back under.



### PECTORAL SLAP:

Humpbacks show their pectoral fins by lying on the water and slapping one or both fins.



### THE BLOW:

The blow is when the humpbacks exhale forcefully through two blowholes on the top of their head creating a cloud of vapour condensation and excess water collected around the blowhole.



### TAIL SLAP:

A tail slap is when the humpback is nearly submerged vertically, while it slaps its tail flukes on the surface of the water.



### BREACH:

A breach is when a humpback propels most of its body out of the water, and turns to crash spectacularly onto the water surface.

