

It should be obvious that cetaceans—whales, porpoises, and dolphins—are mammals. They breathe through lungs, not through gills, and give birth to live young. Their streamlined bodies, the absence of hind legs, and the presence of a fluke¹ and blowhole² cannot disguise their affinities with land-dwelling mammals. However, unlike the cases of sea otters and pinnipeds (seals, sea lions, and walruses, whose limbs are functional both on land and at sea), it is not easy to envision what the first whales looked like. Extinct but already fully marine cetaceans are known from the fossil record. How was the gap between a walking mammal and a swimming whale bridged? Missing until recently were fossils clearly intermediate, or transitional, between land mammals and cetaceans.

1. Fluke: The two parts that constitute the large triangular tail of a whale
2. Blowhole: A hole in the top of the head used for breathing

Directions: Mark your answer by filling in the oval next to your choice.

1. In paragraph 1, what does the author say about the presence of a blow-hole in cetaceans?
 - It clearly indicates that cetaceans are mammals.
 - It cannot conceal the fact that cetaceans are mammals.
 - It is the main difference between cetaceans and land-dwelling mammals.
 - It cannot yield clues about the origins of cetaceans.
2. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 1 about early sea otters?
 - It is not difficult to imagine what they looked like.
 - There were great numbers of them.
 - They lived in the sea only.
 - They did not leave many fossil remains.