

Reading 2.19

Curriculum Connection Life Science

What do you know about whales?

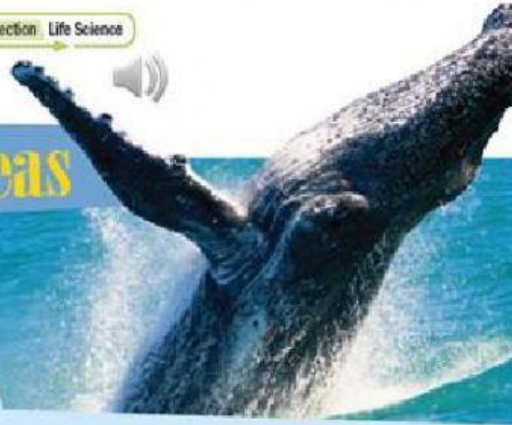
King of the Seas

The blue whale is the biggest living animal in the world. It grows up to 30 meters long, and the largest can weigh more than 180 metric tons. The tongue of a blue whale alone can weigh as much as an elephant, and its heart can be the size of a small car. A baby blue whale weighs up to 2.7 metric tons when it is born, and gains 91 kilograms every day for its first year. But these enormous animals can swim at a fast speed of 32 kilometers an hour.

During certain times of the year, an adult whale eats about 3.6 metric tons of krill a day. The whale swims slowly through the water with its mouth open, and thousands of tiny fish and plankton swim into it. But the whale can't swallow anything larger than a shrimp.

Whales are mammals, and so they cannot stay under water for too long. They need to come to the surface to breathe after 10 to 20 minutes. Blue whales usually dive around 100 meters, but can reach a depth of 500 meters. When they come to the surface, they blow a wet stream 12 to 15 meters up in the air.

Blue whales are the loudest animals on Earth. Their call is louder than a jet, and it can travel for hundreds of kilometers in the ocean. They use their calls and songs to communicate with other blue whales. Fortunately blue whales are no longer an endangered species.



About the Reading

Complete the sentences.

1. The blue whale is _____ of all living animals.
2. An adult whale can sometimes eat _____ than 3 metric tons in one day.
3. Whales can only swallow fish that are _____ than shrimp.
4. The _____ that blue whales usually go underwater is 500 meters.
5. Whale calls are _____ than the noise of a jet engine.