



# Where They Blow...

Canadian waters are rich in whale species, with more than 30 different types inhabiting the waters off our 200,000 kilometres of coastline. Even members of the same species found in different locations have developed distinct behaviours. Virtually every one is threatened or endangered

Illustration by Cory Proulx

**1. KILLER WHALE**  
*Orcinus orca*  
Location: Northeast Pacific, northern resident  
Population (2017): 309  
Risk status: threatened  
Threats: shrinking salmon stock, pollution, noise; natural threats include their small size and slow growth



**2. KILLER WHALE**  
*Orcinus orca*  
Location: Northeast Pacific, southern resident (see article page 22)  
Population (2018): 74  
Risk status: endangered  
Threats: shrinking salmon stock, pollution, noise, ship strikes, climate change; natural threats include inbreeding, late sexual maturity, low birth rates

**3. KILLER WHALE**  
*Orcinus orca*  
Location: Northeast Pacific, offshore  
Population (2013): 300  
Risk status: threatened  
Threats: prey decline (dogfish, chinook salmon and Pacific halibut), contaminants and toxic spills, chronic and acute acoustic disturbances; often gathers in large groups of 120 or more, so oil spills and underwater explosions are particularly dangerous

**4. KILLER WHALE**  
*Orcinus orca*  
Location: Northeast Pacific, Bigg's/transient  
Population (2009): 122 (mature individuals)  
Risk status: threatened

Threats: low reproductive rate (one calf every five years), acoustic disturbances, pollutants, toxic spills, collisions with vessels, decreased prey availability

**5. BLUE WHALE**  
*Balaenoptera musculus*  
Location: Pacific  
Population: unknown  
Risk status: endangered  
Threats: collisions with ships, entanglement in fishing gear, pollution



**6. RIGHT WHALE**  
*Eubalaena japonica*  
Location: North Pacific  
Population: 20 to 30 (not sighted in Canadian waters in 50 years)  
Risk status: endangered  
Threats: vessel strikes, entanglement, noise pollution



**7. GREY WHALE**  
*Eschrichtius robustus*  
Location: Eastern North Pacific  
Population (2016): 20,000  
Risk status: special concern  
Threats: collisions with ships, entanglement in fishing gear; coastal industries such as salt extraction, oil exploration, mining can lead to toxic spills and noise pollution that ruin breeding and feeding habitats



**11. COMMON MINKE WHALE**  
*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*  
Location: North Pacific  
Population (2005): 475  
Risk status: not at risk  
Threats: whaling, entanglement, noise, vessel strikes

**8. HUMPBACK WHALE**  
*Megaptera novaeangliae*  
Location: North Pacific & North Atlantic  
Risk status: special concern  
Threats: vessel strikes, entanglement, toxic spills, declining prey, noise pollution

**9. FIN WHALE**  
*Balaenoptera physalus*  
Location: Pacific  
Population (2004): 2,500  
Risk status: threatened  
Threats: vessel strikes, acute and chronic noise pollution, entanglement in fishing gear, pollution, climate change

**10. SEI WHALE**  
*Balaenoptera borealis*  
Location: Pacific  
Population: after no reported sightings in Canadian waters in more than 50 years, 5 were spotted in summer 2018  
Risk status: endangered  
Threats: hunted until 1975, the species has not been able to recover since; threats to remaining individuals include vessel strikes, noise, entanglements, climate change

KILLER WHALE: GREY WHALE: ISTOCK; RIGHT WHALE: MINKE WHALE: NICK HAWKINS.



● Numbers on the map represent general location of specific populations. While some whales in Canadian waters are limited to areas in and around the dots, other populations range widely over great distances.  
● Whales Hotspot: This area is frequented seasonally by multiple species. ○ Extirpated or extinct species.



**12. KILLER WHALE**  
*Orcinus orca*  
 Location: Northwest Atlantic and eastern Arctic  
 Population (2015): <1,000 mature individuals  
 Risk status: special concern  
 Threats: acoustic disturbances, contaminants, toxic spills; in the Arctic killer whales are hunted



**13. NORTHERN BOTTLE-NOSE WHALE**  
*Hyperoodon ampullatus*  
 Location: Davis Strait-Baffin Bay-Labrador Sea  
 Population: unknown  
 Risk status: special concern  
 Threats: acoustic disturbances, contaminants, toxic spills

**14. NORTHERN BOTTLE-NOSE WHALE**  
*Hyperoodon ampullatus*  
 Location: Scotian Shelf  
 Population (2011): 164  
 Risk status: endangered  
 Threats: entanglement, oil and gas activities, acoustic disturbance, contaminants, and vessel strikes; anthropogenic (human-caused) noise is of particular concern because northern bottlenose whales are found near oil and gas fields to the south of Nova Scotia

**15. BELUGA WHALE**  
*Delphinapterus leucas*  
 Location: Cumberland Sound  
 Population (2017): <1,000  
 Risk Status: threatened  
 Threats: acoustic disturbance, climate change, pollution, predation by killer whales and polar bears

**16. BELUGA WHALE**  
*Delphinapterus leucas*  
 Location: Baffin Bay, eastern High Arctic  
 Population: unknown  
 Risk status: special concern  
 Threats: overexploitation, climate change, pollution

**17. BELUGA WHALE**  
*Delphinapterus leucas*  
 Location: Eastern Hudson Bay  
 Population: unknown  
 Risk status: endangered  
 Threats: overhunting, habitat alterations (e.g., river damming), climate change, noise pollution

**18. BELUGA WHALE**  
*Delphinapterus leucas*  
 Location: St. Lawrence Estuary  
 Population (2014): 583 mature individuals (est.)  
 Risk status: endangered  
 Threats: habitat loss and degradation, strikes by small vessels, entanglement, prey competition with commercial fisheries, chemical and biological contamination from heavy marine traffic



**19. BELUGA WHALE**  
*Delphinapterus leucas*  
 Location: Ungava Bay  
 Population (2014): <100  
 Risk status: endangered  
 Threats: hunting, changes to habitats, noise, dredging, shipping and other industrial activity

**20. BELUGA WHALE**  
*Delphinapterus leucas*  
 Location: Western Hudson Bay  
 Population: unknown  
 Risk status: special concern  
 Threats: overhunting, climate change

**21. BLUE WHALE**  
*Balaenoptera musculus*  
 Location: Atlantic  
 Population (2014): <250 mature individuals  
 Risk status: endangered  
 Threats: noise, food supply, pollution, ship strikes, whale-watching



**22. BOWHEAD WHALE**  
*Balaena mysticetus*  
 Location: Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort  
 Population (2009): >10,000  
 Risk status: special concern  
 Threats: climate change, disturbance from ships, offshore oil and gas development, hunting

**23. BOWHEAD WHALE**  
*Balaena mysticetus*  
 Location: Eastern Canada-West Greenland  
 Population (2009): 6,000  
 Risk status: special concern  
 Threats: climate change, disturbance from shipping, offshore oil and gas development

**24. FIN WHALE**  
*Balaenoptera physalus*  
 Location: Atlantic  
 Population: unknown  
 Risk status: special concern  
 Threats: noise from navigation, seismic and sonar exploration and development, decline in prey, toxic spills, ship strikes, climate change

**25. GREY WHALE**  
*Eschrichtius robustus*  
 Location: Atlantic  
 Population: 0, since the 18th century  
 Risk status: extirpated

**26. RIGHT WHALE**  
*Eubalaena glacialis*  
 Location: North Atlantic  
 Population (2011): 411  
 Risk status: endangered  
 Threats: vessel strikes, entanglement, noise pollution

**27. SOWERBY'S BEAKED WHALE**  
*Mesoplodon bidens*  
 Location: Atlantic, Continental Slope  
 Population: unknown  
 Risk status: special concern  
 Threats: entanglement; as a deep diver, it is extremely vulnerable to noise pollution

**28. COMMON MINKE WHALE**  
*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*  
 Location: North Atlantic  
 Population: plentiful  
 Risk Status: not at risk  
 Threats: whaling, entanglement, noise, vessel strikes; there was a sharp rise in unexplained minke whale deaths in Atlantic Canada in 2018

**29. SPERM WHALE**  
*Physeter macrocephalus*  
 Location: Northwest Atlantic, Northwest Pacific  
 Population: plentiful  
 Risk status: not at risk  
 Threats: pollution, entanglement, strikes



**30. NARWHAL**  
*Monodon monoceros*  
 Location: Baffin Bay and Hudson Bay  
 Population (2014): 40,000 and 2,100  
 Risk status: special concern  
 Threats: hunting, pollution, ship strikes (increasing traffic)