

HUMPBACK WHALE WORD SEARCH



Humpback whales are endangered marine mammals known as cetaceans. They are warm-blooded, air-breathing mammals that nurse their young. Humpback whales migrate from Alaska to Hawai`i to breed, calve and nurse their young. While the humpback whales are in Hawai`i, they can be seen from water or from shore. Whales may be seen alone or in groups called pods. A mother and calf may sometimes be seen traveling with an escort. Escorts are males that are probably interested in mating with the adult female. Many times mother and calf can be seen resting in near-shore waters.

Humpback whales perform a variety of behaviors while in Hawai`i. A blow can be seen when a whales comes to the surface to breathe. A few different behaviors can be seen when a whale dives. One of these is the peduncle arch. It occurs when a whale arches its back high above the water, possibly to dive deeper. Following a peduncle arch, a humpback will extend its flukes above the water. In a fluke down dive, the whale's flukes remain turned down, but in a fluke up dive the underside of the tail is exposed, displaying a pattern of markings that are unique to each whale.

Other behaviors that are commonly seen involve slapping a part of the whale's body against the water (head slap, pec slap, tail slap, or peduncle slap). Also, a whale may raise its head straight out of the water during a head rise, also known as a spy hop. Probably the most spectacular behavior is the breach. A breach occurs when a whale propels most of its body out of the water. It sometimes turns in the air, throws one pectoral fin out to the side, and then plunges back into the water.

Humpback whales are magnificent creatures and are fascinating to watch. Since they are an endangered species they are protected by federal and state laws. It is illegal in Hawai`i to approach a humpback whale within 100 yards.

The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary was established to protect Hawai`i's humpback whales and their habitat. Sanctuary boundaries include areas off of Kaua`i, O`ahu, Moloka`i, Lana`i, Maui, and the Big Island of Hawai`i. One of the primary goals of the sanctuary is to educate the public on the relationship between humpback whales and the Hawaiian Islands marine environment.