

ANIMAL BITES

ISSUE 09
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THE SAFE YOUTH NEWSLETTER FOR KIDS WHO KNOW THAT ANIMALS MATTER.

This issue of Animal Bites is all about pilot whales. Sadly, in February this year more than 400 pilot whales were stranded at Farewell Spit, in Golden Bay. Many kind New Zealanders rushed to help these gentle, intelligent creatures.



PILOT WHALES ARE ACTUALLY DOLPHINS. THEY ARE VERY INTELLIGENT, HIGHLY SOCIAL ANIMALS. UNFORTUNATELY, PILOT WHALES OFTEN GET STRANDED AND THIS CAN HAPPEN ALL OVER NEW ZEALAND. THEY ALSO FACE THREATS FROM COMMERCIAL FISHING, WHALING AND EVEN PLASTIC.

ANIMAL PROFILE: WHALES

Scientific name

Globicephala melas (long-finned pilot whale)
Globicephala macrorhynchus (short-finned pilot whale)

In the family

Pilot whales are mammals. There are two species of pilot whales, long-finned and short-finned. Pilot whales in New Zealand waters are almost always long-finned. Pilot whales belong to the Delphinidae family, which also includes dolphins and killer whales (Orca). There are approximately 88 known species of whales and more than 40 are seen around New Zealand's coasts.

Lifespan

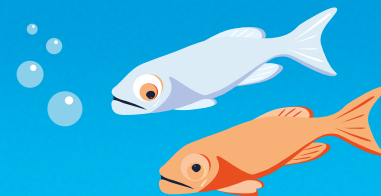
Females live about 60 years, while males live about 35 to 45 years.

Ancestry

The first whales evolved over 50 million years ago. They are thought to have evolved from land dwelling animals who lived around water. Over millions of years these animals evolved into water dwelling mammals.

Pilot whales in New Zealand

Pilot whales often get stranded. There are many cases of individual strandings all around New Zealand. Some places such as Golden Bay, Stewart Island and the Chatham Islands are hotspots for strandings. One of the worst whale strandings in New Zealand happened in 1918. Sadly, an estimated 1000 whales were stranded in the Chatham Islands.



WHALE HELLO!

Pilot whales communicate with a variety of sounds such as whines, buzzes, pulsed calls, clicks, and whistles.



The Pilot Whale

HEAD

Both species of pilot whale have a large bulbous melon on their heads. The melon is a deposit of fat on the whale's forehead.

EYES

Most whales have good eyesight above and below water. Toothed whales, such as pilot whales, also use echolocation to navigate their surroundings.

TEETH

Short-finned pilot whales have 14-18 teeth on each of their jaws. Long-finned pilot whales have 18-24 on each jaw.

INTELLIGENCE

Whales and dolphins are highly intelligent animals who perform complex behaviours. They also form many close relationships within their pods.

WHALE

CHARACTERISTICS

AND BIOLOGY

BLOWHOLE

Pilot whales have one blowhole, like all toothed whales. Blowholes are similar in structure and origin to other animals' nostrils.

EMOTION

There are several reports of whales and dolphins behaving in ways that are related to different emotions. It has also been found that dolphins who swim with other dolphins show more positive responses to new things.

BODY SIZE

Long-finned pilot whales are generally bigger than short-finned ones. They are also usually longer.

TAIL

The muscles in whale tails extend all the way from the back of the skull to the tip of the tail and are some of the strongest people know about.

PECTORAL FINS (FLIPPERS)

Pilot whales' pectoral fins are sickle-shaped. Long-finned pilot whales tend to have longer fins that are around a fifth of their body length. Short-finned pilot whales' fins are around one sixth of their body length.

ANIMALS IN TROUBLE

PILOT WHALES FACE MANY THREATS

PLASTIC

There is a lot of plastic floating in the ocean. Whales can eat this plastic by accident or because they mistake it for food. This can cause them to suffer. They can even die because their stomachs are blocked up. Even little bits of plastic and other rubbish can cause these animals long-term problems by blocking them up or damaging their insides. Another big problem is balloons. Over the past ten years the number of balloon pieces found on beaches has tripled. These can cause problems for all types of ocean and beach-dwelling animals.

COMMERCIAL FISHING

Overfishing is a real problem. Fish are caught today at a faster rate than they can reproduce. This means people are using up the fish that whales eat so it is harder for them to survive. Whales can also get caught up in fishing nets and suffocate under the water. This is a slow and painful death.

WHALING

Though pilot whales are not often hunted for their flesh, they are sadly still hunted on the Faroe Islands for food. Some countries, such as Japan, kill other types of whales for food as well.

STRANDING

Pilot whales are often stranded on beaches. It is not really known why whales strand. There are many possible reasons why whales might strand such as navigational error, features in coastline they are not used to, injury or sickness. One reason for stranding of large groups is that whales are very social and form strong bonds with each other. It is thought they will try to help fellow stranded whales, but this puts them at risk of being stranded also. This would explain why there are often strandings in large numbers.

CAPTIVITY

Many whales and dolphins are kept in captivity for human entertainment. Keeping animals this way is extremely cruel because these animals need to swim large distances and live in big complex social groups. In captivity, they are usually separated from their families. The capture of these animals from the wild is also cruel. Captive whales and dolphins often die younger than wild ones, due to the mental and physical stress they suffer in captivity.





TIPS

TO HELP ANIMALS

1 GO FISH-FREE TO FREE THE FISH

Ok, so whales are not fish, they are mammals, but fishing kills whales and dolphins. You can help them by finding easy and delicious substitutes for fish. Eating fish-free helps fish and all other sea creatures!



3 CLEAN UP PLASTIC WHERE YOU CAN

You can pick up plastic, and other rubbish, so it cannot find its way into drains and the sea. If you do pick up rubbish, be sure to wear gloves and have a bag or bucket to put the rubbish into. You may also like to ask a few friends to help, and have some fun doing it.

5 TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT WHALES

Talking to others about the issues whales face can also help. You can encourage them to eat fish-free, use less plastic, and avoid marine parks and zoos. They might even like to come with you to clean up rubbish.

2 USE LESS PLASTIC

Using less plastic means there is less plastic that can get into the oceans or other environments. This is good for all animals. You could encourage others to use less plastic too. If you do use plastic, make sure you put it in a bin; never leave plastic on the ground.

4 AVOID MARINE PARKS AND AQUARIUMS

In marine parks and aquariums, sea creatures are kept in small tanks against their will when they would rather be free in the wild. Although New Zealand no longer has any marine-mammal parks, with the closure of Marineland in July 2008, we still have aquariums. If you want to see whales and other sea creatures there are lots of documentaries you can watch, or, you could go to the sea side.

6 BECOME A MARINE MEDIC

Once you turn 15 you can become a marine mammal medic. Project Jonah New Zealand holds training days for people to become marine medics. Visit www.projectjonah.org.nz to find out more.

KIND FOOD

The best thing you can do for animals is to stop eating them. Try this fish-free, delicious sushi.

Sushi

UTENSILS:

- Rice cooker (or a pot)
- Knife
- Bowl
- Chopping board
- Something to stir with
- Sushi mat

INGREDIENTS:

RICE

- 1 cup sushi rice
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp rice vinegar
- 1 tsp sugar
- ½ tsp salt

FILLING

- ½ cup grated carrot
- ½ capsicum
- ½ avocado
- 4 nori sheets
- Egg-free vegan mayonnaise (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

THE SUSHI RICE

- Place the rice and water into the rice cooker and cook according to the manufacturer's instructions. For a pot use 1 cup of rice to 1½ cups of water; simmer for 15 to 20 minutes until the water is absorbed.
- Once done, season with the rice vinegar, sugar and salt; mix through and set aside to cool.

THE FILLING

- Slice the avocado and capsicum into strips.
- Divide the cooled rice into 4 portions. Cover sushi mat with plastic wrap if desired. Place one sheet of nori, shiny side down, on the mat.
- Moisten your fingers with some water to prevent rice from sticking to them, then spread the rice evenly over the nori sheet. Leave about 2½ cm at the top without rice.
- With the exposed end of the nori facing away from you, spread ¼ of each of the vegetables down the end closest to you, a bit in from the edge of the rice. Add vegan mayonnaise if desired.
- Next roll the sushi away from you. You need to grip the mat firmly but not squash the sushi. Once rolled, seal the end with water.
- Now cut the sushi into 8 pieces.
- Repeat this process for the rest of the rolls.



NOTE:
You may need some help from a parent for this.

WORD FIND

Words can be up, down, forward, backward, or diagonal.

Cetacea

Orca

Pilot

Dolphin

Plastic

Flipper

Echolocation

Stranding

Fin

Fishing

Sushi

Tail

Pods

Whale

Blowhole

V	F	E	E	H	S	C	H	A	N	B	L	S	Q	C
W	O	C	E	L	O	H	W	O	L	B	T	L	J	E
S	D	H	R	U	P	L	T	J	I	R	K	M	L	T
S	R	O	G	E	U	G	Y	E	A	H	A	U	I	A
X	C	L	X	P	P	J	M	N	G	I	S	E	A	C
H	I	O	Y	L	L	P	D	N	X	G	G	U	T	E
X	T	C	W	O	C	I	I	P	O	D	S	H	S	A
K	S	A	D	A	N	H	V	L	F	C	J	S	A	S
A	A	T	M	G	S	R	H	B	F	I	K	Y	O	G
A	L	I	X	I	D	O	L	P	H	I	N	R	H	Y
E	P	O	F	W	A	Z	F	T	O	L	I	P	Y	Z
E	X	N	H	C	H	G	V	W	B	D	U	L	D	Q
H	B	A	R	B	R	Z	V	K	E	K	H	E	O	L
R	L	O	Q	N	N	A	L	W	J	X	S	V	U	E
E	O	J	Z	D	B	B	S	T	Z	X	F	I	J	Q

SAFE KIDS FOR ANIMALS

This is where we recognise your action for animals.



SAFEYOUTH
Kids' Voice 4 Animals



EDEN (10) FEILDING

Eden raised \$176 selling vegan cupcakes. Amazing, Eden!

Eden is also our SAFE Youth profile for this issue – see below.

VINCENT (9) CHRISTCHURCH

Vincent recently found a small lop bunny running around the streets. He got his mother and brother to help. Together they knocked on doors to find the rabbit's guardian. Then they even helped the guardian catch the bunny, named Alfie, and take him back home. Fantastic animal rescue, Vincent!



MAJA (13) AUCKLAND

Maja has been busy doing beach clean ups on her local beach. She also wrote an article, for Vegetarian Living magazine, about the effect of litter on marine life. Maja has written a book review for this issue – you can read it on page 6.



GREAT WORK! MAJA!



ANA (10), LILY (10) & STELLA (10)

AUCKLAND

Lily, Ana and Stella have managed to raise over \$150 so far for SAFE and are still going. Great job, Ana and Lily!



SAFE YOUTH PROFILE

Name: Eden

Age: 10

Hometown: Feilding

Favourite animal: Bunny

What got you interested in wanting to help animals?

I spend a lot of time with animals and I love them. It upsets me to think about them being killed or hurt.

What is your favourite veg food?

Guacamole with mum's sourdough bread.

Anything you want to share about animals?

We have two cats (Scout and Mini) and two free-range bunnies (Rosie and Rupert). We also have some fish and lots of free-roaming chickens.



EDEN & LEMONARDO





Bad Oil and the Animals By L P Hansen

Review by Maja (13)

Being a teenager who is passionate about solving the ethical problems that affect our planet, I related to this book in every way.

An enthralling page-turner, *Bad Oil and the Animals* is both well-researched and cleverly written. It features five teenagers who learn about the injustices surrounding dairy production and palm plantations and want to take action. I liked how the compelling storyline and description combined to create a story that shone light on palm plantations and dairy production as well as making for an interesting read.

It is an inspiring, heartbreaking and at times harrowing book that is laced with humour in parts. I would totally recommend it. I think teenagers and young adults would enjoy it the most, however it is fairly simply written and younger readers would be able to follow it too.

Happy reading!



IT'S FREE!

JOIN SAFE YOUTH



If you are 8-14 you can join SAFE Youth free. Sign up online at SAFE.org.nz/safe-youth, or email alex@safe.org.nz.



safe.org.nz



TALKING TO PROJECT JONAH

Project Jonah fights for marine mammals to be protected and respected



What can we do to help whales?

Whales are amazing animals who have lived in our oceans for thousands of years. Despite this, they are under threat from anthropogenic (human driven) causes now more than ever. We need to protect our oceans, the places these animals call home. We need to reduce the amount of plastic and rubbish that makes its way into their environment, we need to monitor the amount of noise in the ocean and we need to research how we can look after these animals with climate change altering the makeup of the sea.

Why do whales spurt water from their blowholes?

It is not actually water that comes out of their blowholes! Whales are marine mammals like us – they breathe air just like you and me. When they come to the surface of the ocean to breathe, they open their blowholes and exhale from their lungs. Within this exhaled air there is often condensed moisture from within their lungs as well as some water that is resting on the top of the blowhole. They then take a deep breath in and dive down deep again.

How do whales flick their tails?

Good question! The muscle that controls the movement of a whale's tail runs from the back of their skull right down to their tail. It is the biggest and strongest muscle in the animal kingdom. The tail's main function is propulsion and it moves up and down to move the whale through the water. Interesting fact – whales cannot swim backwards!

How deep underwater can whales go?

Whales are fantastic divers and can dive down to some incredible depths. The record for the deepest and longest dive goes to the Cuvier's beaked whale that has been recorded diving to 2992 metres and staying down for 137.5 minutes.

Why do whales become beached?

There is not usually just one simple reason. Strandings occur for a number of reasons. This can be anything from a sickness or injury, to a whale that has just swum off course. The reason we see mass strandings occur is the strong bonds among the pod. Out in the deep ocean if one whale gets into trouble, they send out a distress call and the other whales will come and assist. When a whale strands on a beach it will send out the distress call and the rest of the pod will come to help, but they often end up getting stranded themselves.

Anything else you can tell us about whales?

In New Zealand, we are lucky enough to have half of the world's marine mammals either living in or travelling through our waters. That is over 40 different species of whales and dolphins! You don't have to go far to see some amazing wildlife here in Aotearoa so I would totally encourage people to get out on the water and see what they find!

To learn more about project Jonah go to www.projectjonah.org.nz.

