

Lesson ideas for geography teachers to share: Blue whale

Answers

1. Explore **The Ocean in 1891**, The Era of Whaling. How many whales were killed in the first half of the twentieth century?
340,000.
2. Who has banned hunting whales? And who flouts the ban?
The IWC (International Whaling Commission) has banned whaling and Norway both continue to hunt them.
3. Open The Feeding Event. After lunging forward, opening its mouth and capturing krill how does a whale not swallow seawater (whilst keeping the crustaceans in its mouth)?
Whales filter water out through the baleen by expanding their tongues. This forces the water out and traps the krill in their mouths.
4. Go to Gender. Who is bigger: male or female whales?
Females whales are 5% larger than males.
5. The Mythology and Mystery. What did humans accomplish *before* they managed to film a free-swimming whale underwater?
Space travel.
6. Access Record Breaker. How many calories can a whale take from a single mouthful of krill?
457,000.
7. How heavy is a Blue whale?
A Blue whale can weigh up to 180 tonnes, they are the largest animal ever to live on Earth.
8. Why did the whale (in the foyer of the Natural History Museum) beach?
In 1891 a whale beached in Wexford, Ireland, because she was caught in shallow water around the harbour. It is thought the weather could have caused her to lose her bearings.
9. Explore **Hintze Hall** and open Why the whale. Why is the skeleton so important?
It is vital for studying life in the ocean. Once upon a time these beautiful creatures were described as 'monsters of the sea'.
10. Open What's Left to Learn? What *is* left to learn about whales?
Scientists have been studying whale song for decades trying to decipher it. Scientists also don't know how long Blue whales live for or even where they migrate to.
11. Open Pose. Why is the skeleton suspended at such an angle?
The pose is how these animals eat krill. The new diving angle of the exhibit better reflects how a whale behaves in the ocean.
12. A Symbol of Hope. In 1960, after decades of hunting, how many Blue whales were left?
As few as 500.