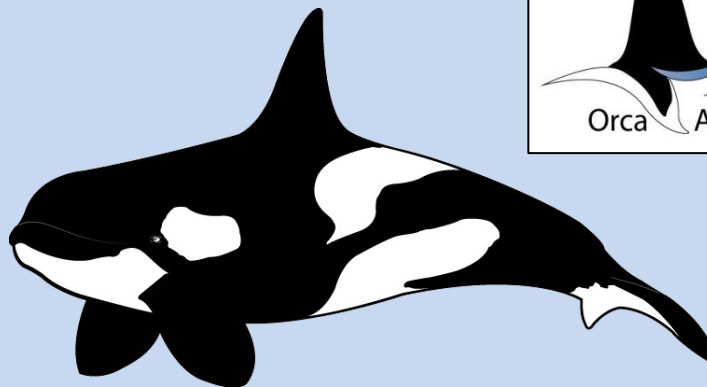


Orca



Scientific name: *Orcinus orca*

Other names: killer whale, blackfish

Description:

Orca are the largest member of the dolphin family. They are black with a white underside and white saddle and eye patches. Some types of orca are grey and white.

Where do they live?

Orca can be found in nearly every ocean of the world. Groups of orca living in the same area are known as orca populations.

We have orca living off the coasts of Scotland and Ireland!

How many are there?

It is thought that there are at least 50,000 orca found around the world, however different populations vary in size. Some populations are very small and are endangered.

How long do they live for?

Males: 50 – 60 years

Females: 80 – 90 years.

Some orca alive today are thought to be over 100 years old!

How big are they?

Males can grow up to 9.8m long and weigh up to 10,000kg.

Females can grow up to 8.5m long and weigh up to 7,500kg.

Male dorsal fins can grow up to 1.8m tall!

How fast and far can they swim?

Distance: up to 160km/day

Speed: over 56km/hr

What do they eat?

Orca are the apex (top) predator of the ocean. They eat fish, stingrays, sharks and even other marine mammals. Different populations of orca eat different things. Off the Scottish coast, one population of orca are fish-eaters and another population are seal-eaters!

How do they live?

Like us, orca are very social animals. They live in family groups called 'pods', which usually have a female leader known as a matriarch. They tend to stay with their families for their entire lives. Different populations of orca live in different group sizes: some are small (a mother and her children) and some are large, with lots of extended family.