

# HUMPBACK WHALES

## of the Philippines

**Kingdom:** Animalia  
**Phylum:** Chordata  
**Class:** Mammalia  
**Order:** Cetacea  
**Family:** Balaenopteridae  
**Genus:** *Megaptera*  
**Species:** *novaeangliae*

### Species Description

**WEIGHT:**  
 25-40 tons (22,000-36,000 kg);  
 newborns weigh about 1 ton (900 kg)

**LENGTH:**  
 Adult, 12-18 m (females larger than males);  
 newborn calf, 3-4.5 m.

**LIFESPAN:**  
 about 50 years

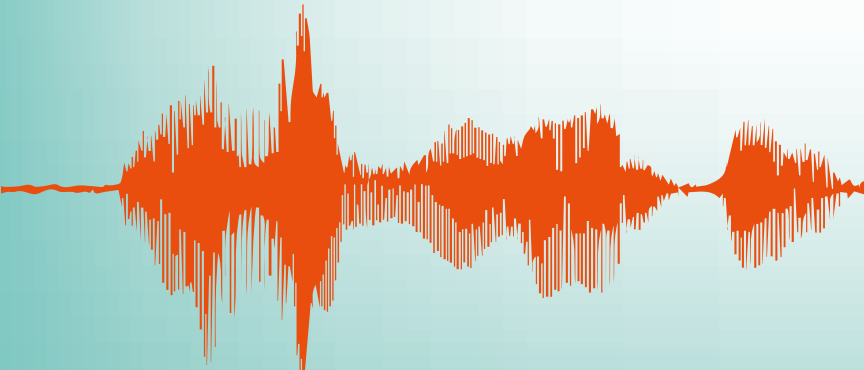


A 1.8 m diver compared to the whale



**APPEARANCE:**  
 Grey to black with some white areas; with a hump like to sickle-shaped dorsal fin; have long black-and-white flippers or pectoral fins; distinctive bumps on top of the head; and black-and-white pigment patterns on the underside of the tail flukes.

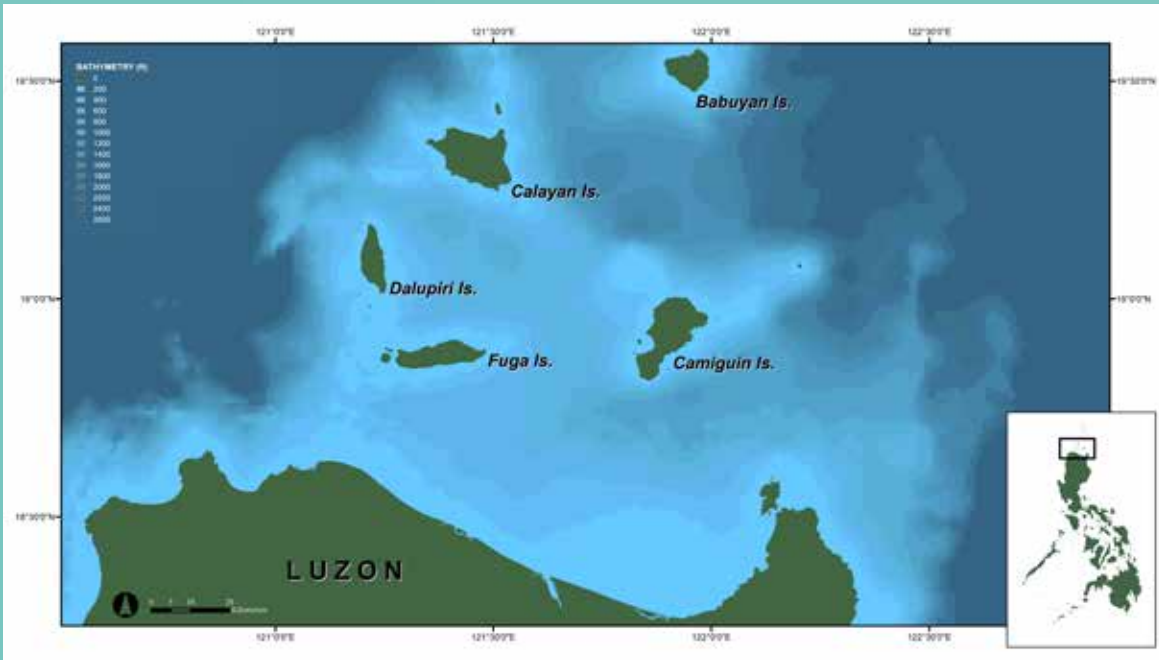
**DIET:**  
 tiny crustaceans (mostly krill), plankton, and small fish; they can consume up to 1,360 kg of food per day.



**WHALE SOUNDS:**  
 Humpback whales are best known for their songs. Songs consist of sequences of sounds that are repeated over and over in a pattern. Patterns of humpback whale sounds change from year to year and can vary in different parts of the ocean. Only male humpback whales sing.

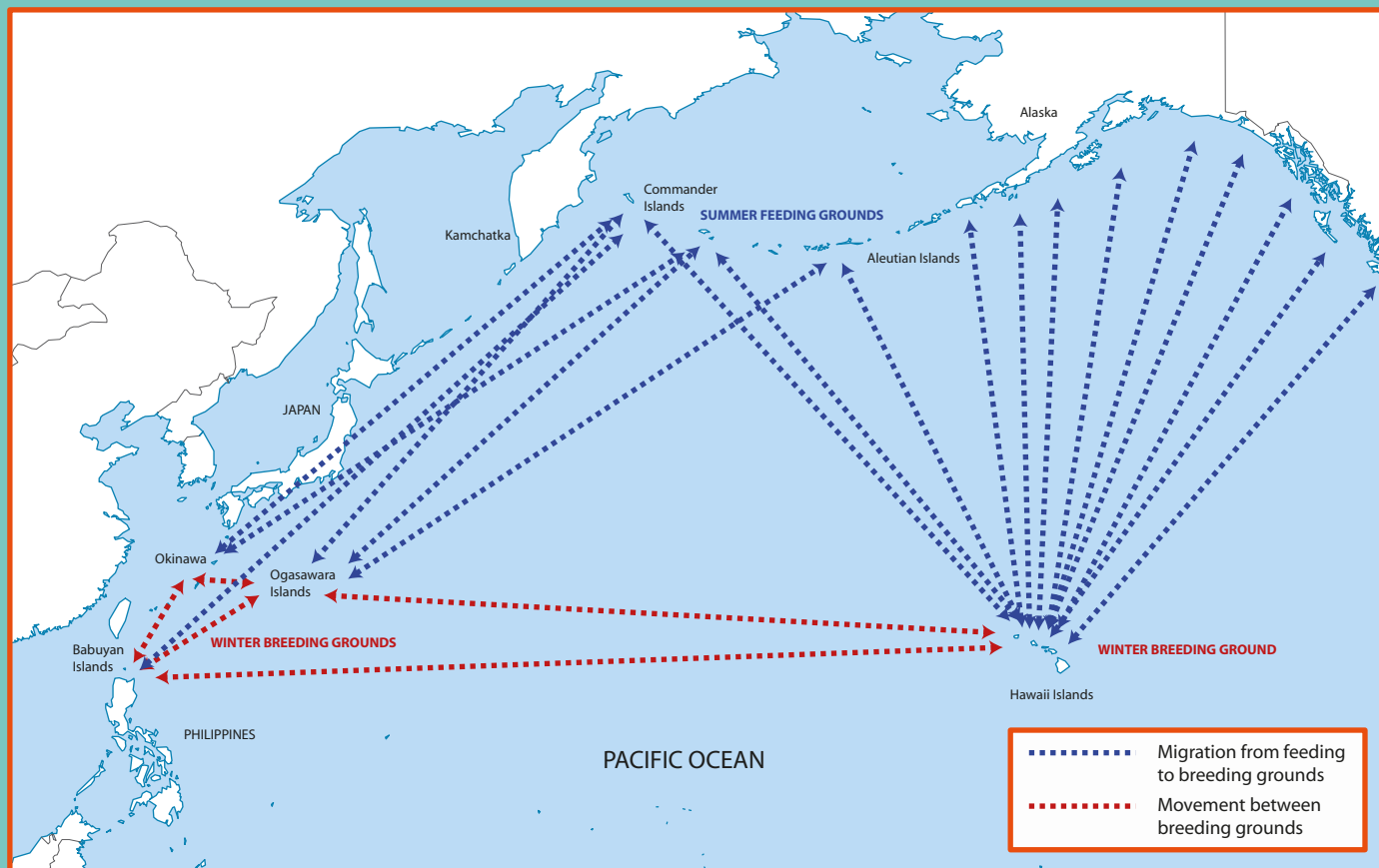
### DISTRIBUTION:

Humpbacks occur worldwide. They migrate annually from high-latitude summer feeding grounds to subtropical or tropical winter breeding grounds. Humpbacks in the Philippines belong to the western North Pacific stock.



**The Babuyan group of Islands**  
 The Babuyanes of Cagayan Province is composed of five main islands, namely, Calayan, Dalupiri, Fuga, Camiguin, and Babuyan Claro which are under the jurisdiction of two municipalities, Calayan and Aparri. The humpbacks winter in these waters from December to May of each year, reaching as far south as the eastern coast of northern Sierra Madre.

Map showing the migration patterns of humpback whales in the western North Pacific between their feeding and breeding grounds and between different breeding grounds.



### Key Behaviors

#### Breach

The whale propels itself out of the water, generally clearing the surface with two-thirds of its body or more. As the whale rises above the water, it throws one pectoral fin out to the side and turns in the air on its longitudinal axis.



#### Blow

Refers to both the act of breathing and the cloud of water droplets produced above the animal's head during the process of exhalation.

#### Fluke up dive

As the whale dives, it may arch its back with the peduncle appearing at the surface of the water, which is usually followed with its tail fluke above the surface of the water. The tail flukes can be brought straight up into the air, exposing the entire ventral surface.



#### Spy hop

is when the whale rises straight up out of the water slowly and maintains its head above the surface to just below the eye. It often turns 90-180 degrees on its longitudinal axis, then slips back below the surface.

#### Pectoral slap/Flipper slap

Humpbacks frequently roll at the surface, slapping their long pectoral fins against the water, or they may lie on their side, bringing one fin high up into the air and then swinging it forcefully down onto the surface of the water.



BALYENA AT LUMBA SA PILIPINAS  
 Paseo del Mar, Brgy. Pangdan, Jagna, Bohol

#### References:

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Humpback whale illustrations: WWF-Philippines / Oscar Figuracion