



Name _____

The Blue Whale

Learn all about this gentle giant and answer the True/False statements that follow.

The Blue Whale is the largest creature ever to have lived on earth. Largest than any dinosaur even. Their tongues can weigh as much as an elephant and their hearts as much as a car.

As big as these animals are, these giants feed on Plankton and tiny shrimplike animals called krill. A single adult blue whale can consume up to 7,900 pounds of krill in a day. They mainly catch their food by diving and descending into depths of approximately 1600 feet. The whale's mouth has a fascinating row of plates fringed with bristles to help it filter its main source of food which is Plankton. With each mouthful, the whale can hold up to 11,000 pounds of water and Plankton. The whale will force the water out of its mouth and lick the bristles with its fleshy tongue. Despite the size of its mouth, the dimensions of its throat are such that a blue whale cannot swallow an object wider than a beach ball.

Even though the blue whale is a deep-water hunter it must come to the surface of the sea to breathe. This is because the blue whale is a mammal. When it surfaces, it exhales air out of a blowhole in a cloud of pressurized vapor that will spout out up to 30 feet in the air.

Blue whales occasionally swim in small groups, but are usually found alone or in pairs. They are thought to form close attachments. They cruise the ocean at around 5 miles per hour, but can reach speeds of over 30 miles per hour.

Even though we can't hear them, blue whales are one of the loudest animals on the planet. They communicate with each other using a series of low frequency pulses, groans, and moans. It is thought that in good conditions blue whales can hear each other almost a thousand miles away. Scientists think they use these vocalizations not only to communicate, but to navigate the deep ocean.

Blue whales have few predators but are known to fall victim to attacks by sharks and killer whales. Many are injured or die each year from impacts with large ships. They are currently on the endangered species list. It is estimated that there are only 5,000-12,000 blue whales left in the world's oceans.

Answer True or False

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|--|------|-------|
| 1. Blue Whales are mammals. | True | False |
| 2. The only animal bigger than a blue whale was a dinosaur. | True | False |
| 3. Blue whales usually travel in groups. | True | False |
| 4. Blue whales feed on Plankton and krill. | True | False |
| 5. Blue whales are endangered. | True | False |
| 6. Blue whales could swallow a car. | True | False |
| 7. Blue whales need to breathe air. | True | False |
| 8. Blue whales cannot hear very far. | True | False |
| 9. Blue whales can eat up to 7,900 pounds of krill in a day. | True | False |
| 10. A blue whale's tongue can weigh as much as an elephant. | True | False |