



WHALES

**ACTIVITIES BASED ON RESEARCH FROM
THE CENTER FOR COASTAL STUDIES**

written and edited by

**KATH BUFFINGTON, MARIA FLEMING,
DEBORAH KOVACS,
KAREN STEUER, AND NATHALIE WARD**

S C H O L A S T I C
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Dr. Barbara S. Mayo,
Founder of the Center for Coastal Studies.
Her life-long devotion to saving coastal and marine
environments was an inspiration to all ages.*

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WHALE BEHAVIOR

Whales are wild animals whose behavior is unpredictable and mysterious to humans. A scientist on a research excursion observing a whale doesn't know where a whale will travel or what the whale does while it is under water. But every so often it is possible to catch a glimpse of a whale's behavior when it appears at the water's surface to breathe, feed, or jump. Suddenly, a massive humpback whale may hurl its 40-ton body through the air in a spectacular leap. This is called "breaching." Or it may "spyhop" by raising its head above the water's surface to peer around briefly before sinking back down out of sight. These activities are just two examples of some often-seen whale behaviors.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Whales in Action

WHALES IN THEIR HABITAT: Pages 28–29 show whales in an ocean scene demonstrating some commonly observed behaviors. Reproduce the pages and have students paste page 29 below page 28 (along the line) to make a mini-poster depicting how whales behave in their habitat. Ask students to read the descriptions of different whale behaviors and examine the illustrations. They can use the mini-poster with the puppet they make in the activity below.

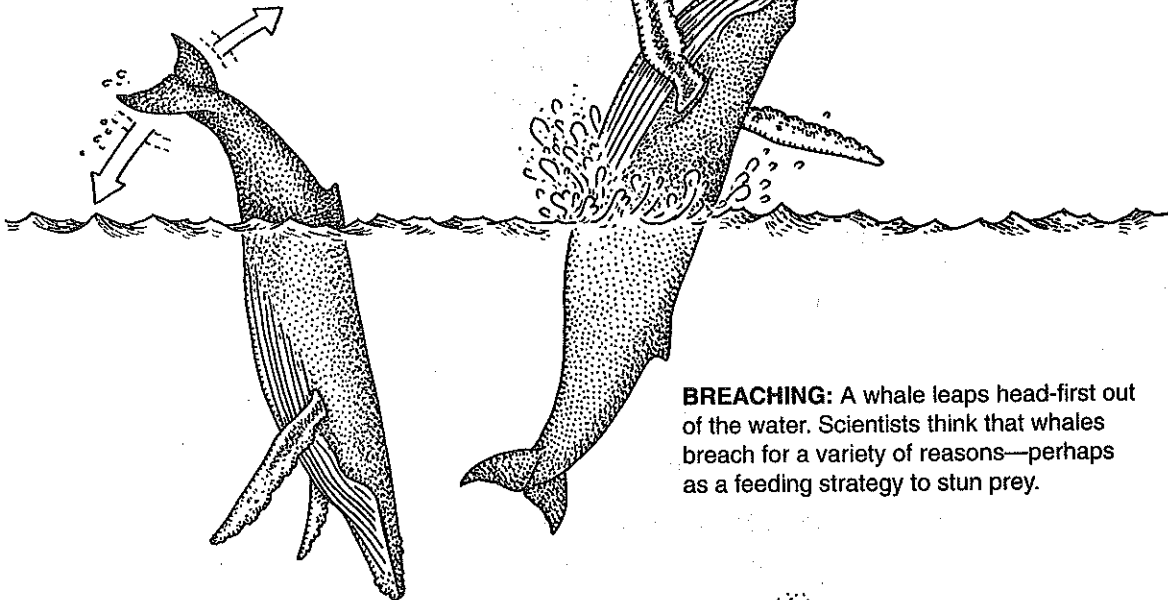
A WHALE OF A PUPPET: On reproducible pages 30–32 you will find directions and a pattern for making a right whale puppet with movable parts. Distribute a copy of each page to students and help them assemble the puppets. Children can pretend their whales are in the ocean, and refer to the mini-poster to simulate some whale behaviors. You may want to divide students into pairs for this activity. A cardboard box—painted blue and turned on its side—can be used to represent the ocean's surface. Students can take turns manipulating their puppets behind the ocean "stage."

Whales in Their Habitat:

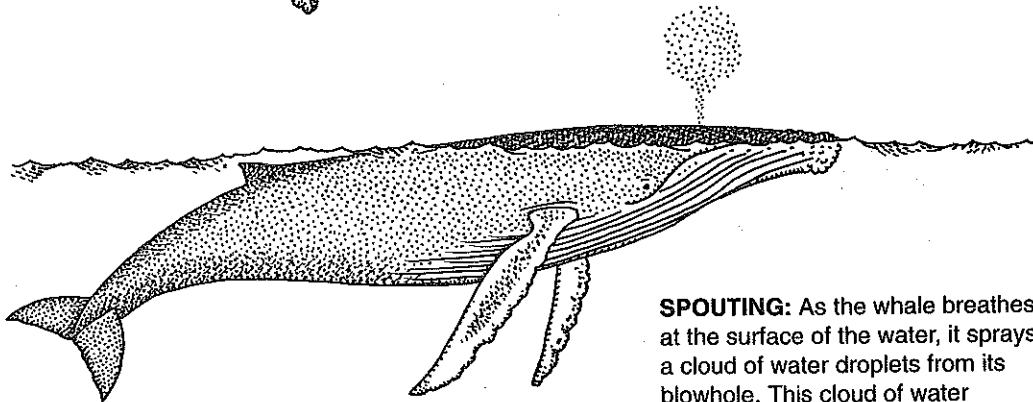
AN ACTION POSTER

Because whales live underwater, most of what they do is hidden from view. But sometimes whales come to the surface, and people can see how they behave. Here are some well-known whale behaviors.

LOBTAILING: The whale has its head down. It holds its flukes above the surface of the water, and then slaps them continuously against the water.



BREACHING: A whale leaps head-first out of the water. Scientists think that whales breach for a variety of reasons—perhaps as a feeding strategy to stun prey.

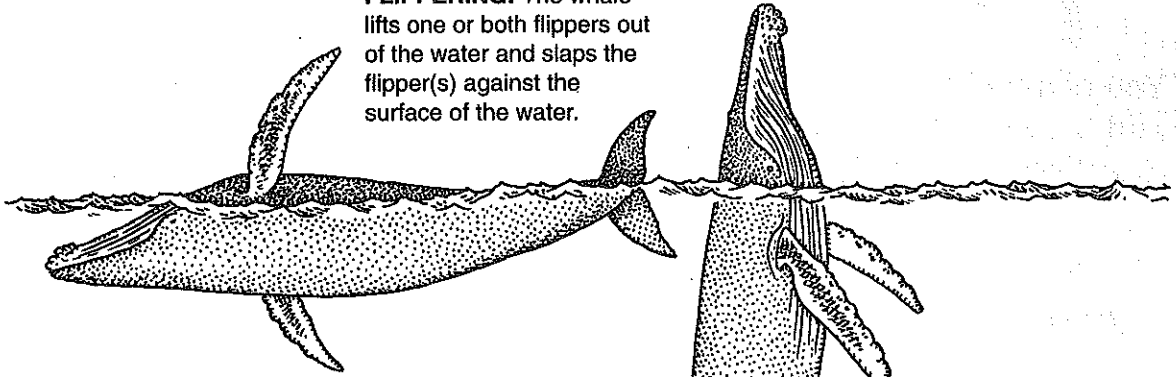


SPOUTING: As the whale breathes at the surface of the water, it sprays a cloud of water droplets from its blowhole. This cloud of water droplets is called the spout or the blow. Spouting makes a loud whooshing sound. The spouts of different kinds of whales are different shapes.

Paste along this line

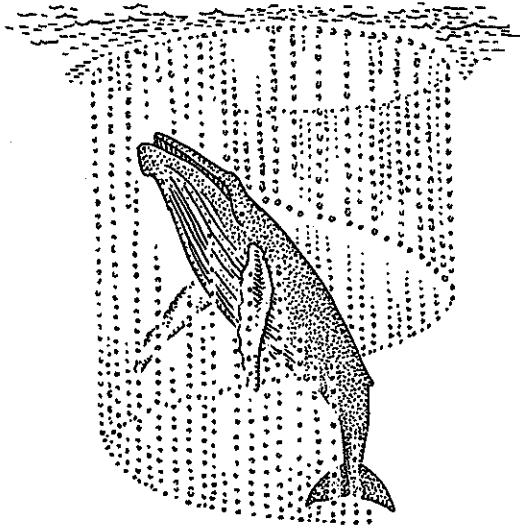


FLIPPERING: The whale lifts one or both flippers out of the water and slaps the flipper(s) against the surface of the water.

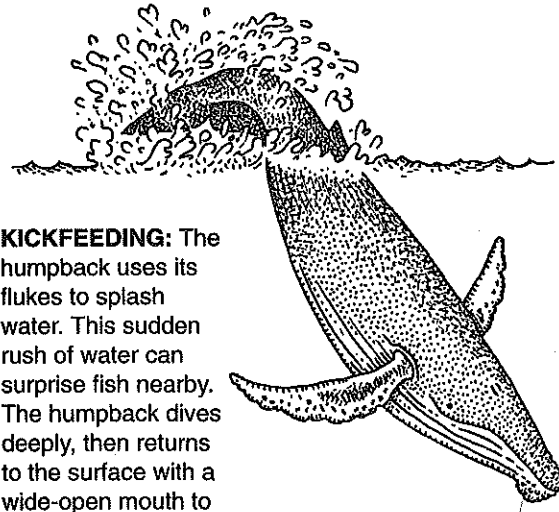


FORMING A BUBBLE NET (OR CLOUD):

A humpback whale dives beneath a school of fish. Then it blows columns of bubbles as it circles back up to the surface of the water. The bubble columns join to form a "net" (or cloud) up to 100 feet across. The "net" (or cloud) traps the fish as the whale swims through the center with its mouth wide open.

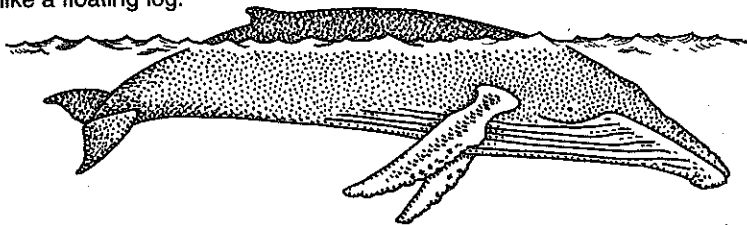


SPYHOPPING: The whale slowly rises straight up out of the water, until its eye is above the surface of the water. Then it sinks back into its more usual horizontal position. Spyhopping may be a whale's way of seeing what's happening above the surface of the water.



KICKFEEDING: The humpback uses its flukes to splash water. This sudden rush of water can surprise fish nearby. The humpback dives deeply, then returns to the surface with a wide-open mouth to scoop up the surprised fish.

LOGGING: The whale rests at the water's surface without swimming and looks like a floating log.



A Whale of a Puppet

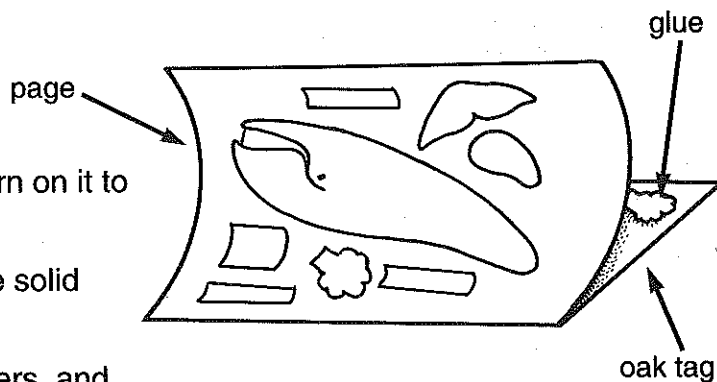
You can make a right whale puppet that can spout, move its tailfluke, and flip its flippers. Just use the pattern on the next page and follow the directions below. Then put your action poster showing whales in their habitat on your desk. Pretend your whale is in the ocean. Use the poster to help show how it behaves.

Materials:

- whale pattern
- glue
- 8" by 10" piece of oak tag
- scissors
- a pencil
- markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- strong tape
- 2 brass fasteners

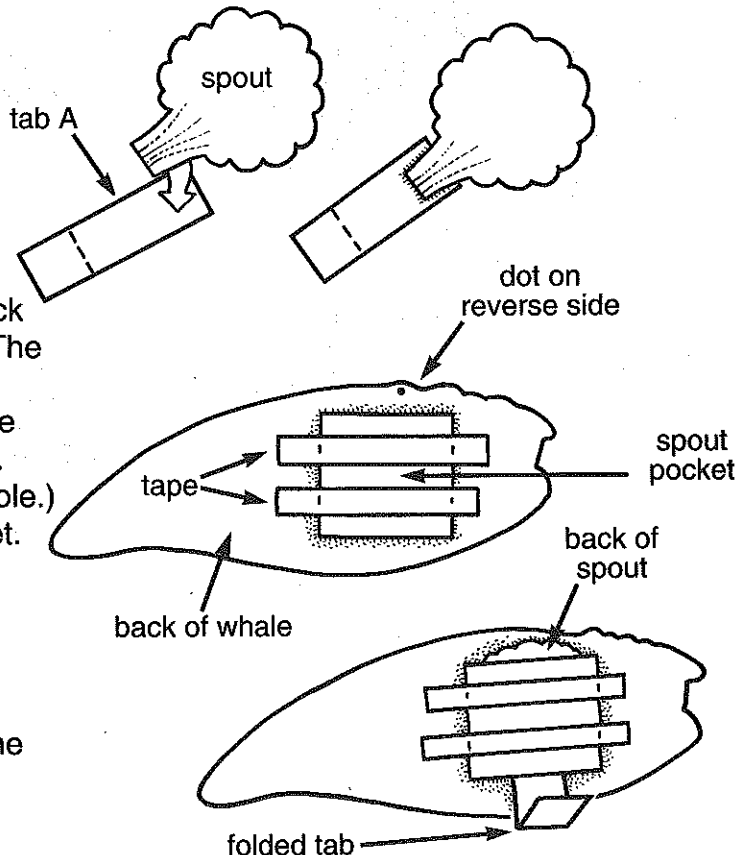
What you do:

1. Glue the page with the pattern on it to the cardboard.
2. Cut out the shapes along the solid lines.
3. Color the whale's body, flippers, and flukes.



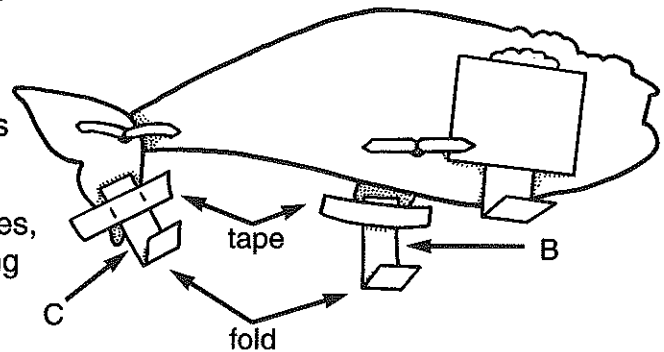
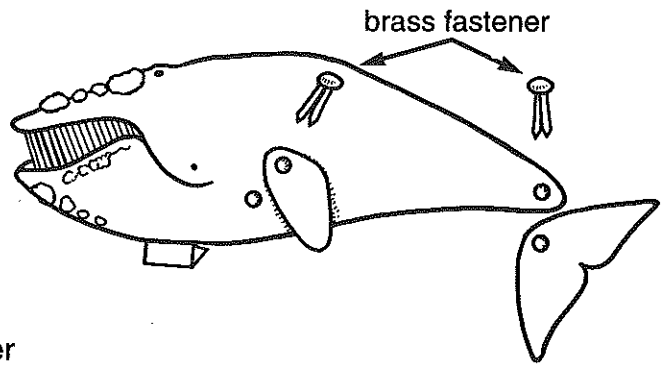
To attach the spout:

4. Tape tab A to the back of the whale's spout, as shown.
5. Tape the spout pocket to the back of the whale's body, as shown. The pocket should be just under the small, dark circle at the top of the whale's body near the dorsal fin. (This circle is the whale's blowhole.) Tape only the sides of the pocket. Do not tape the top or bottom.
6. Slip the spout into the top of the pocket you just made. Pull the tab out from the bottom of the pocket and fold tab A back on the dashed line.



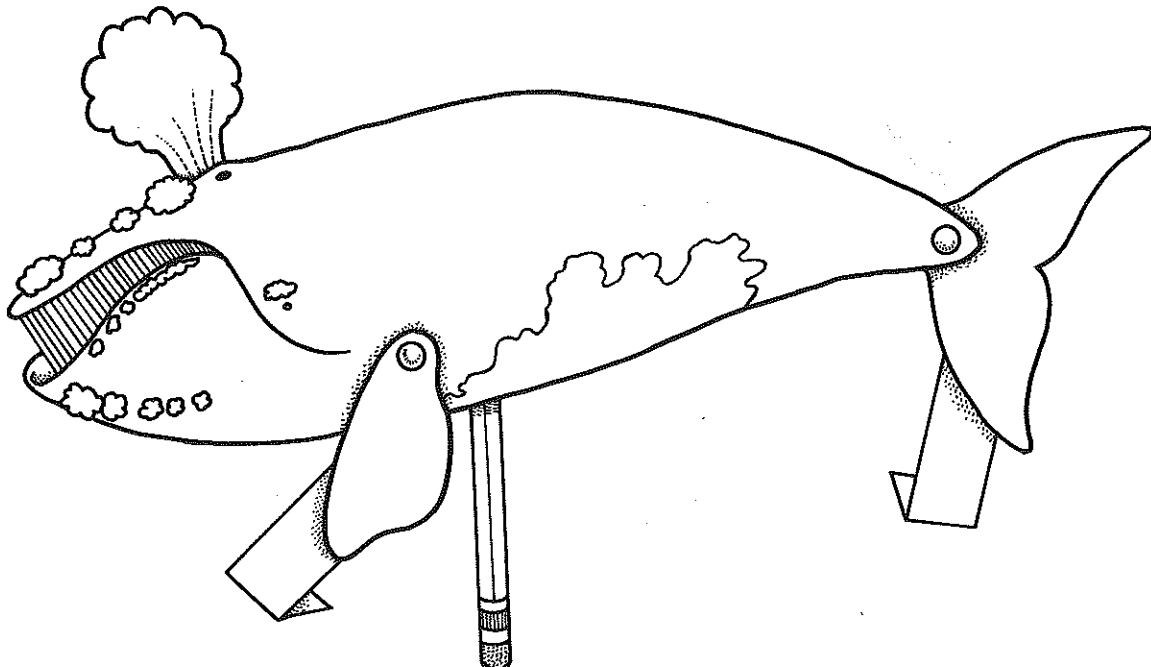
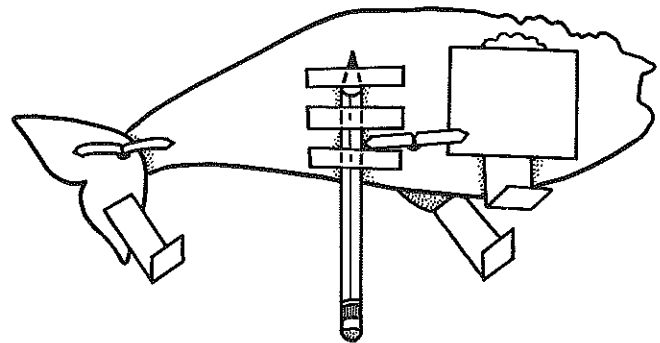
To attach the flipper and flukes:

7. Use one brass fastener to attach the whale's flipper to its body.
8. Tape tab B to the back of the flipper as shown. Fold tab B back on the dashed line.
9. Use the other brass fastener to attach the whale's tail flukes to its body.
10. Tape tab C to the back of the flukes, as shown. Fold the tab back along the line.



To finish your puppet:

11. Tape the pencil to the back of the whale's body. Hold the puppet by the pencil.
12. Pull or push tabs A, B, and C to move the whale's flipper or flukes and to make the whale spout.



A Whale of a Puppet

