



WHALES

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

written and edited by

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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 MIGRATION

Migration is another mysterious aspect of whale behavior. Not all whales migrate. Most baleen whales are migratory, while most toothed whales are not. Migrating whales travel thousands of miles as they move between polar and tropical regions in search of optimal breeding and feeding conditions. There are many unanswered questions about where, when, and why whales migrate, and migratory habits vary among species. But in general, whales spend the summer feeding in polar regions. Plankton—the primary food source of baleen whales—is most plentiful in Arctic and Antarctic waters. When polar waters become colder in winter, the whales head toward more temperate regions to mate and calve.

Long Journeys

Because humpback whales populate the waters near the Center for Coastal Studies during part of the year, researchers there know a little bit more about the migratory patterns of these animals than those of other whales. Humpbacks travel between 3,000 and 4,000 miles on their round-trip journey between their breeding grounds in the Caribbean and their feeding grounds in the North Atlantic. Right whales, another species that inhabits North Atlantic waters, make similarly long journeys. They travel from feeding grounds in the waters off Nova Scotia, Canada, to breeding grounds in the waters near the southern states of Georgia and Florida.

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Incredible Journeys

Make photocopies of the reproducible on page 38 and distribute one to each student. It will provide them with information about the migratory habits of humpback and right whales. It also includes a fun, hands-on mapping activity for them to try.

Name _____

Incredible Journeys

Some whales make long trips called migrations. They travel from feeding grounds, places where they can find plenty of food, to breeding grounds, places where they give birth to young and mate. Read the fact boxes below about the journeys of two different whales. Then follow the directions to map the whales' migration paths.

Humpback Whales

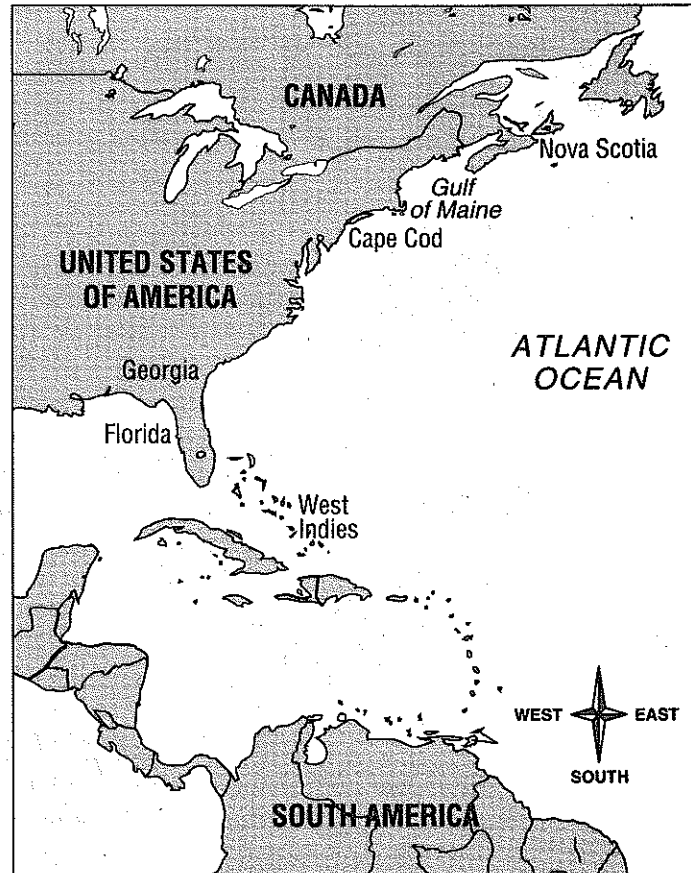
Summer: feed in Gulf of Maine off of Cape Cod, Massachusetts

Winter: breed in waters in the West Indies

Right Whales

Summer: feed in waters off of Nova Scotia, Canada

Winter: breed in waters off of southern Georgia and Florida



Mark the following things on the map. Use a red pencil for the humpback whale and a blue pencil for the right whale.

1. Write the letter F on the map to show each whale's feeding ground.
2. Write the letter B on the map to show each whale's breeding ground.
3. Draw a line to show a path each whale might follow to get from its feeding ground to its breeding ground.

Now use the map you made to answer the questions.

4. Do the whales head north or south to breed? _____
5. Do the whales head north or south to feed? _____
6. Which whale's breeding ground is farther South? _____
7. Which whale's feeding ground is farther North? _____