

## Humpback whale

**MEGAPTERA NOVAEANGLIAE** from the greek **me**gas, **gr**eat and **pt**eron, a **w**ing, for a whale with huge winglike flippers.

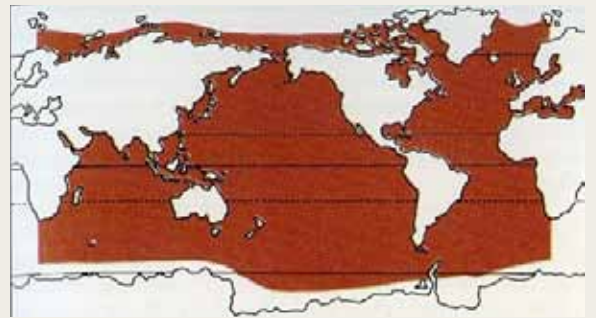


LENGTH: 14 TO 17 METRES FOR MALES AND 15-19 METRES FOR FEMALES AND WEIGHING FROM 30-48,000 KGS (53 TONS)!

Humpbacks are found in both the northern and southern oceans and feed on krill and small schooling fish, and when food is concentrated, the whale lunges through the patch with its mouth open straining the water. The Humpback has also developed an intriguing method of rounding up prey by swimming in a circle below the surface blowing bubbles to form a vertical "bubble net". This net traps the prey inside and the whale surfaces in the middle with its mouth open, collecting food on the way.

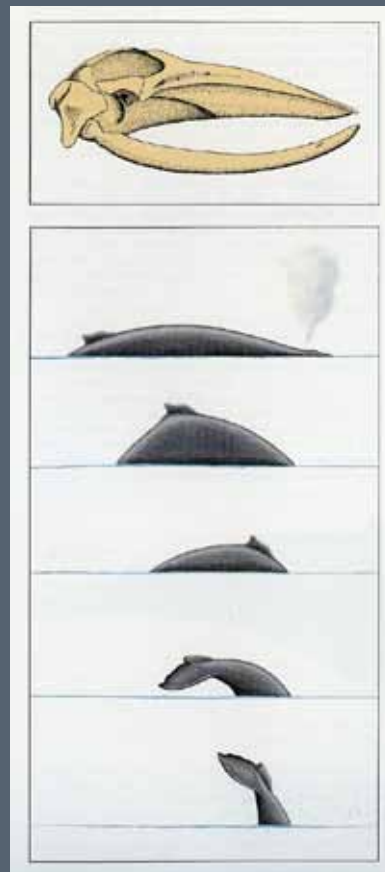
The Humpback whale frequents New Zealand's coastal waters but their numbers were greatly reduced by intensive whaling activities by foreign whaling ships and New Zealand shore-based whalers from the 1840s with a further decline occasioned by foreign whaling fleets in Antarctic waters in the 1950s. By 1963 only 23 were sighted passing through Cook Strait whereas 10 years earlier 500 had been seen in one year.

In the southern hemisphere the Humpback has definite migration routes between its Antarctic feeding grounds and breeding areas north of New Zealand. In autumn they travel mainly up the east coast, with some passing through Cook Strait, and in spring they return principally by way of the west coasts.



**HUMPBACKS ARE FOUND IN BOTH THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN OCEANS AND FEED ON KRILL AND SMALL SCHOOLING FISH.**

Humpbacks produce the longest and most varied songs in the animal world and are one of the most energetic of the large whales. They are well known for their spectacular breaching, lobtailing and flipper slapping.



**ABOVE: THE SKULL OF A HUMPBACK.**

**BELOW: A HUMPBACK DIVE SEQUENCE.**

For more interesting information on whales check out our website: [worldwithwhales.com/whale-kids](http://worldwithwhales.com/whale-kids)

**SAVING THE WHALE MEANS SAVING ITS HISTORY**