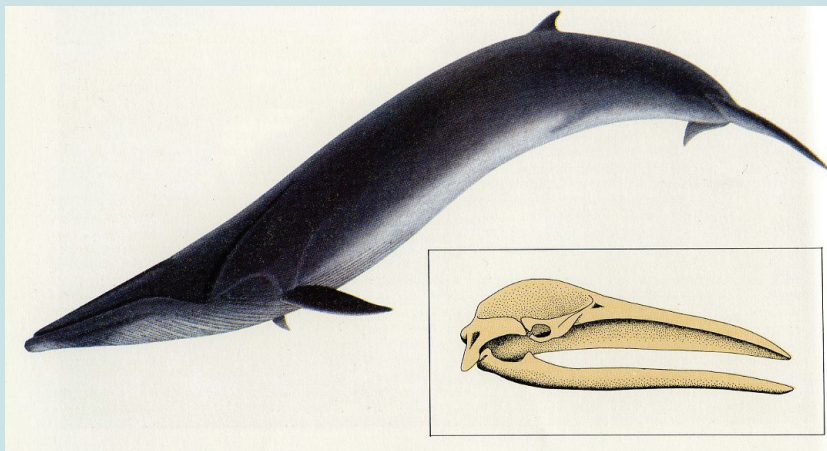


## Fin Whale *Balaenoptera physalus*

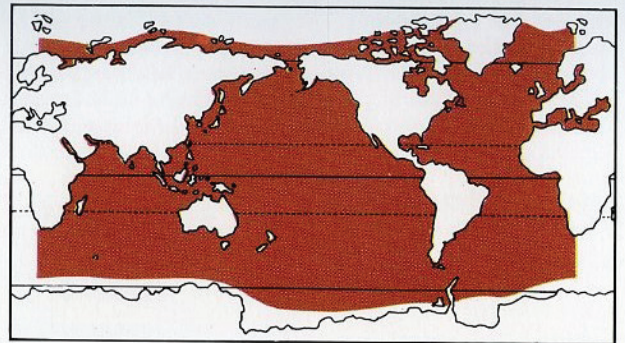
from the Greek phusalis, a wind instrument or something like a toad, which puffs itself up.



Fin whales, known as the greyhounds of the oceans, reach 24m in length – second in size only to Blue whales and are similar to Sei and Bryde’s whales. They have a flattish head, and a distinctly rigid tailstock—a feature which gave rise to the whaler’s name ‘razorback’.

They feed mainly on krill but are adept at gathering swarming crustaceans and schools of small fish.

Their lifespan is at least 80 years.

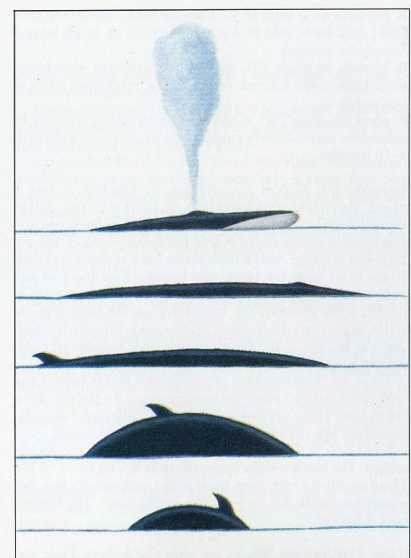


They are found in all oceans at all temperatures and in all depths, even in the Mediterranean.

Although still hunted today by Japanese whalers in the southern oceans, they were never a major target for the Australian and New Zealand whalers, but like the Blue, was an important species in the antarctic whaling industry.

There have been strandings in New Zealand and the Finner is occasionally seen by fishermen in Cook Strait or off the South Island of New Zealand.

It is estimated that there are some 70-80,000 Fin Whales worldwide with a greater abundance in the North Atlantic and North Pacific. After their massive slaughter during the 20th century in the southern oceans they are only making a slow recovery off Antarctica.



Above: dive sequence  
Below: feeding posture with distended throat: note the white baleen plates on front right only

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