

Deep Sea Learning with Georgia Aquarium



EDUCATION
GEORGIA AQUARIUM

Marine Mammal Madness: Fact Sheet

As seen on Deep Sea Learning with Georgia Aquarium:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/GeorgiaAquarium>



Key Terms:

- A **mammal** is an animal that is warm blooded, has hair, gives birth to live young, and feeds their young with milk.

- **Marine mammals** include cetaceans, pinnipeds, sea otters, sirenians (manatees and dugongs) and polar bears.

- All whales, dolphins, and porpoises are **cetaceans**.

- **Baleen** -- stiff plates in the upper jaw of some whales, used to filter out tiny animals from the water for food.

- Toothed whales can use **echolocation** - emitting a sound and then listening to the echo - to navigate and locate prey.

- Seals, sea lions, and walruses are **pinnipeds**.

- **Mustelids** are a group of mammals that includes weasels, ferrets, and otters.

- Sea otters are **keystone species**; these are organisms whose existence is critical to the balance of their ecosystem.

- Baleen whale species are some of the world's largest living animals. In fact, the biggest of all - the blue whale - is the largest animal to have ever existed and can be longer than the Ocean Voyager tunnel (100 feet!).

- Toothed whales include belugas, narwhals, sperm whales, dolphins and porpoises. These are social animals that can use echolocation to navigate and locate prey. Georgia Aquarium is home to both belugas and bottlenose dolphins.

- What is the difference between a seal and a sea lion? Sea lions have ear flaps called "pinnae", while seals have ear holes. On land, sea lions can walk on all four flippers, seals cannot, they move caterpillar-like.

- Sea otters are related to weasels and ferrets. They play an important role in maintaining the balance of the kelp forests in which they live by keeping sea urchin populations under control through predation. This affects many species since a healthy kelp plant provides a home for many marine animals.

- Marine mammals face threats from pollution, loss of prey through overfishing and climate change. Georgia Aquarium participates in valuable research programs worldwide, in order to help protect wild marine mammal populations.

Visit <https://www.georgiaaquarium.org/at-home-learning-with-georgia-aquarium/> for more online resources to use at home!