



Humpback Whale

Megaptera novaeangliae

Quick facts

Order Cetartiodactyla

Conservation status
Global *Least concern*

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Global trend *Increasing*

Size 13 - 15 m

Weight 25,000 - 30,000 kg

Life span Possibly up to 100 years.

The humpback whale is a distinctive rorqual with a relatively short head and robust body. It is found worldwide in all seas, and sightings around Britain and Ireland have increased markedly since the early 1980s.

Habitat

Distributed worldwide. Found around Iceland, Norway, Great Britain, and Ireland in the eastern North Atlantic.

Behaviour

Strongly migratory, travelling up to 25,000 km each year to feed in summer in high latitudes, and to mate and give birth in winter in tropical waters. All North Atlantic humpbacks seem to mix spatially and genetically in West Indies in winter.

Diet & Feeding

Uses a variety of techniques including herding with bubble nets, clouds, or curtains to catch krill and small fish including herring and mackerel.

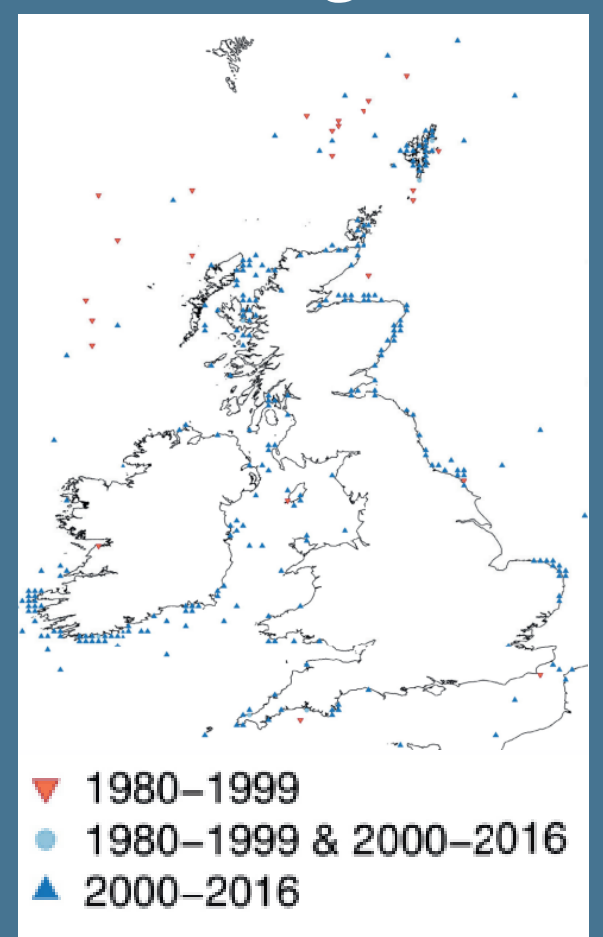
Reproduction

Mean age at first reproduction is 6 - 12 years depending on location, and females typically breed every two or three years.

Conservation & Threats

Commercial whaling seriously depleted all humpback populations. They have been legally protected from commercial whaling since 1966 and populations have increased in several locations, including in the North Atlantic. They are particularly vulnerable to becoming entangled in fishing gear and other debris, and to ship strikes.

Range



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