

WHALE

PHOTO-IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

for Naturalists + Citizen Scientists

How to photograph identification features for
Right, Fin, Sei, Humpback, Blue and Killer whales

Photographs of whales can be added to global catalogues.
Identification features help researchers recognise individual whales
and understand population movements.



SUBMIT PHOTOS TO [HAPPYWHALE.COM](https://happywhale.com)



<https://iwc.int/sorp>

BLUE WHALE - Dorsal fin, lateral body (mottling)

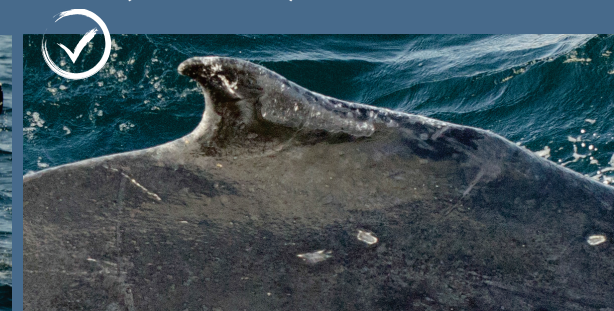


GOOD ANGLES - include mottling around dorsal fin

BAD ANGLE

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HUMPBACK WHALE - Fluke (underside) + dorsal fin



Underside of flukes used for ID - GOOD ANGLES



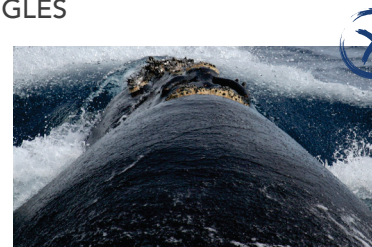
Topside of flukes NOT USED - BAD ANGLES

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RIGHT WHALE - Head (left, right + above)



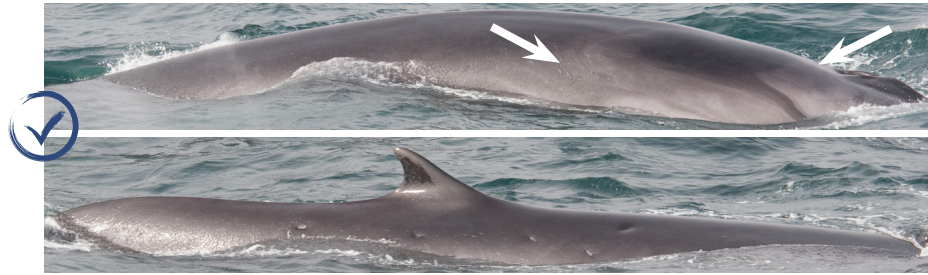
GOOD ANGLES



BAD ANGLES

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FIN WHALE - Dorsal fin, blaze + chevron - right side preferred



Take series of images to link blaze + chevron (between arrows) to dorsal fin



GOOD ANGLE

BAD ANGLE

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ORCA/KILLER WHALE - Dorsal fin, saddle + eye patch



GOOD ANGLES

BAD ANGLE

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BEST
VOLUNTARY SCHEME
FOR BIODIVERSITY AND
ECOSYSTEM SERVICES
IN TERRITORIES OF
EUROPEAN OVERSEAS



<https://iwc.int/sorp>

SEI WHALE - Dorsal fin, lateral body



Include lateral body around dorsal fin



GOOD ANGLE

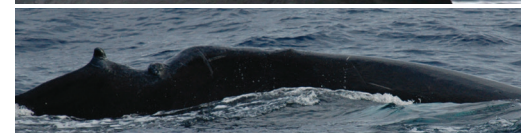
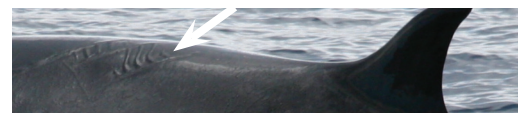
BAD ANGLE

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HEALTH ASSESSMENT



Craters from gull attacks - colourless/white/red



Scars or injuries from ship strike

PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

- Set camera to Georeference images (settings: Location > On)
- Set local Date + Time
- Set to highest image quality
- Take sequences to link body parts eg. dorsal fin to flukes
- Photograph dead + injured whales eg. propeller + entanglement wounds or scars
- When submitting images include date and latitude/longitude
- Never delete, downsize or crop images

Photographs used in this guide courtesy of International Whaling Commission (IWC). Taken during IWC Southern and Pacific Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research cruises; see iwc.int/sowar and iwc.int/power



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