

SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Balaenoptera musculus Blue Whale

Group: Chordata (vertebrates), Mammalia (mammals), Cetacea (Whales and Dolphins), Balaenopteridae (rorquals)

Status: *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*: endangered
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: Endangered

Endemic Status: Migratory



Blue whales occur in all oceans, primarily along the edge of continental shelves and ice fronts. In the southern hemisphere, blue whales generally stay south of 40 degrees S during summer before moving northward past Tasmania and the Australian coastline as winter approaches.

The blue whale is the largest living animal on earth, reaching up to 30 m in length and weighing over 160 tonnes. The body shape is mainly narrow, slightly arched and streamlined. Body colour is a light bluish grey mottled with greyish white or lighter underneath. A small dorsal fin is situated at the end of the lower back. They occur in all oceans, primarily along the edge of continental shelves and ice fronts. Threats include direct killing (illegal in Australian waters), entanglement in nets or other water debris, collision with oceanic vessels, marine pollution leading to disease or strandings, e.g. oil spills, competition and depletion of food stocks by fisheries, especially unsustainable harvest of krill, disturbance and harassment.

Source; Bryant, S. L. and Jackson, J. (1999). *Tasmania's Threatened Fauna Handbook*. Threatened Species Unit, Parks and Wildlife Service, Hobart.

A complete species management profile is not currently available for this species. Check for further information on this page and any relevant Activity Advice.

Key Points

- **Important:** Is this species in your area? Do you need a permit? Ensure you've covered all the issues by checking the Planning Ahead page.
- **Important:** Different threatened species may have different requirements. For any activity you are considering, read the Activity Advice pages for background information and important advice about managing around the needs of multiple threatened species.

Further information

Check also for listing statement or notesheet pdf above (below the species image).

NRE Whale and Dolphin Viewing Guidelines

Australian National Guidelines for Whale and Dolphin Watching

Industry Guidelines on the Interaction between Offshore Seismic Exploration and Whales

Cite as: Threatened Species Section (2024). *Blue Whale (Balaenoptera musculus): Species Management Profile for Tasmania's Threatened Species Link*. <https://www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/Pages/Blue-Whale.aspx> Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. Accessed on 2/11/2024.

Contact details: Threatened Species Section, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (1300 368 550).

Permit: A permit is required under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* to 'take' (which includes kill, injure, catch, damage, destroy and collect), keep, trade in or process any specimen or products of a listed species. Additional permits may also be required under other Acts or regulations to take, disturb or interfere with any form of wildlife or its products, (e.g. dens, nests, bones). This may also depend on the tenure of the land and other agreements relating to its management.