



# Latest Episode: Whales, #117

Hello, Who Smarted? listener! Our latest episode, #117, is about Whales. Did you know whales are able to use 90% of the oxygen from the air they breathe? This allows them to take deep breaths and stay underwater for as long as 90 minutes! But where did whales come from and how can we protect them?

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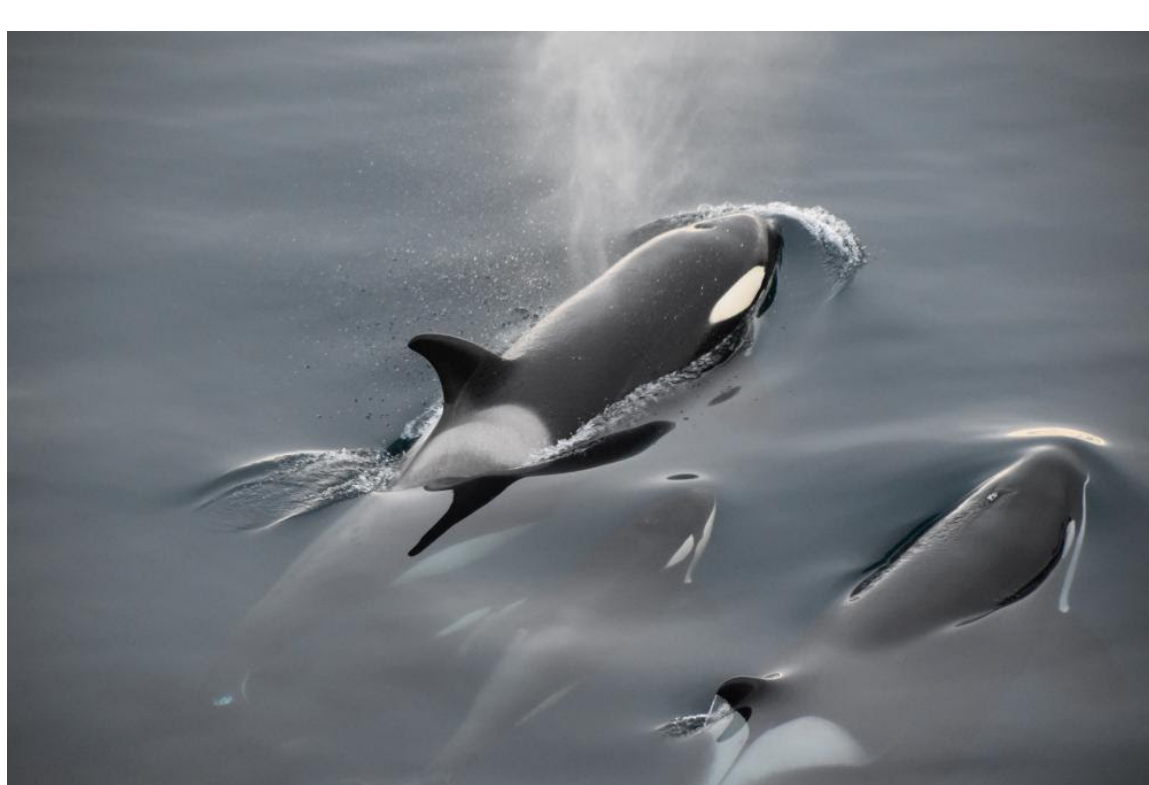


Around 65 million years ago - a small, land-based, mammal called the Indohyus decided to become a marine creature and took to life in the water. No big deal, right? Well, as it turns out ALL WHALES are descendants of the Indohyus!

That's right. Whales started out as furry, cat-sized weasel-like creatures with the nose of a pig and hooves! Indohyus was a herbivore, suggesting that the earliest ancestors of whales adapted their diet to become carnivorous after they took to the water.

Another change was a physical one. The Indohyus had nostrils at the end of a long, dog-like snout! However, through evolution, those nostrils moved all the way up the whale's face to the top of its head to be closer to the surface of the water. Thus forming a blow hole!

So, why did the Indohyus decide to move from the land to the sea? According to scientists, the Indohyus became more adapted to a watery environment in order to avoid land-based predators and because it was easier to find food in the water. And find food they did! This new aquatic creature, the whale, grew to enormous proportions and today the Blue Whale is the largest animal on the planet - weighing up to 400,000 pounds and reaching 98 feet in length!

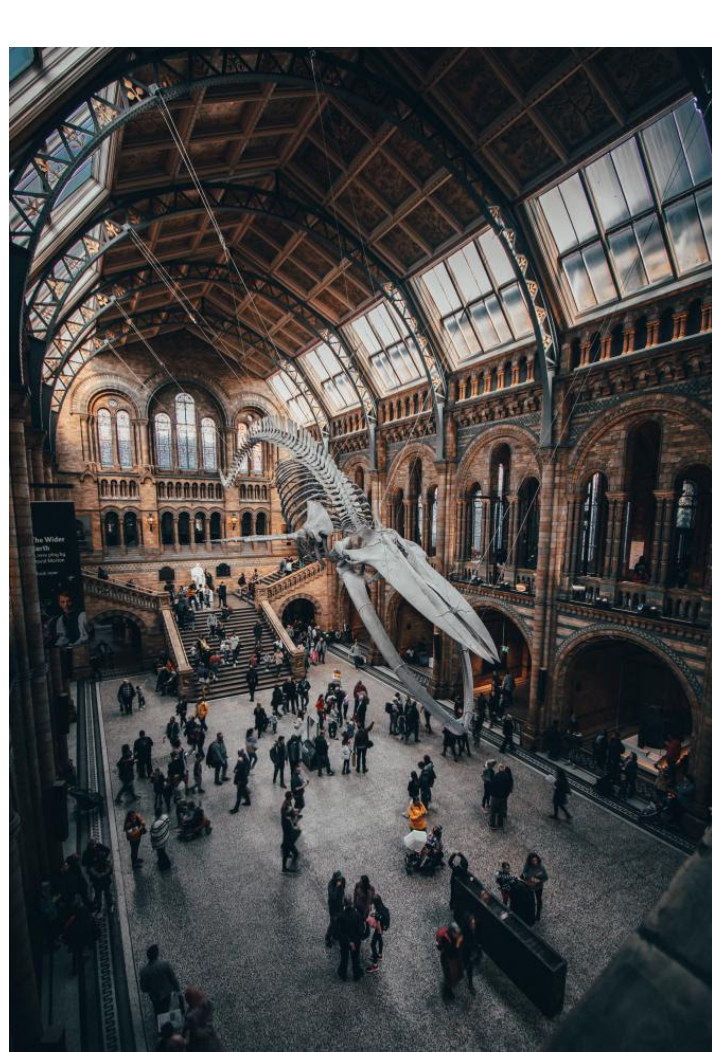


## What You'll Learn

1. How did whales evolve?
2. What are vestigial body parts?
3. How do whales communicate?

## Activities

1. During the episode we describe the cat-sized, weasel-shaped, whale ancestor, the Indohyus. Ask your child to draw their version of this ancient whale ancestor from 65 million years ago!
2. Or, if they'd rather draw a whale -- that would be awesome too! ! Happy drawing!
3. There are many different types of whales - and they're all amazingly beautiful creatures! Have your child search up different whale species and list their unique features. You can start off with the Blue Whale, Gray Whale, Beluga Whale, Humpback Whale, Sperm Whale and Orcas (aka Killer Whales).



## Additional Resources

Whales are among the most endangered species on earth. There are many great organizations dedicated to protecting whales from human and environmental threats. If your kids would like to learn more check out [Sea Shepherd](#), [Oceanic Preservation Society](#), or [Save the Whales](#).



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