

JUMBO OCEAN ANIMALS

Guide



**6 Jumbo Animals for
little hands and BIG imaginations!**

Animal Facts

Octopus

- An octopus's defense mechanism, squirting ink, not only momentarily blinds attackers but also dulls their sense of smell
- Similar to other sea creatures such as dolphins and whales, the octopus is very intelligent, possessing the ability to solve puzzles, distinguish between patterns and shapes, and imitate the behavior of others
- The octopus has a short life span, ranging from 2 years on average to 5 years in the case of the Giant Pacific Octopus
- Because an octopus is an invertebrate, or has no backbone, it can contort its body to squeeze through the tiniest spaces—even a hole the size of a dime!

Whale

- Whales have no teeth; instead, they feed using plates in their upper jaws that are composed of a bristly substance called *baleen*
- Baby whales, called calves, are well protected by the adults, who constantly watch over the calves in groups until they get older
- Whales often appear to be smiling because of their arched lower lips
- Scientists can determine a whale's age by looking at the wax plug in its ear. Similar to a tree's rings, this plug has a pattern of layers that provides an accurate age estimate
- Whales are well known for their singing ability and often change their tune to attract other whales

Shark

- A shark's body is composed of a skeleton made of cartilage, just like your ears and nose
- To breathe, sharks have to move constantly. Movement forces water over their gills and gets oxygen into their bloodstream—if they stop moving, they will die
- Sharks can hear a fish swimming in the water from over 1,500 feet away!
- Sharks can smell a single drop of blood in the water from a mile away!
- The whale shark, one of the longest-living creatures on Earth, has a life span of 150 years!
- Sharks have four-chambered hearts, just like humans

Sea Turtle

- Cold-blooded sea turtles are sunbathers! Because they can't generate their own body heat, sea turtles need to warm under the sun to regulate their body temperature

- The green sea turtle weighs 700 pounds and has large, paddle-like flippers that make it a powerful swimmer
- Although green turtles become herbivores (plant eaters) by adulthood, they also eat invertebrates such as crabs, jellyfish, and sponges while young
- When female sea turtles are ready to deliver offspring, they climb onto land, dig a pit in the sand with their flippers, lay 100 to 200 eggs inside it, and re-cover the pit with sand; the babies hatch after two months
- Green turtles are listed as an endangered species

Seal

- The seal most commonly seen in zoos and places like Sea World® is actually the California sea lion
- While seals and sea lions are from the same animal family (Pinnipedia), their appearance is slightly different: sea lions have external ear flaps and seals do not
- The California sea lion is the fastest of all seals or sea lions, swimming at speeds of 25 mph
- California sea lions slow their heart rates while underwater so they can hunt longer for fish, squid and shellfish
- The large northern fur seal nearly became extinct in the 19th century—today, they number more than one million worldwide

Dolphin

- The largest species of dolphin is the killer whale, or orca, often misclassified because of its name
- Dolphins don't actually have eyes in the back of their head, but they can see forward, backward, and behind themselves
- Dolphins breathe through a blowhole on the top of their head after coming up to the water's surface
- Dolphins communicate with each other by clicking, whistling and other sounds
- Dolphins are frequently spotted jumping in majestic arcs in and out of the water. They do this to increase their swimming speed

Discussion Starters

In addition to providing great opportunities for pretend play, Jumbo Ocean Animals are helpful early science discussion starters. Ask questions, such as the following, to help students understand the similarities and the differences between the animals.

Which animals have fur or hair?

Do any of the animals lay eggs?

Does the coloring of any of the animals help it blend into its natural habitat?

Are any of the animals herbivores (eat only plants)?

Which animals are endangered species? Talk about what this means and how animals can be protected.

Questions like these help students develop early classification skills based on the characteristics of the animals.

Design a Habitat

Challenge students to use crayons and paper to design one of the animals in its natural habitat. Make sure the students consider the basic needs of the animals including food and shelter.

Animal Act

Encourage students to move and make noise like each of the animals as you hold them up in view. Have students take turns acting like an animal and have others guess which animal the actor is pretending to be. Discuss how the animals sound and move in comparison to each other. How are they alike? How are they different?

Care Instructions

To clean, wipe the surfaces of the animals with a damp cloth. Dry immediately. To prevent water from trapping inside the animals, do not immerse them in water. Pieces are not dishwasher safe.



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