

ORCA FACTS



What is an Orca & why don't you call them killer whales ?

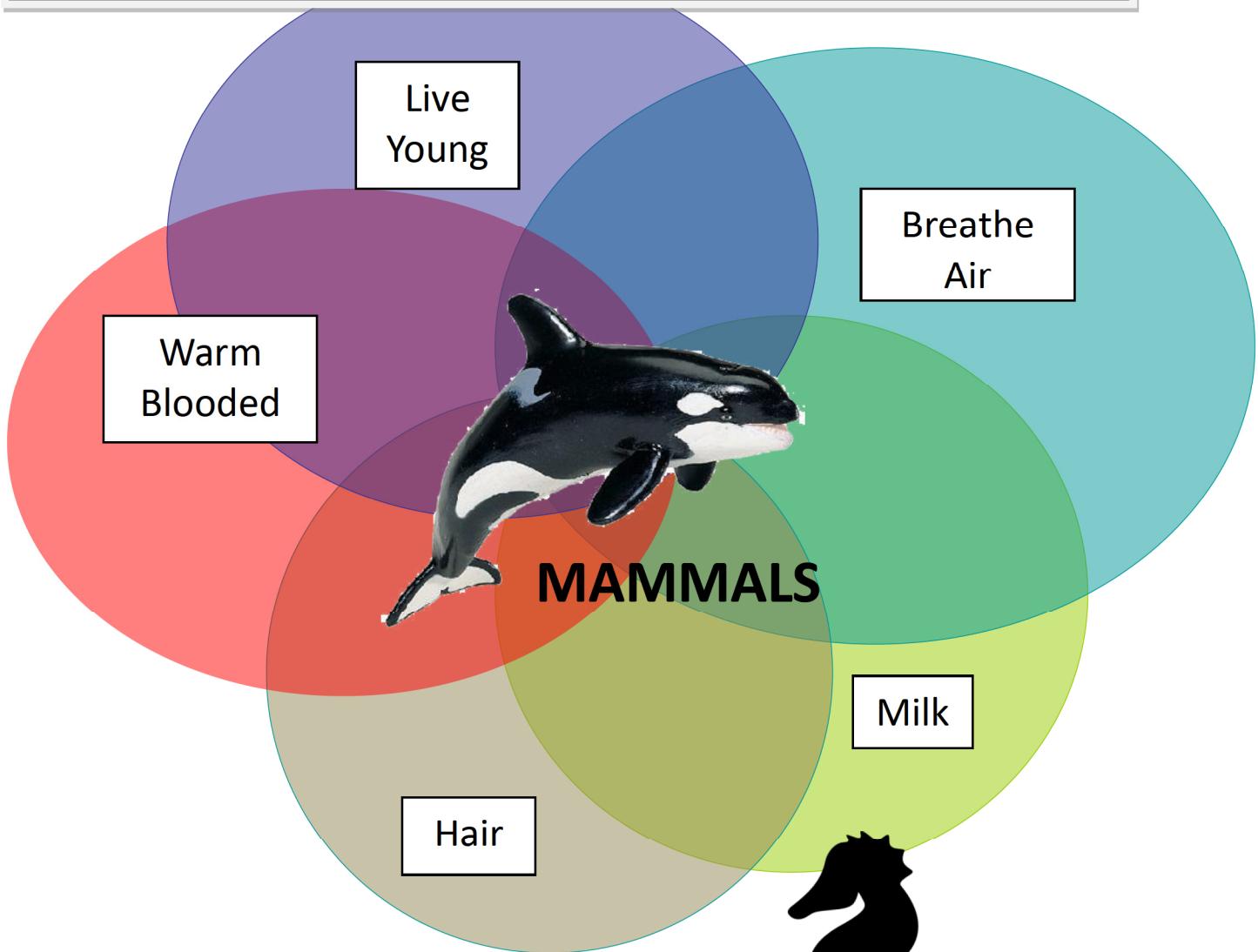
Orca (*Orcinus orca*) are also known as killer whales. However, in the strictest of scientific terms they are actually the largest member of the dolphin family and not a 'true' whale (this is determined by their teeth, skull morphology (shape and structure) as well as their size).



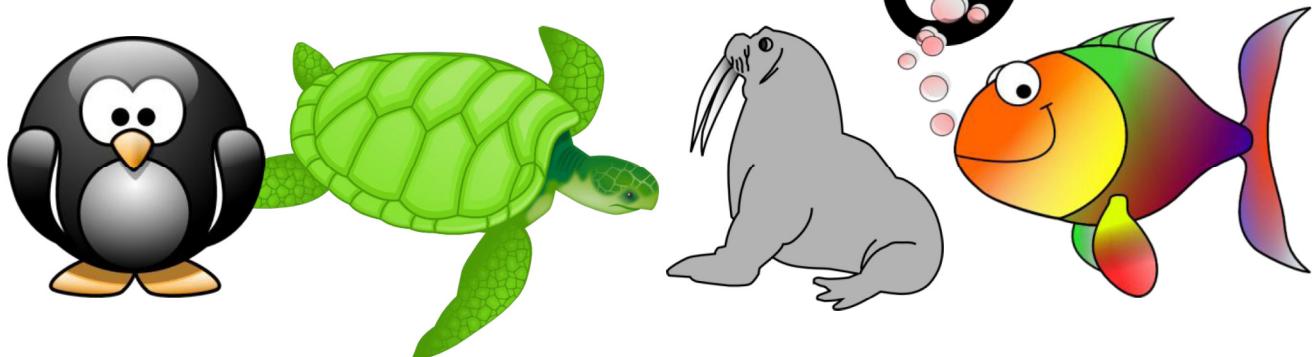
Orca belong to the dolphin family

*Some people call these animals **KILLER WHALES**. It doesn't mean that they kill people. Rather, the name is thought to come from the fact that some orca kill whales (so they were either called 'killer of whales' or 'whale killer' and this became the name 'killer whale'). Depending on where you live and what language you speak, *Orcinus orca* have different local names. Check out the 'What is in a name' section below.*

Orca are mammals; therefore they are warm blooded, breathe air, give birth to live young, have milk and have hair.

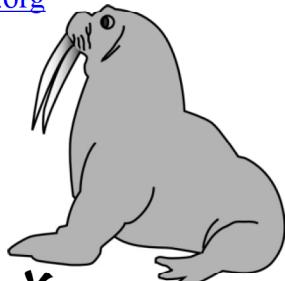


Which of these sea animals are mammals? (answer on page 3)



ANSWER:

Walrus

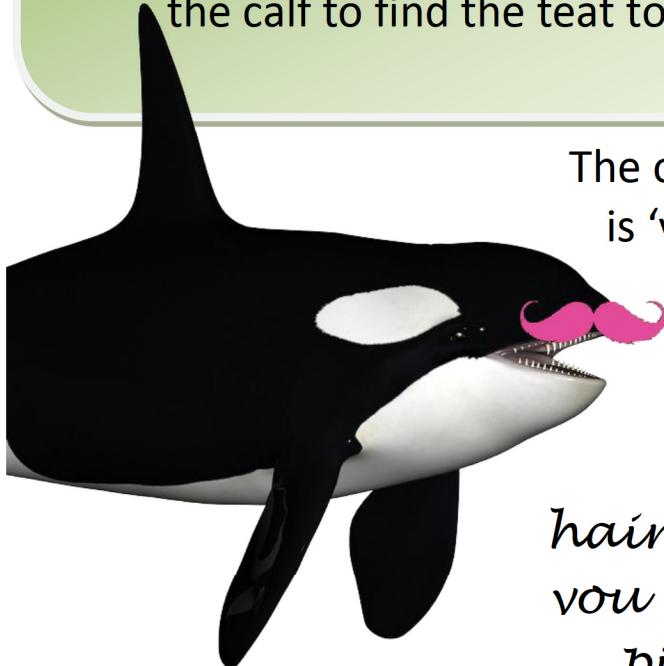


But did you know that seahorses give birth to live young (and it is the male who is 'pregnant') – he carries the babies in a 'brood pouch' which is part of his belly?

You ~~said~~ before that orca
have ~~hair~~. Yeah ~~right!~~
I've never seen
a ~~hairy~~ whale!



Actually ALL whales and dolphins have hair (albeit only a few hairs around their top lip & they are not hairy like dogs or cats). But most whales lose these few hairs when they are very young. It is thought the hairs might help the calf to find the teat to suckle from.



The official term for these 'whiskers' is 'vibrissae'. Orca average 3 - 4 on each side of their top lip.

Given that you have probably never seen hair on an orca, we thought you might appreciate this picture of our very own Pink-Moustached Orca!

Q: What is black & white and has hair?



Answer: yes, cows & zebra are right,
but don't forget about the orca

