



## Grand Manan & White Head



Cetaceans		Pinnipeds
<b>Odontocetes - Toothed Whales, Dolphins &amp; Porpoises</b>	<b>Mysticetes - Baleen Whales</b>	<b>True Seals</b>
<b>Common/Occasional</b>	<b>Common</b>	<b>Common</b>
Harbour Porpoise ( <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> )	Minke Whale ( <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> )	Harbour Seal ( <i>Phoca vitulina</i> )
White-sided Dolphin ( <i>Lagenorhynchus acutus</i> )	Finback Whale ( <i>Balaenoptera physalus</i> )	Grey Seal ( <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> )
White-beaked Dolphin ( <i>Lagenorhynchus albirostris</i> )	Humpback Whale ( <i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i> )	
	Right Whale ( <i>Eubalaena glacialis</i> )	
<b>Uncommon</b>	<b>Uncommon</b>	<b>Uncommon</b>
Bottle-nosed Dolphin ( <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> )	Sei Whale ( <i>Balaenoptera borealis</i> )	Harp Seal ( <i>Phoca groenlandica</i> )
Common Dolphin ( <i>Delphinus delphis</i> )	Blue Whale ( <i>Balaenoptera musculus</i> )	Hooded Seal ( <i>Cystophora cristata</i> )
Striped Dolphin ( <i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i> )		
Orca ( <i>Orcinus orca</i> )		
Beluga ( <i>Delphinapterus leucas</i> )		<b>Extirpated</b>
Long-finned Pilot Whale ( <i>Globicephala melaena</i> )		Walrus ( <i>Odobenus rosmarus</i> )
Northern Bottle-nosed Whale ( <i>Hyperoodon ampullatus</i> )		
Pygmy Sperm Whale ( <i>Kogia breviceps</i> )		
Sperm Whale ( <i>Physeter catadon</i> )		
Beaked Whale ( <i>Mesoplodon sp.</i> )		

### Seals

We have four species of seals which may be seen in the Bay of Fundy, one of which is common ([harbour seal](#)), one which is increasing in numbers ([grey seal](#)) and two which are sporadic visitors ([hooded](#) and [harp seals](#)).



These seals belong to the phocids or earless seals. They can not bring their hind flippers under the body as another group of seals can (otariids or sea lions, fur seals, etc.), they swim with a side-to-side motion of their body using their hind flippers as a rudder and they lack ear lobes or

pinnae. One species, which is the only member of the odobenids, has been extirpated (or removed) through hunting pressure (*walrus*). Seals occupy a controversial place in the Bay of Fundy because of conflicts with fisheries and aquaculture but they are generally regarded positively by visitors and there are growing numbers of "Seal Watching Adventures" in conjunction with other activities.

### Phocids or Earless Seals:

Harbour Seals (*Phoca vitulina concolor*) – common

The most common species of seal in the Bay of Fundy is the **harbour seal** (*Phoca vitulina concolor*). Both sexes of this small seal reach a max. length of 170cm (5'6") and males a weight of 115kg (250lb) and females 90kg (200lb). The coat is mottled and varies in colour from white to tan to dark brown to red. When wet the coat colour is dark, often appearing grey. Harbour seals have a Labrador retriever look to their face with the nostrils in a V. These seals have a varied diet of fish, crustaceans and squid. Pups are born on rocky ledges from May to the beginning of June and remain with their mothers for about one month. Precocious, they can swim within hours of birth. Harbour seals are considered a pest to most fishing practises, especially herring weirs and Atlantic Salmon aquaculture sites. The latter employ underwater sound makers and double nets to keep the seals away. Bounties on harbour seals were in place until the early 1980's. Harbour seals are frequently seen in the water, especially from lookouts and around weirs. When they "haul out" it is usually on rocky ledges and offshore islands rather than populated islands because they are wary of humans, although pups sometimes haul out in unexpected places. Seal pups should be left where they are for at least 48 hours before contacting Fisheries and Oceans or the Grand Manan Whale & Seabird Research Station. The pups may just be resting and will return to the water when hungry. After separating from their mothers they tend not to associate with adult seals until much larger. There is a positive attitude toward harbour seals during the summer by whale watch vessels since they often stop to see seals on haul out ledges.



Hooded Seals (*Crystophora cristata*) – rare  
**Hooded seals** (*Crystophora cristata*) are spotted

Grey Seals (*Halichoerus grypus*)- occasional

**Grey seals** (*Halichoerus grypus*) a larger seal, are being seen more frequently but harbour seals still outnumber them. The grey seal population in the Bay of Fundy appears to be on the increase. Males reach lengths of 245cm (8') and weigh 450kg (990lb), females 215cm (7') and 270kg (600lb).

The head is long and the seal is often called the "horsehead" seal. The nostrils form a W. The males are dark with light spots and the females are light with dark spots. Grey seals also have a varied diet including fish, crustaceans and squid. Pups are born from mid-December to February on rocky ledges in this area. The pups are white at first then moult into the respective coat colours, the moult beginning after weaning at 16 days. Grey seals are also considered a pest in herring weirs and Atlantic Salmon aquaculture sites. The latter employ sound makers and double nets to keep the seals away. Grey seals are the primary host for the codworm (now called sealworm). One stage is found in the muscle of various fish species, fish processors often "candle" infected fillets (place them over a light table) and remove the worms by hand. Grey seals are sometimes seen in the water, their prominently shaped heads distinguishing them from harbour seals. When they "haul out" it is usually on rocky ledges and offshore islands with harbour seals rather than populated islands because they too are wary of humans.



Harp Seals (*Phoca groenlandica*) – rare  
**Harp seals** (*Phoca groenlandica*) are also rare



more frequently in the Bay of Fundy but they still are rare visitors. Normally found in the Arctic in the summer, they pup on ice floes in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the winter. These seals have been subject to a hunt for many years. The population is increasing with the decrease in hunting pressure. Males reach a length of 260cm (8.5') and weigh 365kg (800lb), females 220cm (7'3") and 225kg (500lb). The adult pelage is a mottled bluish-grey with a black face. The young pups are white when born but quickly moult to a blue coat on the back, dark face and white underbelly, hence the name blueback. They are weaned after only 4 days, and left on their own until they finally enter the water by themselves. Their diet is mostly fish, crustaceans and squid. Hooded seal males have a proboscis or nasal sac which they can inflate, appearing as a red sac on top of their snout, especially if angered. Because of the rarity of this seal in the Bay of Fundy it is not considered a pest to fisheries or aquaculture, nor is it hunted, but would be treated in the same manner as harbour and grey seals when it occurs.

visitors to the Bay of Fundy, usually living in the Arctic in the summer and pupping on ice floes in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the winter. Both sexes attain 170cm (5'7") in length and 130kg (296lb) in weight. The coat colour is white with a dark "harp" or saddle on the back and dark face. Pups are born in late February to mid-March on pack ice and are weaned after 10 days. The pups are called "whitecoats" for the first three weeks until they moult into a grey coat with dark spots and are then called "beaters". Immatures of 14 months and older are known as "bedlamers". The diet is mostly fish and crustaceans. Long been hunted the population is increasing with decreases in hunting pressure. Because of the rarity of this seal in the Bay of Fundy it is not considered a pest to fisheries or aquaculture, nor is it hunted, but would be treated in the same manner as harbour and grey seals when it occurs.

### *Odobenid:*

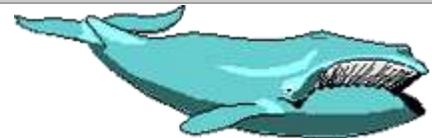
#### Walrus(*Odobenus rosmarus*)- extirpated

**Walrus** (*Odobenus rosmarus*) were extirpated from the Bay of Fundy by European settlers and seafarers. Their distribution is now restricted to the Arctic. The only sighting of a walrus in the Bay of Fundy in this century was in 1937 in Bear Cove, NS. These large seals reach lengths of 3m (10') and weigh 1200kg (2640lb) for males and 2.5m (8'3") and 800kg (1760lb) for females. Their skin is brown with sparse reddish hair, squarish head with stout whiskers, often blood-shot eyes, and long, constantly growing tusks. Their diet consists of bivalves, clams, polychaetes, other invertebrates and some fish. They have very heavy bones which are easily identified. Middens (bone and shell refuse heaps) along the Fundy coast always have walrus remains, indicating their importance as food. Walrus bones come up in scallop drags occasionally. The pups are born from April to June and are not weaned until two years of age.

## *Whales*

The whales or cetaceans which regularly occur in the Bay of Fundy can be divided into two groups, toothed cetaceans or odontocetes

(harbour porpoises, Atlantic white-sided dolphins, longfin pilot whales) and baleen whales or mysticetes (minke, finback, sei, humpback and right whales).



Most are seasonal residents from late spring to early winter, however, some occur in the winter. Occasionally other species venture into the Bay such as beluga, orcas, pygmy sperm whale, sperm whale, white-beaked dolphin, bottlenose dolphin, common dolphin, striped dolphin, northern bottlenose whale, beaked whale and blue whales. These species normally occur elsewhere, their occurrence would be considered extralimital and rare. Some records are from a single stranding of a dead cetacean. One species of baleen whale was hunted to extinction - the Atlantic grey whale. Whales are regarded positively by most, including fishers, although some conflicts do present themselves. The Grand Manan Whale & Seabird Research Station works with weir fishers to safely released entrapped cetaceans without jeopardizing the fishers catch. Whale watching is a popular "Adventure".

## Mysticetes or Baleen Whales:

### Minke Whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) – common

The **minke whale** (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) - A common small whale, minkes reach a max. length of 8.5m (28'). They are light grey with a white belly, white patches on their flippers and throat grooves or pleats. Individuals are not easily identified. Minkes typically filter small schooling fish such as herring by gulping large mouthfuls and squeezing out the water. The prey remains in the mouth because of the baleen fringes which acts as barriers to the prey but not the water. Minkes have also been seen eating individual fish. They can be seen close to shore usually singly or in groups less than three. While minkes may be elusive they are known to breach and approach vessels for a closer look. Minkes dive without lifting their tails and usually submerge for five minutes and less but can hold their breath substantially longer. The blow is visible only in the right conditions of light, humidity or temperature. Calves are born from October to March and remain with their mothers for less than six months. Minkes populations are not considered threatened. Norway still hunts these whales in the North Atlantic. Minkes sometimes swim into herring weirs but with the aid of the Grand Manan Whale & Seabird Research Station personnel, weir fishers can release minkes unharmed using a specially designed net and not lose their fish.



### Finback Whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) – common

The **finback whale** (*Balaenoptera physalus*) is the second largest baleen whale and commonly occurs in the Bay of Fundy. It reaches lengths of 24m (78'). Dive times vary from 4-12 minutes with the last or terminal dive after a surface period indicated by a high arch of the back. This whale usually does not lift its tail when diving. The blow or expired breath rises 10m (33') in a tall, straight column. Finbacks are fast and difficult to follow when travelling. They are not particularly active at the surface, although on occasion they do breach. The whale has a light grey back with occasional blotches of orange and yellow, a blaze (or chevron) extending from the eye across the back, white belly, white right lower jaw (the left side is dark), and throat grooves or pleats. Individuals can be identified by photographing the right side of the whale. The curved dorsal fin is situated toward the tail. Finbacks typically filter by gulping, krill and small schooling fish such as herring. The calves are born from December through April in unknown locations. Finbacks and blue whales have the deepest, loudest voices in the ocean, letting them communicate over great distances. Still hunted in the eastern North Atlantic by Norway, this species is considered "vulnerable" in Canadian waters. Finbacks are often seen from shore.



### Sei Whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*) – occasional

The **sei whale** (*Balaenoptera borealis*) is a recent new comer to the Bay of Fundy on a regular basis. They reach lengths of 15m (50'), and are slate grey, with circular scars, throat pleats or grooves and a large curved dorsal fin mid way along the back. They feed by skimming small plankton such as copepods and krill, despite being able expand their mouth by inflate the throat pleats. They are fast swimmers and dive without lifting their flukes

### Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) - rare sightings

for about ten minutes and while at the surface, their path can be tracked because they leave "footprints" at the surface. The blow is shorter and less dense than a finback's. Calves are born in the winter remaining with their mother for about seven months. A whaling station operated at Blandford, NS, until 1970, hunting sei whales but the population is not considered threatened.



*Humpback Whale (Megaptera novaeangliae)* – common

The **humpback whale** (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) reaches a length of 12-18m (40-60') and are dark with a white belly, flippers, and throat grooves or pleats. Sensory knobs or tubercles are located on their heads. The variably shaped dorsal fin is located on the mid-back on a hump - hence the name. Sometimes "knuckles" or bumps may be seen along the dorsal tail stock of thin whales, corresponding to vertebrae. The flippers are the longest of any whale reaching 4.5m (15').

Humpbacks may be identified by the underside of the tail - each whale has a unique tail pattern, including the trailing edge of the flukes which is serrated. Humpbacks lift their tail when they dive, dive durations range from four to ten minutes and sometimes longer. The blow is balloon shaped.

Humpbacks typically feed by gulping, krill and small schooling fish such as herring. They employ a number of methods to corral fish including bubble nets, bubble spirals and their white flippers. The calves are born from January through March in the Caribbean. Humpbacks are listed as "threatened" in Canadian waters. Humpbacks are very active at the surface and are known to breach, tail lobe, spyhop, flipper wave and slap. Males humpbacks "sing" in the Caribbean mating grounds. Humpbacks are sometimes seen from shore.

*Right Whale (Eubalaena glacialis)* – common

The **right whale** (*Eubalaena glacialis*) has been protected from commercial hunting since 1937, but remains endangered with less than 350 in the western North Atlantic. The right or true whale to hunt, right whales were the first whale to be commercially hunted beginning in the 1100's. By the 1800's the whale was very rare and whalers turned to other species. The whales were prized from the amount of oil rendered from the blubber layer and the baleen which was called "whale bone" and was used in corsets, buggy whips, umbrellas, etc. Up to two thirds of the population visits the Bay of Fundy between June and December. Right whales reach lengths of 17m (55'), are black or dark grey with no dorsal fin or throat pleats, and craggy patches on their heads called callosities. The callosities and other markings and scars are used to identify individuals. Some right whales have white patches on their bellies. The blows are V-shaped when seen from behind or in front. Right whales lift their dark, smooth tail when they are about to dive. Dive times average 10-20 minutes, longer than the other species of whales because they capture prey by skimming the water with their mouth open. The prey remains on the baleen fringes and the water escapes between the plates. Right whales typically feed on small plankton such as copepods and also krill. The feeding method extends the dive times. Calves are born in Florida/Georgia waters between December and March and remain with their mothers for about one year. The Bay of Fundy is an important nursery area for right whale mothers and calves. Right whales engage in many types of surface



behaviour, including breaching, tail lobbing, spyhopping, flipper waving and slapping. Courtship groups of 2 to 45 whales are sometimes encountered - one of the world's greatest wildlife spectacles. Right whales are not usually seen from shore, preferring deeper water between Grand Manan and Noa Scotia. A right whale conservation zone exists in the Bay of Fundy.



*Atlantic Grey Whale (Eschrichtius robustus) - Extinct*

*Odontocetes or Toothed Whales:*

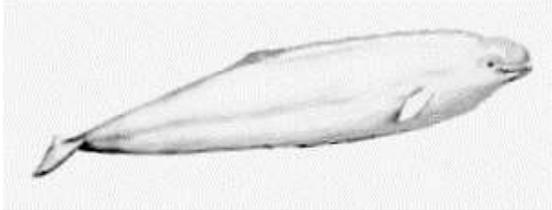
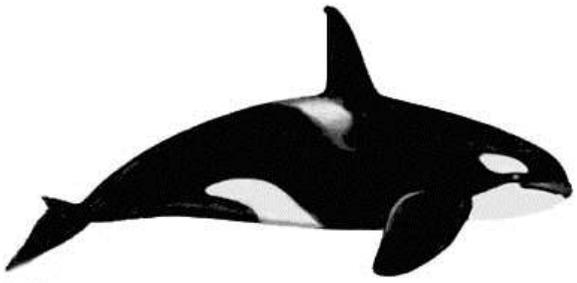
*Harbour Porpoise (Phocoena phocoena) – common*

The **harbour porpoise** (*Phocoena phocoena*) are small and elusive reaching lengths of only 1.7m (5'6"). They are grey above and white below with a triangular dorsal fin, small spoon-shaped teeth and a blunt snout. They are not attracted to motorized vessel or are particularly active at the surface. They prefer herring and other fish approximately 15cm (6") in length. Calves remain with their mothers for about six months. Their first solid food is usually krill. Porpoises dive for no more than five minutes with most dives between two-three minutes, and do not have a visible blow unless the right conditions of light, humidity or temperature are present. In that time they can dive as deep as the Bay of Fundy 227m (745'). Porpoises are often in small groups and recent tracking studies indicate that they remain within the Bay of Fundy and Gulf of Maine throughout the year, many migrating toward Cape Cod in the winter. Porpoises are sometimes caught in bottom set gill nets and die. An international group of fishers, conservationists, government officials and researchers, has been trying to reduce this mortality. Porpoises also swim into herring weirs but with the aid of the Grand Manan Whale & Seabird Research Station personnel, weir fishers can release porpoises unharmed without losing their fish. Porpoises can easily be seen from shore. Porpoises are considered "threatened" in Canada.

*Atlantic White-sided Dolphin*

*(Lagenorhynchus acutus) – occasional*

The **Atlantic white-sided dolphin** (*Lagenorhynchus acutus*) is larger than a porpoise (lengths of 3m or 10'), is black with a light flank and yellow flank patch and white belly. The dorsal fin is sharply curved, there is a prominent beak and the teeth are pointed. Dolphins actively seek moving vessels and are acrobatic at the surface. They often travel in groups ranging from less than ten to 500 or more. They typically dive for less than five minutes and usually do not have a visible blow unless the right conditions of light, humidity or temperature are present. The dolphins probably move offshore in the winter, arriving in the Bay of Fundy in the summer. White-sided dolphins eat fish, squid and some crustaceans. The calves are born in June and July and stay with their mothers for about 1.5 years. White-sided dolphins are not usually seen from shore. Dolphin populations are not considered threatened.

	
<p><i>White-beaked Dolphin (Lagenorhynchus albirostris) - formerly common, now occasional</i></p>	<p><i>Bottlenose Dolphin (Tursiops truncatus) - 1 stranded specimen</i></p>
	
<p><i>Common Dolphin (Delphinus delphis) - stranded specimens</i></p>	<p><i>Striped Dolphin (Stenella coeruleoalba) - stranded specimen</i></p>
<p><i>Long-fin Pilot Whale (Globicephala melaena) - occasional sightings</i></p> 	<p><i>Beluga (Delphinaptera leucas) - occasional sightings</i></p> 
<p><i>Orca (Orcinus Orca) - rare sightings, formerly more common</i></p> 	
<p><i>Pygmy Sperm Whale (Kogia breviceps) - 2 stranded specimens</i></p>	<p><i>Sperm Whale (Physeter macrocephalus) - occasional sightings</i></p>

	
<p><i>Northern Bottlenose Whale (Hyperoodon ampullatus) - 1 stranded specimen</i></p> 	<p><i>Beaked Whale (Mesoplodon sp.) - possible sighting</i></p>

*References:*

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**Have a Question? E-Mail us at: [info@grandmanannb.com](mailto:info@grandmanannb.com)**

Page revised March 6, 2014