WHALE PHOTO-IDENTIFICATION GUIDE
for Naturalists + Citizen Scientists • South Georgia + Antarctic Region

How to photograph identification features for Right, Fin, Sei, Humpback, Blue and Killer whales

Photographs of whales can be added to global catalogues. Identification features help researchers recognise individual whales and understand population movements to/from Antarctic habitats.

SUBMIT PHOTOS TO HAPPYWHALE.COM

HUMPBACK WHALE - Fluke (underside) + dorsal fin

Underside of flukes used for ID - GOOD ANGLES

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BLUE WHALE - Dorsal fin, lateral body (mottling)

GOOD ANGLES - include mottling around dorsal fin
BAD ANGLE

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RIGHT WHALE - Head (left, right + above)

GOOD ANGLES
BAD ANGLES

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GOOD ANGLES
BAD ANGLES

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**FIN WHALE** - Dorsal fin, blaze + chevron - right side preferred

Take series of images to link blaze + chevron (between arrows) to dorsal fin

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**ORCA/KILLER WHALE** - Dorsal fin, saddle + eye patch

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**SEI WHALE** - Dorsal fin, lateral body

Include lateral body around dorsal fin

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**HEALTH ASSESSMENT**

- Craters from gull attacks - colourless/white/red
- Scars or injuries from ship strike

**PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS**

- Set camera to Georeference images (settings: Location > On)
- Set local Date + Time
- Set to highest image quality
- Take sequences to link body parts eg. dorsal fin to flukes
- Photograph dead + injured whales eg. propeller + entanglement wounds or scars
- When submitting images include date and latitude/longitude
- Never delete, downsize or crop images

Photographs used in this guide courtesy of International Whaling Commission (IWC). Taken during IWC Southern and Pacific Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research cruises; see iwc.int/sower and iwc.int/power