

TUBERCLES

Tubercles are golf ball-sized bumps on a humpback whale's upper and lower jaws - they are the only whales that have them! Scientists think they are used to sense temperature and vibrations in the water.

DORSAL FIN

The humpback whale's dorsal fin is located about 2/3 of the way down its back. It is pointed and just 30cm tall, which is very small compared to the size of the whale's body.

PEDUNCLE MUSCLE

The peduncle muscle is the strongest muscle in the entire animal kingdom! This powerful muscle is used to move the tail up and down for swimming. A humpback whale arches its peduncle when getting ready to dive down. This looks like a hump on the back of the whale, which is how the humpback whale got its name.

FLUKES

Flukes are the whale's tail. They are approximately 4.5 metres across: that's 1/3 of their whole body length! Each humpback whale has different flukes, just like people have different fingerprints.

BALEEN

Humpback whales do not have teeth, instead they have up to 400 pairs of baleen plates hanging down from both sides of their long upper jaws. Each baleen plate is up to 60-90cm long. Humpback whales use baleen to feed by gulping in large amounts of water, and their baleen filters out small prey, such as krill and small fish. Baleen is made out of a strong and flexible material called keratin - this is the same material our fingernails are made of!

BLUBBER

Humpback whales have a thick layer of fat, called blubber, which can be up to 30cm thick! Blubber helps whales stay warm in cold water - and it even helps them float too.

PECTORAL FINS

Humpback whales have the longest pectoral fins of all whales: they are 4.5 metres long: a 1/3 of their whole body length! Humpback whales use their paddle-shaped pectoral fins for steering, turning very quickly and stopping in the water while swimming.

