


The world's most endangered whales

Some scientists argue that whales face more danger from shipping, fishing nets, chemical pollution, climate change and depleted food supplies than from hunting. Others say that if the ban on commercial whaling is lifted, reduced populations will become even more vulnerable to man-made perils

World Conservation Union "Red List" of threatened species, 2006

 **Endangered:** Very high risk of extinction in near future

 **Vulnerable:** High risk of extinction in medium-term future

NORTH ATLANTIC / PACIFIC RIGHT WHALES

Populations estimated at only around 300 individuals in Atlantic and 200 in Pacific – neither may survive century

Both species grow up to 18 metres in length

SEI WHALE

Heavily exploited during 1960s and early 70s
Up to 21m

BLUE WHALE

Hunted almost to extinction in early 20th century – numbers still very low in southern hemisphere

Up to 27m

FIN WHALE

Ship-strikes major cause of mortality
Up to 24m

HUMPBACK WHALE

Before moratorium, more than 100,000 killed for their oil

Up to 14m

BELUGA WHALE

Up to 5m

Belugas in Canada's Gulf of St Lawrence are so badly polluted with chemicals that they are treated as toxic waste when they die

SPERM WHALE

Targeted by hunters after larger baleen whale stocks plummeted

Up to 18m

Sources: IUCN, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society
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