



Whaley awesome animals!



SPECIAL SPECIES: BLUE WHALE

Blue whales (*Balaenoptera musculus*) are the biggest animals on Earth—even bigger than the dinosaurs! They can grow up to 100 feet long, and can weigh as much as 30 elephants. Their hearts are the size of a small car, and when they breathe out, their blow of air and mist can shoot almost 30 feet into the sky.

Even though they're so huge, blue whales eat some of the tiniest creatures in the ocean—little shrimp-like animals called krill. A single whale can swallow several tons of krill in just one day!

A long time ago, people hunted blue whales so much that their numbers dropped very low. Today, hunting is no longer allowed, and in some places, their populations are slowly growing again. But blue whales still face big challenges. They can get hit by ships, tangled in fishing gear, and disturbed by loud noises in the ocean. Changes in the climate also affect their food supply, which can make life hard for them.

Scientists are keeping a close watch on blue whales. Recently, they noticed something unusual—blue whales aren't singing as much as they used to. Their deep songs usually travel for miles underwater, helping them find friends and communicate. Some experts think the whales may be quieter because the ocean is changing and there's less food.

Still, there's hope! In some areas, people have already spotted blue whales earlier in the season than expected. Whale watchers were thrilled to see these gentle giants return, reminding us of how amazing—and important—they are.

Blue whales are true wonders of the natural world. Protecting them means protecting our oceans, too.

Length: 100 feet
Weight: 200 tons
Food: Krill (tiny shrimp)
Lifespan: 80-90 years
Status: Endangered
Number left: 10-25,000





This Month **IN SPACE!**

October 7 - Harvest Supermoon
October 8 - Draconid Meteor Shower
October 21 - Orionid Meteor Shower

**PUSH THIS BUTTON TO WATCH
A FUN VIDEO ABOUT SOLAR TELESCOPES**



Nature

LET'S TRACK SOME ANIMALS

October is here! With leaves falling and undergrowth dying back, animal prints become easier to spot in soft soil. Tracking is not only a fun outdoor activity but also a great way to learn more about the creatures that live around you.

One engaging way to preserve your discoveries is by making plaster casts of animal tracks. All you need is plaster of Paris, water, and a simple container for mixing. Once you find a clear print, gently clean away loose debris, then pour the plaster carefully into the impression. After about 30 minutes, the cast will harden, and you can lift it out to reveal a lasting replica of the track.

This activity is perfect for families, nature enthusiasts, or anyone looking to deepen their appreciation for local wildlife. Whether it's a deer, raccoon, or fox passing through, every track tells a story. Autumn is the ideal season to explore, observe, and preserve these signs of the natural world.





SNAPSHOT WISCONSIN

Citizen Science

WANT TO HELP REAL SCIENTISTS?

Have you wondered what animals roam your neighborhood woods or fields after dark? The Snapshot Wisconsin project lets students and teachers become citizen scientists by helping monitor wildlife across the state. Through a partnership between the Wisconsin DNR and the Zooniverse platform, volunteer-managed trail cameras capture tens of millions of images from habitats ranging from prairies to forests.

Anyone can take part: you can host a camera (Wisconsin residents only), or you can log in online to classify images—identify deer, raccoons, coyotes, bears, and more—through Zooniverse's simple interface.

Each photo is reviewed by multiple volunteers to ensure accuracy, and images with tricky identifications are flagged for expert review.

Why does it matter? The data collected help DNR scientists track species distributions, monitor population changes over time, and guide wildlife management decisions.

For classrooms, Snapshot offers lesson plans aligned with Wisconsin and NGSS standards, making it easy to bring real-world science into your students' hands.

Dive in, log on, and help Wisconsin's wild neighbors—you might spot something amazing.





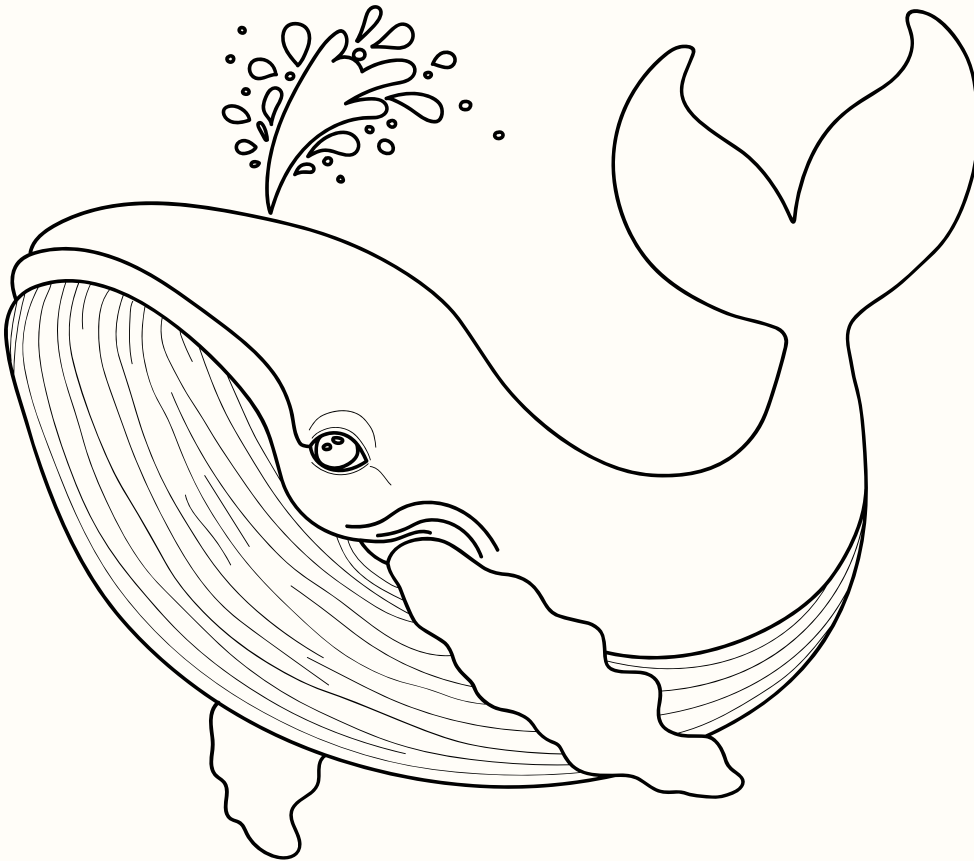
Want Whale Mail?

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Whale Mail is free, and you can sign up at

www.forestwhales.com/education

Each month, we will have a featured whale and fossil, plus we will include fun activities, ideas, astronomy news, videos and even the occasional contest where we give away free prizes like fossils, or an official Forest Whales school/library program!!!



Color me!
↩

Color the whale, upload it to Facebook or Instagram and tag Forest Whales. We will feature some of the coolest ones in the next issue of Whale Mail!

Get creative!



Featured Fossil: **Woolly Rhino**

Imagine a rhinoceros covered in long, shaggy fur—that's the woolly rhino! These incredible animals lived during the Ice Age, roaming across Europe and Asia in the freezing cold. They were about the same size as today's rhinos, but their thick coat, small ears, and fat layer helped keep them warm in snowy climates.



Woolly rhinos had huge, curved horns that could grow over three feet long! They probably used them to sweep snow aside to reach grass, and maybe even to show off or fight other rhinos.

Sadly, woolly rhinos went extinct about 14,000 years ago. Scientists believe a mix of warming weather and human hunting led to their disappearance. But the cool part is—we know a lot about them because frozen remains have been found in Siberia, with their fur, horns, and even stomach contents still preserved!

Woolly rhinos remind us of Earth's wild past.

A horrible joke...

Why did the whale bump into the boat?

Well, he didn't do it on porpoise!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov 7 - School event
Nov 13 - School event
Nov 15 - Appleton Public Library



NEW BOOK

Dave's new book features a library, Wisconsin history, time travel, treasure hunting, and a few surprises. You can purchase it at [Orange Hat Publishing!](http://OrangeHatPublishing.com)



BOOK AN EVENT

Want to inspire kids with a life-size whale? Contact Dave today with questions, size requirements, schedules, etc.