

Endangered Ocean Life: Sharks, Dolphins and Whales

Dolphins

Bokoske, S. (1993). *Dolphins!* New York: Random House.

Bokoske portrays dolphins as sensitive, intelligent and friendly mammals. This informational nonfiction book introduces dolphin behavior, social structure, intelligence, and interaction with humans. Stories about dolphins and their relationship to people both interest and encourage the reader to learn more about dolphins. This is a good choice for lower level readers in the classroom for research or independent reading.

Horton, C. (1996). *Dolphins: Endangered!* New York: Benchmark Books.

Dolphins are closely related to whales, but according to Horton, they are not whales. In fact, many larger dolphins, such as killer whales, are called whales because of their size. 40 kinds of dolphins exist. This informational book describes the different types of dolphins, how they live, and what can be done to save them from extinction. This book features a glossary with pronunciation key, index, and table of contents. It makes a nice teaching tool for students learning to stretch their nonfiction reading and research skills.

Stoops, E., Martin, J.L., & Stone, D. (1996). *Dolphins*. New York: Sterling Publishing.

This team of authors created an informational text with an accessible format for middle-to-upper elementary students. It works well with two similar books Stoops worked with Sterling to create—*Whales* and *Sharks*. A question-and-answer format introduces facts about reproduction, self-defense, dietary habits, characteristics, habitat and lifestyle. Generous use of captions with full-color photos, as well as an index and table of contents make this book easy to browse for information. It makes a thoughtful read for students looking for research ideas to pursue, as well as a good book for a reading comprehension exercise comparing this text to information from Stoops' *Whales*.

Zoehfeld, K. (1994). *Dolphin's First Day: The Story of a Bottlenose Dolphin*. New York: Scholastic.

This realistic fiction book chronicles the birth and first day's experiences of Little Dolphin, a bottlenose dolphin born off the coast of Florida. The factual information is shared through a child-friendly storyline. The pen-and-ink watercolor illustrations enhance the text for elementary readers. A nice feature is the last page, which has a summary of bottlenose dolphin information, a glossary, and points of interest in the book. This serves nicely as a read-a-loud or as an independent read.

Poetry and Poetic Writing

Prelutsky, J. (1997). *The Beauty of the Beast: Poems from the Animal Kingdom*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

This anthology holds more than 200 animal poems written by more than 100 twentieth-century poets. Arranged in five sections, it covers insects, fish, reptiles, birds and mammals. Watercolor illustrations by Meilo So enhance the text. Whale and shark poems triggered this book's placement in the unit; however, one poem in particular enhances the concept of extinction for the reader—The Whale Ghost. Starkly written, it sings for the listener about the beauty and loss of our great whales. Coupled with other poems from the text, the makings of a meaningful poetry lesson can be found here.

Worth, B. (1999). *Wish For a Fish*. New York: Random House.

When the Cat in the Hat, Sally, and Dick take an undersea voyage aboard the S.S. Undersea Glubbe, they travel through several levels of ocean depth. Along the way, they meet sharks, jellyfish, dolphins, manatees, whales and sea cucumbers, as well as other ocean life. Lots of information is cleverly packed into this rhyming fictional text. It touches on the ocean's food chain, different light zones, and mammals. It works perfectly as an introductory read-a-loud text to jump start interest in studying ocean life.

Sharks

Battan, M. (1997). *Shark Attack Almanac*. New York: Random House.

Battan presents a wealth of shark information for the budding shark fan. Packing in details of more than 350 of the world's shark species, Battan also delves into famous shark attacks, interviews with attack survivors and shark experts, and water safety tips that shed light on shark behavior. The reading level is best suited to middle-elementary readers. It would serve well as a research tool and an independent read for students needing more challenge in the classroom.

Berger, M. (1999). *Chomp! A Book About Sharks*. New York: Scholastic.

This nonfiction reader conveys a broad range of information with good use of color photographs. Clear chapter headings organize the information. New vocabulary is defined and accompanied by pronunciation prompts throughout the text. Bulleted information breaks down key topics related to sharks such as anatomy, reproduction, characteristics and environment. This is a useful, compact text for both research and independent reading uses.

Cerullo, M. (2000). *The Truth About Great White Sharks*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

In this informational nonfiction book, Cerullo addresses the issue of identifying the great white shark as a dangerous predator or victim of bad media coverage. Through carefully organized facts laid out in a picture-book format, the author makes an argument for preservation and appreciation of this infamous creature. She touches on the great whites' physical characteristics, behaviors, feeding habits, difficulties in studying sharks, and potential medical benefits for humans. Special sidebars, a detailed glossary, bibliography, list of conservation groups and index, as well as more than 50 color photos break the information into manageable bites. This book is a great resource for students who want to narrow their research subject or participate in an advocacy project such as letter writing.

Cole, J. (1986). *Hungry, Hungry Sharks*. New York: Random House.

A simpler text and pictures invites less confident readers to learn more about sharks. Cole depicts the shark as both a predator and a victim within the ocean world. (A family of dolphins works as a team to kill a shark that threatens them.) Different species of sharks are covered, as well as shark facts related to anatomy, diet, and their threat (or lack thereof) to humans. Color illustrations reinforce the text heavily throughout the book. This is a good choice for lower level readers in the classroom for research or independent reading.

Llewellyn, C. (1998). *I Didn't Know That Sharks Keep Losing Their Teeth: And Other Amazing Facts about Sharks*. Brookfield, CT: Copper Beech Books.

This nicely formatted non-fiction book details information about sharks' diet, anatomy, habits, senses and reproduction. It is a valuable classroom tool for dispelling many myths about sharks. It also covers little known facts, i.e. some sharks glow in the dark and about

50 percent of shark species are less than three feet long. It is an excellent source book for lessons on reading non-fiction text with particular attention to use of an index, glossary, table of contents, subheads and captions.

Simon, S. (1995). *Sharks*. New York: HarperCollins Children's Books.

In typical Simon style, this nonfiction text plunges readers into the world of sharks with a nice balance of informational text and bold color photos. He covers basic information about their varied species, habits and habitat, as well as physical characteristics and life cycles. While it lacks captions and indexes to organize the information for readers, the scientific text is broken up with full-page photographs to pace the flow of information. This book serves nicely as an independent read for strong readers or as a guided reading text with instructional support from the teacher.

Stoops, E., & Stoops, S. (1994). *Sharks*. New York: Sterling Publishing.

This informational science text details information about sharks' diet, anatomy, habits, senses, self-defense, reproduction and relationship with people. Its picture-book format is broken up with information presented in a trivia format within eight sections. An index, glossary, table of contents, subheads and captions make this an excellent source book for lessons on reading non-fiction text as well an independent read for students who are hungry to learn more about all types of sharks. It works well with the other Stoops-authored book in this bibliography, *Whales*, for a Venn diagram activity to compare and contrast information.

Troll, R. (2002). *Sharkabet: A Sea of Sharks from A to Z*. New York: Westwinds Press.

Troll created a fun, informative alphabet book that explores many varieties of sharks from *angel* to *zebra*. Both current and extinct species are covered, as well as rays, guitarfish and chimaeras. A section dedicated to "Amazing Shark Facts" and a "Shark Field Guide" infuses additional information for the curious reader and offers a launch point for further investigations. Brilliant artwork lends a whimsical feeling to the text. Information about how the world's most feared predator has become endangered balances its message. This book fits nicely into a project such as creating a class alphabet book or shark trading cards.

Whales

Arnold, C., & Hewett, R. (1999). *Baby Whale Rescue: The True Story of J.J.* New York: BridgeWater Books.

The true story of how J.J., a 14-foot baby gray whale found near death off the California coast, is detailed here in a picture-book format. She was discovered on January 10, 1997, exhausted, hungry, and separated from her mother. Brought to SeaWorld for care, J.J. gained 900 pounds in just the first month! The story of how her caretakers rehabilitated and released her back to the ocean is detailed and touching. Full-color photos accompany the text. This is an appropriate independent read, as well as a nice choice for a guided reading.

Berger, M., & Berger, G. (1999). *Do Whales Have Belly Buttons?: Questions and Answers About Whales and Dolphins*. New York: Scholastic.

This book is nicely organized for elementary students who are developing non-fiction reading skills. It shares information such as how long whales stay under water, how they communicate, and which whales have the longest migration. Its question-and-answer format breaks up information into easy-to-digest trivia chunks that hold interest. Full-color pictures throughout the book enhance meaning and reinforce the text. A detailed

index assists in locating information in the text for research purposes. This book works well when paired with Llewellyn's *I Didn't Know That Sharks Keep Losing Their Teeth* for working with graphic organizers to sort and understand information in a Venn diagram or similar exercise.

Carwardine, M. (1995). *Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises*. New York: Dorling Kindersley Publishing.

Carwardine penned this guidebook for the Eyewitness Handbooks series. Information is organized by family orders with annotated illustrations and range maps accompanying each entry. 79 species are listed with general information on anatomy, behavior, diet, evolution, habitat and conservation. From a social studies perspective, commercial whaling and whale watching history as well as legends of whales and dolphins are covered. A glossary and list of association addresses is included. For classroom purposes, this is an excellent resource for research projects. Students could use it as a model to create whale trading cards from.

Davies, N. (1997). *Big Blue Whale*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

"For every blue whale alive today, there were once twenty." Davies portrays the blue whale, the largest mammal ever, through sensory writing and conversational text that draws the reader in. She describes skin as feeling "springy and smooth like a hard-boiled egg" and "slippery as wet soap." The blue whales' size, endangered species status, yearly migration, and daily diet of 30 million krill give the reader greater perspective about this creature. Soft, crosshatched pen-and-ink illustrations enhance the text. Its level is appropriate for independent reading and research.

Esbensen, B. (1994). *Baby Whales Drink Milk*. New York: HarperCollins Children's Books.

Ebensen's informational nonfiction book reinforces that whales as mammals have many features in common with humans, cats and dogs. It highlights an important concept that whales are different from fish. Examples of how a humpback cares for its young and other basic facts are covered. The illustrations show different points of view, environment and lighting. A concluding spread of six whale species next to a diver shows how large these animals are in relation to humans. This is a nice text for independent reading and research for readers who behind grade level, and a good reinforcement read for all.

Harman, A. (1996). *Whales: Endangered!* New York: Benchmark Books.

Harman focuses on differences between baleen and toothed whales, their anatomy, and reasons why they are endangered. Characteristics that traditionally made whales vulnerable to hunting by man, as well as efforts to preserve whales are covered. Detailed range maps, a glossary with a pronunciation guide and a list of environmental agencies make this a good choice for stronger readers interested in a more detailed research or advocacy project.

Kelsey, E. (1998). *Finding Out About Whales*. New York: Firefly Books.

Students looking for deeper information about how whale researchers study their subjects will enjoy the information presented in this text. Part of the Science Explorers series, its picture-book format encourages browsing. Its trivia-style layout activates prior knowledge and encourages the reader to dig for more information. Information about blue, humpback, gray, beluga, and killer whales is detailed and punctuated with color photographs throughout. A column of research notes accompanies each species. Moving beyond its value as a research read, information in this book translates nicely into a whale trading card or whale alphabet book project.

London, J. (1999). *Baby Whale's Journey*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

London describes a baby sperm whale's first year of life, from birth through weaning from its mother. Simple, poetic text and gorgeous illustrations make this realistic fiction book a strong choice for interesting students in studying whales. (It earned recognition as a National Science Teachers Association/Children's Book Council Outstanding Science Trade Books for Children 2000.) It contains a helpful reader's guide (useful for teachers) with suggestions for instruction and discussion. It works nicely as a shared or guided reading choice.

Milton, Joyce. (1989). *Whales: The Gentle Giants*. New York: Random House.

Milton weaves a considerable amount of information into this book, covering whale behavior, gestation and anatomy, migration, social structure (and protection from predators), intelligence, and relationships with humans. Generous pen-and-ink color illustrations reinforce the text. This is a good choice for lower level readers in the classroom for research or independent reading.

Sis, P. (1992). *An Ocean World*. New York: Greenwillow Books.

This nearly wordless picture book tells the story of a whale born in captivity in "Ocean World" who is released to the sea after growing too large for her man-made habitat. Through charming pen-and-ink watercolor drawings, Sis shows the whale becoming more independent and attempting to communicate with other whale-shaped objects such as a blimp, a submarine and a garbage scow (which pollutes her environment with trash and humiliates her in the process). Just as she despairs, another whale befriends her and the book ends on an upbeat note. This book serves well as a resource for students to write their own creative story to accompany the illustrations.

Smyth, K. C. (1986). *Crystal: The Story of a Real Baby Whale*. Camden, ME: Down East Books.

This book, written by a cetacean researcher and teacher, tells the story of a real baby whale's first year. Named Crystal by whale researchers at Stellwagen Bank in Massachusetts Bay, the story follows his birth, migrations, and relationships with other humpback whales. Pictures, pencil illustrations and maps enhance the meaning of the text. This is a great book for a read-a-loud, as well as a resource for science and social studies lessons with a local emphasis.

Stoops, E., Martin, J., & Stone, D. (1995). *Whales*. New York: Sterling Publications.

This informational science text details information about whales' diet, anatomy, habits, senses, self-defense, reproduction and relationship with people. Its picture-book format is broken up with information presented in a trivia format within eight sections. An index, glossary, table of contents, subheads and captions make this an excellent source book for lessons on reading non-fiction text as well as independent read for students who are eager to learn more about all types of whales.