

Teaching materials on the topic Biodiversity Conservation (TMBC)

Topic: Porpoises

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Type of material: Worksheets which can be used as class work.

Learning objective: The pupils will learn about porpoises and their environment.

Plan of action: After an introduction to the topic “porpoises”, the worksheets can be used as a form of class work. It is advisable to make more information available to the children, for example by providing a box of books.

Porpoises – Information for teachers

The porpoise family consists of three species with a total of eight different types of porpoise. Harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) also live near us in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. A porpoise is a small, strong whale. It is under two metres long and its small head is rounded and beakless. It weighs on average between 50 and 60 kilograms, but the females are bigger and heavier than the males.

These animals have a dark grey or black back. Their undersides and necks are lighter in colour, almost white. The porpoise has a fin shaped like a triangle which is located in the middle of its back. It belongs to the toothed whale family and has spatula or pen-shaped teeth.

Harbour porpoises can only be found in the cold coastal waters of the northern seas. They prefer waters which are quiet and close to the coast, such as shallow seas, fjords and bays. It is difficult to see porpoises because they are very shy and only come up to the water’s surface very quickly in order to breathe. Their streamlined body and very smooth skin are perfect for moving through the water.

Porpoises are solitary; they can be found in groups only during their mating season. Porpoises reach sexual maturity earlier than other whales and they have a comparatively high fertility rate. A new-born porpoise weighs just five kilograms and measures around 70cm when it is born.

Porpoises spend most of their time eating. They feed on fish and sometimes octopus, crustaceans, snails and bristle worm.

The number of porpoises in the world has dramatically decreased in recent years due to human activities: boat traffic, whaling, chemical and noise pollution, fishing nets and lack of food through overfishing all represent serious threats to these animals.

Sources

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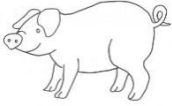
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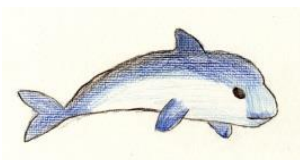
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Schlögel,R.:(o.j) Die letzten 300(<http://schweinswal.eu/> downloaded 27.01.14)



10 things you should know about porpoises!

1. The German word for porpoise is “Schweinswal” – which in English literally means “pig whale”, however porpoises are not related to pigs; instead they belong to the toothed whale family.
2. Porpoises have grey-black backs and white tummies.
3. Their body shape allows porpoises to move perfectly in the water. They move along using their tailfin, which is called fluke.
4. Porpoises breathe through a blowhole, which is on top of their back. They have to swim up to the water’s surface in order to breathe.
5. The flipper on their back is called fin; porpoises have a triangle-shaped fin.
6. Porpoises like living in cold seas, you can also find them near us in the North Sea and Baltic Sea.
7. Porpoises rarely live longer than twelve years.
8. Porpoises mainly eat small fish like herring, mackerel, salmon and sardine.
9. Porpoises are one of the smallest types of whale and grow to 1.50 – 1.70 metres long.
10. There are no porpoises living in zoos because they die in captivity.



Porpoise profile

Name: _____

What it looks like: _____

Size: _____

How long it lives: _____

Where it lives: _____

What it likes eating most: _____

Special features: _____

Tasks:

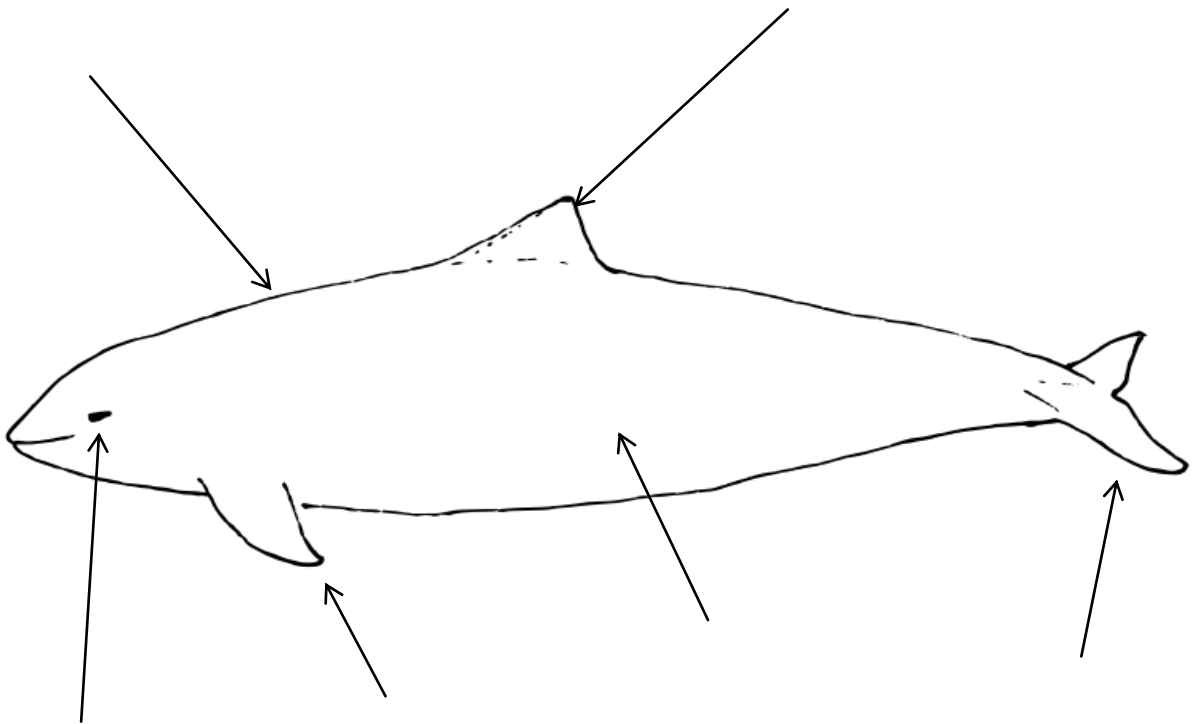
1. Read the text "10 things you should know about porpoises"
2. Complete the above profile on this worksheet.
3. Draw a porpoise in the picture frame above.



What do porpoises look like?

Tasks:

1. Cut the words out
2. Stick them in the right place
3. Colour in the porpoise using the right colours



body

blowhole

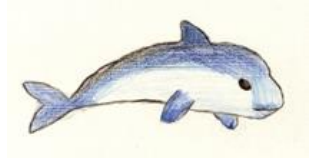
fluke

eye

pectoral fin

fin

Why are there fewer and fewer porpoises?



Hello, my name is Rosa. I am a porpoise and I live in the North Sea. There are fewer and fewer porpoises, because there are many dangers all around us in the sea. In the word-search below, you can discover which dangers threaten me.

F	L	F	H	V	Z	P	A	N	W
I	A	P	U	R	E	P	T	O	R
S	S	E	M	P	X	C	E	I	P
H	B	Y	A	J	L	Q	Z	S	R
I	T	D	N	D	T	B	R	E	Z
N	S	E	S	F	G	K	K	N	O
G	A	G	D	L	N	C	P	E	C
N	W	B	O	A	T	S	T	R	N
E	G	K	L	E	W	B	S	L	A
T	C	X	S	B	H	T	W	K	O
S	K	H	R	U	B	B	I	S	H
A	G	P	O	I	S	O	N	D	L

Tasks:

1. Six things which threaten porpoises are hidden in the word-search above.
2. You will find them → and ↓ .
3. The words are in the box below.
4. Colour the words in using different colours and write them in your exercise book.

poison, rubbish, boats, noise, humans, fishing nets