

WILDLIFE IN DANGER

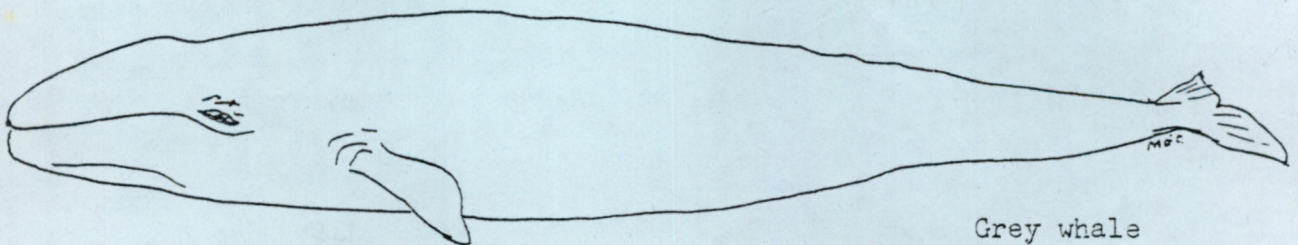
The Canadian Wildlife Federation has recently prepared a list of those animals considered to be 'endangered' throughout most or all of their Canadian range. 'Endangered' refers to those species or subspecies in danger of extinction and whose prospects of survival are in immediate jeopardy. Included on the list are 12 species of mammals, 5 birds, 5 reptiles, 3 amphibians, 9 fish and 7 invertebrates. Two of the four whale species on the list are described below.

BLUE WHALE (Balaenoptera musculus)

The largest animal that has ever existed on earth, the mighty blue whale may attain a length of 100 feet and weigh 145 tons. As its name suggests, it is dark blue-grey with light blue-grey spots on its flanks and belly. The blue whale winters in temperate and tropical waters, and summers in polar seas in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans. North Pacific stocks may be seen off the British Columbia coast during their migrations to and from the Aleutian Islands, and migrating North Atlantic stocks frequently enter Newfoundland and Labrador waters. The blue whale was extensively hunted by whalers between 1913 and 1931 when more than 30,000 were killed for their oil. Although it is now protected by member countries of the International Whaling Commission, the world population of blue whales is estimated at between 3,000 and 6,000 and declining.

GREY WHALE (Eschrichtius robustus)

A medium-sized whale measuring up to 50 feet long, the grey whale is easily recognized by its barnacle-encrusted grey skin. Lacking a dorsal fin, it possesses a row of humps along the rear third of the back. The grey whale migrates annually up and down the continental shelves of the eastern and western Pacific Ocean, following the temperate currents. Because of these regular migrations along coastal areas, the grey whale was almost exterminated by whalers by the end of the late 19th century. It is now fully protected by the International Whaling Commission and has recovered to a world population of 17,000.



Grey whale



Blue whale