



# Whale (Animal)

*Joe Roman*

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Whales are the largest animals ever to have lived on the earth: the longest recorded was over 33 metres long, the heaviest more than 171,000 kgs; a large Blue Whale's tongue alone can weigh more than an elephant. Whales can stay underwater for more than an hour, some speculate that they can live for up to 200 years, and they are among the most intelligent animals known to humanity. Whale recounts the evolutionary and ecological background, as well as the cultural history, of these extraordinary mammals, long persecuted and now celebrated throughout the world. From the tales of Jonah and Brendan the Navigator to Moby Dick and recent discoveries of cetacean songs and culture, Joe Roman looks at the role of the whale in human history, mythology, art, literature, commerce and science. Illustrated with Stone Age carvings, medieval broadsheets and colour underwater photographs, Whale shows how our perception of these animals has changed over the centuries: a hundred years ago, a stranded whale was usually greeted with flensing knives; now people bring boats and harnesses to return a wayward creature to the sea. Written by an author with vast experience of the subject, Whale will appeal to all those interested in whales and the conservation of the oceans, as well as anyone studying cultural history and the natural sciences.

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