

Humpback Whale

(*Megaptera novaeangliae*)

Description:

Medium-sized, dark whale with distinctive ridge anterior to the dorsal fin. Noticeable “bumps” on the head. Extremely long white pectoral flippers make it easy to see underneath the water. Flukes are serrated at trailing edge and may be completely white or black but are usually a variation of black and white.

Status: Endangered under the ESA and Depleted under the MMPA.

Length: 13-17m (45 - 56 feet)

Weight: 25 - 40 tons

Gulf of Maine Population: >500

Life Span: > 50 years

Prey: sandlance, herring, mackerel, other small schooling fish, krill

Can be Confused With: right whales fluking at a distance.



Illustration by Garth Mix

Recognizing Humpback Whales



Humpback Whale Behavior



Kick-feeding



Bubble cloud feeding



Lunge feeding



Spy hopping



Flipper Slapping



Breaching

All Photos Courtesy of R. Asmutis-Silvia, WDCS.