

ACTIVITY: Students create gray whales then use scientific methods to identify

GRADE LEVEL(S): 2nd to 6th



30 minutes each

DISCIPLINES: Science, language arts, visual arts

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- describe and discuss gray whale photo identification methods
- discuss how the coloration pattern of each gray whale is unique.
- discuss how and why scientists use an a whale's coloration patterns and scars to identify an individual gray whales
- create a visual example of a gray whale identification catalogue page

MATERIALS:

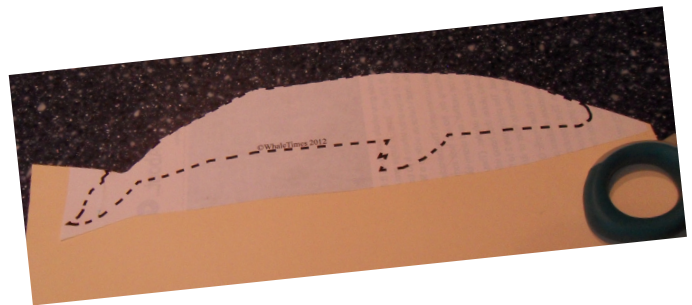
- Construction paper: white or blue, light gray for whale
- pre-cut whale stencil (file folder or card stock work best)
- Glue sticks
- Scissors

- Gray Tempera paint: Dark, medium, and light gray

Copy or copies of the *ID that Whale! Whale Outline and Photo Identification Catalogue Page*

Prep:

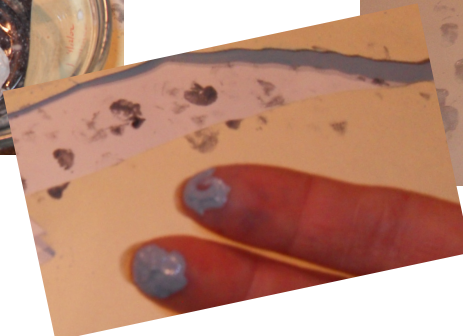
1. Pre-cut stencil or stencils of the gray whale shape. To create the stencil, we found it easy and quick to glue the whale outline on to a file folder. Then cut out.



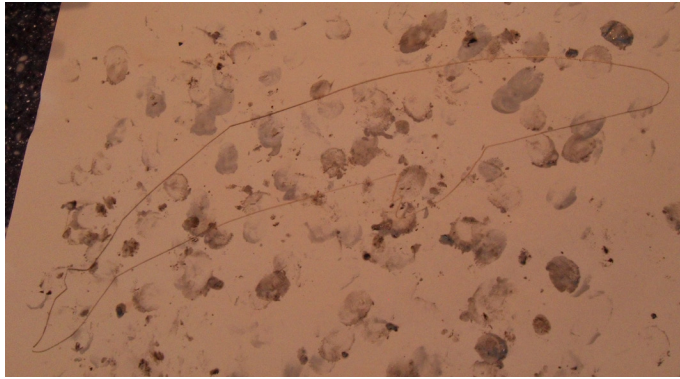
What to do:

Step 1

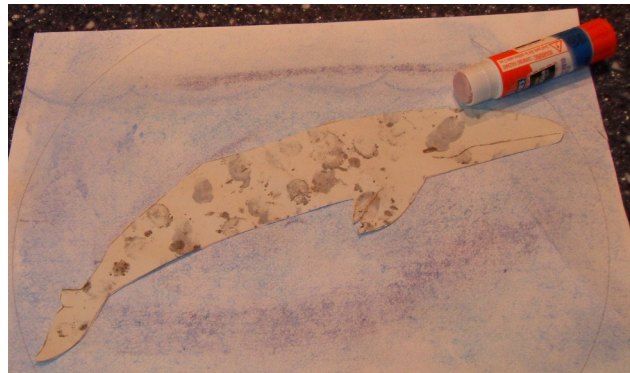
Students will fingerprint to create the colors and patterns on a gray whale's skin. Give each student a piece of light gray or white construction paper. Have each student dip the fingertips of one hand into the gray paint. Have them press their fingertips together with the fingertips of the other hand. Now that they have paint on all fingertips, have them tap their fingers onto the construction paper. Repeat process with all three paint colors.



- Step 2** (After paint dries.) Have the students use the whale pattern to trace a gray whale over the paint. Next, have them cut out the whale.

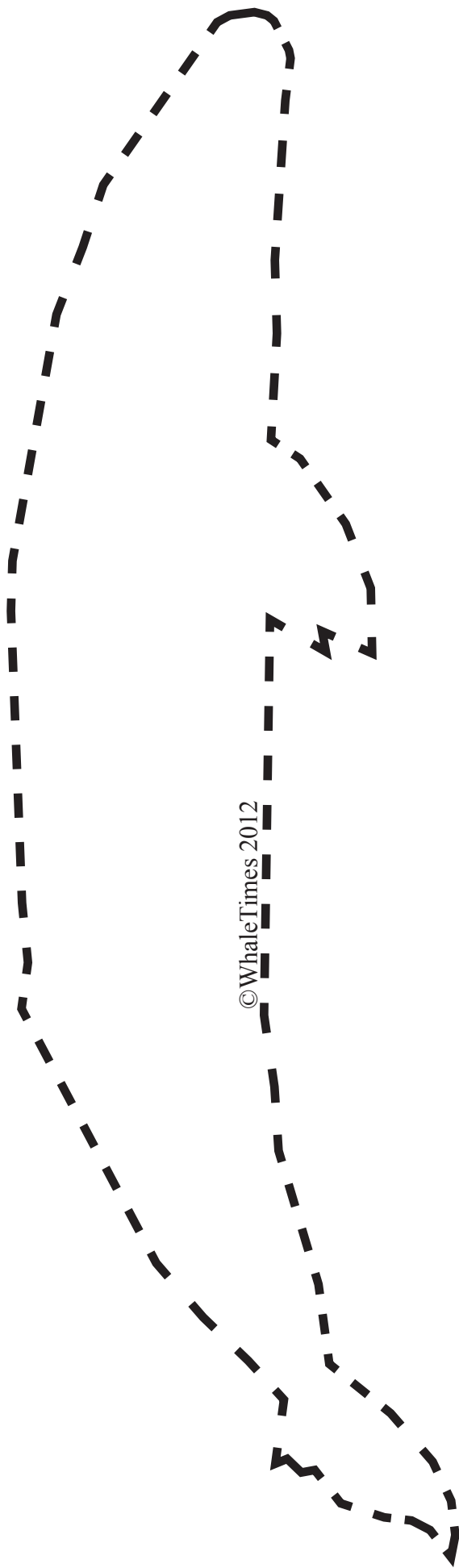


- Step 3** Glue the whale on to blue paper or have students color or chalk the watery background onto white construction paper.



- Step 4** Have students determine facts about their whale (size, first observed...etc.) Have the student examine the flanks (just below knuckles) and tail flukes to see if there are any unusual patterns. Does one create a pattern that inspires a nickname?
- Step 5** Show students and discuss the *Photo Identification Catalogue Page* used by the scientists. Have them create a catalogue page for their whale. Discuss what information they have about their whale and what information is missing? Discuss what kind of research they would need to do to gather the missing information.
- Optional**
1. Decorate the room with the gray whales.
  2. Create a classroom catalogue by making photocopies of each whale's ID page and put together to make a book.
  3. Have students use ID Catalogue to try and identify the whales found around the classroom.
  4. Discuss challenges scientists might face trying to identify individual whales.

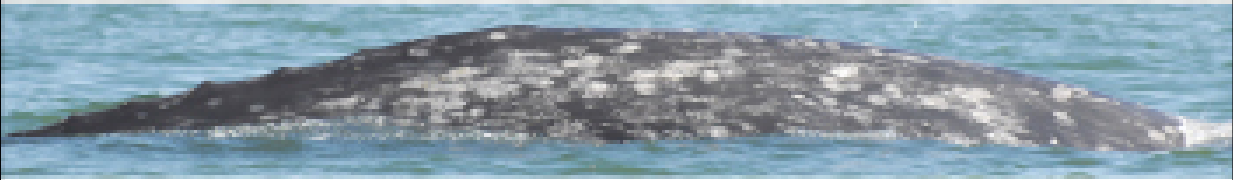
# ID that Whale! Whale Outline



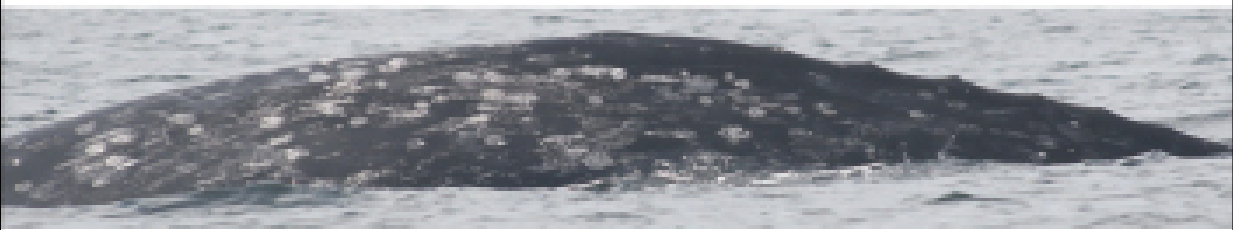
Celebration of Conservation: Gray Whales  
WhaleTimes Virtual Team Member Activity

# Photo Identification Catalogue Page

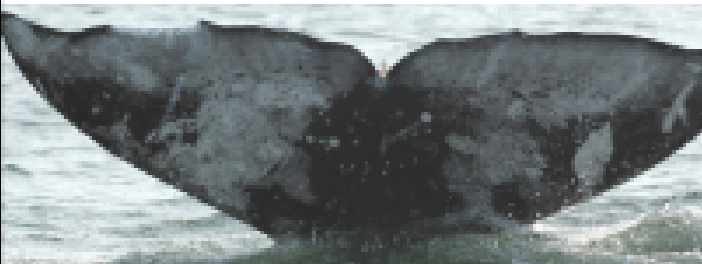
Southwest Fisheries Science Center /NOAA



Right



Left



Fluke

CATALOG ID NUMBER

**032**

NAME

*Flex*

FIRST/LAST YEAR SEEN

1997/2009

GENETIC SAMPLE?

Yes

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