

Gray Whales

Eschrichtius robustus

The Gray Whale is a species common to the west coast of North and Central America. They live mostly in shallow coastal waters which makes them a popular species for whale watching.

To feed, Gray Whales will dive to the ocean floor and scoop out great mouthfuls of mud. Water and sediment is then forced out through the whale's baleen, leaving behind the tiny crustaceans used as food.

The Gray Whale is an extremely old species with a fossil record extending back 500,000 years.

Gray Whales are the last living member of the genus *Eschrichtius* and family *Eschrichtiidae*. Their closest living relatives are thought to be the Humpback and Fin Whales, although these species have very different skeletal structures.

It is believed that Gray Whales have the longest migration pattern of any mammal on Earth, up to 14,000 miles (22,000 km) between their feeding grounds off the coast of Alaska and their breeding grounds in Mexican waters.

Gray Whales were imperiled for a long time but were removed from the Endangered Species List in 1994 after a ban on hunting and a successful recovery plan.

