

Vaquita (Phocoena sinus)



Status: CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

LENGTH: 4 to 5 feet (1.3 to 1.5 m)
DIET: fish, squid, crustaceans
HOME: northern Gulf of Mexico

FOUND: 13-160 feet (4-50 m) deep
PREDATORS: large sharks
LIFESPAN: 20 years

Most people have never heard of the **world's most endangered whale** – the vaquita. This porpoise is as long as a 12-year old kid.

Home Tiny Home

Vaquitas live within a small part of the Gulf of California. They are only found within an area that is half the size of the Island of Hawaii.

Secretive Whales

Scientists didn't know the vaquita existed until the 1950s. Unlike other flashy whales, vaquitas do not do fancy jumps or leaps. Except when taking a breath, they spend most of their time under water. Vaquitas avoid boats and people. Scientists have noticed that when they get the rare opportunity to see vaquita, the porpoises stay about a half-mile (1 km) away from the research boat.

Scientists who study vaquitas peer through binoculars for hours to catch a single glimpse of one taking a quick breath before it disappears beneath the surface.

Pretty Porpoise

Dark rings around a vaquita's eyes and lips adds to the its unique beauty and list of secrets. Scientists do not know how or if the exotic coloration helps the porpoise.

A vaquita's triangle-shaped dorsal fin is higher and wider (compared to its body size) than most porpoises. The male vaquita's dorsal fin is slightly larger.

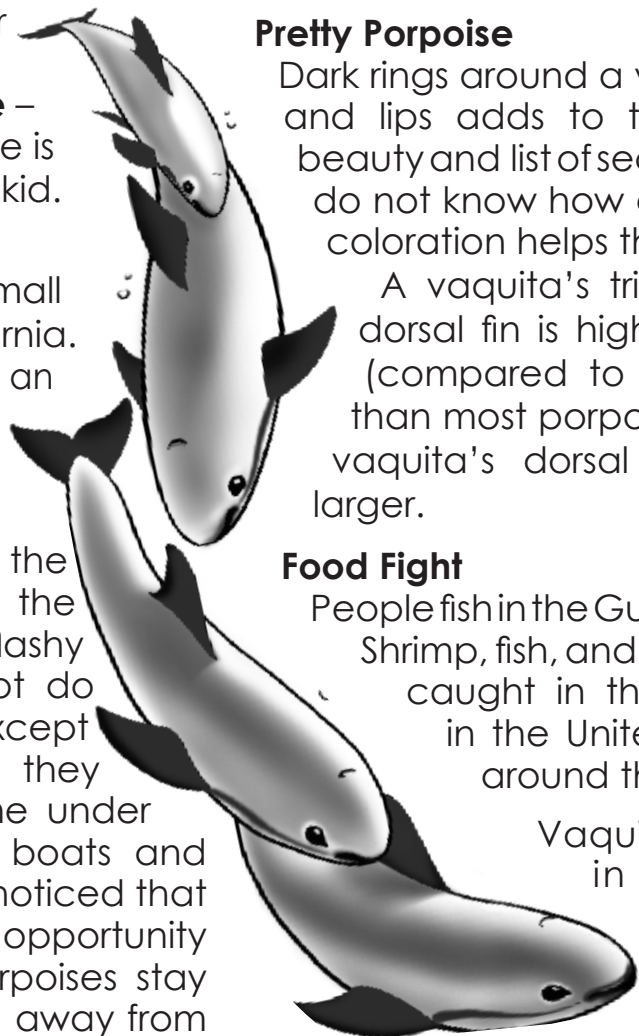
Food Fight

People fish in the Gulf of California. Shrimp, fish, and other seafood caught in the Gulf is sold in the United States and around the world.

Vaquita get caught in nets set for shrimp, squid, and fish.

Vaquita also get caught in nets illegally set to catch a critically endangered fish called the *totoaba*.

There might only be 30 vaquita left in the entire world. Can you help us save them?



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Help save vaquita and other ocean animals by eating sustainably caught seafood. Read more about sustainable seafood on the WhaleTimes "What is Sustainable Seafood?" fact sheet.