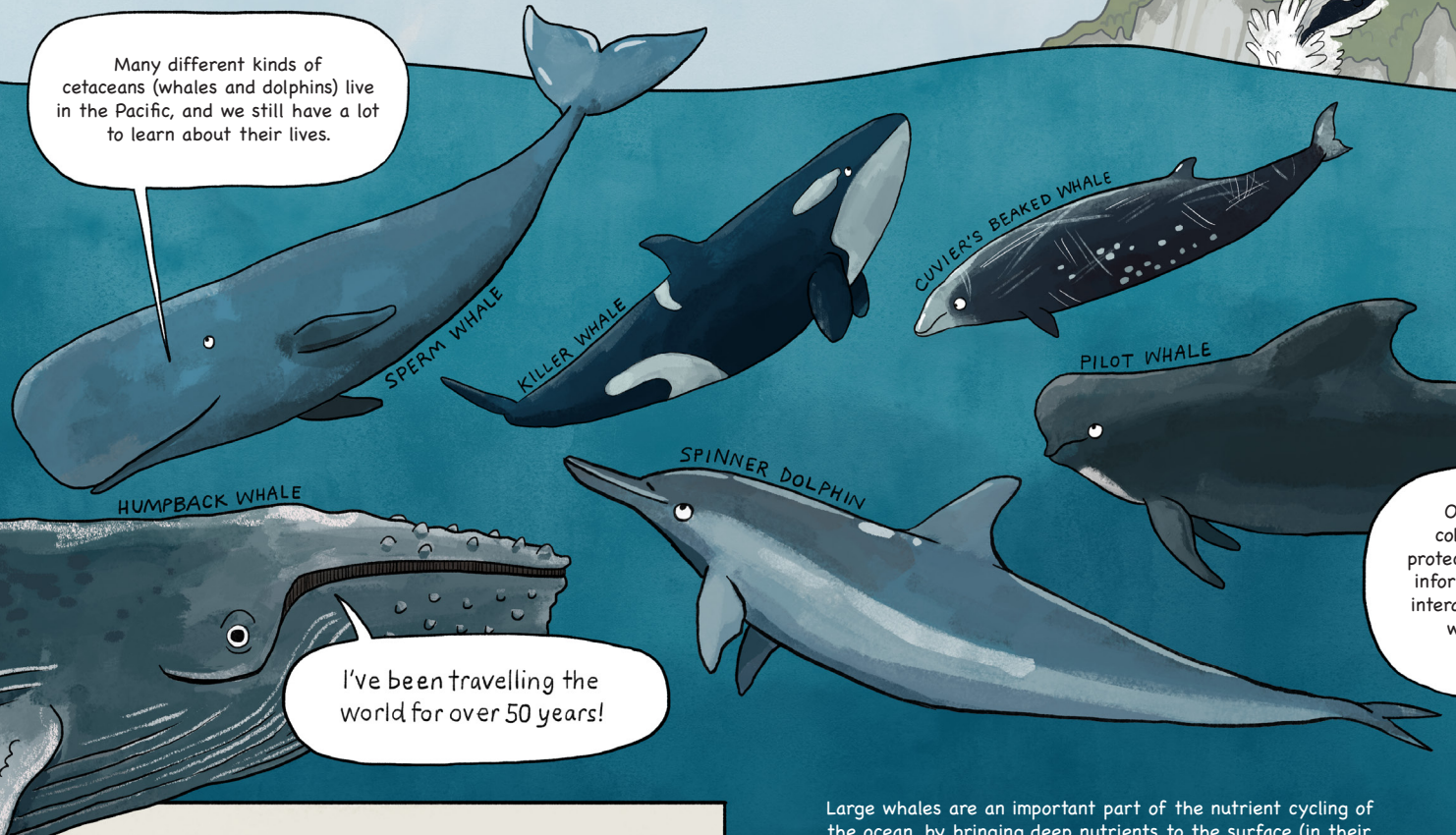


WHALES & DOLPHINS

Many different kinds of cetaceans (whales and dolphins) live in the Pacific, and we still have a lot to learn about their lives.



I've been travelling the world for over 50 years!

Whales and dolphins are very long-lived – like humans – and only reproduce slowly. It takes many generations for their populations to grow.

Historical commercial whaling killed so many whales that many species are only just beginning to recover. Their populations are small and fragmented.



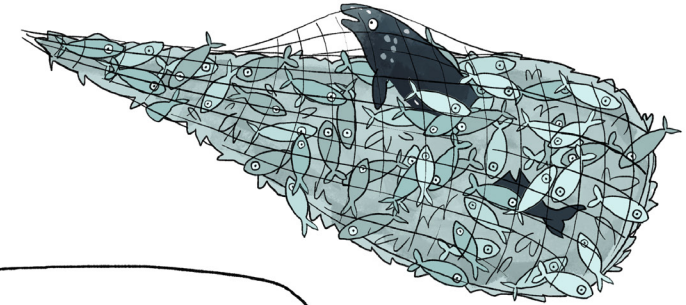
Large whales are an important part of the nutrient cycling of the ocean, by bringing deep nutrients to the surface (in their poop!) which helps plankton to grow. They also store carbon in their bodies, which sinks to the bottom of the sea when they die. Growing whale populations means healthier oceans, and may help to slow the impacts of climate change.



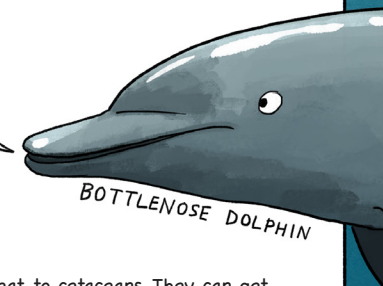
Some cetaceans prefer coastal areas over the open ocean, sometimes choosing to live around just one island – but there's a lot we don't understand yet about this behaviour.

THREATS TO DOLPHINS & WHALES

The biggest threat to whales and dolphins in the Pacific is fishing gear – including industrial long lines, purse seines, and artisanal gill nets. They get trapped, and then they drown.



Observers on fishing boats can collect useful information to help protect whales and dolphins. With more information about the ways cetaceans interact with fishing equipment, we can work towards preventing their accidental capture.



Plastic pollution is also a serious threat to cetaceans. They can get tangled in discarded fishing gear, and will eat plastic that they mistake for food.

