

THE HUMPBACK WHALE

Humpback whales live in the open ocean with the help of some key features. Named for the hump of its dorsal fin, this graceful whale often jumps out of the water with powerful force. Huge mammals of the ocean, these giants are incredibly built.

TUBERCLES

The knobby structures on the snout and chin. Each tubercle contains a sensory hair. These help the whale sense vibration and temperature.

TWO BLOWHOLES

Humpbacks exhale from their twin blowholes, with a wide blow up to 13 feet high. The warm, moist lung air is mainly expelled as a cloud of condensation.

VENTRAL PLEATS

12 to 30 throat grooves span two-thirds of the length of the whale's underside. They contain the extra skin that allows the whale's huge mouth to expand while feeding.

PECTORAL FIN

Forward fins that are a third of the length of the whale's body. These fins can grow up to 15 feet long.

DORSAL FIN

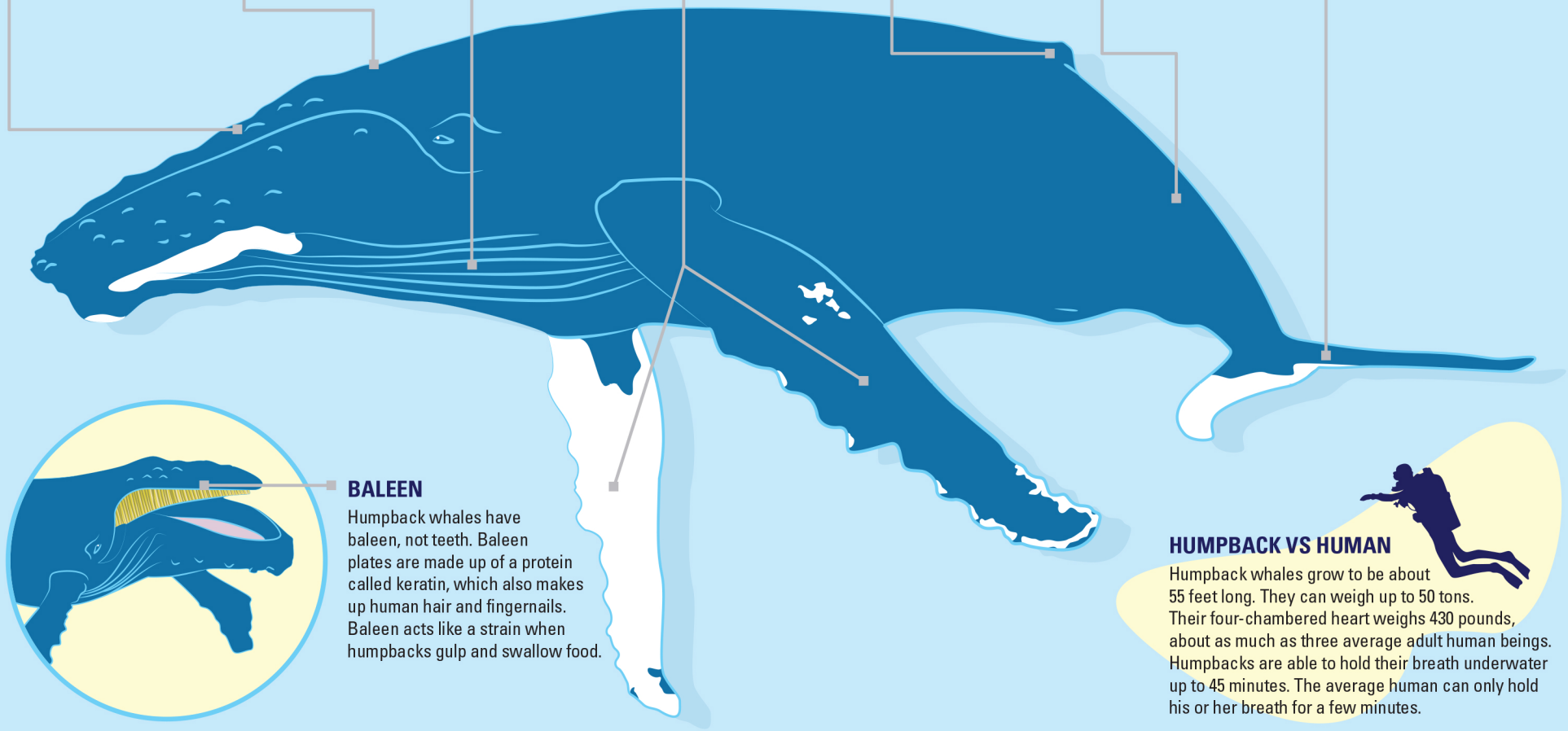
A relatively small fin right on the back along the humpback's body. Humpback dorsal fins come in many different sizes and shapes.

CAUDAL PEDUNCLE

Immensely strong rear section of the humpback that is connected to the tail. The powerful muscles here lift the whole back region of the body out of the water and then slap it down onto the surface.

TAIL FLUKES

The two sides of the tail are called flukes. Often they carry scars from attacks and natural color patterns. These marks can be used by scientists to identify whales.



BALEEN

Humpback whales have baleen, not teeth. Baleen plates are made up of a protein called keratin, which also makes up human hair and fingernails. Baleen acts like a strain when humpbacks gulp and swallow food.

HUMPBACK VS HUMAN

Humpback whales grow to be about 55 feet long. They can weigh up to 50 tons. Their four-chambered heart weighs 430 pounds, about as much as three average adult human beings. Humpbacks are able to hold their breath underwater up to 45 minutes. The average human can only hold his or her breath for a few minutes.

