

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Wolves of the Sea

By Guy Belleranti



Which sea animal is the greatest hunter of all? Some people might say the great white shark has a reputation as the most fierce predator of the ocean. Others would argue that the giant squid is the best hunter of the sea because it can grow to be over 110 feet (12 m) long. I disagree. In my opinion, the greatest



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Orcas are also highly intelligent. Their brain is the second heaviest among marine mammals. (The sperm whale has the biggest brain of all the sea mammals.) Orcas are intelligent, curious, and playful. They even communicate with each other using their own language. Their intelligence makes hunting easier because they can outsmart their prey.

The orca lives and hunts in a family group called a pod. When the pod works together, orcas can catch and eat any marine animal including sharks, penguins, seals, sea lions, walruses, porpoises, and even giant whales. Because of their cooperative hunting skills, orcas are often referred to as the “wolves of the sea.”

Other traits that help their hunting ability are their keen senses. An orca has excellent



eyesight, both underwater and above. If it's hunting a seal, for example, an orca could see it clearly if it's on an ice floe above water, or if it's diving under the ocean's surface. They also have great hearing, which allows them to locate prey from far away. They even have an extra sense that humans don't have – echolocation.



When it uses this extra sense, an orca sends out high-pitched clicking sounds. When it hears the sounds echo off an object the orca knows the object's location, shape, speed, and size.



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be interested to know that there are no documented cases of a wild orca purposely attacking a human being. Even though they may be the fiercest hunter in the sea, they don't consider humans their prey.

### **More interesting orca facts:**

- Orcas are found in all the oceans of the world, but they usually prefer cooler waters.
- Adult females can give birth to a calf every 3 to 10 years. The calf is 6 to 8 feet (2-2.4 m) long at birth and weighs around 400 pounds (180 kg).
- Orcas are not fish! They are mammals because they breathe air, are warm-blooded, and give birth to live young.

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1. What is this article mostly about?
  - a. how orcas are different from other whales
  - b. the recent discovery of wild orcas
  - c. traits that make killer whales great hunters
  - d. wolves that live in the sea



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4. What is echolocation and how does it work?

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5. Tell whether each statement is true, false, or an opinion. Write **T**, **F**, or **O** on the lines.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Killer whales are a large species of fish.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The greatest hunters in the sea are orcas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ An adult orca is heavier than an adult great white shark.
- \_\_\_\_\_ An orca's brain is larger than a sperm whale's brain.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Killer whales are the most beautiful animal on Earth.

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.



1. \_\_\_\_\_ reputation

a. smart; brainy



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4. \_\_\_\_\_ communicate

d. young cow, camel, whale, or elephant

5. \_\_\_\_\_ keen

e. sharp; sensitive; acute

6. \_\_\_\_\_ documented

f. belief about something or someone

7. \_\_\_\_\_ cooperative

g. clearly reported; proven

8. \_\_\_\_\_ calf

h. talk to others; send messages to others



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“Wolves of the Sea” was written as a persuasive essay to convince readers that orcas are the greatest hunters of the sea. The author begins by stating his opinion, then he backs it up with a series of facts.

In your opinion, which animal is the greatest hunter on land? Write a persuasive essay



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7.   **b**   cooperative

**g.** clearly reported; proven

8.   **d**   calf

**h.** talk to others; send messages to others