

## Mammals



Marine mammals are those that either live full time in the ocean like whales (Cetaceans) and manatees (Sirena). The whales are divided into 2 groups – those with teeth (odontoceti). This group includes several whales like the sperm whale and porpoises and

dolphins). The other group are baleen whales (mysticeti) (the blue whale, the right whale). Baleen is a kind of “plastic” looking material (keratin that hangs down from the whale’s gums and acts as a kind of strainer for the plankton these whales eat. Others live in the water and come on the land fairly easily – seals and sea lions (pinnipeds). Some are often on the land like sea otters and polar bears who are dependent largely on the ocean for food.

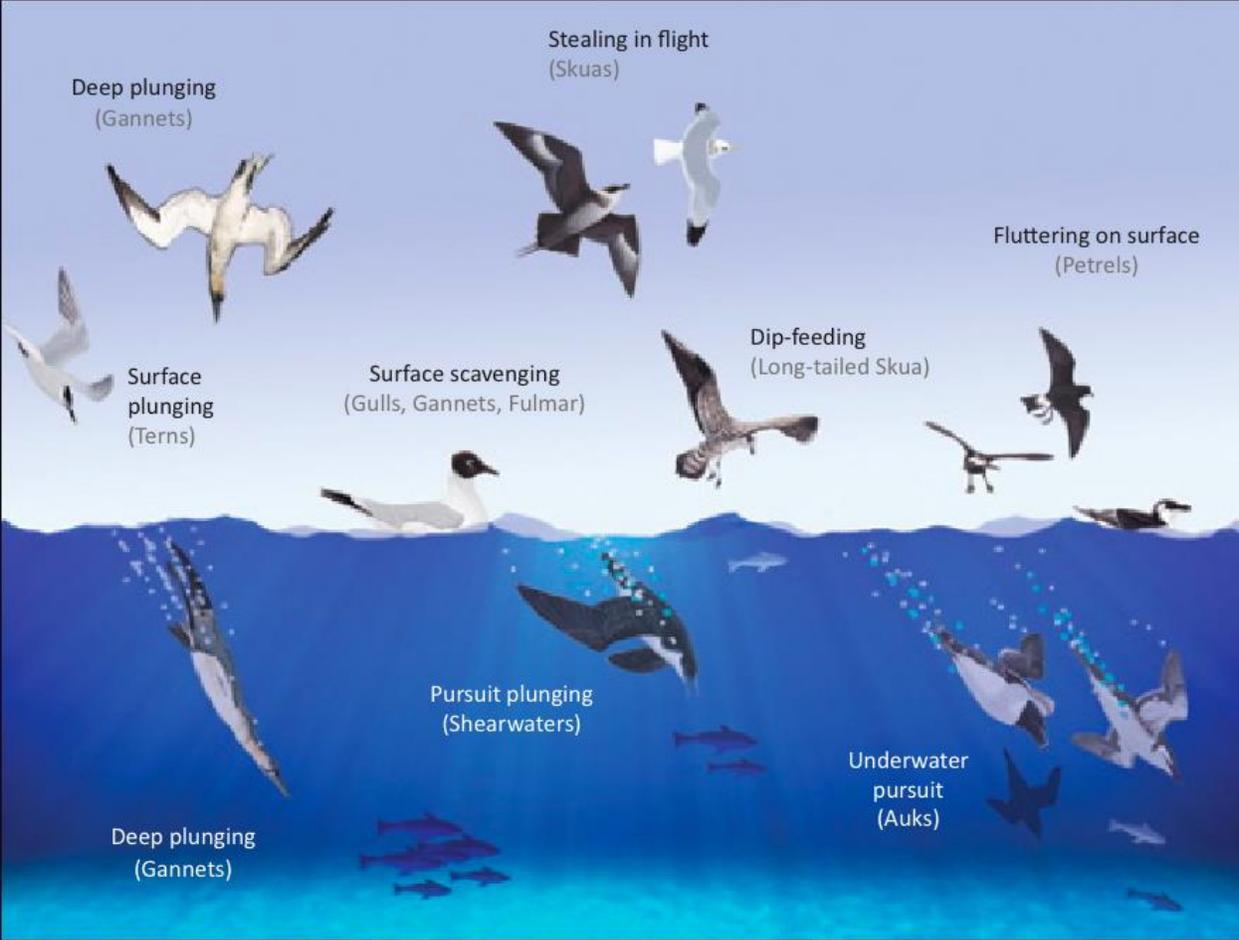
## **Birds**

Although no birds spend their entire lives exclusively in the ocean, many do hunt fish and other sea life. Penguins are the most water adapted of all birds and seem far more graceful in the water than waddling around on the land.

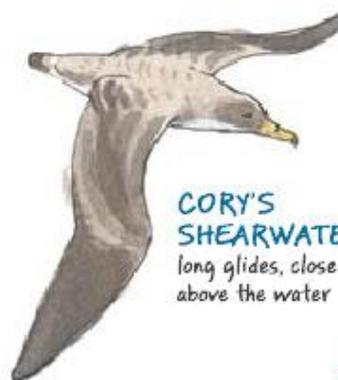




Many birds are highly specialized for the kinds of “fishing” they do.



# Quick identification guide to Seabirds



**CORY'S SHEARWATER**  
long glides, close above the water



**STORM-PETREL**  
white rump like a swallow



**YELLOW-LEGGED GULL**  
light-coloured bill, eyes and legs

dark grey mantle with white edge

tips of wing black, with large white spots



**AUDOUIN'S GULL**  
dark-coloured bill, eyes and legs

light grey mantle without obvious white edge

tips of wing black, with small white spots



dark above light below

**MEDITERRANEAN SHEARWATER**  
quick wingbeats, usually flying in flocks



rounded crown and steep forehead slender bill

angular hindcrown

strong bill

**CORMORANT**



**MEDITERRANEAN SHAG**



thick kinked neck



thin straight neck

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Different Ecological Niches along the shore are important for many reasons. The Coral Reefs are found only along the shores of island volcanos or the remnants of such islands

What you need to remember are the following phyla and some of the reasons they are important in this class

**1. Porifera:** (sponges) simplest animals. Used by people largely for cleaning but also used by Romans to line helmets to make them more comfortable. Biological sponges are not much in use any more. We will talk about sponge divers later in the term

**2. Cnidaria:** One of the two radially symmetrical animal phyla. This one includes most jellyfish, anemones, and corals. They are typified by

their radial symmetry and their nematocysts or stinging cells. The coral, which form reefs, are an important ecological niche and also served as an example of relationship between the coral and a dinoflagellate which lives in the coral. The dinoflagellate is a primary producer that photosynthesizes. Hence it gives off oxygen which the coral itself can use. The coral gives off carbon dioxide which the dinoflagellate needs to photosynthesize. The dinoflagellate gives the coral its color. When the coral is stressed (as for example the temperature rises (as say during an el Niño) the dinoflagellate is expelled (the coral turns white and the process is known as "bleaching") and may die if the a cooler temperature does not occur. If the stressing mechanism does vanish, the dinoflagellates return to the coral.

Another example of this kind of relationship was between the clown fish and the anemone in which both benefit from the other.

Coral is also crucial in that coral reefs constitute an environment which is very important in the ocean and which will be discussed shortly.

**3. Arthropods** (joint legged animals). These are animals which are widely eaten around the world. They include the crustaceans (lobsters, crabs etc.) insects and spiders and the ever popular horseshoe crab (more closely related to the spiders than to the crabs). The blood of the horseshoe crab is important to pharmaceutical companies for its ability to detect impurities.

**4. Mollusks.** Another important food group and includes bivalves like clams. Also important are oysters and others which produce pearls as a result of an irritant which has appeared inside the shell (like a grain of sand) and which becomes covered by a secretion which forms the pearl. The deliberate placing of the irritant in the shell produces a pearl known as a "cultured" pearl.

**5. Echinoderms or Echinodermata.** This is the other radially symmetrical phylum and includes various kinds of starfish, sea cucumbers (Holothuroidea), sea urchins (Echinoidea) echinoids and some others. They are considered to be closer to the chordate phylum than the others. They also have enormous regenerative powers in

which parts of the animal can generate the entire animal while an animal having lose an "arm" or something can regenerate that.

**6 Chordates:** Animals which at some point in their life cycle have a stiffening rod down there backs known as a notochord. Within the phylum "chordata" is a subphylum called "vertebrata" or "vertebrates" which developed a backbone. The vertebrates are divided into 5 classes:

**Fish**

**Amphibians**

**Reptiles**

**Mammals**

**Birds**

Fish and amphibians are tied to the water. While some fish can live out of the water – sometimes even for a few days) it is their basic environment and a place where they need to spawn and where the young develop. Amphibians are basically odd ball fish except in their adult stage they are far more able to remain out of water. A commonly seen amphibian is the frog (the young are tadpoles). Amphibians are notoriously missing from marine animals while fish have been categorized as salt water (biologists say "marine") and fresh water (biologists say "aquatic") forms although this is not a recognized division in terms of taxonomy where the usual distinction is between aganatha (jawless fish) and gnathostomes (jawed fish). The gnathostomes currently greatly outnumber the agnathic fish. The most common distinction made taxonomically is between osteichthys (bony fish) and chondrichthys (cartilaginous fish – sharks and rays and the like). Fish are generally seen as being the dominant animal during the Devonian period.

Reptiles make the major shift in evolution to life on land by developing an egg which can be laid on the land, and hence no longer need to return to the water. There were a large number of marine reptiles in prehistoric times like the mosasaur, pleisiosaur and others, but they all went extinct at the end of the Cretaceous period along with the dinosaurs and the flying reptiles like the pterodactyl. Of the major reptiles the crocodile/alligator crew managed to survive the extinction

that did in the dinosaurs, but by and large these are not marine animals but usually found in more fresh water environments . Turtles also survived and the sea turtle is the major reptile found in the oceans although some lizards are involved to a lesser degree with the water.

Mammals have returned to the ocean are in several orders: the cetaceans (whales), sirena (manatees), pinnipeds (seals and sea lions) carnivore (walrus). These are the orders in which there are animals that are basically finned or with flippers that have returned to the sea. Others, like the sea otter and the polar bear, which are also considered marine mammals are far less adapted to ocean living. The seals are heavily adapted to living in the ocean, but can come out on the land and move around with some easy. The whales and manatees do not move between land and ocean.

The cetaceans are divided into two groups (toothed whales (Odontoceti) and baleen whales (Mysticeti). The toothed whales include animals like the killer whale (Orca), the sperm whale (Physeter) and the smaller members of the group – the porpoises and dolphins. The baleen whale includes the huge blue whale, the North Atlantic Right whale (the most endangered of the whales) It gets its name from whalers who claimed it was the “right” whale to take because it slept on the surface and floated when killed. It is still in danger from ships which tend to collide with the sleeping animal and injure or kill it. Ships in the area where there are right whales have to reduce their speed greatly and keep a watch for the whales The Pacific Gray whale (which once endangered) has made a come back and is no longer on the endangered species list. Whales have been important largely in the U.S. as animals which were hunted for their whale oil and baleen. Other countries like Iceland and other Scandinavian countries along with Japan have hunts whales for food.

The sirena or manatees live in estuaries and shore environments. They are thought by some to be the stimulus for “mermaids” The are dwindling in number and are often the victims of boat strikes. Virtually all of them show scars from boat propellers. They also fall victim to

certain algal blooms which may in some instances be caused by anthropogenic eutrophication.

Seals which have been long hunted for their pelts are no longer hunted and are increasing in number. This had led to some problems in that they eat about 6% of their body weight in fish daily. As their numbers increase, the amount of fish they eat rises. Seals are the favorite food of some of the larger animals like White sharks and Orcas. The block on hunting has caused the number of seals to rise and they have become far more common in places like Cape Cod Bay. White sharks breed off Montauk Point and young sharks are fish eaters. As they approach adolescence, their diet switches to seals which they need to learn to hunt. They have moved up into Cape Cod Bay and the number of shark attacks on people in the Bay has risen. Sharks, learning to find seals, initially seem to mistake people on paddle board and surf boards for seals and attack them. The growing seal population has caused more seals to be seen in places where they had not been for a long time like New York harbor which has raised for some the image of potential shark attacks on the Long Island beaches.

Sea Otters, like most animals have their own little niche and they are fond of eating sea urchins, thereby controlling the population of these echinoderms. Sea urchins eat kelp and control that population. Kelp is an important ecological zone and a kind of nursery for many animals. Sea otters figure centrally in several scenarios. Hunters in the 1800 and 1900 hunted them for their wonderful pelts. As a result, their numbers dropped off sharply and they were becoming endangered. Once the hunting was stopped their numbers grew again. When people started taking pollack fish in great numbers, it had an impact on the seal population which fell off to about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the original number. Seals are the favorite food of Killer Whales (orcas) who were then forced to eat other animals for food. They turned to the already dangerously endangered sea otter. As sea otter numbers plummeted, the sea urchin population rose. (When any trophic level is removed or lessened, the level below tends to increase in number and the one above decrease). Sea urchins then overate the kelp and destroyed the kelp forests, thereby destroying the "nurseries" the kelp were serving for many animals.

It is important at all times to keep in mind the idea of "a system" and that doing something in one part of the system will likely cause the system to readjust to the changes – often in ways one does not expect. We have seen this with the anchovies, and seals and fish and now with the fish and the kelp

Birds: These are, like the mammals descended from reptiles but the affinities are much closer. Thought by many to have evolved from "saurischian dinosaurs" none of the birds actually has returned to the ocean as a permanent habitat. Penguins are perhaps the most involved. They no longer fly (like the ostrich and emu) but unlike the ostrich and emu are remarkably at home in the water and can swim with great speed and efficiency and grace. On land they look peculiarly clumsy and waddle around.

Other birds, while spending less time actually in the water get much of their food from the ocean by diving onto and into it to take fish – often when a school of fish is being attacked from below by other predators. Many of the adaptations in the birds has to do with the way they take the food from the water – diving, plunging etc.