

Gray Whales in the Atlantic?

Since the 1800's it's thought that gray whales had been hunted to extinction in the Atlantic Ocean. In the past 13 years, there have been 5 sightings of gray whales in the Atlantic. Here is a short collection of links that will take you to the stories about the sightings as well as other information.

Grey whale info

[ACS fact sheet](#)

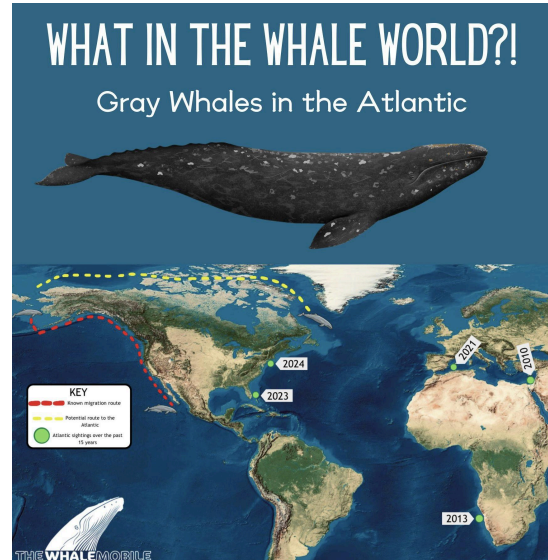
[NOAA fisheries](#)

[The Adventure Buddies](#). Cute video done by kids.

[Whale Watch Cabo](#): higher level intro with taxonomy.

Sightings

1. March, 2024, a [gray whale](#) was spotted by the aerial survey team from the New England aquarium.
2. Dec, 2023 one was spotted near Miami. [This article](#) has a great little video about gray whales.
3. May, 2021, a gray whale ended up off the coast of Morocco and was spotted close to France and Italy as well. Here is a video about that gray whale from the [BBC](#)
4. May, 2013. Guardian.com. [First gray whale spotted south of the equator](#).
Where did this whale come from?
smithsonian.com. [Gray Whale Breaks Migration Record With 16,700-Mile Journey](#)
nationalgeographic.com. [A gray whale swam halfway across the world, setting a new record](#)
5. May 2010. ResearchGate.net. [Gray whale \(*Eschrichtius robustus*\) in the Mediterranean Sea: Anomalous event or early sign of climate-driven distribution change?](#)



What do we know about the history of gray whales in the area?

October 27, 2023. Earth.com [Early whaling wiped out two species of whales in the eastern Atlantic](#)

October 6, 2022:Phys.org. [Gray whale's disappearance from Atlantic Ocean holds clues to possible return](#)

Did gray whales ever live in the Mediterranean?

July 2013: The Royal Society. [Forgotten Mediterranean calving grounds of gray and North Atlantic right whales: evidence from Roman archaeological records](#)

Aug. 1995: Journal of Mammalogy. [Dating Remains of Gray Whales from the Eastern North Atlantic](#)

July 19, 2022: Smithsonianmag.com. [Scientists Find Most Complete Atlantic Gray Whale Skeleton Ever](#)

Why is this happening?

Most scientists think this points to climate change.

The whales are moving across the Northwest passage where there is less ice!
[New England Aquarium](#)

To learn more about the ocean is warming and how it is studied, see what [Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute](#) has to say.



SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS ON HOW YOU COULD USE THIS IN THE CLASSROOM

Possible activities:

Mapping

Map where the whales were sighted in the Atlantic

Where they traditionally are sighted in the Pacific.

Draw possible routes that the whales took to get from the Pacific to the Atlantic. (This is similar to that map that we did, but the students could do it!)

Explain the theories as to what is happening. Has that theory changed over the 13 years that grays have been occasionally sighted in the Atlantic?

What are the pros and cons of gray whales being in the Atlantic from what you have read about.

Potential NGSS connections

MS-LS2-1 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence for the effects of resource availability on organisms and populations of organisms in an ecosystem.

MS-LS2-4 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

Construct an argument supported by empirical evidence that changes to physical or biological components of an ecosystem affect populations.

MS-ESS3-3 Earth and Human Activity

Apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing a human impact on the environment.*

