

# Underwater living

Unlike fish and other underwater animals, whales cannot breathe in water. They must swim to the surface to breathe air. Whales do not breathe through their mouth, but through a large nostril called a **blowhole**. The blowhole is on the top of the whale's head. Just before a whale dives under the water, a flap covers the blowhole. Whales can stay underwater for a long time before they have to surface again.

*Sperm whales have a huge, square head, which is filled with a waxy substance called spermaceti. This may help them to dive.*





When whales come to the surface, they breathe out so hard that a jet of air and water bursts out of their blowhole.

### Keeping warm

Whales have to keep warm in cold water. They have a thick layer of fat, called **blubber**, under their skin. The fat traps heat in the whale's body so it stays warm.

## Whale

Sperm whales can dive deeper than any other mammal in the world. Most dives are between 1,000 and 2,000 feet (300–600 m), but they can reach at least 6,500 feet (2,000 m). Sperm whales can swim underwater for two hours without taking a breath.

**fact**