



## Cuvier's Beaked Whale

**Cuvier's beaked** or goosebeak whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*) are medium-sized cetaceans can be found along the Aleutian Islands and many of the waters throughout the world, except for waters at high latitudes.

**General description:** At birth Cuvier's beaked whales measure about 8 ft 11 in (2.7 m). Adult females average 21 ft (6.4 m) and weigh 5 tons. Adult males average 20 ft (6.0 m) and weigh 4 tons.



The Cuvier's beaked whale has a relatively small head and beak. The mouth turns upward giving it a goose-like appearance, hence the name goosebeak whale. As with all toothed whales there is a single blowhole. Two V-shaped grooves are present on the throat and the lower jaws (mandibles) have two conical teeth that erupt only in adult males. The body of the Cuvier's beaked whale is robust but it has small tapered, flippers that fit into flipper pockets that allow for a hydrodynamic profile and a dorsal fin located near the flukes that can be falcate or triangular in shape.

The color of the Cuvier's beaked whale ranges from tan to reddish-brown. The head and neck are white in adults. Males have long scratches thought to be caused by intra-specific fighting for females.

**Food habits:** Toothed whales use echolocation to locate their prey. High frequency sound waves are produced within the nasal complex and focused through the melon (forehead) into the whale's surroundings. As these sound waves hit objects they bounce back as echoes giving the whale information about its prey and environment. Cuvier's beaked whales capture their prey by "suction feeding" using the throat grooves to quickly expand the oral cavity to suck prey into their mouths. Cuvier's beaked whales feed primarily on squid and deep water fish.

**Life history:** Almost nothing is known about the age of maturity, reproduction, or longevity of this species.

**Seasonal movements:** Cuvier's beaked whales can be found in water 5,000 ft (1500 m) to 11,500 ft (3500 m) deep.

**Behavior:** Cuvier's beaked whales are shy and seldom seen. They travel in pods of 2–15 and may breach.

**Population size:** There are no estimates of abundance for the Cuvier's beaked whales, but they are not currently listed as 'threatened' or 'endangered' under the Endangered Species Act, nor are they listed as 'depleted' under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

**Predators, hunting, and other mortality:** There are no known predators of the Cuvier's beaked whales. Mass strandings have been associated with military's use of Low Frequency Active Sonar (LFAS) but the evidence is not conclusive.

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