

Everything you need to know about Migaloo

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It's whale season here in Australia, between June to October.

Here's everything you need to know about Migaloo, the white whale:

- Migaloo is an adult white male humpback whale, estimated to have been born in 1986.
- He was first spotted in 1991 passing through Byron Bay.
- It's estimated that Migaloo was 3-5 years old when he was first sighted.
- Migaloo has brown eyes and his white exterior shows some signs of sun damage.
- When Migaloo was first sighted he was the only known white whale in the world.
- Migaloo's song was first recorded in 1998, which convinced researchers that Migaloo was in fact a male due to his knack for melody.
- The whale's sex was then confirmed by researchers from the Southern Cross University in 2004 when they were able to obtain skin samples.
- Until September 2011 it was thought that Migaloo was the only white whale in existence, after which, an all-white humpback calf emerged.
- 'Migaloo' means 'white fella' in some Aboriginal languages.

- Despite being almost completely white, Migaloo is referred to as 'hypopigmented' rather than 'albino'.
- Scientists say that it's possible Migaloo is 'leucistic,' which refers to partial loss of pigmentation.
- Migaloo is a part of Australia's eastern humpback whale population.
- Migaloo is protected by the Australian National Guidelines for Whale and Dolphin Watching in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act Regulations.
- However Migaloo has been given extra protection due to his uniqueness under Queensland & Commonwealth Government legislation that is enacted each whale season which says that a vessel will be fined \$16 500 if it comes within 500 metres of the white whale.
- Nevertheless, Migaloo hasn't been immune to some collisions. The whale collided with a trimaran, a type of boat, on the Queensland coast on 2003.
- Besides Migaloo, there are only 3-4 other known white whales, making them exceedingly rare.
- The other white whales go by the names of Bahloo, Willow and Migaloo Jnr, all humpback whales,
- The first official sighting of Migaloo for 2017 was on the 8 July, off the NSW coast.
- In 2015 scientists explained that it's likely we'll see less and less of Migaloo as he matures and swims further offshore.