

# Marine Mammal Mimics



## Objective

Students will demonstrate examples of the typical behavior of various sea animals living in different habitats.

## Materials

- SeaWorld Stars cards on pages 2-4
- Reference materials about marine mammals. ([www.seaworld.org](http://www.seaworld.org))

## Action

1. Role-play each of the animals on pages 2-4. First describe an animal's home. (For example: the ocean for a dolphin, an island for a sea lion, or river bank for an otter.)
2. Next, ask your students to imagine they are the animal. Begin by having them "put on" appropriate body parts. For example, sea lions need front and back flippers, whiskers, a fur coat, and large eyes.
3. Lead your students through some active role-play behaviors such as swimming, diving, catching food, and jumping out of the water onto a rocky shoreline. As you role-play, ask students what they "see" in the water. What do they see on land? Ask them to suggest role-play behaviors that will—
  - help them avoid predators
  - help them find and eat prey
  - help them locate others of their own kind
4. Finally, role-play trained behaviors that you might see at SeaWorld. Include trained show behaviors as well as trained husbandry behaviors (behaviors that an animal is trained to do to facilitate caring for that animal).

## Deeper Depths

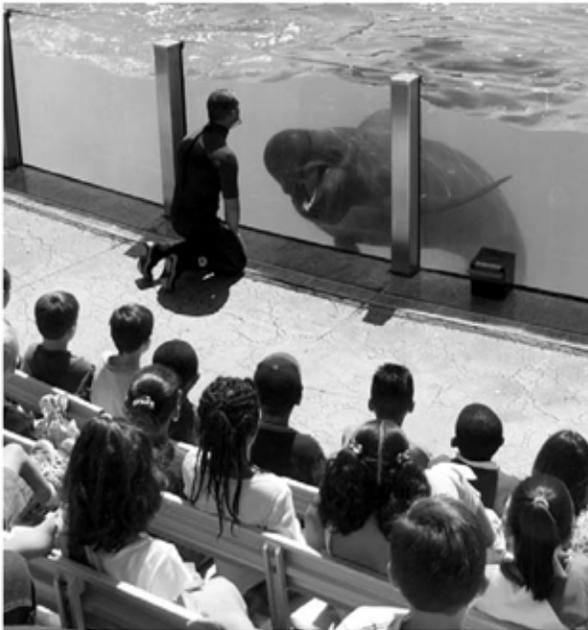
Play animal charades. A student chooses an animal and acts it out while classmates guess the correct animal. Or try this game: after one student chooses an animal, classmates ask "yes" or "no" questions about the animal's behavior until they correctly guess the animal.

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## SeaWorld Stars

Use these cards to help your students get started exploring the behavior of some marine mammals. Here are ideas for ways to use these cards in your classroom:



- ◆ Use the facts to help you prepare lesson plans and lead discussions in class.
- ◆ Copy and cut apart the cards. Distribute a different card to each cooperative learning group or to each student. Learn more about the animals by visiting the school library or go to the SeaWorld/Busch Gardens ANIMALS Web site at [seaworld.org](http://seaworld.org). Groups may even adopt their animal as a "mascot" while working on the Animal Behavior and Training Unit.
- ◆ Copy and cut apart the cards. Distribute a complete set to each student or group of students. Students compare similarities and differences among various animals and determine which animals can do similar behaviors.

### killer whale

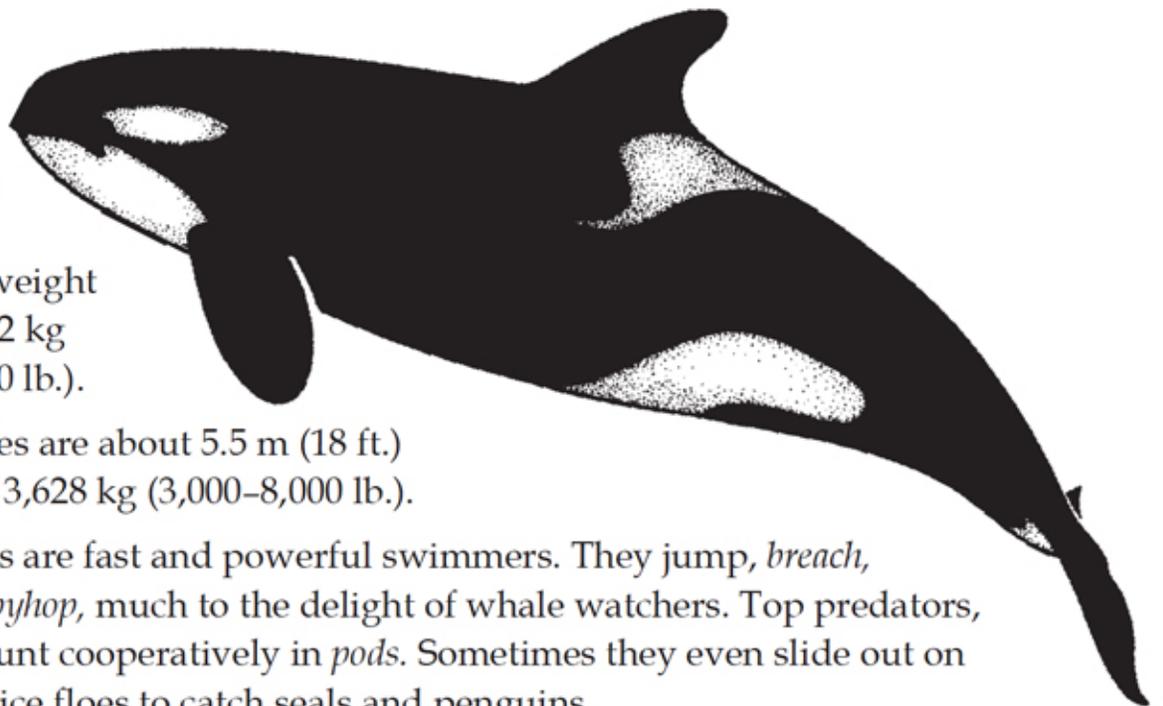
*Orcinus orca*

**size\*:** Males reach about 6.1 m (20 ft.) and weight 3,628 to 5,442 kg (8,000–12,000 lb.).

Adult females are about 5.5 m (18 ft.) and 1,361 to 3,628 kg (3,000–8,000 lb.).

**behavior:** Killer whales are fast and powerful swimmers. They jump, *breach*, *lobtail* and *spyhop*, much to the delight of whale watchers. Top predators, they often hunt cooperatively in *pods*. Sometimes they even slide out on sandbars or ice floes to catch seals and penguins.

At SeaWorld, Shamu and friends inspire awe and thrill crowds as they demonstrate their adaptations for living in the sea. Their powerful jumps and breaches soak enthusiastic audiences.



\* killer whales in the North Atlantic

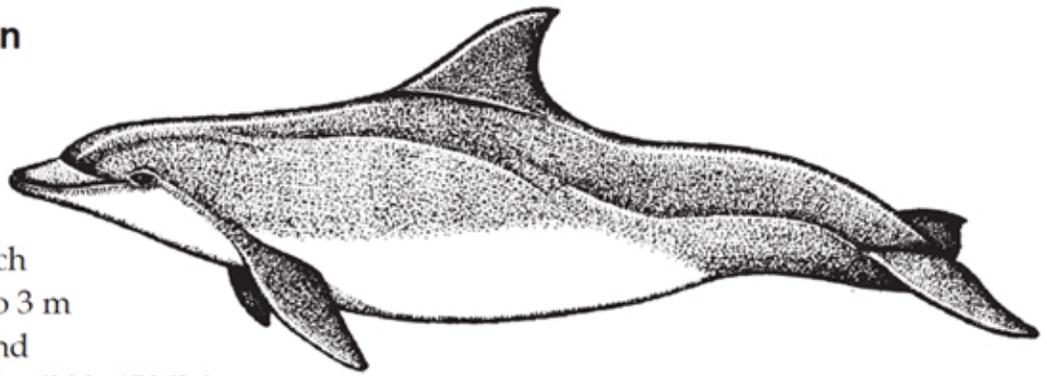
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## bottlenose dolphin

*Tursiops truncatus*



**size:** Adults reach about 2.5 to 3 m (8–10 ft.) and 136 to 295 kg (300–650 lb.). Males are usually larger than females.

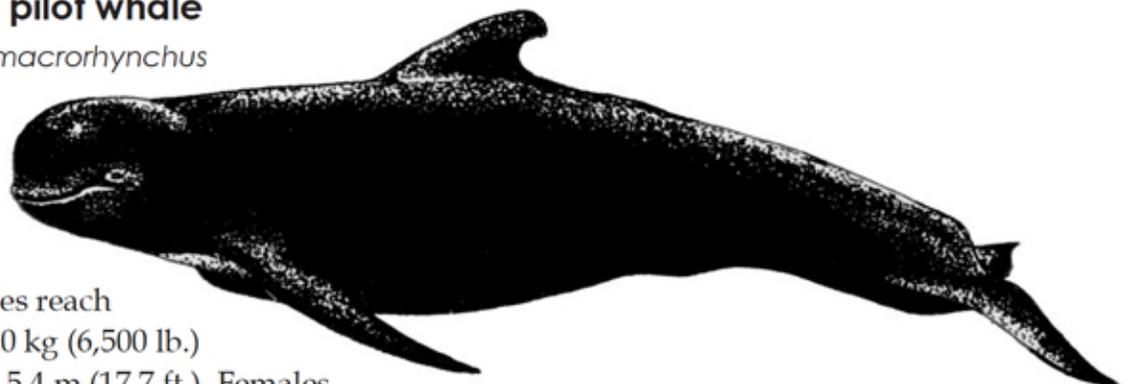
**behavior:** Dolphins are social mammals that live in groups called pods. Dolphins in a pod interact and communicate with each other. Several pods may temporarily form larger groups that travel together. At sea, bottlenose dolphins chase one another, toss seaweed, jump, and “surf” ocean swells. Sometimes they ride the bow and stern wakes of boats.

At SeaWorld, bottlenose dolphins perform in the Dolphin Show, where they jump, splash, and interact with each other and their trainers.

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## short-finned pilot whale

*Globicephala macrorhynchus*



**size:** Males reach 3,000 kg (6,500 lb.) and 5.4 m (17.7 ft.). Females reach 1,200 kg (2,600 lb.) and 4 m (13.1 ft.)

**behavior:** Short-finned pilot whales are found throughout temperate and tropical oceans, where they live and travel in groups of a few to several hundred. At sea they often associate with bottlenose dolphins. Their seasonal movements probably coincide largely with the movement of their primary prey: squid.

SeaWorld San Diego is the only place in the world where pilot whales are trained to perform. They are featured in the Dolphin Show, where they perform alongside their natural companions, the bottlenose dolphins.

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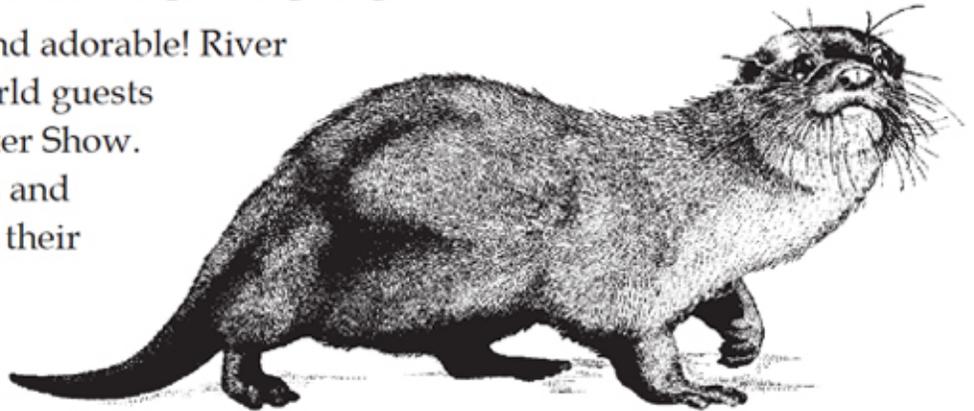
## Asian small-clawed river otter

*Aonyx cinerea*

**size:** The smallest of all the otters species, these otters reach about 65 to 94 cm (26–37 in.) and 1 to 5 kg (2.2–11 lb.).

**behavior:** Some river otter behaviors look like “play.” River otters chase one another in the water, tackle each other on shore, and slide down muddy or snowy banks. These actually are adaptive behaviors that reinforce social bonds and encourage young animals to practice hunting and fighting skills.

They’re small, furry, and adorable! River otters entertain SeaWorld guests in the Sea Lion and Otter Show. They run, climb, wave, and carry show props with their dextrous front paws.



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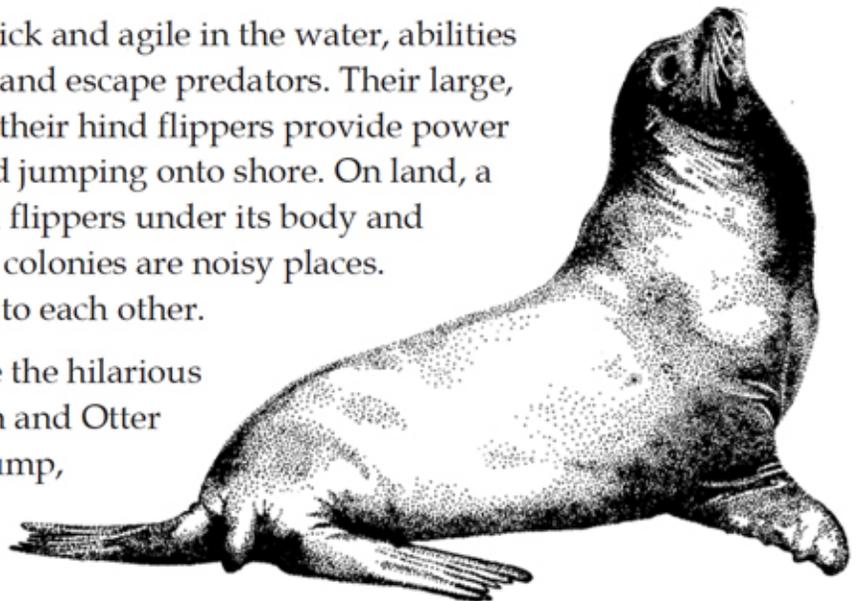
## California sea lion

*Zalophus californianus californianus*

**size:** Adult males are about 2 to 2.5 m (6.5–8 ft.) and 200 to 400 kg (440–880 lb.).  
Adult females are about 1.5 to 2 m (5–6.5 ft.) and 50 to 110 kg (110–240 lb.)

**behavior:** California sea lions are quick and agile in the water, abilities that help them catch prey and escape predators. Their large, winglike foreflippers and their hind flippers provide power for swimming, diving, and jumping onto shore. On land, a sea lion can rotate its hind flippers under its body and walk on all fours. Sea lion colonies are noisy places. Sea lions often call loudly to each other.

At SeaWorld, sea lions are the hilarious performers in the Sea Lion and Otter Show. They swim, dive, jump, “bark,” and clamber about with their trainers.



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