

[1] "Balaenoptera physalus — Fin Whale — Glossary SPRAT Profile For information to assist regulatory considerations, refer to Policy Statements and Guidelines, the Conservation Advice, the Listing Advice and/or the Recovery Plan. EPBC Legal Status and Documents Top EPBC Act Listing Status Listed as Vulnerable as Balaenoptera physalus (Date effective 16-Jul-2000) Cetacean as Balaenoptera physalus Listed migratory - EPBC Act as Balaenoptera physalus, Bonn as Balaenoptera physalus Approved Conservation Advice Threatened Species Scientific Committee (2015). Conservation Advice Balaenoptera physalus fin whale. Canberra: Department of the Environment. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/species/pubs/37-conservation-advice-01102015.pdf>. In effect under the EPBC Act from 01-Oct-2015. Listing Advice Listing assessment information may be available in the approved Conservation Advice Recovery Plan Decision Recovery Plan required, this species had a recovery plan in force at the time the legislation provided for the Minister to decide whether or not to have a recovery plan (19/2/2007). The recovery plan (DEH 2005) that was made for this species on 18/05/2005 ceased to be in effect from 1/10/2015. Adopted/Made Recovery Plans There is no adopted or made Recovery Plan for this species Adopted/Made Threat Abatement Plans Department of the Environment and Energy (2018). Threat Abatement Plan for the impacts of marine debris on the vertebrate wildlife of Australia's coasts and oceans (2018). Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/tap/marine-debris-2018>. In effect under the EPBC Act from 21-Jul-2018. Marine Bioregional Plans Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPac) (2012). Marine bioregional plan for the Temperate East Marine Region. Prepared under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/marine/marine-bioregional-plans/temperate-east>. In effect under the EPBC Act from 27-Aug-2012. Other Commonwealth Documents Top Other EPBC Act Plans South-east marine region profile: A description of the ecosystems, conservation values and uses of the South-east Marine Region (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015) [Information Sheet]. Policy Statements and Guidelines Australian National Guidelines for Whale and Dolphin Watching 2017 (Department of the Environment and Energy, 2017) [Admin Guideline]. Industry Guidelines on the Interaction between offshore seismic exploration and whales (Department of the Environment and Water Resources (DEW), 2007) [Admin Guideline]. Federal Register of Legislative Instruments Migratory: Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - Amendment to the List of Migratory Species (03/12/2002) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002d) [Legislative Instrument] as Balaenoptera physalus Recovery Plan: Blue, Fin and Sei Whale Recovery Plan 2005-2010 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005y) [Legislative Instrument] as Balaenoptera physalus Threat Abatement Plan: Instrument under section 270B of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 to make a Threat Abatement Plan (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018i) [Legislative Instrument] as Balaenoptera physalus Threatened: Declaration under s178, s181, and s183 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - List of threatened species, List of threatened ecological communities and List of threatening processes (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000) [Legislative Instrument] as Balaenoptera physalus State Government Documents and Websites TAS: Balaenoptera physalus (Fin Whale): Species Management Profile for Tasmania's Threatened Species Link (Threatened Species Section (TSS), 2014vw) [State Action Plan]. State Listing Status SA: Listed as Vulnerable (National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 (South Australia): January 2020 list) as Balaenoptera physalus TAS: Listed as Vulnerable (Threatened Species Protection Act 1995 (Tasmania): November 2020 list) as Balaenoptera physalus WA: Listed as

Endangered (Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (Western Australia): September 2018 list) as *Balaenoptera physalus* Non-statutory Listing Status IUCN: Listed as Vulnerable (Global Status: IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: 2020.2 list) VIC: Listed as Data deficient (Advisory List of Threatened Vertebrate Fauna in Victoria: 2013 list) NGO: Listed as Endangered (The action plan for Australian mammals 2012)

**Naming**  
Top Scientific name *Balaenoptera physalus* [37]  
Family Balaenopteridae: Cetacea: Mammalia: Chordata: Animalia  
Species author (Linnaeus, 1758)  
Infraspecies author  
Reference Other names *Balaenoptera physalis* [64478]  
Distribution Map  
Top Distribution map  
The distribution shown is generalised from the Departments Species of National Environmental Significance dataset. This is an indicative distribution map of the present distribution of the species based on best available knowledge. Some species information is withheld in line with sensitive species polices. See map caveat for more information.

**Illustrations**  
Top Illustrations  
Google Images <http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/animals/anim0844.htm>  
Other Links, Including Superseded Commonwealth Documents  
Top Commonwealth of Australia (2000). Declaration under s178, s181, and s183 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - List of threatened species, List of threatened ecological communities and List of threatening processes. F2005B02653. Canberra: Federal Register of Legislative Instruments. Available from: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2005B02653>. In effect under the EPBC Act from 16-Jul-2000.  
Commonwealth of Australia (2002d). Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - Amendment to the List of Migratory Species (03/12/2002). F2007B00765. Canberra: Federal Register of Legislative Instruments. Available from: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2007B00765>.  
Department of the Environment and Heritage (2005e). Australian National Guidelines for Whale and Dolphin Watching. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/australian-national-guidelines-whale-and-dolphin-watching-2005>.  
Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) (2005a). NON-CURRENT Blue, Fin and Sei Whale Recovery Plan 2005 - 2010. Department of the Environment and Heritage. Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/recovery/balaenoptera-sp/index.html>. In effect under the EPBC Act from 18-May-2005. Ceased to be in effect under the EPBC Act from 01-Oct-2015.  
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (2009t). Threat abatement plan for the impacts of marine debris on vertebrate marine life. Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/marine/publications/threat-abatement-plan-impacts-marine-debris-vertebrate-marine-life>. In effect under the EPBC Act from 01-Jul-2009. Ceased to be in effect under the EPBC Act from 21-Jul-2018.

**Newsletters**  
Top EPBC Act email updates can be received via the Communities for Communities newsletter and the EPBC Act newsletter.  
Caveat  
Top This database is designed to provide statutory, biological and ecological information on species and ecological communities, migratory species, marine species, and species and species products subject to international trade and commercial use protected under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act). It has been compiled from a range of sources including listing advice, recovery plans, published literature and individual experts. While reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, no guarantee is given, nor responsibility taken, by the Commonwealth for its accuracy, currency or completeness. The Commonwealth does not accept any responsibility for any loss or damage that may be occasioned directly or indirectly through the use of, or reliance on, the information contained in this database. The information contained in this database does not necessarily represent the views of the Commonwealth. This database is not intended to be a complete source of information on the matters it deals with. Individuals and organisations should consider all the available information, including that available from other sources, in deciding whether there is a need to make a referral or apply for a permit or exemption under the EPBC Act.

**Citation:** Department of the Environment (2022). *Balaenoptera physalus* in Species Profile and Threats Database, Department of the Environment, Canberra. Available from: <https://www.environment.gov.au/sprat>. Accessed Tue, 18 Jan 2022 20:33:35 +1100. Where available the sections below provide a biological

profile for the species. Biological profiles vary in age and content across species, some are no longer being updated and are retained as archival content. These profiles are still displayed as they contain valuable information for many species. The Profile Update section below indicates when the biological profile was last updated for some species. For information to assist regulatory considerations, please refer to Conservation Advice, the Recovery Plan, Policy Statements and Guidelines.

Profile Update

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The following detailed profile was last updated on 26 August 2016.

Taxonomy

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For some time, two subspecies of fin whale were recognised: *B. physalus quoyi*, which occurs in the Southern Hemisphere, and *B. physalus physalus*, which occurs in the Northern Hemisphere.

More recently, a third subspecies known as the pygmy fin whale was described by Clarke (2004) based on a specimen that stranded in Argentina (Clarke 2004). This third subspecies is listed by the Society for Marine Mammalogy (Committee on Taxonomy 2014) as *B. physalus patachonica*.

Despite *B. physalus patachonica* occurring in the Southern Hemisphere, little is known about this subspecies and, unless stated otherwise, this profile is primarily focused on the Southern Hemisphere subspecies *B. physalus quoyi*, which occurs within Australian and Antarctic waters.

Common name: fin whale, finback whale

Description

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Fin whales are dark grey to brownish black dorsally, grading to pale or white along the abdomen. The undersides of the flippers and flukes are also white. The head is asymmetrical in colour and is mostly dark but the right lower jaw is white. Baleen plates are black on the left jaw and white on the right jaw. The body is free of mottling or extensive scarring (Leatherwood & Reeves 1983).

The fin whale is the second-largest whale species, after the blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*). Adult whales range between 20 and 27 m long and weigh more than 70 tonnes. As with other baleen whales, female fin whales grow to a larger size than males (Aguilar & Lockyer 1987). The fin whale is very streamlined in appearance, with a distinct ridge along the back behind the dorsal fin. The dorsal fin is set two-thirds of the way along the back, and is up to 60 cm tall, curved and often slopes backwards (Leatherwood & Reeves 1983).

Fin whales are more gregarious than other baleen whales, and often occur in groups of 6–10, though single animals and pairs are more common. Aggregations of over 100 whales may be observed on feeding grounds (Watkins et al. 1987).

Recordings of regular, pulsed sounds, seemingly of mechanical origin, attracted considerable military interest in the 1950s, and eventually these sounds were conclusively linked to sightings of fin whales (Schevill et al. 1964). Fin whale sounds are mostly 20 Hz or 22 Hz and are short, low-frequency tonal sequences (Nieukirk et al. 2004). Pulsed sounds include a "rumble" which is a call of very long duration (about 30 seconds), in the frequency range of 10–30 Hz with extensive frequency and amplitude modulation. The association of these sounds with the reproductive season suggests that they may be used in reproductive displays by males (Watkins et al. 1987).

Australian Distribution

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Australian Waters

Fin whales have been observed during aerial surveys in South Australian waters between November and May (Gill et al. 2015), however, fin whale distribution in Australian waters is known primarily from stranding events and whaling records.

Fin whale strandings have been reported in small numbers from Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania (Bannister et al. 1996). Two strandings have been reported in South Australia: one in 1925 off Port Wakefield, the other in 1999 north of Port Lincoln. One stranding was reported in Victoria in 1956 (Larcombe et al. 2002). Two strandings have been reported in Western Australia: one yearling in 1951 near Mandurah, the other in 1996 at Cottesloe (Chittleborough 1996). There are three records of fin whale strandings in Tasmania (McManus et al. 1984).

Chittleborough (1996) reported that nine fin whales were taken during the whaling season in Western Australia between 1912 and 1937 and another three in the whaling seasons of 1953, 1956 and 1959.

Fin whales have been sighted inshore in the proximity of the Bonney Upwelling, Victoria, in the summer and autumn months during aerial surveys (Gill 2002). Fin whale acoustics have been heard off the Rottneest Trench, Western Australia, between January and April 2000 (McCauley et al. 2000).

Antarctic Waters

Several fin whales were sighted off Australia's Antarctic Territory (south of 55° S) during whale survey cruises (Ensor et al. 2002; Nishiwaki et al. 1998). Sightings within Antarctic waters have been collected from various Antarctic expeditions including 61 sightings of 341 individuals during the 2013 Antarctic Blue Whale Voyage (Double et al. 2013).

The distribution of fin whales appears to be complex. In the Antarctic Circle and the Subantarctic, this species is often found in areas of complex and steep bathymetry (sea floor topography), such as deep ravines where fish and other prey species are also known to concentrate (Thiele 2004, pers. comm.). Fin whales calls have been detected in Antarctic waters during February to July at three locations; the Western Antarctic Peninsula, the Scotia Sea and Eastern Antarctica (Gedamke et al. 2007, Sirovic et al. 2009, Gedamke & Robinson 2010).

Global Distribution

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Fin whales are considered a

cosmopolitan species and occur from polar to tropical waters, but rarely in inshore waters. They show well defined migratory movements between polar, temperate and tropical waters (Mackintosh 1965). Migratory movements are essentially north–south with little longitudinal dispersion. Fin whales regularly enter polar waters. Unlike blue whales and minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*), fin whales are rarely seen close to ice (Mackintosh 1965); although recent sightings have occurred near the ice edge of Antarctica during Southern Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research (SOWER) cruises (Thiele 2004, pers. comm.).

Non-migratory fin whales are found in the Gulf of California year-round and there is a resident population in the western Mediterranean (Bérubé et al. 2002). The population in the Gulf of California is small (around 400) and genetically isolated from the neighbouring North Pacific population (Bérubé et al. 2002). The Mediterranean population is also genetically distinct from the North Atlantic populations (Notarbartolo-di-Sciara et al. 2003).

Fin whale aggregation areas in the Northern Hemisphere include the eastern North Pacific Ocean (from the Chukchi Sea, around the coast of Alaska, south to Baja California), the western North Pacific Ocean (from the Philippine Sea, East China Sea, Yellow Sea, Sea of Japan, Bering Sea and Sea of Okhotsk), the western North Atlantic Ocean (from Cape Hatteras, Canada, Newfoundland and Cape Cod, in the north, to the Gulf of Mexico, Florida and the Greater Antilles, in the south) and the eastern North Atlantic Ocean (Norway, Iceland, Jan Mayen and the Spitsbergen Archipelago, in the north, to the Straits of Gibraltar in the south) (Gambell 1985a). During the Northern Hemisphere summer (June–August), fin whale are concentrated between the shore and the 1800 m bathymetric contour from 41° N to 57° N (Gambell 1985a).

Fin whale aggregation areas in the Southern Hemisphere (excluding Australia) include the South Pacific Ocean, the Southern Ocean and the Indian Ocean including the coasts of New Zealand, Peru, Brazil and South Africa (Gambell 1985a).

It is likely that fin whales migrate between Australian waters and the following external waters: Antarctic feeding areas (the Southern Ocean); Subantarctic feeding areas (the Southern Subtropical Front); and tropical breeding areas (Indonesia, the northern Indian Ocean and south-west South Pacific Ocean waters) (Thiele 2004, pers. comm.).

**Surveys Conducted**

Top Fin whales were sighted (n=7) between November–May (upwelling season) during aerial surveys conducted between 2002–2013 in South Australia (Gill et al. 2015). Feeding was observed during these surveys. This is one of the first documented records of fin whale feeding in Australian waters, suggesting that the region may be used for opportunistic baleen whale feeding (Gill et al. 2015). Only one fin whale was sighted during blue whale acoustic surveys undertaken in the Bonney Upwelling along the south-east coast of South Australia in March 2012 (Miller et al. 2012).

Acoustic recordings of fin whales in Antarctic waters were conducted from January 2003 and July 2004 at four locations; the Western Antarctic Peninsula, the Scotia Sea, Eastern Antarctica and the Ross Sea (Sirovic et al. 2009). Two distinct fin whale call types were detected during February–July at all locations except the Ross Sea (Sirovic et al. 2009). Long-term acoustic data (2004–2007) was collected from the Southern Ocean (between Australia and the Antarctic continent) where fin whale acoustic presence was detected between April and June (Gedamke et al. 2007). Fin whale vocalisations were collected as part of acoustic surveys conducted off East Antarctica (30–80° S) in January–February 2006 (Gedamke & Robinson 2010). 61 sightings of 341 individual fin whales were sighted during the 2013 Antarctic Blue Whale Voyage (Double et al. 2013).

**Population Information**

Top Reliable estimates of fin whale population size in Australia are not currently possible. The proportion of time that this species spends at the surface varies considerably depending on their behaviour and local ecology (e.g. whether they are travelling or foraging; depth at which prey occurs): thus, extrapolation of accurate population estimates are difficult.

There is insufficient information to describe the population structure of fin whales (DEH 2005a). Stocks of fin whales were depleted by commercial whalers (the north-east Pacific population is estimated at 32–44% of pre-exploitation stock (Braham 1984)) and there is insufficient information to indicate future changes in size in non-North Atlantic Ocean stock (IWC 2007).

Two distinct fin whale call types were detected during acoustic recordings in Antarctic waters, suggesting that two different populations may exist within the Southern Ocean (Sirovic et al. 2009).

Natural fluctuations are unknown for fin whales within Australian waters, but elsewhere, long-range movements appear food related. For example, studies in the Mediterranean have shown that food availability at a particular time and place is a function of environmental conditions in the previous months. It appears that fin whales adapt their movements and group size depending on long-term food availability rather than short-term environmental conditions (Littaye et al. 2004).

Hybridisation between fin whales and blue whales has been documented in five cases (Berube & Aguilar 1998; Cipriano & Palumbi 1999; Spilliaert et al. 1991). The hybrids, three females and two males, were all taken in commercial whaling operations in the Northern Hemisphere.

Estimated population numbers identified by Aguilar (2009) in global locations:

- 15 200 in the Antarctic, south of 30° S-
- 25 800 in the central North Atlantic-
- 4100 in the northeastern North

Atlantic (North and West Norway)- 17 400 in the Spain–Portugal–British Isles area- 1700 off West Greenland- 1000 off Newfoundland- 2800 off the east coast of North America south of the Gulf of St Lawrence- 5700 in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska- 3300 off the west coast of the United States

**Habitat**

The Australian Antarctic waters are important feeding grounds for fin whales. Sightings of fin whales feeding in the Bonney Upwelling area indicate that this area is also a potentially important feeding ground (Morrice et al. 2004). There are no known mating or calving areas in Australian waters. The sighting of a cow and calf in the Bonney Upwelling in April 2000 and the stranding of two fin whale calves in South Australia suggest that this area may be important to the species' reproduction, perhaps as a provisioning area for mothers with calves (Morrice et al. 2004). Fin whales are widely distributed in both hemispheres between latitudes 20–75° S (Mackintosh 1966). This species is common in temperate waters, the Arctic Ocean and Southern Ocean. In the Southern Ocean/Subantarctic this species is often found in areas of complex and steep bathymetry, such as deep ravines, where fish and other prey are known to concentrate (Thiele 2004, pers. comm.). Fin whales in the Bonney Upwelling are sometimes seen in the vicinity of the endangered blue whale and vulnerable Sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*), both of which are listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. It is uncertain whether these threatened species are competitors or associates of the fin whale.

**Life Cycle**

Fin whales become sexually mature at 6–10 years of age and the average length of Southern Hemisphere animals (at sexual maturity) is 19 m for males and 20 m for females (Laws 1961). Age of first reproduction is around 10 years (Taylor et al. 2007). Breeding in the Southern Hemisphere occurs between May–July (Aguilar 2009). Gestation lasts around 11 months with calves being born at around 6–7 m long (Aguilar 2009). The mean calving interval is two to three years (Agler et al. 1993; Laws 1961). This low rate of reproduction has implications for the ability of a population to recover. The location of breeding grounds is unknown (Thiele 2004, pers. comm.). Weaning occurs around 6–7 months and is followed by a resting period of six months when mating then takes place (Aguilar 2009). Life expectancy is up to nearly 100 years. Rates of natural mortality are unknown, but fin whales are subject to predation by killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) and possibly a number of shark species, as well as smaller parasites, infection and disease (Thiele 2004, pers. comm.).

**Feeding**

Fin whales feed intensively in high latitudes and may also feed to some extent, depending upon prey availability and locality, in lower latitudes. Fin whales feed on planktonic crustacea, some fish and cephalopods (crustaceans). In the Antarctic, they primarily feed on krill (*Euphausia superba*) (Nemoto 1970). There has been speculation that interspecific competition for food resources between both whale and non-whale predators may be critical to the biology of fin whales in the Southern Hemisphere (Kawamura 1994). However, there is no direct information on how such interactions may or may not affect the status of fin and other whales (Clapham & Brownell 1996). Fin whales frequently lunge or skim feed at or near the surface and they are known to dive to 230 m to feed. Surface feeding could make the whales vulnerable to entanglement in craypot lines and various nets. Fin whales are killed by ship strike more than any other whale which may be due to surface feeding (Thiele 2004, pers. comm.). In recent years, seismic surveys have occurred in areas of krill abundance, where fin whales have been seen feeding on occasion. Acoustic pollution (from activities such as commercial and recreational vessel noise, and seismic survey activity) has been identified as having the potential to degrade habitat important to the survival of fin whales. Habitat degradation may result in reduced occupancy and/or the exclusion of individual whales from suitable habitat, compromised reproductive success and mortality. It is possible that impacts on a sufficient number of individual whales could lead to broader impacts at the population level (DEH 2005a). Fin whale hotspots in the Antarctic have been positively related to sea surface temperature, eddy kinetic energy and krill biomass (Santora et al. 2014). Fin whale feeding hotspots may serve as environmental reference points for species management and conservation in the Southern Ocean (Santora et al. 2014).

**Movement Patterns**

There is insufficient data to prescribe migration times for fin whales, but recent sightings in Australian waters include summer and autumn months (Thiele 2004, pers. comm.). Fin whales have been seen within South Australian waters during the November and May upwelling season, with some individuals observed feeding (Gill et al. 2015). Fin whales have been sighted inshore in the proximity of the Bonney Upwelling, Victoria, along the continental shelf in summer and autumn months (Gill 2002). Fin whale-type calls, suggesting the presence of fin whales in the area, were recorded between January and April 2000 off the Rottneest Trench, Western Australia (McCauley et al. 2000). Fin whale calls have been detected in Antarctic waters from February to July (Gedamke et al. 2007, Sirovic et al. 2009, Gedamke & Robinson 2010). The migration routes and location of winter breeding grounds are uncertain. During

migration, fin whales are segregated by sex as well as age: males migrate first and pregnant females migrate in advance of other sexual classes, with immature whales migrating last (Mackintosh 1965).

[Threats](#) [Top](#) [The Action Plan for Australian Mammals 2012](#) (Woinarski et al. 2014) identifies a number of threats:

Threat factor	Consequence rating	Extent over which threat may operate
Climate and oceanographic variability and change	minor-severe	large, potentially operating and increasing throughout the range
Anthropogenic noise and acoustic disturbance	minor/moderate-large	Habitat degradation including coastal development, port expansion and aquaculture
Pollution	minor/moderate-large	Fisheries catch, entanglement and bycatch
Vessel strike	minor/localised	minor/localised, but potentially increasing in future as fin whale populations increase and shipping increases
Resource depletion due to fisheries (potential threat)	potentially minor to moderate	depending upon the scale of future over-harvesting
Resumption of commercial whaling (potential threat)	minor to severe	depending upon the scale of whaling impacts
		potentially throughout large part of range depending upon the scale of commercial whaling if it were to resume

[Threat Abatement and Recovery](#) [Top](#) [The approved conservation advice for the fin whale](#) (Threatened Species Scientific Committee 2015) identifies the following conservation and management actions:

- Maintain and improve existing legal and management protection
- Continue or improve existing legislative management actions under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999, including the Australian Whale Sanctuary provisions.
- Maintain high levels of protection for fin whales in all relevant international agreements including the IWC, CITES, CMS, fisheries related agreements, and the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings (ATCM).
- Understanding impacts of climate variability and change
- Continue to meet Australia's international commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and regulate the krill fishery in Antarctica.
- Assessing and addressing anthropogenic noise
- Once the spatial and temporal distribution (including biologically important areas) of fin whales is further defined, an assessment of the impacts of increasing anthropogenic noise (including seismic surveys, port expansion, and coastal development) should be undertaken on this species.
- If required, additional management measures should be developed and implemented to ensure the ongoing recovery of fin whales.
- Minimising vessel collisions
- Develop a national vessel strike strategy that includes the assessing the risk of vessel strikes on fin whales and also identifies potential mitigation measures.
- Ensure all vessel strike incidents are reported in the National Vessel Strike Database.
- Information and research priorities
- Priority research objectives include:
  - Determine population abundance, trends and population structure for fin whales, and establish a long-term monitoring program in Australian waters.
  - Describe the spatial and temporal distribution of fin whales and further define biologically important areas (feeding and calving), and migratory routes within Australian and Antarctic waters.

[Marine Bioregional Plans](#) [Top](#) [Marine bioregional plans have been developed for four of Australia's marine regions - South-west, North-west, North and Temperate East.](#) Marine Bioregional Plans will help improve the way decisions are made under the EPBC Act, particularly in relation to the protection of marine biodiversity and the sustainable use of our oceans and their resources by our marine-based industries. Marine Bioregional Plans improve our understanding of Australia's oceans by presenting a consolidated picture of the biophysical characteristics and diversity of marine life. They describe the marine environment and conservation values of each marine region, set out broad biodiversity objectives, identify regional priorities and outline strategies and actions to address these priorities. [Click here for more information about marine bioregional plans.](#)

The fin whale has been identified as a conservation value in the Temperate East (DSEWPaC 2012aa) Marine Region. The "species group report card - cetaceans" for the Temperate East (DSEWPaC 2012aa) Marine Region provides additional information.

Marine bioregional plans have not been developed for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve, the South East marine bioregion or the Torres Strait. Preliminary work has been undertaken to identify conservation values, Key Ecological Features and Biologically Important Areas in these areas, but these data are currently not complete.

[Management Documentation](#) [Top](#) [Documents relevant to the management and recovery of the fin whale are available at the start of the profile.](#)

[Species Profile References](#) [Top](#) [Sirović, A., J.A. Hildebrand, S.M. Wiggins & D. Thiele \(2009\). Blue and fin whale acoustic presence around Antarctica during 2003 and 2004. Marine Mammal Science. 25:125-136.](#) [Aglar, B.A., R.L. Schooley, S.F. Frohock, S.K. Katona & I.E. Seipt \(1993\). Reproduction of photographically identified fin whales, Balaenoptera physalus, from the Gulf of Maine. Journal of Mammology. 74:577-587.](#) [Aguiar, A. \(2009\). Fin whale Balaenoptera physalus. In: Perrin,](#)

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