

# Whaling Time Line

<b>Prior to 1000</b>	People in various parts of the world hunt whales for food and subsistence products. Beached whales are harvested and hunting is conducted close to shore, in small open boats.
<b>C. 1000</b>	Basques , in what is now northern Spain, realize the value of whale products and begin commercial hunting of right whales. Over the next several centuries, they expand slowly northward and westward, from the Bay of Biscay, arriving off Labrador around 1540.
<b>1611</b>	England's Muscovy Company sends two whaling ships to the newly-discovered Arctic island of Spitsbergen to hunt bowhead whales.
<b>1620</b>	Pilgrims come to Cape Cod. Whales are very numerous along coast and in deep water. The Pilgrims are not whalers, but they learn how to hunt whales by watching Native Americans in canoes. When colonists begin to hunt whales, Native Americans made up half of their crews.
<b>1675</b>	Yoriharu Wada begins organizing whaling crews in Taiji, Japan.
<b>1700's</b>	Nantucket rapidly becomes most important whaling port. Whales are sighted from shore and boats were launched to begin the chase. Try-works were erected on the beach to bill the blubber.
<b>1712</b>	A Nantucket vessel takes the first sperm whales.
<b>1720s</b>	A decline in whales near the Cape Cod coast leads to longer voyages off the coast of Canada. Need real voyage.
<b>1720-1820</b>	Nantucket plays a central role in the whaling business.

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<b>1750's</b>	For the first time, Yankee ships begin boiling oil out of the whale blubber on board whaling ships instead of on land. This technological innovation allows vessels to stay at sea for longer and to pursue whales in warmer waters.
<b>late 1700s</b>	Whaling voyages last an average two to four months.
<b>1775-1815</b>	The American Revolution and the War of 1812 interfere with all maritime trade and whaling. The American whaling fleet of 360 ships is nearly destroyed.
<b>1817</b>	The wife and son of a Nantucket captain are among the first family members to sail on a whaling voyage.
<b>1820s</b>	More and more whaling takes place in the Pacific Ocean. Whaling operations shifts from Nantucket to New Bedford because of its deeper harbor. Whaling voyages begin to last for several years, as they venture further and further from home.
<b>1840-1860</b>	These are some of the most profitable years of whaling. The number whaling ships rises to 735.
<b>1848</b>	Lewis Temple develops the toggle harpoon that improves the odds of holding onto a whale once it is harpooned.
<b>1849</b>	Bowhead whales are hunted in the Western Arctic for the first time. This is dangerous work in icy seas.
<b>1857</b>	New Bedford has the most successful year in whaling history.

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<b>1859</b>	Petroleum is discovered in Pennsylvania. Kerosene begins to replace whale oil.
<b>1861-1864</b>	Many whaling ships are converted to Union service or sunk during the Civil War.
<b>late 1860s</b>	Sven Foyn, a Norwegian, perfects a harpoon cannon that can be mounted on steamboats. This innovation allows blue whales and finback whales to be hunted for the first time.
<b>late 1800s</b>	As whaling becomes less profitable, more African Americans and CapeVerdeans hold officers' jobs on whaling ships.
<b>1923</b>	Diesel-powered factory ships hunt in the Antarctic Circle. They can process a whale in one hour.
<b>1924</b>	The last whaleship to sail from New Bedford is wrecked during a hurricane. New England whaling soon comes to an end.
<b>1939</b>	Over 39,000 blue and finback whales are killed in this year. These oil-rich species begin to disappear.
<b>1946</b>	Seventeen nations form the International Whaling Commission to regulate the killing of whales.
<b>1971</b>	All whaling is banned in the United States. Several west-coast Indian tribes are allowed to kill a limited number of whales each year using traditional hunting methods.

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<b>1986</b>	The Whaling Commission votes to ban commercial whaling, but it has limited enforcement powers.
<b>Today</b>	Whales are most profitable as tourist attractions. Boatloads of people try to get a glimpse of a whale off the coast of Cape Cod.