

Interesting Facts

Did you know that killer whales share personality traits with humans, chimpanzees???

The American Psychological Association have recently published a research done in Spain where the personality traits of 24 captive orcas were observed. Six of the orcas were caught in the wild while the remainder were born in captivity.

“Trainers and other staff who worked closely with the orcas completed surveys ranking each animal on a list of 38 personality traits, including playfulness, independence, stubbornness, bravery, sensitivity and protectiveness. Those traits were analyzed and compared with previous studies of the same personality traits for chimpanzees and humans”. This research can be found online in the *Journal of Comparative Psychology*. <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/com-com0000146.pdf>

“These similar personality traits may have developed because they were necessary to form complex social interactions in tightly knit groups that we see in killer whales, humans and other primates.”

This study shows that the personality traits (e.g., playful, gregarious and sociable) of orcas were similar to those of both humans and chimpanzees however more inclined towards chimpanzees. Orcas and chimpanzees also shared a combination of personality traits such as stubbornness, protectiveness and agreeableness (e.g., patient, peaceable and not bullying), along with some traits relating to dominance.

Orcas can live into their 90s in tightly knit pods that hunt together and share their food, showing advanced communication skills and team work. Their compassion and altruism received international news coverage when J-35 or Tahlequah of the Southern Resident Killer Whales, began pushing her dead newborn calf last July. With the help of other pod members, she kept her deceased calf afloat for 17 days while swimming hundreds of miles. This exhausting effort interfered with the pod's ability to hunt.

Even other smaller dolphin species have been known to keep dead newborns afloat, but not for such a long time as seen in the following article:

https://www.businessinsider.com/grieving-dolphin-pictured-carrying-its-dead-calf-2019-4?fbclid=IwAR1-dKYhVitS-r6v-0DQGnPuw1Fo6JmiGp9qR_fBaXRPVfcEmQJz52jJ48Q



Grief is a complex emotion that hasn't been manifested in most animals, although some finds show that species that live in tight-knit groups, such as chimpanzees, elephants and giraffes mourn their off spring.

Article reference: <https://phys.org/news/2018-11-killer-whales-personality-traits-humans.html#jCp>

Journal reference: Journal of Comparative Psychology

Provided by: American Psychological Association

A study conducted in 2018 by Rachel Morrison and Diana Reiss proved that dolphins exhibit self-awareness at a mirror at a younger age than previously reported for children or other species. When presented with a mirror, human infants aren't usually able to recognize themselves until they are around 12 months old. Bottlenose dolphins, on the other hand, are able to recognize themselves at just seven months old. The experiment was done on both male and female dolphins to get a range of results.

Article reference: https://www.disclose.tv/there-may-be-creatures-on-this-planet-more-intelligent-than-humans-study-says-357539?fbclid=IwAR2q6nb6isNA2Tm5mi_QCyUJBwTfah8fAVnjsMbrThVJuoWAXqN07e-s6ug

Self – awareness test video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6M92OA-5-Y>

Orcas have the second-largest brain of all marine mammals. Sperm whales have the largest brains of any mammal on earth. In fact the sperm whales brain weighs 5 times that of a human's brain! <https://www.whalefacts.org/sperm-whale-brain/>

[Marino et al. 2007](#) note: 'cetaceans continue to provide an enormous body of empirical evidence for complex behavior, learning, sociality, and culture'.

[Marino even speculates that](#): 'It may be that many cetacean species [whales and dolphins] have achieved a level of social-emotional sophistication not achieved by other animals, including humans' - <https://uk.whales.org/rights/scientific-evidence-for-whale-and-dolphin-rights/>

Further reading:

'Brain Structure and Intelligence in Cetacean' by Lori Marino in [*Whales and Dolphin: cognition, culture, conservation and human perceptions.*](#)

Listen to this Beluga mimicking human chatter!!!

<https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/beluga-whale-stuns-navy-team-with-amazingly-human-chatter-listen/?fbclid=IwAR3JkTYcZDxGua8d-9myLqR5m4vCC0d-Bcfa-HN7gi4gPhEYTCj9zH3TXmE>