

New York City sees Wildlife

adapted from an article by Oliver Milman



- 1 For most New Yorkers, wildlife spotting is confined to squirrels, the odd raccoon and anguished encounters with rats. But in the waters surrounding the city a very different animal experience is quietly booming: sightings of whales. According to the citizen science group *Gotham Whale* 272 whale sightings were recorded in New York City waters last year. That is an extraordinary leap from 2011, when just five of the huge cetaceans were witnessed frolicking near the most populated urban area in the US.
- 2 The sightings, almost all of humpbacks, have been logged by *Gotham Whale* members who are building a catalogue of known individuals, of which there are currently 112. “The numbers keep increasing and increasing very dramatically,” said Paul Sieswerda, founder of *Gotham Whale*. “Humpbacks were nearly hunted to extinction but the populations are coming back.”
- 3 Sieswerda said the increase in sightings was down to a number of factors, including legislation such as the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act that have mopped up pollution flowing from the Hudson River and helped safeguard humpbacks from direct harm. Cleaner water from the Hudson is bringing nutrients that feed a fish called menhaden. Menhaden are a key prey species for humpback whales.
- 4 Among the sightings is one of a whale that entered New York harbour in 2016 and carried on up the Hudson, startling people looking down from apartments on the Upper West Side. Another whale was photographed breaking through the water to scoop up a tight formation of fish, the Empire State Building in the background. Most of the whales are spotted near the Rockaways, along Long Island and close to the New Jersey shore.

- 5 Scientists are yet to see a full picture of the state of New York's whale population, however. In April, the *Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium* and the *Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution* announced a plan to use two new acoustic buoys. It is hoped that monitoring whales even when boats are not nearby will help detect fin whales, as well as more regularly sighted humpbacks.

- 6 Howard Rosenbaum, senior scientist at the *New York Aquarium*, said: "It's fantastic that you can go out from the Rockaways less distance than most New Yorkers commute on the subway each day and get to see some of the largest animals on the planet." He pointed out that it can be hard to ascertain if the increased sightings are down to a growing population or simply a growing number of people taking the time to look. Longer-term and more complete research will be needed. "We have to be careful when we are talking about New York whale populations, but it is safe to say whales are being seen with increasing regularity and that there is an overall recovery happening among humpbacks," he said. "Last year was amazing for whale sightings and I hope it's the same this year."

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Tekst 8

- 1p 27 What becomes clear from paragraph 1?
- A Groundbreaking research into the habitats of whales takes place in New York.
 - B In and around New York City more and more whales are seen recently.
 - C New York City seems to attract wildlife species that are not native to the region.
 - D New Yorkers are fascinated by the many species of small rodents in their city.
- 1p 28 How does paragraph 2 relate to paragraph 1?
- A It confirms the information given in paragraph 1.
 - B It questions the information given in paragraph 1.
 - C It summarises the information given in paragraph 1.
- 1p 29 Which of the following descriptions fits paragraph 3?
- A It mentions possible explanations for the fact that whales seem to thrive in the New York area.
 - B It shows that national legislation has had a negative impact on the whale population in the New York area.
 - C It stresses how another species of fish suffers from the fact that there are more whales in the New York area.
- 1p 30 What becomes clear about the whales in paragraph 4?
- A They are advertised as being a major touristic attraction.
 - B They occasionally display quite threatening behaviour.
 - C They seem to have a severe impact on the ecosystem.
 - D They sometimes swim quite close to where people live.
- 1p 31 'Scientists are yet to see a full picture' (paragraph 5)
What do these scientists still miss?
- A more detailed information about different types of whales
 - B photographic evidence for their claim that there are more whales
 - C the effect of heavy sea traffic on the behaviour of the whales
 - D the precise locations that are most favoured by the humpback whales

- 1p 32 What is one of the points made by Howard Rosenbaum in paragraph 6?
- A Humpback whales are no longer an endangered species in need of extra protection.
 - B It is unclear whether the number of whales in the New York region has actually grown.
 - C The whale population near New York seem to like it when people come to watch them.
 - D Whales are huge and possibly dangerous animals that need to be treated with caution.

Bronvermelding

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