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## **Bryde's Whale, a Tropical Whale**

Imagine being confused for your cousin all the time. An identity issue is a common problem for this whale. Bryde's Whale (*Balaenoptera edeni*) is commonly confused with the Sei Whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*). *B. edeni* is commonly referred to as a Tropical Whale due to its habitat. The whale's scientific name is in honor of Sir Ashley Eden, Chief Commissioner of Burma, where the first whale was identified in 1878. The common name is accredited to Johan Bryde, the Norwegian consul to South Africa. He also built the first whaling factory in Durban in 1909.

The distinguishing feature between the Bryde's Whale and the Sei is the three ridges on the Bryde's rostrum. The coloration is bluish to black on its back with a belly of white to yellow. It is a slender whale, less muscular than other Baleen Whales.

Bryde's Whale is common in the temperate and sub-tropical warm waters. The waters provide a constant warmth and plentiful food supply. They do not typically migrate like many of its Baleen cousins. Its movement is simply to follow its dinner.

The typical diet includes schooling fish, krill and plankton. The fish include pilchard, Pacific sardine, mackerel, anchovy, and herring. Like many people, this whale has its favorite fish depending on where it lives. The Tropical Whale eats like other Baleen Whales, by using the filter feeding of its baleen.

Though the whales are often seen solitary, they are also seen in mother and calf pairs. They are rarely seen in large groups other than for the feeding.

A mother will give birth to a calf after about 12 month gestation. The calf is 4 meters at birth and weighs 900 kilograms. Females reach a length of about 12 meters and males will be about 13 meters fully grown. A full grown whale is about 12,000 kilograms.

The Tropical Whale can cruise its home waters up to speeds of 20 miles per hour. They can reach faster speeds when staying out of the way of predators and hunters. Like other whales, Bryde's is easier to approach during feeding because it is distracted. It is hunted by Killer Whales. Researchers in the Gulf of California observed 15 Killer whales perusing a Bryde's Whale, slowly attacking it when it surfaced. Several days later the whale carcass washed ashore.

Despite the protection by many laws, the Tropical Whale is still hunted in many parts of the world. It is reported to see this whale on the menu in the Orient.

Because Bryde's Whale is commonly mistaken for the Sei Whale, the population is hard to estimate. Current estimation is about 80,000 world wide.