

Whales

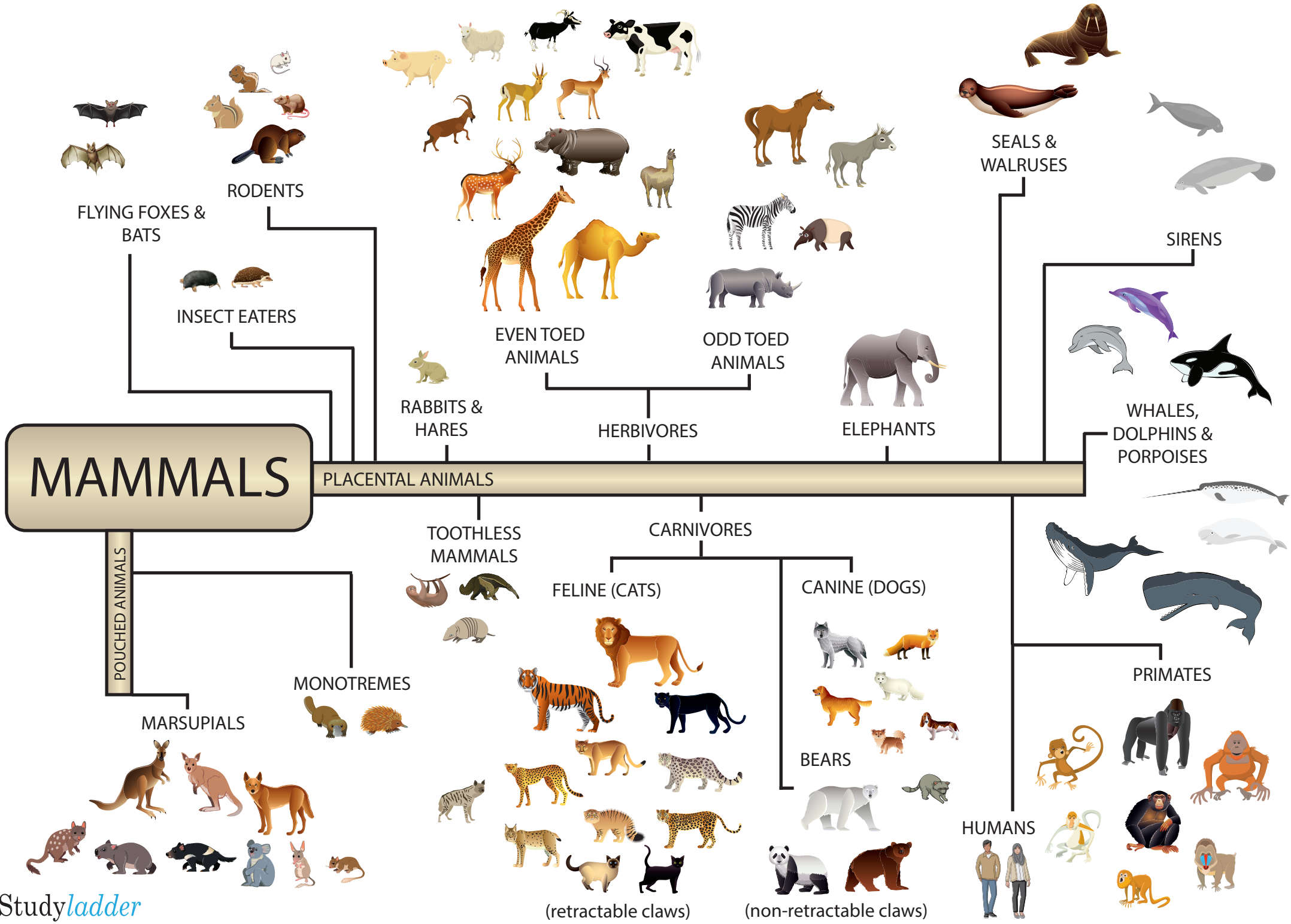
Discussion Questions:

- 1) How are whales classified?
- 2) What is the difference between a baleen whale and a toothed whale?



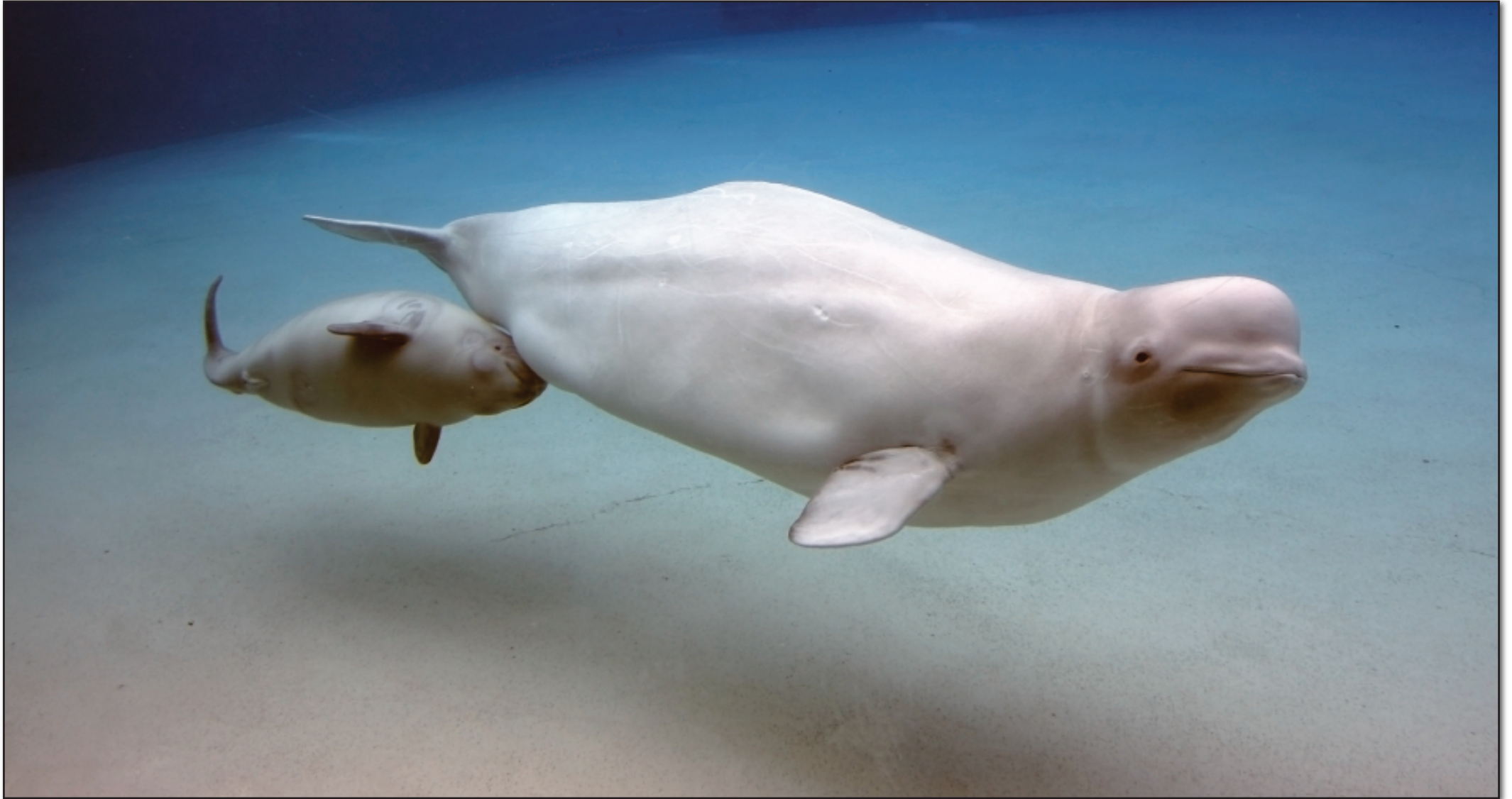
Whales are mammals, not fish. They need to come to the surface of the water to breathe air.





Cetaceans

The Cetaceans are mammals that live permanently in the sea. This group includes whales, dolphins and porpoises. Like other mammals, they have warm blood and give birth to live babies. They suckle their young with milk. This is a beluga whale mother swimming with her baby.



Baleen Whales (Mysticetes)

Mysticetes is the scientific name for species of whales that have baleen instead of teeth. These whales have baleen plates in their mouth instead of teeth. They use these to filter their food from the water. Baleen whales are generally larger than toothed whales. Examples of baleen whales include:

blue whales, minke whales, grey whales, fin whales, sei whales, humpback whales, bowhead whales, and right whales.



Toothed Whales (Odontocetes)

Odontocetes is the scientific name for species of whales that have teeth. Toothed whales use their teeth when they are hunting. They use their teeth to grab onto their prey before they swallow it whole. They will also bite large prey into smaller pieces that they can easily swallow. Examples of toothed whales include:

sperm whales, orca (killer whales), pilot whales, beluga whales, narwhals, dolphins and porpoises.