



Science News

[Share](#) [Blog](#) [Cite](#)
[Print](#) [Email](#) [Bookmark](#)

Whales Are Polite Conversationalists: Rhythms Can Be Spotted In Ocean's Chatter

ScienceDaily (Oct. 27, 2009) — What do a West African drummer and a sperm whale have in common? According to some reports, they can both spot rhythms in the chatter of an ocean crowded with the calls of marine mammals -- a feat impossible for the untrained human ear.

See also:

Plants & Animals

- Dolphins and Whales
- Marine Biology
- Sea Life
- Animals
- Nature
- Wild Animals

Reference

- Baleen whale
- Toothed whale
- Evolution of cetaceans
- Whale song

Now a group of marine biologists at the Littoral Acoustic Demonstration Center has developed a tool that can spot these rhythms and identify individual animals. Their results, which will be presented at a meeting of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) next week in San Antonio, suggest that whales make a specific effort to keep their calls from overlapping.

George Ioup at the University of New Orleans and colleagues have developed a way to analyze calls produced by marine mammals. Their technique, which follows principles similar to how the human ear picks

out a voice at a crowded cocktail party, groups similar-sounding clicks to isolate the calls of individual animals.

Natalia Sidorovskaia of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and colleagues have discovered that whales change the intervals between these echolocating clicks in a way that seems to prevent cluttering the echoes from these calls.

"In other words, whales are polite listeners; they do not interrupt each other," writes Sidorovskaia. She suspects that this communication strategy would allow groups of whales to explore their environment faster and more efficiently.

Adapted from materials provided by *American Institute of Physics*, via *EurekAlert!*, a service of AAAS.

Email or share this story: [Facebook](#) [Email](#) [Twitter](#) [Print](#) [More](#)

Need to cite this story in your essay, paper, or report? Use one of the following formats:

- APA American Institute of Physics (2009, October 27). Whales Are Polite Conversationalists: Rhythms Can Be Spotted In Ocean's Chatter. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved October 29, 2009, from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/10/091026132930.htm>
- MLA



Sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*). (Credit: NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center)

Ads by Google

Advertise here

What's After the Aquarium

Check out Whales in the Wild! See the Real Thing Live & in Person
PrinceOfWhales.com

Ocean Adventure San Diego

(619)808-2822 Whales, Dolphins, Eco-Tours to Mexico, SD Bay Tours
www.AdventureRibRides.com

Whale Watching Field Trip

California's Spectacular Coastlines Whales, Dolphins, Sharks. Book Now!
www.NewportWhales.com/SchoolTrips

AMITIZA® (lubiprostone)

Official web site for AMITIZA. Get the product profile and more...
www.amitiza.com/HCP

Jumbo Stuffed Animals

All Types of Stuffed Animals. Free Shipping on Select Items!
StuffedAnimals.com

Related Stories

Ecologists Home In On How Sperm Whales Find Their Prey

(May 29, 2006) — Ecologists have at last got a view of sperm whales' behaviour during their long, deep dives, thanks to the use of recently developed electronic "dtags." According to new research published in the ... > [read more](#)

Beaked Whales Actually Hear Through Their Throats

(Feb. 8, 2008) — Researchers have been using computer models to mimic the effects of underwater noise on an unusual whale species and have discovered a new pathway for sound entering the head and ears. Since 1968, it ... > [read more](#)

Research Tracks Whales By Listening To Sounds

(Jan. 2, 2006) — Researchers have developed a new tool to help them study endangered whales -- autonomous hydrophones that can be deployed in the ocean to record the unique clicks, pulses and calls of different whale ... > [read more](#)

Just In:

North Carolina Sea Levels Rising Faster

Science Video News



Sounds From the Sea

Manmade and natural sounds, from boat engines to rainfall, sound different below the sea surface. To study their impact of noise on marine life, ... > [full story](#)

▶ [Pediatricians Reduce Ear Infections By Vaccinating Children](#)

▶ [Are Bioluminescent Bacteria Behind Milky Seas Legend?](#)

▶ [Physiologists Investigate The Role Of Perception In Motion Sickness](#)

▶ [more science videos](#)

A1CNow+
 Real-time results made simple.
 Learn more. >>>
 simplewins

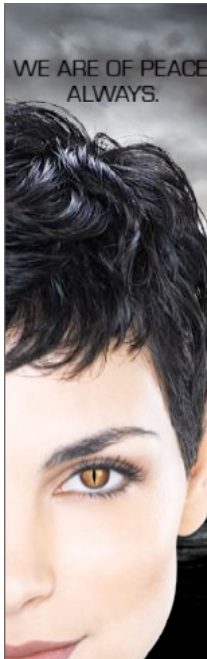
Breaking News

... from NewsDaily.com

- ▶ [Multiyear Arctic ice is effectively gone: expert](#)
- ▶ [Bad driver? Blame your genes](#)
- ▶ [Scientists see blast from past -- 13 billion years ago](#)
- ▶ [Size matters when it comes to AIDS defense](#)
- ▶ [Bad drivers? Blame their genes](#)
- ▶ [more science news](#)

In Other News ...

- ▶ [U.S., China talk nice on trade, pork ban lifted](#)
- ▶ [Obama's "too big to fail" plan blasted in Congress](#)
- ▶ [Rajaratnam asks U.S. court to lower bond](#)
- ▶ [House unveils \\$894 billion healthcare bill](#)
- ▶ [Iran proposes big changes to draft atom deal: report](#)
- ▶ [Clinton puzzled at Pakistan failure to find al Qaeda](#)



[read more](#)



Monitoring Baleen Whales With Autonomous Underwater Vehicles

(Feb. 22, 2006) — Like robots of the deep, autonomous underwater vehicles, or AUVs, are growing in number and use in the oceans to perform scientific missions ranging from monitoring climate change to mapping the deep ... > [read more](#)

- ▶ [Recession unofficially ends as economy grows 3.5 percent](#)
- ▶ [Obama honors slain soldiers killed in Afghanistan](#)
- ▶ [more top news](#)

Search ScienceDaily

Number of stories in archives: 76,779

Copyright Reuters 2008. See [Restrictions](#).

Find with keyword(s):

Enter a keyword or phrase to search ScienceDaily's archives for related news topics, the latest news stories, reference articles, science videos, images, and books.

Ads by Google

[Advertise here](#)

Kayak with Sea Otters

Wild kayak tours of 4 or 6 days
Kayak with Orca - Telegraph Cove
www.KayakBC.ca

Coffee Fool Fresh Exposed

A shocking secret coffee co's don't want you to know
www.coffeefool.com

Experience wild whales

If Sea World makes you feel guilty See wild humpback whales in Canada
www.wildlands.com

Free Subscriptions ... from ScienceDaily

Get the latest science news with our free email newsletters, updated daily and weekly. Or view hourly updated newsfeeds in your RSS reader:

- ▶ [Email Newsletters](#)
- ▶ [RSS Newsfeeds](#)

Feedback ... we want to hear from you!

Tell us what you think of the new ScienceDaily -- we welcome both positive and negative comments. Have any problems using the site? Questions?

Your Name:

Your Email:

Comments:

Click button to submit feedback:

[About This Site](#) | [Editorial Staff](#) | [Awards & Reviews](#) | [Contribute News of Use](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms](#)
Copyright © 1995-2009 ScienceDaily LLC — All rights reserved — Contact: editor@sciencedaily.com