

Welcome Chaperone! Explore the Museum's main building — the Nature Exploration Center (NEC) — and be on the lookout for the animals of North Carolina. This guide offers easy activities to help you engage your students in learning.

Second Floor, Coastal NC Overlook
near bridge, top of the escalator

West Indian Manatee, mother and baby

Animals with backbones are called vertebrates. Bones are alive!

When a bone is injured, it repairs itself.

A motor boat propeller struck the mother Manatee and injured her rib. Do you think the mother survived the injury?

(Yes. The bone would not have healed if she had died.)

Bones grow as an animal grows.

Compare the FINGER BONES and SKULL of the mother and baby. The gaps between finger bones and holes in the skull will close as the baby's bones grow.

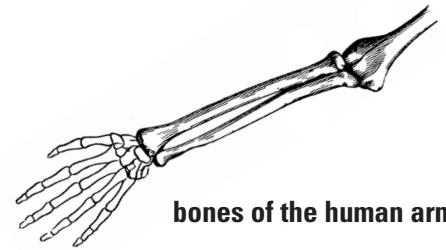
Forelimb bones:

Compare the Manatee flipper to your arm. What do they have in common? *(They are built of the same pieces: one large upper arm bone, two lower arm bones, a set of little wrist bones and a set of finger bones.)*

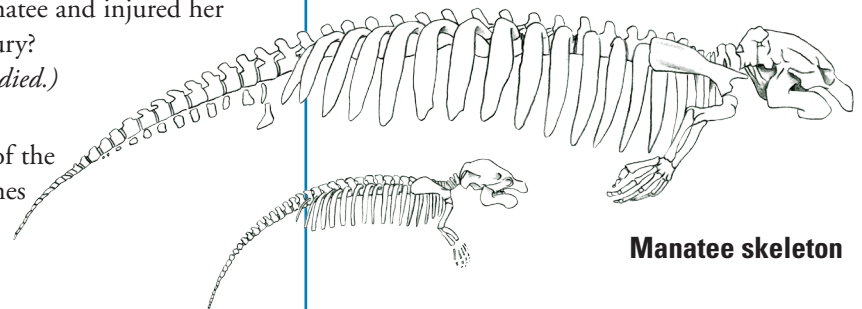
Blue Whale (next to Manatee)

BlueWhales have the largest skeletons of any vertebrate.

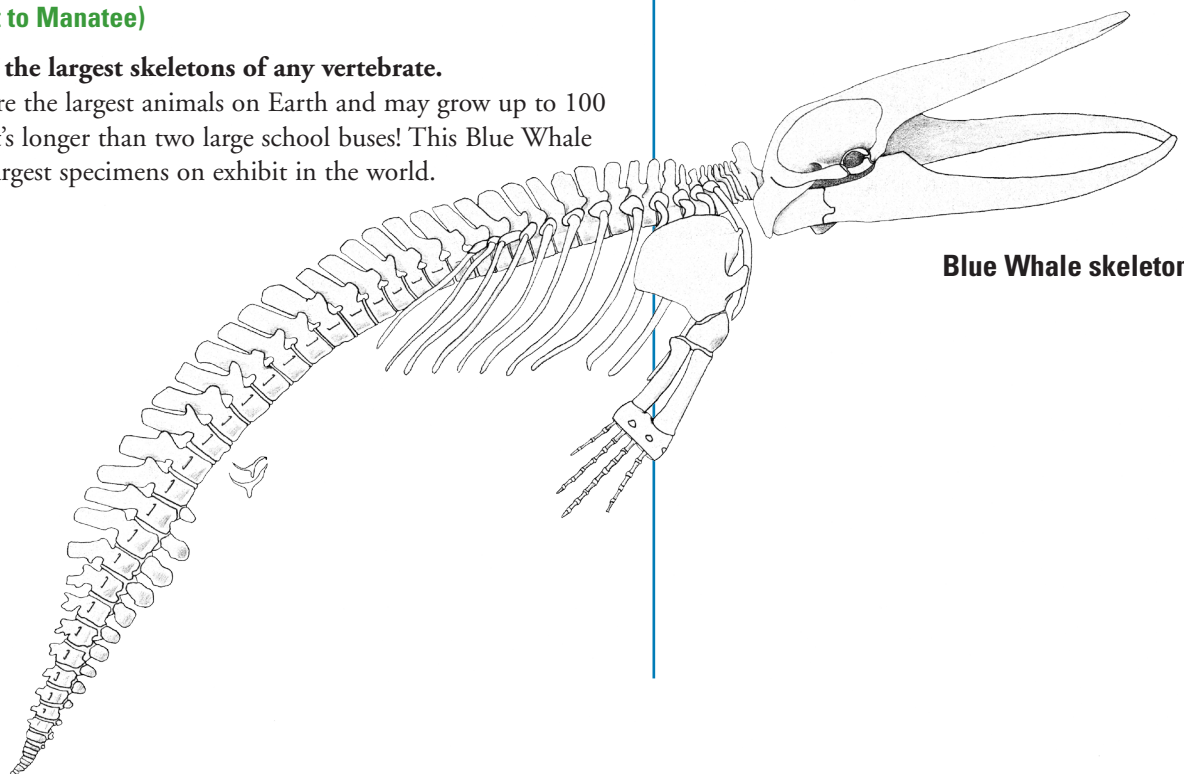
Blue Whales are the largest animals on Earth and may grow up to 100 feet long. That's longer than two large school buses! This Blue Whale is one of the largest specimens on exhibit in the world.



bones of the human arm



Manatee skeleton



Blue Whale skeleton

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Third Floor, Prehistoric North Carolina Gallery at the exit near the Acro Dome

Giant Ground Sloth

The Giant Ground Sloth is an extinct mammal that once lived in North Carolina.

Rib Cage:

The sloth's ribs form a cage around the chest. What critical organ do the ribs protect? (*HINT: Its muscles pump 24/7*)
(Heart)

Feet:

Notice that this sloth walked on the sides of its feet. Can you do that? How does it feel? The sloth had no choice because its claws prevented it from putting its feet flat on the ground.



Giant Ground Sloth



Ground Sloth Skeleton