

Killer whale mothers look after sons for life

虎鯨母親為照顧兒子付出一生

一項對北太平洋虎鯨的研究表明，虎鯨母親為兒子做出“終身犧牲”。

The sound of a very close **bond**. A killer whale mother and son **surfacing** together, because in orca family life, **offspring** stay by their mother's side into adulthood.

從這段聲音中可以聽出虎鯨親密的母子關係，音訊中的虎鯨母子一起浮出水面，因為在虎鯨的家庭生活中，後代直至成年之後一直待在母親身邊。

But sons are particularly dependent on their mums. Well into **adulthood**, males will demand to be fed fish by their mothers, even though they're much larger than females.

然而，雄性虎鯨尤其依賴於牠們的母親，即便早已成年，雄性虎鯨仍會要求母親給牠們餵魚，儘管牠們遠大於雌性虎鯨。

But that close family bond comes at a cost. This new study showed that having a son cut by half a mother's chance of **reproducing** again in the future. The scientists believe that mothers invest so much of their energy and effort in their male offspring because the biggest, oldest ones tend to father most of the new calves in a killer whale pod.

但建立這種親密的家庭關係是要付出代價的，這項新的研究表明，養育一頭雄性虎鯨會使虎鯨母親未來再次生育的幾率減半，科學家們認為，虎鯨母親將如此多的精力投入到雄性後代身上是因為體型最大、最年長的雄性後代往往會成為虎鯨群中大部分新生幼崽的父親。

As well as providing an insight into the complex, **close-knit** lives of these marine mammals, the findings could help us protect them. Understanding how much it costs to raise the next generation of orcas is an insight into what these mammals need to survive.

這些發現不僅能讓我們深入瞭解虎鯨這種海洋哺乳動物複雜而親密無間的生活，還能幫助我們保護這一物種，瞭解虎鯨養育下一代所付出的代價讓我們更深刻地認識到這類哺乳動物生存的基本所需。

1. 字彙表

bond	關係，紐帶
surfacing	浮出水面
offspring	後代
adulthood	成年（期）
reproducing	生育，繁殖
close-knit	親密無間的

2. 閱讀理解：請在讀完上文後，回答下列問題。（答案見下頁）

1. How long do orca offspring stay with their mothers?
2. True or False? *Male orcas are much bigger than females.*
3. Why do scientists believe orca mothers invest so much in their sons?
4. What benefits could come from the findings of this study?

3. 答案

1. How long do orca offspring stay with their mothers?

Orca offspring stay by their mother's side into adulthood.

2. True or False? *Male orcas are much bigger than females.*

True. Males are much larger than females.

3. Why do scientists believe orca mothers invest so much in their sons?

Because the biggest, oldest orcas tend to father most of the new calves in a killer whale pod.

4. What benefits could come from the findings of this study?

As well as providing an insight into the complex, close-knit lives of these marine mammals, the findings could help us protect them.