



## Geographers and Scientists

Examine the geography and science of Rapa Nui (Easter Island)

### *16. Whales as sacred guides across the Pacific Ocean*

*Requirements: Humpback Whales film (either online access or download); writing materials*

*Working style: individually, and as a class*

*Curriculum: Science; History; Geography*

*Time: 20 minutes*

*Polynesian navigators also used behaviours of birds and sea creatures to help them navigate across the Pacific. Whales (known as koholā or tohorā in Polynesian languages) are especially valued as sacred guardians, spiritual ancestors, and ocean deities. Their annual movement (migration) between different parts of the Pacific across summer and winter provided clues about directions and the natural movement of water (sea currents). Humpback whales are particularly important, travelling from the Antarctic to South Pacific each year to give birth to their young.*

Watch this **short film** and write a short guide for a Polynesian explorer about the signs to look out for that will help them know that whales are nearby.