

## Introduction

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Because later editions of dictionaries do not include the extensive lists of plurals that were printed in *Webster's New International Dictionary* (Second Edition, 1959) (*WNI 2*), *WNI 2* has been used as the basis for this section on plurals.

The aim of this section is not to give endless rules for forming plurals—these can be found in any dictionary—but rather to show the singular and plural forms of potentially troublesome words and phrases used in MMS Offshore scientific and technical publications. Specifically included are brief explanations and listings for the following:

- Words of foreign origin
- Two- and three-word compounds
- Collective nouns
- Fishes, birds, and mammals

Also included is a glossary of scientific names to show the correct terminology for many of the plants and animals discussed in MMS Offshore publications.

## Words of Foreign Origin

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**PL.1.**—Although many words of foreign origin retain the foreign plural, some have an **English regular plural** and a **foreign plural**, sometimes with a difference in meaning. For example, see *antenna* in the following listing of plurals of words of foreign origin.

addendum, addenda	emphasis, emphases
agendum, agenda	equilibrium, equilibriums (equilibria, <i>scientific</i> )
alga, algae	erratum, errata
antenna, antennae (antennae, zoology)	focus, focuses <i>or</i> foci
antithesis, antitheses	formula, formulas
appendix, appendixes <i>or</i> appendices	genus, genera
automaton, automatons	helix, helices
axis, axes	hypothesis, hypotheses
bacterium, bacteria	index, indexes <i>or</i> indices
basis, bases	maximum, maximums
catalysis, catalyses	medium, mediums <i>or</i> media
crisis, crises	memorandum, memorandums
criterion, criteria	nucleus, nuclei
curriculum, curriculums	octopus, octopuses <i>or</i> octopi
datum, data	parenthesis, parentheses
ellipsis, ellipses	phase, phases
	phenomenon, phenomena

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## Words of Foreign Origin—continued

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phylum, phyla  
plateau, plateaus  
quantum, quanta  
radius, radii  
referendum, referendums  
spectrum, spectra  
stimulus, stimuli  
stratum, strata  
stratus, strati

syllabus, syllabuses  
symposium, symposia  
synopsis, synopses  
synthesis, syntheses  
tableau, tableaux  
terminus, termini  
thesaurus, thesauri  
thesis, theses

## Two- and Three-Word Compounds

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**PL.2.**—In most two- and three-word compound expressions consisting of a noun with an adjective or a phrase, the principal word (the noun) takes the plural form. As can be seen in the listing below, this principal word is not always the first word of the compound expression.

accountants general  
attorneys at law  
attorneys general  
commanders in chief  
comptrollers general  
consuls general  
courts-martial  
governors general

inspectors general  
letters patent  
notaries public  
paymasters general  
postmasters general  
sergeants at arms  
surgeons general  
surveyors general

☞ In similar-appearing terms, if the principal word (a noun) is second, it takes the plural form:

director-generals  
judge advocates  
lieutenant colonels

## Collective Nouns

**PL.3.**—Collective nouns—common nouns that indicate a group or collection of persons, places, things, concepts, actions, or qualities—may be **either singular or plural**. Collective nouns that are used in the plural form mean more than one group or collection of individuals. The list below shows examples of plural collective nouns.

assemblies	conferences	legislatures	publics
associations	congresses	ministries	racers
blocks	councils	nations	remnants
boards	crowds	numbers*	senates
cabinets	electorates	packs	shoals
classes	fleets	pairs	societies
clubs	generations	peoples	staffs
committees	groups	populaces	teams
companies	herds	populations	
complexes	humanities	professions	

With respect to usage, many collective nouns are used in the singular form with either a collective singular or a plural meaning—they require a singular or plural verb according to the concept that they are representing. For example, in the sentence—*The jury was deadlocked.*—the collective noun *jury* refers to the group as a whole and thus takes the singular verb *was*. This same collective noun assumes a different meaning in the following sentence because it is referring to individuals within a group and thus takes the plural verb *were*—*The jury were allowed to go to their homes for the night.*

☞ \*When the word *number* refers to a specific number, use a singular verb. When *number* refers to an approximation, use a plural verb.

- The number of committee members was five.
- A number of oil companies were waiting for the sale announcement.

## Fishes, Birds, and Mammals

**PL.4.**—Some names of fishes, birds, and mammals always use a different form in the plural, and some always use the same form in both the singular and the plural. Those that differ in the singular and plural are distinguished by the addition of **s, es, en, iss, eye, umlaut**, etc. Some use a different plural to denote different varieties or species or kinds but use the unchanged plural to denote that the idea is collective.

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Because of these various methods of expressing the plural forms of the names of fishes, birds, and mammals, etc., their listings in this section are subdivided into lists A and B to signify the following:

**List A.**—The same forms are always used in both the singular and the plural.

**List B.**—The plural form is usually different from the singular.

## List A.—Plural and Singular the Same

The following words *always* use the same form in both the singular and the plural.

bison	moose
burbot	narwhal
capelin	oldsquaw
caribou	plaice
deer	reindeer
grayling	salmon
grouse	sandlace
herring	sheep
kelp	tuna

## List B.—Plural and Singular Different

The plurals of the words below are usually formed by adding *s*, *es*, *en*, etc. Note, however, that if some words in the list (such as *goat*) are preceded by a certain adjective—especially *wild*, *native*, or *mountain*—then their plural and singular forms are the same.

☞ When you are referring to collective groups of species, the plural forms may differ from normal use (e.g., *one fish, two fish; but two fishes, one of the trout variety and one of the bass variety*).

bear, bears	marlin, marlins
beaver, beavers	marten, martens
bird, birds ( <i>and compounds, as blackbird</i> )	murre, murrees
brant, brants	otter, otters
canvasback, canvasbacks	owl, owls
cisco, ciscoes	ox, oxen
clam, clams	perch, perches
cod, cods	phalarope, phalaropes
cormorant, cormorants	pike, pikes
crane, cranes	pintail, pintails
crow, crows	plover, plovers
curlew, curlews	pollock, pollocks
dolphin, dolphins	porpoise, porpoises
dove, doves	ptarmigan, ptarmigans
dowitcher, dowitchers	puffin, puffins
drake, drakes	raven, ravens
duck, ducks	roe, roes
dunlin, dunlins	scad, scads
eagle, eagles	sculpin, sculpins
eelpout, eelpouts	sea lion, sea lions
eider, eiders	seal, seals
falcon, falcons	shearwater, shearwaters
fish, fishes ( <i>and compounds, as blackfish</i> )	sheepshead, sheepsheads
flathead, flatheads	shrimp, shrimps
flounder, flounders	smelt, smelts
goat, goats	smolt, smolts
goose, geese	snipe, snipes
gull, gulls	sole, soles
haddock, haddocks	sparrow, sparrows
halibut, halibuts	squid, squids
hawk, hawks	steelhead, steelheads
horse, horses	sturgeon, sturgeons
humpback, humpbacks	swan, swans
kittiwake, kittiwakes	trout, trouts
lark, larks	walrus, walruses
lobster, lobsters	whale, whales
mackerel, mackerels	yellowfin, yellowfins
mallard, mallards	yellowtail, yellowtails
manatee, manatees	

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## Scientific Names

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**PL.5.**—The following are listings of the singular and plural versions of common and Latin names.

### Plurals.—Nonendangered Marine Mammals and Terrestrial Mammals

bear, bears:	
polar bear .....	<i>Ursus maritimus</i>
dolphin, dolphins:	
common dolphin .....	<i>Delphinus delphis bairde</i>
northern right whale dolphin .....	<i>Lissodelphis borealis</i>
Pacific bottlenose dolphin .....	<i>Tursiops truncatus gilli</i>
Pacific white-sided dolphin .....	<i>Lagenorhynchus obliquidens</i>
narwhal, narwhal .....	<i>Monodon monoceros</i>
porpoise, porpoises:	
dall porpoise .....	<i>Phocoenoides dalli</i>
harbor porpoise .....	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>
sea lion, sea lions:	
California sea lion .....	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>
Steller's sea lion .....	<i>Eumatopias jubatus</i>
seal, seals:	
bearded seal .....	<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>
Guadalupe fur seal .....	<i>Arctocephalus townsendi</i>
northern elephant seal .....	<i>Mirounga angustirostris</i>
northern fur seal .....	<i>Callorhinus ursinus</i>
ribbon seal .....	<i>Phoca fasciata</i>
ringed seal .....	<i>Phoca hispida</i>
spotted seal .....	<i>Phoca vitulina largha</i>
walrus, walruses:	
Pacific walrus .....	<i>Odobenus rosmarus divergens</i>
whale, whales:	
beluga whale .....	<i>Delphinapterus leucas</i>
killer whale .....	<i>Orcinus orca</i>
minke whale .....	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>
Pacific pilot whale .....	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>

Plurals.—Fishes and Crabs

capelin, capelin .....	<i>Mallotus villosus</i>
cisco, ciscoes:	
Bering cisco .....	<i>Coregonus laurettae</i>
least cisco .....	<i>Coregonus sardinella</i>
cod, cod <u>or</u> cods*:	
arctic cod .....	<i>Boreogadus saida</i>
saffron cod .....	<i>Eleginus gracilis</i>
crab, crabs:	
blue king crab .....	<i>Paralithodes platypas</i>
red king crab .....	<i>Paralithodes camschaticus</i>
tanner crab .....	<i>Chionoecetes opilio</i>
crevalle, crevalles <u>or</u> crevallies	
dab, dabs:	
longhead dab .....	<i>Limanda proboscidea</i>
eelpout, eelpouts:	
Canadian eelpout .....	<i>Lycodes polaris</i>
flounder, flounders:	
arctic flounder .....	<i>Liopsetta glacialis</i>
Bering flounder .....	<i>Hippoglossoides robustus</i>
starry flounder .....	<i>Platichthys stellatus</i>
hamecon, hamecon .....	<i>Artediellus scaber</i>
herring, herring:	
Pacific herring .....	<i>Clupea harengus pallasii</i>
kingfish, kingfish	
mackerel, mackerel, <u>or</u> mackerels*	
mullet, mullet, <u>or</u> mullets	
pompano, pompano <u>or</u> pompanos	
salmon, salmon .....	<i>Oncorhynchus</i> spp.
chum salmon .....	<i>Oncorhynchus keta</i>
pink salmon .....	<i>Oncorhynchus gorbuscha</i>
sand lance, sand lance:	
Pacific sand lance .....	<i>Ammodytes hexapterus</i>
sculpin, sculpin <u>or</u> sculpins*:	
arctic fourhorn sculpin .....	<i>Myoxocephalus quadricornis</i>
arctic staghorn sculpin .....	<i>Gymnocanthus tricuspis</i>
shorthorn sculpin .....	<i>Myoxocephalus scorpius</i>
twohorn sculpin .....	<i>Icelus bicornis</i>
smelt, smelts .....	<i>Osmeridae</i>
rainbow or toothed smelt .....	<i>Osmerus mordax dentex</i>
sole, soles	
yellowfin sole .....	<i>Limanda aspera</i>
trout, trout, <u>or</u> trouts*	
tuna, tuna <u>or</u> tunas	
whitefish, whitefishes .....	<i>Salmonidae</i>

\*See note in *List B*.  
spp. indicates plural of species

## Plurals.—Invertebrates

euphausiid, euphausiids .....	<i>Thysanoessa raschii</i>
Phytoplankton and Algae:	
brown alga, algae .....	<i>Laminaria saccharina</i>
diatom, diatoms .....	<i>Desmarestia viridis</i>
	<i>Nitzschia frigida</i>
	<i>Nitzschia cylindrus</i>
	<i>Nitzschia grunowii</i>
	<i>Chaetoceros</i>
	<i>Navicula marina</i>
kelp, kelp .....	<i>Phyllaria dermatodea</i>
sea lettuce (green algae) .....	<i>Ulva</i>
Zooplankton:	
copepod, copepods .....	<i>Eurytemora pacifica</i>
	<i>Acartia clausi</i>
	<i>Calanus plumchrus</i>
	<i>Eucalanus bungii</i>
calanoid copepods .....	<i>Pseudocalanus</i> spp.
	<i>Oithona similis</i>
cladoceran, cladocerans .....	<i>Evadne nordmani</i>
	<i>Metridia lucens</i>
Benthic Invertebrates:	
amphipod, amphipods .....	<i>Gammaracanthus loricatus</i>
	<i>Gammarus</i> spp.
	<i>Onisimus litoralis</i>
	<i>Pontoporeia femorata</i>
brittle star, stars .....	<i>Ophiura sarsi</i>
clam, clams .....	<i>Mya</i>
	<i>Spisula</i>
	<i>Serripes</i>
	<i>Astarte borealis</i>
	<i>Macoma calcarea</i>
	<i>Nucula tenuis</i>
	<i>Yoldia hyperborea</i>
isopod, isopods .....	<i>Saduria entomon</i>
mysid, mysids .....	<i>Mysis litoralis</i>
soft coral, soft corals .....	<i>Eunephtya</i> spp.
sea cucumber, sea cucumbers .....	<i>Psolus</i> spp.
	<i>Cucumaria</i> spp.
Mollusks:	
octopus, octopuses <u>or</u> octopi	
squid, squid <u>or</u> squids*	

\*See note in *List B*.



Plurals.—Marine and Coastal Birds

auklet, auklets:	
crested auklet.....	<i>Aethia cristatella</i>
least auklet .....	<i>Aethia pusilla</i>
parakeet auklet .....	<i>Cyclorhynchus psittacula</i>
brant, brants .....	<i>Branta bernicla</i>
cormorant, cormorants:	
pelagic, cormorant.....	<i>Phalacrocorax pelagicus</i>
dowitcher, dowitchers:	
long-billed dowitcher .....	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>
short-billed dowitcher.....	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>
duck, ducks:	
pintail duck.....	<i>Anas acuta</i>
dunlin, dunlins:	
dunlin .....	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
eagle, eagles:	
bald eagle .....	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>
eider, eiders:	
king eider .....	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>
spectacled eider.....	<i>Somateria fischeri</i>
Steller's eider .....	<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>
falcon, falcons:	
peregrine falcon .....	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
merlin, merlins.....	<i>Falco columbarius</i>
goose, geese:	
cackling Canada goose .....	<i>Branta canadensis minima</i>
emperor goose .....	<i>Chen canagica</i>
lesser snow goose .....	<i>Chen hyporborea</i>
Taverner's Canada goose.....	<i>Branta canadensis taverneri</i>
greater white-fronted goose.....	<i>Anser albifrons</i>
guillemot, guillemots:	
pigeon guillemot.....	<i>Cepphus columba</i>
gull, gulls:	
herring gull.....	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
hawk, hawks:	
northern harrier .....	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
rough-legged hawk .....	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>
kittiwake, kittiwakes:	
black-legged kittiwake.....	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>
loon, loons:	
Pacific loon .....	<i>Gavia pacifica</i>
red-throated loon .....	<i>Gavia stellata</i>
murre, murre:	
common murre .....	<i>Uria aalge</i>
thick-billed murre .....	<i>Uria lomvia</i>
oldsquaw, oldsquaw .....	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>

## Plurals.—Marine and Coastal Birds—continued

owl, owls	
short-eared owl.....	<i>Asio flammeus</i>
snowy owl.....	<i>Nyctea scandiaca</i>
phalarope, phalaropes	
red-necked phalarope.....	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>
red phalarope.....	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>
plover, plovers	
lesser golden plover.....	<i>Pluvialis dominica</i>
semipalmated plover.....	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>
puffin, puffins	
horned puffin.....	<i>Fratercula corniculata</i>
tufted puffin.....	<i>Fratercula cirrhata</i>
raven, ravens	
common raven.....	<i>Corvus corax</i>
sandpiper, sandpiper	
semipalmated sandpiper.....	<i>calidris pusillus</i>
western sandpiper.....	<i>Ereunetes mauri</i>
scaup, scaups	
greater scaups.....	<i>Aythya marila</i>
scoter, scoters	
black scoter.....	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>
surf scoter.....	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>
snipe, snipes	
common snipe.....	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
swan, swans	
tundra swan.....	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>
teal, teals	
green-winged teal.....	<i>Anas crecca</i>
turnstone, turnstones	
black turnstone.....	<i>Arenaria melanocephala</i>
whimbrel, whimbrels.....	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>

**Plurals.—Endangered and Threatened Species**

curlew, curlews:

Eskimo curlew .....*Numenius borealis*

falcon, falcons:

American peregrine falcon .....*Falco peregrinus anatum*

arctic peregrine falcon .....*Falco peregrinus tundrius*

sage, sages:

arctic sage .....*Artemisia senjavinensis*

whale, whales:

bowhead whale .....*Balaena mysticetus*

fin whale .....*Balaenoptera physalus*

gray whale .....*Eschrichtius robustus*

humpback whale .....*Megaptera novaeangliae*

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Additional Notes

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