



Bowhead Whale

by Joanasie Karpik • illustrated by Sho Uehara



EDUCATOR'S
RESOURCE



Animals Illustrated: Bowhead Whale

About the Book

Animals Illustrated mixes fun-filled animal facts suitable for the youngest of readers with intricately detailed illustrations to create a unique and beautiful collection of children's non-fiction books about Arctic animals. Each volume contains first-hand accounts from authors who live in the Arctic, along with interesting facts on the behaviours and biology of each animal.

In this book, kids will learn how bowhead whales raise their babies, where they live, what they eat, and other interesting information, like how they can eat when they don't have any teeth!

About the Author

Joanasie Karpik is a respected Elder from Pangnirtung, Nunavut.

About the Illustrator

Sho Uehara is an illustrator and cartoonist living in Calgary. He graduated from the Alberta College of Art and Design, where he majored in character design and visual communications. He has done illustration work for *Swerve* Calgary and BOOM! Studios, and has completed an independent comic anthology called *Wishless* alongside a group of talented local illustrators. Sho is currently working on self-published comics while doing freelance work.

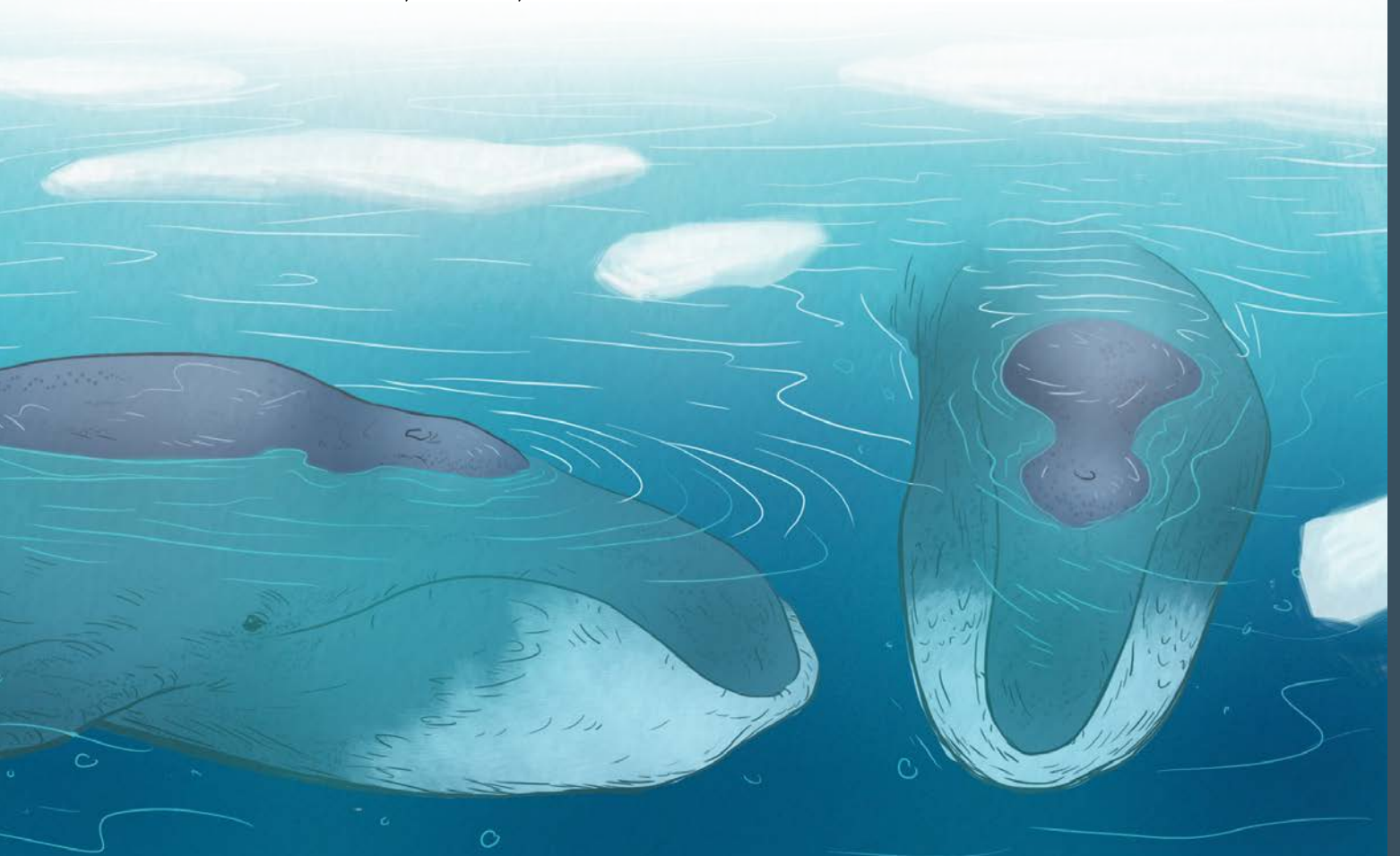
Pre-Reading Discussion Questions

- If students are reading the book independently, have them keep a list of words as they read that are unfamiliar or not understood in context. Encourage students to figure out the meanings of unknown words from the text and pictures.
- If reading the book together as a class, have students point out unfamiliar words. Give a brief definition and keep a list of these words for later review. Some possible examples: blowhole, ice floe, baleen, breaching.
- Open the book and show the class the table of contents. Does everyone understand how it works? How do they think it might be useful? How does the table of contents give clues to what the book is about? Would students rather start at the beginning and read the book straight through, or go directly to the chapters that sound more interesting to them?
- There are several illustration-only pages at the beginning and ending of the book. Show these to the class and ask if anyone can identify what the different elements are in the pictures.

During and Post-Reading Discussion Questions

The following questions and discussion points can be used during and after reading *Animals Illustrated: Bowhead Whale*. Provide students with the chance to voice their own opinions, share their experiences, ask questions, or point out anything else they may notice about the book.

- Can you remember what kind of animal the bowhead whale is? Where do they live? How do they breathe since they live in the water? What colour are they?
- When are people most likely to see bowhead whales? Where? Which three countries do they live near?
- Think back to some of the pictures in the book. After seeing these pictures, how would you describe bowhead whales to someone who hasn't heard of them or read the book?
- What is the only animal in the world that is bigger than the bowhead whale? How long are they? How big is their head? Can you name anything useful that they can use their big heads for? How funny would humans look if their heads were a third the size of their body? Can you name any other big-headed animals?
- How much do bowhead whales weigh? To picture how much 220,000 pounds is, think of 10 garbage trucks stacked on top of each other. It would take 3,600 kids to balance on a see-saw with a bowhead whale—if you could find a see-saw large enough!
- Bowhead whales use baleen plates to gather food. How is using baleen plates different from using teeth? What is keratin? What is zooplankton? What do Inuit call these tiny animals (*illiraq*)? How many pounds of zooplankton can a bowhead whale eat in one day? To consume 4,000 pounds of food, each kid in the class would have to eat 71 donuts! Do you think you could do it?



- What is a baby bowhead whale called? What colour are they when they're born? How soon can they swim on their own? How long do they live with their mothers? If they can swim, why do they stay with their mothers for so long?
- What is the biggest natural predator of the bowhead whale? Does it seem strange to you that one type of whale would eat another? How can orcas hunt and kill a bowhead whale when they are so much smaller than their prey?
- What are some ways that bowhead whales communicate with each other? What types of things do they want to communicate about? Can you imagine any other things?
- When Inuit hunt bowhead whales, what do they do with the meat? With the bones? With the blubber? Have you ever eaten *maktak*? If so, did you like how it tasted? If not, would you like to try it?
- A bowhead whale's layer of blubber is about 18 inches thick; maybe about the length of your arm. How would you like to swim with that much "padding" all around your body? Do you think it would keep you warm in Arctic waters?

Extension Activities

Have students complete one or more of these activities.

Language Arts

Take your list of unknown words, consult a dictionary for meaning, and use each word in a sentence. Bonus for writing a story using the words!

Choose one of these ways a human might interact with a bowhead whale, and write about why you think this would be interesting work to do:

- A scientist who studies bowhead whales
- A hunter of bowhead whales
- A photographer who takes pictures of bowhead whales and sells them to magazines or websites
- A teacher who helps others learn about bowhead whales
- An artist who makes paintings or illustrates books about bowhead whales
- A tour guide who takes people out on boats to look for bowhead whales

Art

Create a storyboard (a sequential series of sketches) for a short, animated cartoon about bowhead whales. The cartoon can be either fiction or non-fiction.

As a class, make a life-size cut-out of a bowhead whale. If it's too big for the classroom, take it out into the hallway to get an idea of the immense size of these creatures!

Science

As a class, find and listen to audio or video with the whale song of bowhead whales. Does it sound like music to you? Have you heard any other animal sounds that are similar?

Bowhead whales get their name from their largest feature. Research and write a report about three other animals that get their names from their unique characteristic(s).

Bowhead whales can be found in Canada, Alaska, and Greenland. Do some research and report on what other animals can be found in these three places. What else do they have in common?

The second-largest animal in the world is the bowhead whale, and the largest is the blue whale. What are the next three largest? Write a report comparing these five giants to each other.

