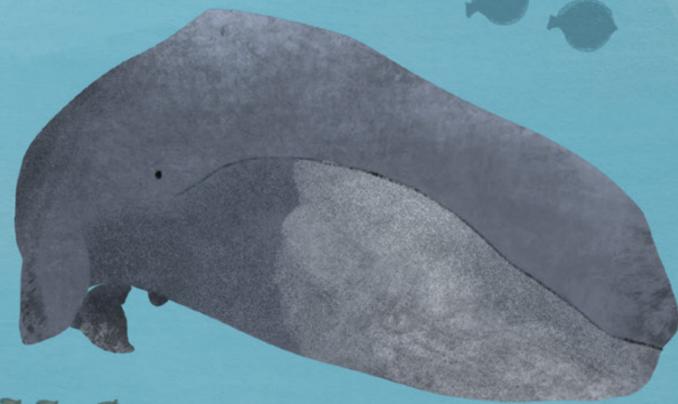


Bowhead Whale

— A marine musician —

Welcome to the Arctic, one of the coldest places on Earth. Deep below the frozen sea, bowhead whales cruise along like big, gray submarines, looking to fuel up on food.

Bowhead whales have no dorsal fin or hump. Having a flat back means they can glide along under the ice.



To stay warm, bowheads have a thick layer of oily fat, called blubber. This can grow to be more than 2ft (0.6m) thick around their middles.

Bowheads get their name from their huge upper jaws, which are shaped like an archer's bow. They have the largest mouth of any animal.

Cool sounds

You probably wouldn't want to put your head under water in the Arctic Ocean during the cold, dark months of winter. But if you did, you might hear some remarkable sounds. Bowhead whales sing for hours at a time, performing a wide variety of groans, whistles, and wails. They create a new set of songs each year.

Ice-breakers

Bowhead whales are usually found in and around the Arctic Ocean's ice. Like all whales, they need to come to the surface to breathe. They can use their powerful heads to smash breathing holes through ice that is as thick as a mattress. Scientists think the whales listen to the echoes from their calls to work out how thick the ice is. This way, they can avoid ice that is too solid to break.

Did you know?

These powerful whales can live to be more than 200 years old. They are one of the longest-living mammals in the world.

