

I am the Walrus



HW 2: Marine Organisms
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Taxonomy of a Walrus

1. Kingdom: Animalia
2. Phylum: Chordata
3. Subphylum: Vertebrata
4. Class: Mammalia
5. Order: Carnivora
6. Suborder: Pinnipedia:



(Has flippers and thick blubber for insulation; rests, breeds and gives birth on land)

Family: Odobenidae

*Walruses are the sole living member of the Odobenidae family, classified for:

*Two long tusks

*No external ears

*Rotatable rear flippers (allowing ability to walk on land),

*Air pouches in throat

- * (inflates to float head above water while sleeping and to produce sound underwater)



Anatomy of a Walrus

Wrinkly skin: typically tan, appears paler when cold (decrease of blood flow to surface to save heat), appears reddish when warm (increase of blood flow to surface to cool body).

Up to 6 in./15 cm. thick, insulates body temperature (about 37°C) to withstand temperatures as cold as -35°C.



Some Facts about the Walrus

- * Walruses can dive down to 200 meters in the ocean and can stay underwater as long as 10 minutes.
- * They are very sociable and huddle together in herds of hundreds, which also retains body heat.
- * The walrus population is about 200,000 and was last counted in 1990
- * There are two subspecies: Pacific Walrus and Atlantic Walrus
 - * The Pacific Walrus is more populated and larger than the Atlantic Walrus
 - * There is dispute over the 3rd type, *dobenus rosmarus laptevi* (Laptev Sea Walrus), due to its similarities to the Pacific Walrus



Above: Laptev Sea Walrus
Far left: Atlantic Walrus
Left: Pacific Walrus

Feeding & Habitat



Diet is diverse and consist of mollusks (especially clams), fish, worms, snails, crabs, and shrimp.

Drag tusks along sea bottom to excavate buried prey



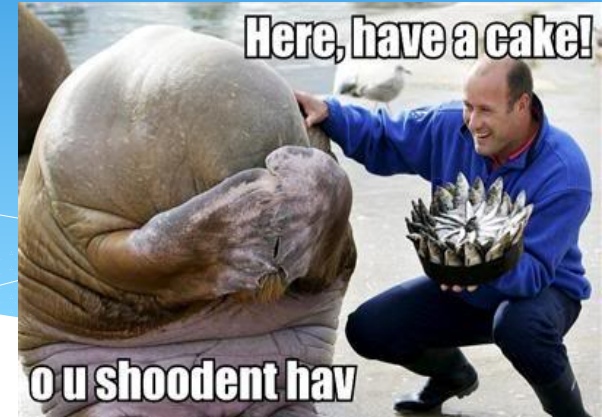
- * Most found in Arctic & Subarctic regions
- * Some larger male walrus prey on seals and small whales



The Life of a Walrus

- * Walrus live an average lifespan of up to 40 years
- * Lives in bachelor groups during the summer
- * The larger the tusks, the higher the walrus's social rank
- * Tusks can grow up to 1 meters in males and 0.5 meters in females. They grow up to 15 years but may continue to grow in males
- * Mating season occurs in mid-winter (January – March); male bulls fight over female cows
- * A female can reproduce after the age of nine
 - * They give birth to a calve every 2-3 years on land in spring (April - June)

- * The gestation period lasts 15-16 months
- * The calves are nursed for about 2 years and grow tusks starting about 8 months of age



Endangerment

- * The walrus's enemies are polar bears, killer whales, and humans.
- * Walrus were heavily hunted for their:
 - * Meat and organs
 - * Hide - clothing, tents, boat covers
 - * Blubber - soaps, oil for machines and lamps
 - * Ivory tusks - knives, jewelry, figurines, engravings/cravings
- * Walrus gain protection under the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act.
- * Native America tribes such as the Inuit and Yupik are currently allowed to hunt a limited number of walrus
- * Climate changes threatens walrus populations by shrinking the area of ice, where they rest and give birth



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