

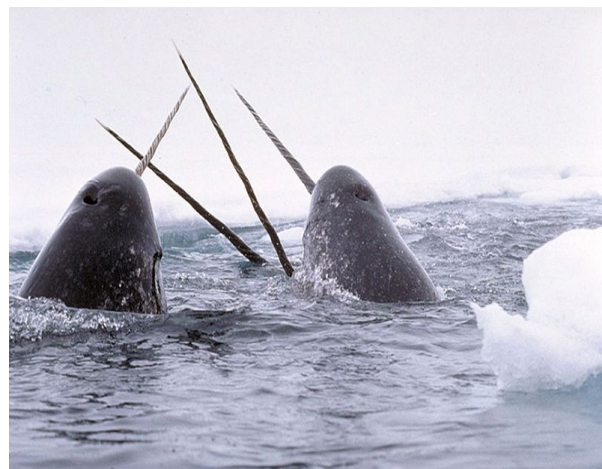
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Unicorn of the Sea

By Guy Belleranti

When people think of tusked animals, elephants and walruses often come to mind. But did you know that there is a whale with a long tusk? Some people call this species of whale the "unicorn of the sea," but its actual name is the narwhal.

The narwhal is a toothed whale that lives in the cold waters of the Arctic Ocean. They only have two teeth, both in the upper jaw. In males, one of these teeth grows straight through the upper lip into an amazing eight to nine-foot long, spiraled tusk. Female narwhals also have tusks, but they are usually much smaller.



## Interesting Narwhal Facts

*People in medieval times would find narwhal tusks on beaches and think they came from the mythical*

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the arctic during winter. They are social animals and live in groups called pods. Mothers give birth to a single five-foot long baby about every three years. Full grown narwhals average 13 to 20 feet in length, with males being larger than females.

vitamins.

*Most narwhals have one tusk, but a few have been found that have two!*

Narwhals have a compact body with short flippers and no dorsal (back) fin. If necessary, they can dive over half a mile beneath the winter ice in search of food. They sometimes stay under water 20 to 25 minutes on these dives. A carnivore (or meat-eater), narwhals eat shrimp, fish and squid. Since they don't have a mouth full of teeth they must swallow their food whole.



*The picture above shows a narwhal's body shape. Notice the narwhal's size compared to the human diver.*

*(Credit: Chris Huh)*



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Information in this article comes from his experiences working with these animals and teaching others.

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1. A tusk is...
  - a. a long, pointed tooth
  - b. a long, pointed bone
  - c. a long, pointed tail
  - d. a log, pointed mouth
  
2. Which might you travel to if you wanted to see a Narwhal: Canada, Antarctica, or Australia?  
Explain your answer.

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3. Why do Native Inuit people sometimes hunt narwhals?

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4.



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- \_\_\_\_\_ Narwhals eat both plants and animals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Narwhals have over one hundred teeth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A male narwal's tusk can grow over eight feet long.

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.



1. \_\_\_\_\_ d p o  
**hint:** group of whales

2. \_\_\_\_\_ s t k u  
**hint:** long, sharp tooth

3. \_\_\_\_\_



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4. \_\_\_\_\_

ad

5. \_\_\_\_\_ r s p f l p e i  
**hint:** body parts used to help a whale swim

6. \_\_\_\_\_ a s d l o r  
**hint:** having to do with the back of an animal such as a fish or whale

7. \_\_\_\_\_ v o r r n i e c a  
**hint:** animal that does not eat plants

## ANSWER KEY

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1. pod

d p o

hint: group of whales



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