

NARWHAL FAST-FACTS

The narwhal's tusk is ivory, which means it's actually a **tooth**.

There's a whole ocean of mysteries about the narwhal, one of nature's most fascinating animals. The "unicorn of the sea" holds many secrets; perhaps the following list will help to demystify this amazing creature!

Adult narwhals develop white spots and splotches as they age—hence the etymology of "narwhal" from Norwegian, "corpse whale," after the look of drowned sailors.

Narwhals cannot survive in captivity.

Narwhals can live up to 100 years, but the average age is about **60 years**.

Only **Inuit** are legally allowed to hunt the narwhal.

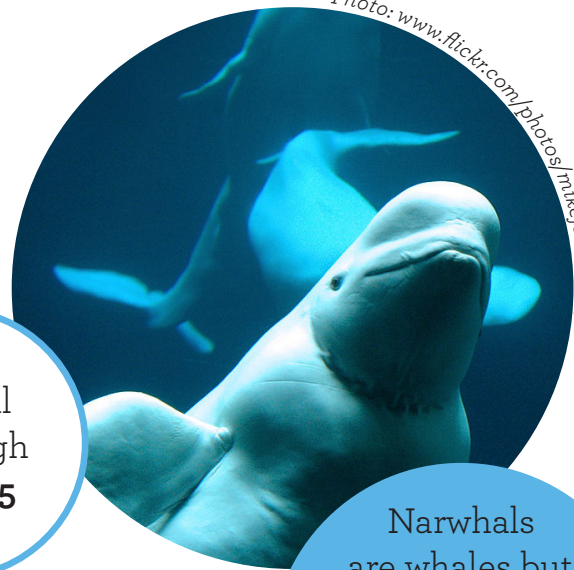
The function of the tusk is still not entirely understood, but scientists think that it is to navigate and sense changes in the environment.

Polar bears and orcas are the narwhal's biggest natural predators.



A narwhal can weigh up to **1.5 tons**.

Narwhals can dive about **a mile deep**.



Narwhals are whales but are also closely related to dolphins. Their closest relative is a beluga.

*Compiled by
Smithsonian's
National
Museum of
Natural History,
Washington, D.C.*

Photo: www.flickr.com/photos/mikejsolutions/

Photo: Glenn Williams, Narwhal Tusk Research



The Inuit use narwhal blubber as an important **source of vitamin C**. It has been a staple in the Inuit diet and culture for centuries.

A narwhal consumes about **66 pounds** of food per day.

Only about **5% of female** narwhals have tusks.

Due to climate change, narwhals have begun to reproduce with belugas, although it is rare. This new animal is called a **narluga**.

The tusk of the narwhal helps them use **echolocation** to navigate.

The tusk continuously grows but growth slows as a narwhal ages.

Females only give birth to calves once every three years, and pregnancy lasts 14 months.

Narwhals are not fast movers at about only **four miles per hour**.

It's possible for a male narwhal to have **two** tusks.

Narwhals have a second tooth, but it usually remains embedded in the skull.

Narwhals eat things like halibut, cod, squid, and shrimp.

A narwhal is made of about **40% blubber**.

