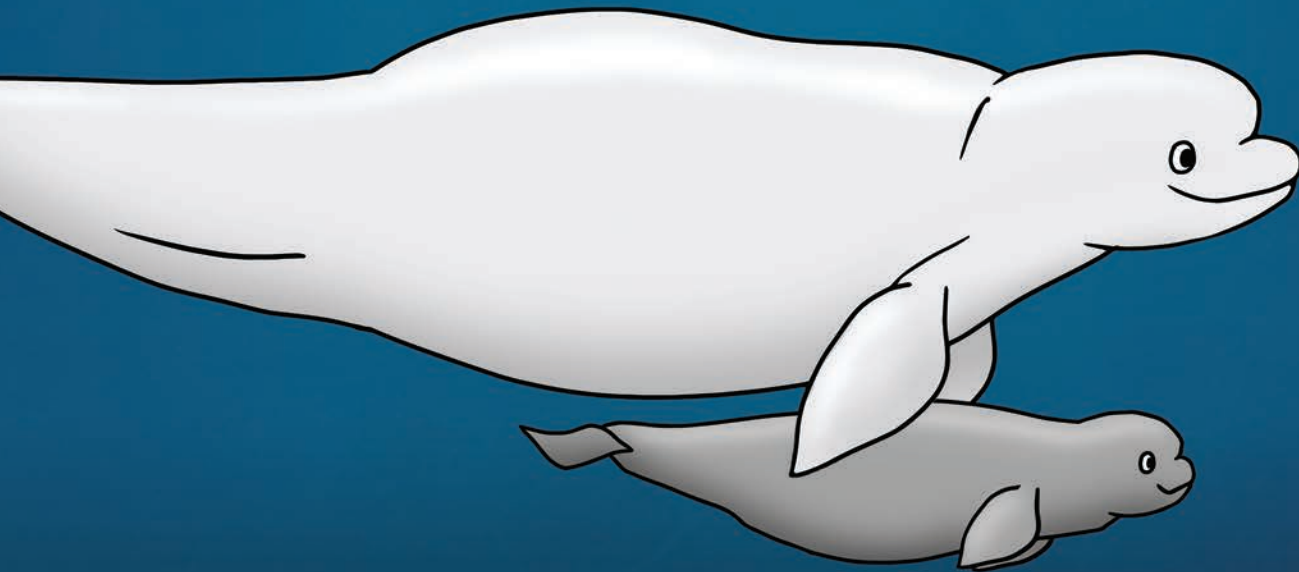


Have you seen this Species at Risk?

**MEET THE
ST. LAWRENCE
BELUGA WHALE**



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada

Canada 

Their smile and white colouring make the beluga the most recognizable whale in the St. Lawrence.

Belugas can grow up to 3.5 metres long. They would need two beds placed end to end to sleep in!



ARCTIC OCEAN

In Canada, beluga whales are divided into eight groups called populations. Do you know why St. Lawrence belugas are exceptional?

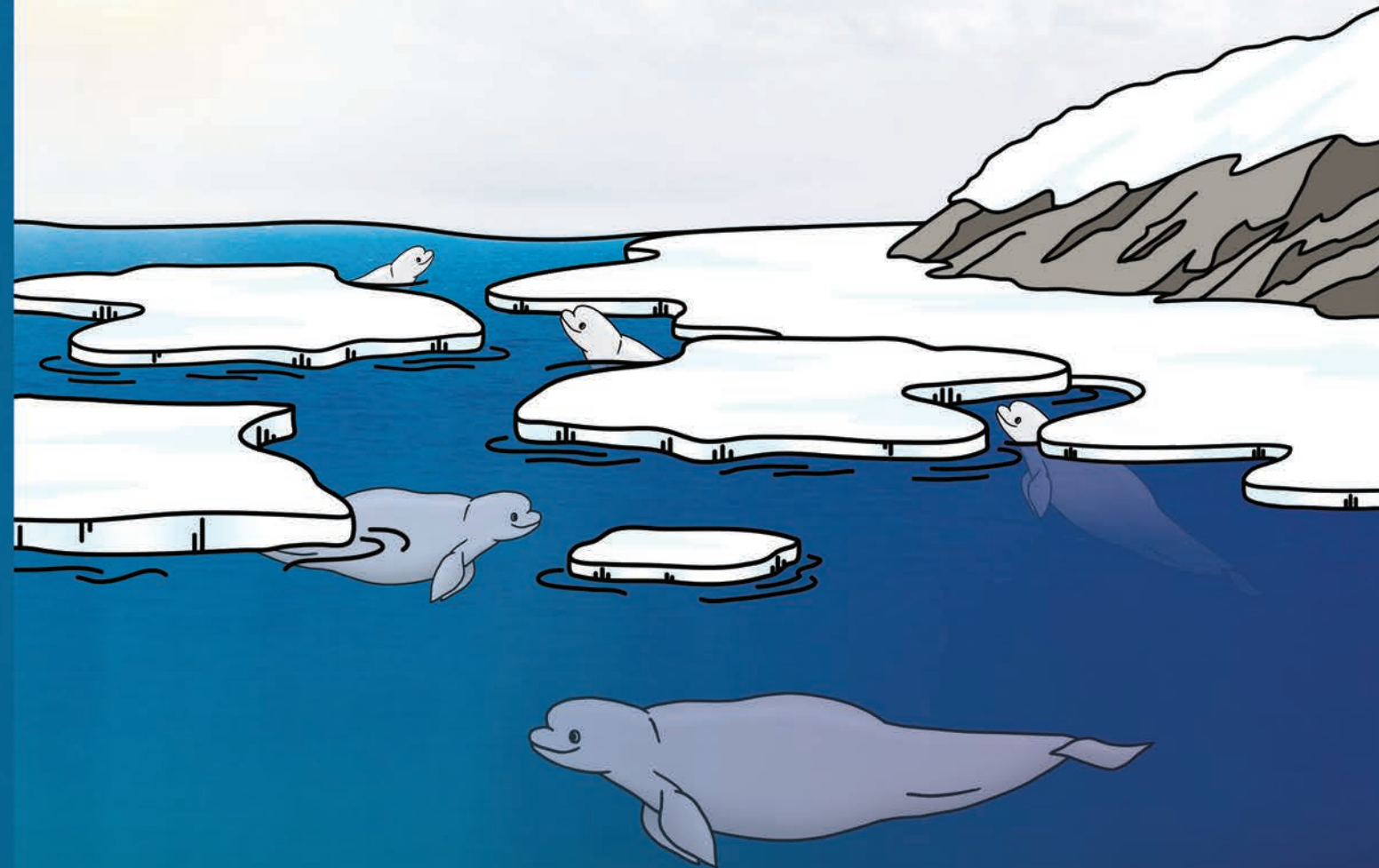
They are the only ones that don't live in the Arctic! This population has been completely isolated from other groups since the last ice age.



Belugas can live in cold water covered in ice. Healthy belugas have a thick layer of blubber to keep them warm.

Have you noticed that belugas don't have a fin on their back? This helps them swim under the ice.

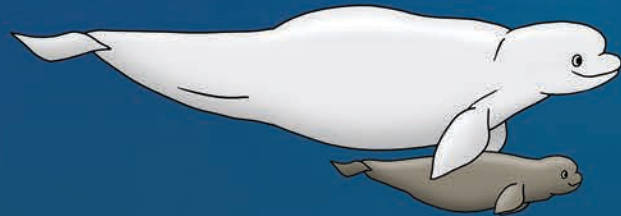
Can you find the 5 belugas in the picture?



Belugas can live up to 75 years.

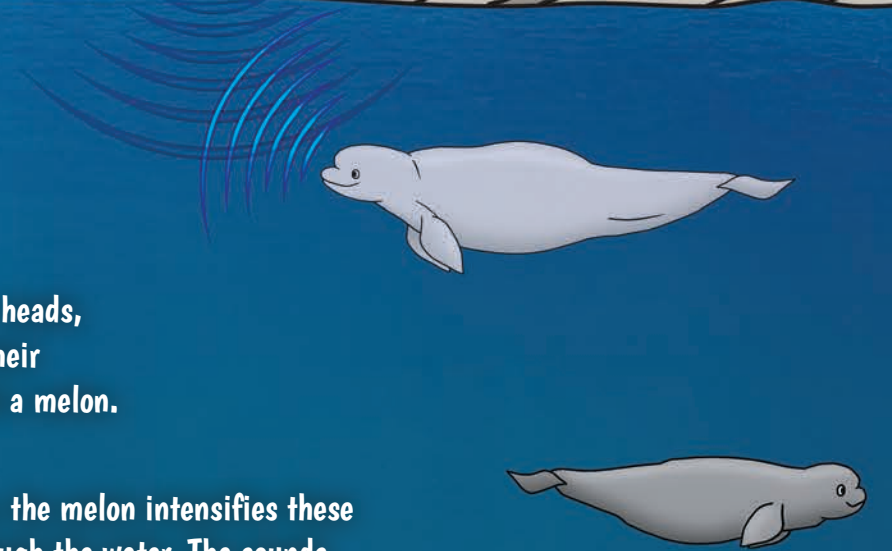
Do you know how to tell how old a beluga is?
The colour of their skin gives it away!

Believe it or not, belugas have brown skin at birth. At about a year old, their skin is bluish. Their skin then gradually turns gray and then white in adulthood.



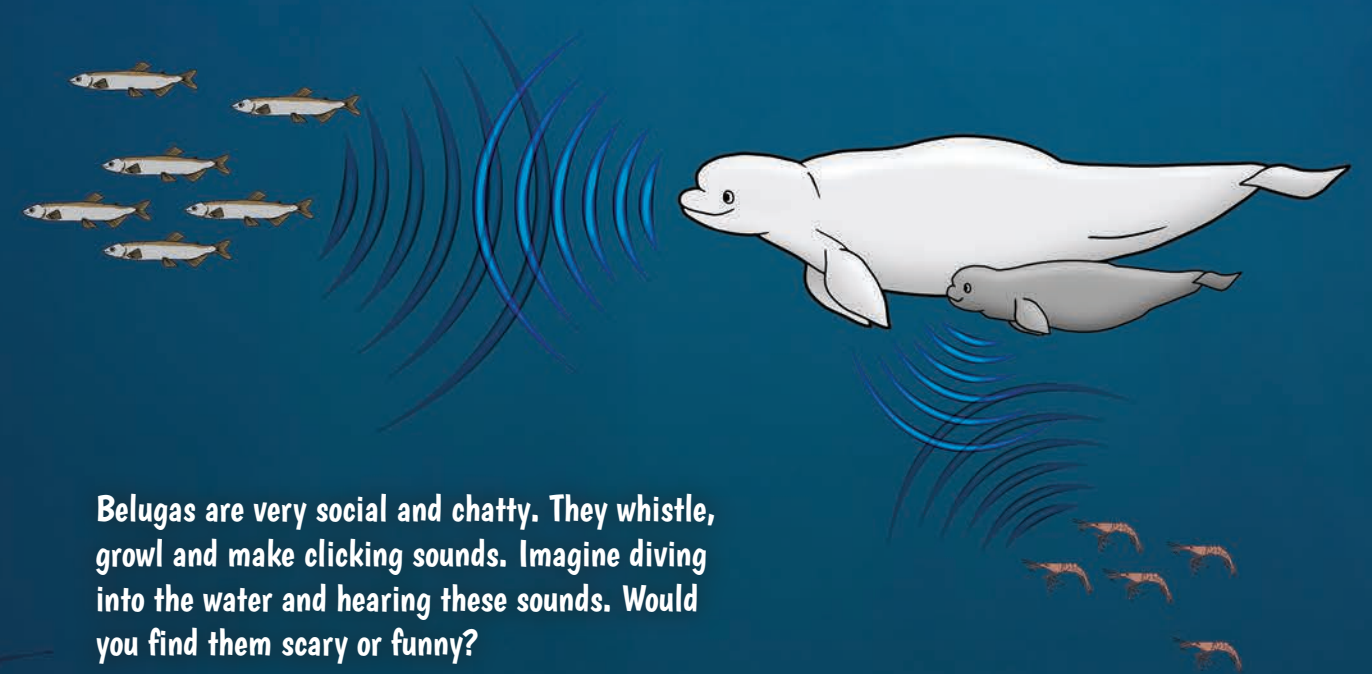
Belugas have a bump on their heads, but it's not because they hit their foreheads! This bump is called a melon.

When belugas produce sounds, the melon intensifies these sounds and projects them through the water. The sounds bounce back from objects in their environment. The whales then listen for the echo. This is known as echolocation!



Belugas are excellent divers. They can dive up to 800 metres below the water's surface to find food. They usually eat small fish, crustaceans and marine worms in the depths of the St. Lawrence.

It's very dark in the water, even in the middle of the day. Sound is just as important for belugas as sight is for humans. It helps them find their way and look for food.



Belugas are very social and chatty. They whistle, growl and make clicking sounds. Imagine diving into the water and hearing these sounds. Would you find them scary or funny?

Belugas use these sounds to talk to each other, help each other and take care for their young.

When the St. Lawrence is quiet, they can talk to each other, even when they're kilometres apart!

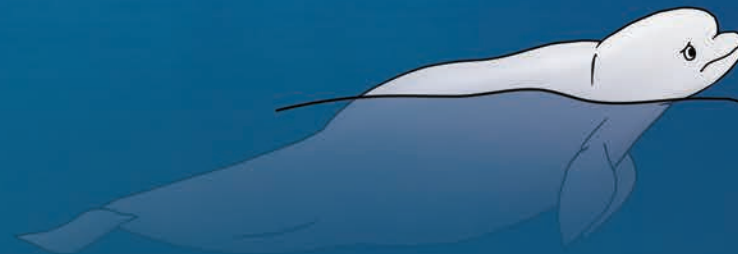
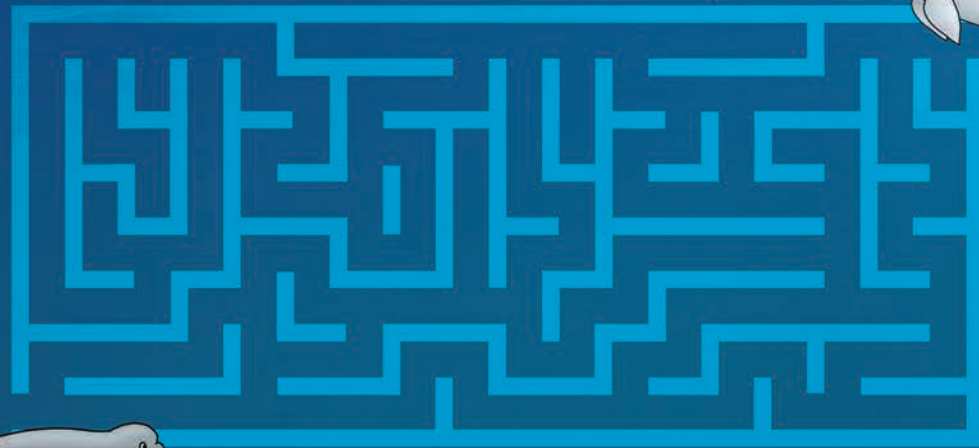
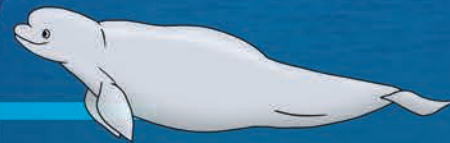


Belugas hear everything in the water, even the sounds big ships and small boats make. These sounds can disturb them and prevent them from doing their usual activities, such as eating and sleeping. When the sounds are too loud, they can even get lost or no longer hear their families.

Belugas are very curious and may even approach boats and kayaks along the St. Lawrence.

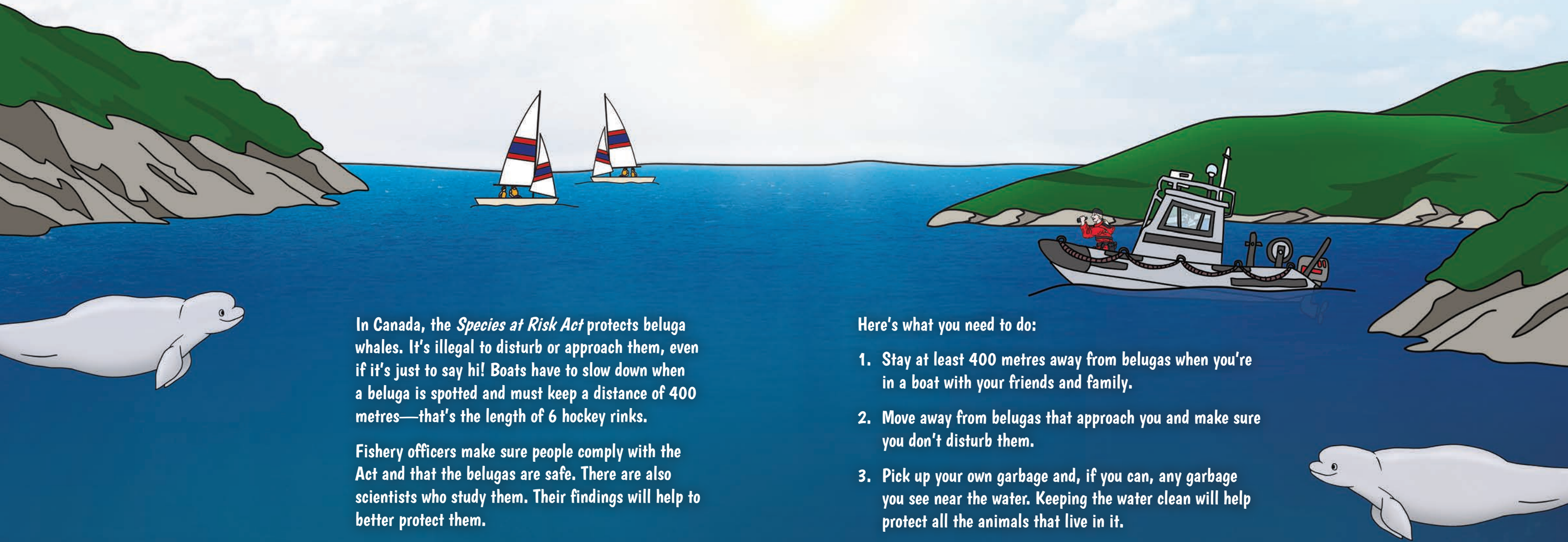
It's important to keep your distance and leave them alone. When they meet people, they can sometimes forget to eat, sleep and even follow their group.

The beluga lost its mother because of the noise. Help him find his way back!



The beluga whale is an endangered animal. That means there are fewer of them than there used to be in the St. Lawrence.

Beluga whales need you! There are actions you can take to help protect them. Ready to become a beluga guardian?



In Canada, the *Species at Risk Act* protects beluga whales. It's illegal to disturb or approach them, even if it's just to say hi! Boats have to slow down when a beluga is spotted and must keep a distance of 400 metres—that's the length of 6 hockey rinks.

Fishery officers make sure people comply with the Act and that the belugas are safe. There are also scientists who study them. Their findings will help to better protect them.

Here's what you need to do:

1. Stay at least 400 metres away from belugas when you're in a boat with your friends and family.
2. Move away from belugas that approach you and make sure you don't disturb them.
3. Pick up your own garbage and, if you can, any garbage you see near the water. Keeping the water clean will help protect all the animals that live in it.

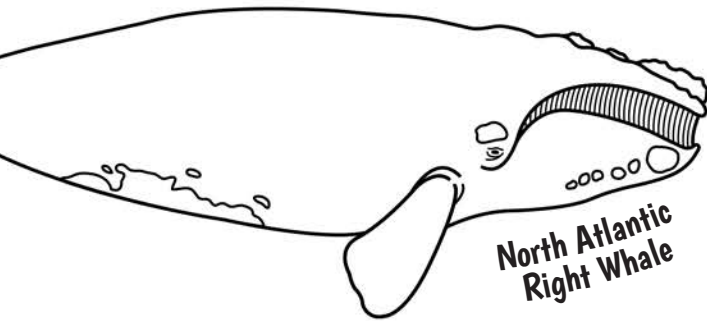
READY TO PROTECT THE BELUGAS?

I, _____, commit to being a guardian of the St. Lawrence belugas.

Let's protect the belugas together!

I'm swimming in good company!
There are other species living in the St. Lawrence that need protection.

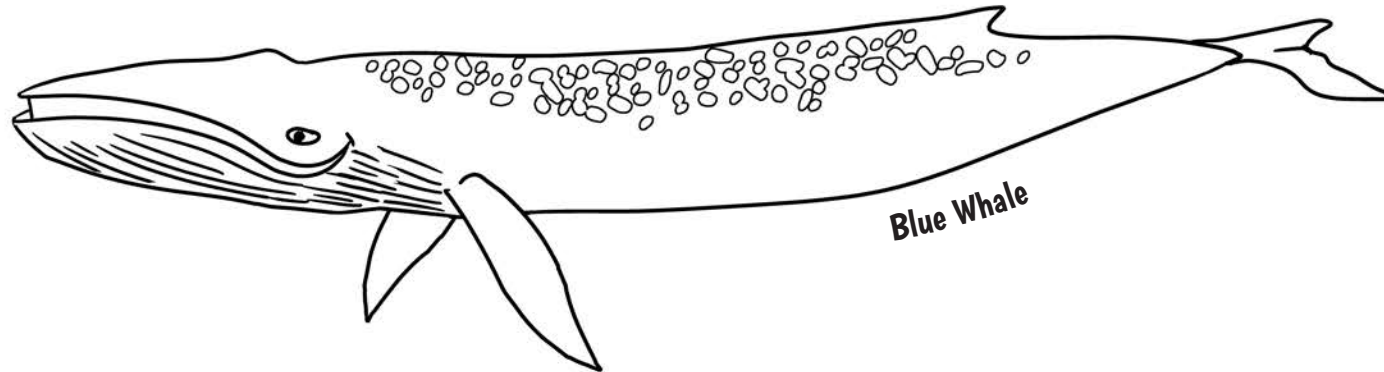
Let's colour them!



North Atlantic Right Whale



Beluga Whale



Blue Whale



QUESTION 1:

What is the bump on a beluga's head called?

- a) A plum
- b) A melon
- c) An apple

QUESTION 2:

What colour are newborn belugas?

- a) White
- b) Blue
- c) Brown

QUESTION 3:

What is echolocation for?

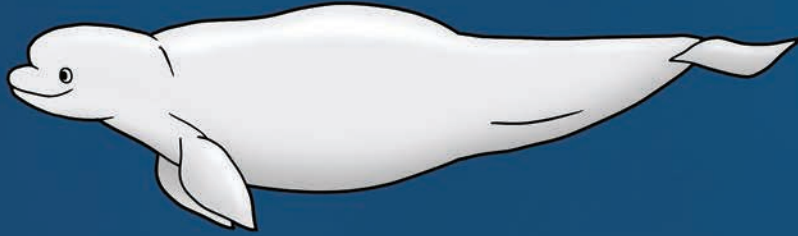
- a) Avoiding obstacles
- b) Finding small fish to eat
- c) Communicating and helping each other take care of their young
- d) All of the above

QUESTION 4:

What is the minimum distance you must maintain from a beluga?

- a) None. It's ok, I just want to say hi!
- b) 400 cm
- c) 400 m

Answers: Question 1: A melon Question 2: Brown Question 3: All of the above Question 4: 400m



Fisheries and Oceans Canada
© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada
MPO/22-2189
Fs23-568/2022E-PDF
978-0-660-42955-7