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The Beluga Whale (*Dephinapterus leucas*)



Range



**BELUGA WHALES
ARE FOUND ONLY
IN THE ICY
WATERS OF THE
ARTIC OCEAN,
ALONG THE
COASTS OF
ALASKA,
CANADA AND
RUSSIA.**



DIET

BELUGAS ARE CARNIVORES. THEIR DIET CONSISTS MAINLY OF FISH, CRAB, SQUID, SANDWORMS, SNAILS, SHRIMP AND CLAMS



Behavior

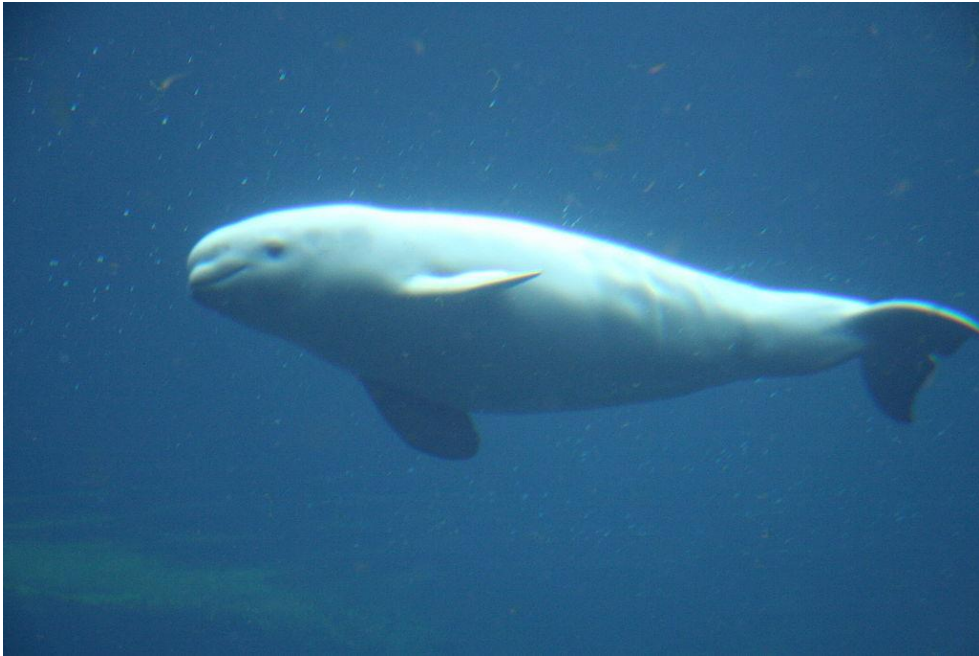
BELUGA WHALES ARE HIGHLY SOCIAL AND ARE OFTEN FOUND IN GROUPS RANGING FROM 2-10 UP TO 2,000 INDIVIDUALS. THEY GENERALLY MATE IN LATER WINTER AND EARLY SPRING WITH A GESTATION PERIOD OF ABOUT 15 MONTHS. THE NURSING PERIOD CAN RANGE ANYWHERE FROM 6-32 MONTHS.

Communication

BELUGAS ARE OFTEN CALLED THE CANARIES OF THE SEA. THEY USE AN IMPRESSIVE AND COMPLEX MIXTURE OF WHISTLES, PULSED/NOISY CALLS OR A COMBINATION OF ALL THREE TO COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER. THEY ARE ALSO UNIQUE FROM MOST MAMMAL SPECIES IN THAT THEY USE ECHOLOCAION FOR NAVIGATION AND PREY DETECTION



Locomotion



BELUGAS ARE HIGHLY ADAPTED FOR LOCOMOTION. THEY USE FEATURES LIKE FINS TO CREATE LIFT, WHILE THEIR STREAMLINED HAIRLESS BODY REDUCES DRAG. BELUGAS ARE ALSO UNIQUE FROM OTHER WHALE SPECIES IN THAT THEY LACK A DORSAL FIN!

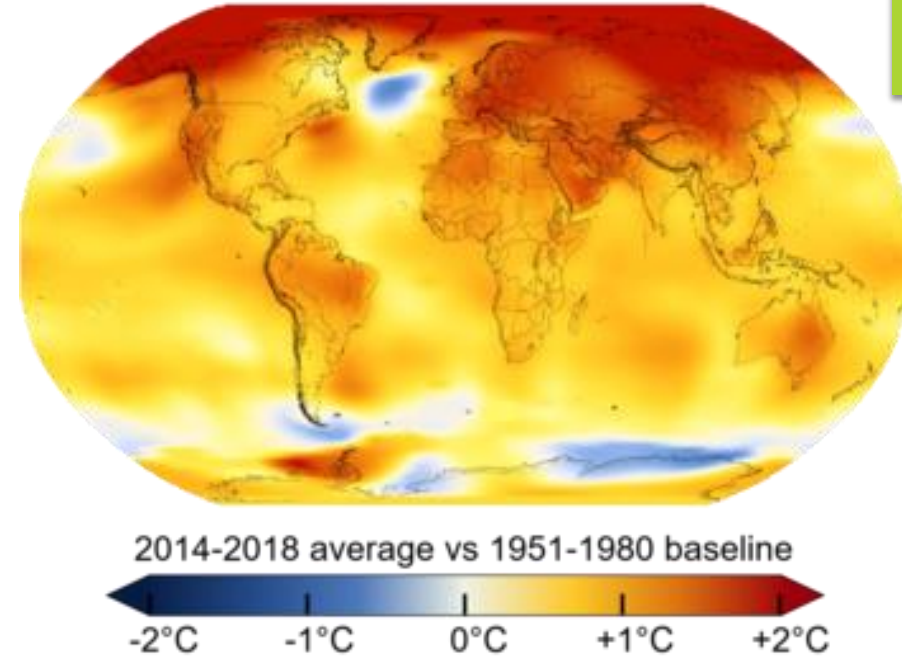
Living with ice

BELUGAS ARE MASTER THERMOREGULATORS. LIKE OTHER CETACEANS, THEY USE BLUBBER TO STAY WARM IN THEIR EXTREME ARTIC ENVIRONMENT. THEIR MUSCLES ARE SPECIALIZED FOR CARRYING OXYGEN AND HAVE HIGH MYOGLOBIN CONCENTRATIONS WHICH ALLOWS THEM TO DIVE UNDER THE SEA ICE FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME





Temperature Change in the Last 50 Years



Concerns

BELUGA WHALES ARE CURRENTLY NOT LISTED AS THREATENED OR ENDANGERED, BUT THERE ARE STILL MANY THREATS AHEAD THAT MAY AFFECT THE HEALTH OF THESE ORGANISMS. COMMERCIAL, RECREATIONAL AND SUSTENANCE FISHING POSES A LARGE THREAT TO BELUGAS' FOOD SOURCE. AND THERE ARE MULTIPLE CONCERNS THAT ARISE AS OUR CLIMATE CONTINUES TO WARM.

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