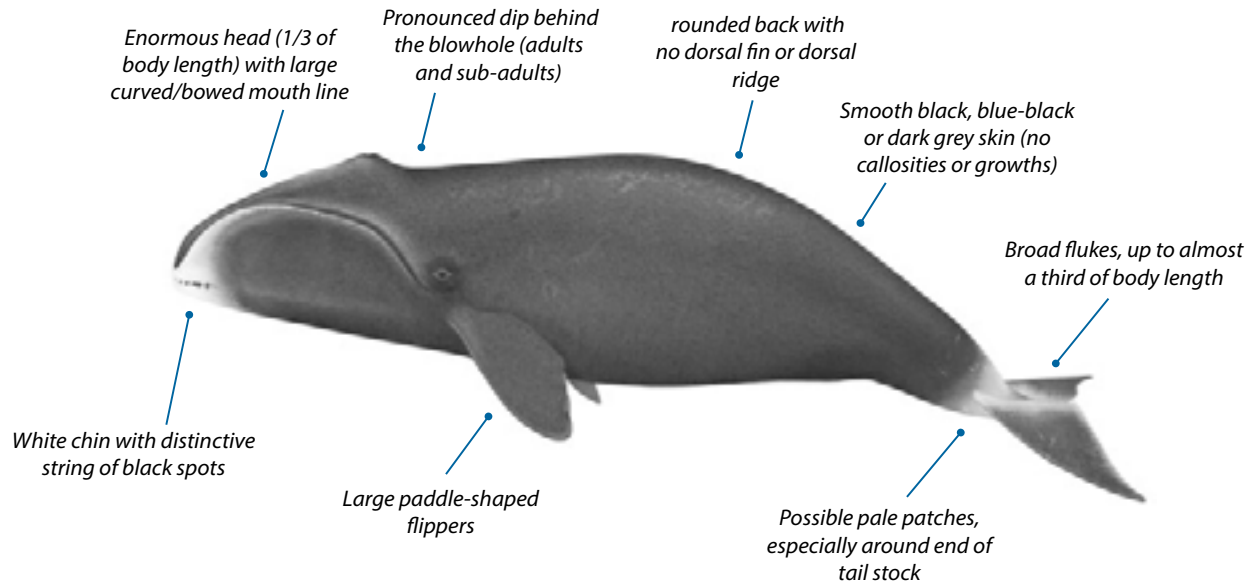


Bowhead whale (*Balaena mysticetus*)

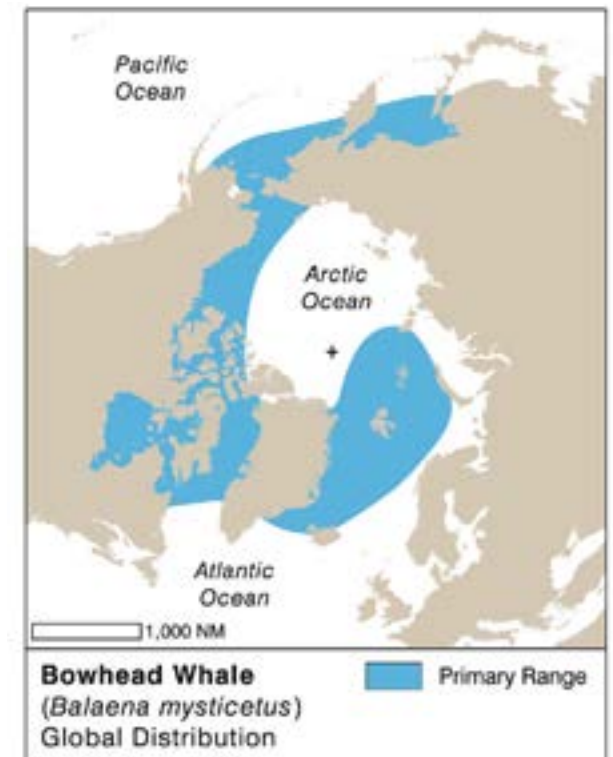
Distribution: Arctic polar and subpolar waters (see map below and full list of countries in the detailed species account online at <https://www.handbook.iwc.int/en/species/bowhead-whale>).

Adult length: 18m (male) 20m (female)
 Adult weight: up to 90,000kg
 Newborn: 4-4.5m / 1000kg



Threats: bycatch, ship strikes, climate change, pollutants, coastal development, habitat degradation
Habitat: Arctic and sub-Arctic waters
Diet: Zooplankton (copepods and krill)

IUCN Conservation status: **Least Concern** – although the East Greenland-Svalbard-Barents Sea subpopulation is considered Endangered and the Okhotsk Sea subpopulation is classified as Critically Endangered.



Bowhead whale distribution. Produced by Anders Siglund Norwegian Polar Institute, and reproduced with permission from Würsig, B., Thewissen, J.G.M. and Kovacs, K.M. Editors (2018) "Encyclopedia of Marine Mammals", 3rd ed. Academic Press, Elsevier: San Diego, CA. Copyright Elsevier: <http://www.elsevier.com>.

Bowhead whales are endemic to Arctic and sub-arctic waters, generally between 55° and 85° North, where they feed on zooplankton (mostly copepods and krill). There are four recognised populations.

Fun Facts

- Bowhead whales have been confirmed to live up to 150 years, although some research indicates they may live as long as 200 years!
- Bowhead whales use their enormous heads to break through ice up to a 1m thick!
- Bowheads have the longest baleen plates of any whale - over 4m long!



Bowhead whale mother and calf in the Arctic. Photo courtesy of Vicki Beaver, NOAAAFSC. (US NMFS Permit No. 14245).

Bowhead whale dive and blow

