Belugas



# Topic

* Ecology and Animals

# Objective

* Play a fun game.
* Learn all about belugas.

## Environmental Education Activity

# Age/Grade Range

* 5-6

# Group Size

* up to 30 students

# Time

* Set-up: 35 minutes
* Activity: 1 hr

# Materials

* Long strips of cloth to blindfold the kids
* Maktak (optional)
* Dried meat (optional)
* A drawing or picture of a beluga

# Set Up

1. Gather materials to show the kids and clear a large space in which to play the game.

# Activity Directions

1. Start with some Beluga Facts: Ask if they’ve ever seen a beluga before (there’s one at the Prince of Whales museum), try to get them to guess how big a baby beluga is, what they eat, what eats them. You can get about 5 youth to lay on the floor to show how big an adult beluga can be. If you have it, pass around the fake maktak and dried meat to show them.

Beluga Facts:

* Belugas are about 1.5 meters long when they are born
* Adult male belugas are 4.5 meters on average.
* They eat arctic cod, shrimp, squid, and sea worms
* They need to eat about 1000 arctic cod a day!
* Their only predators are killer whales, polar bears, and humans.
* They can also get sick from pollution and DDT that is in the water, or they can catch infectious diseases.
* Beluga whales are the only whales that can turn their heads (use their necks)
* They use echolocation to find food and air holes because their eye sight isn’t great.
* There is an organ in their head called a melon, which they use for echolocation.
* They communicate with clicks and whistles, they sound like birds.
* Some people call them melonheads, or sea canaries.
* Belugas can swim backwards
* A new layer is added to their teeth every year, scientists can use these rings to figure out how old the whale is (like tree rings)

1. Play the Beluga Echolocation game:

* This game is supposed to be played with a bigger group (more than 15), where the majority of the group forms a circle of ‘ice’ that the game is played in, so that blindfolded kids aren’t running into walls and to make it easier for them to catch fish. If you don’t have too many people let all of the kids be fish and just give them imaginary boundaries to stay within; the adult supervisors can make sure the belugas don’t run into walls and other stuff.
* Four (or however many blindfolds you have) people are beluga whales, everyone else is a fish. When the belugas say ‘BELUGA” everyone who is a fish has to reply “FISH,” through hearing them the belugas have to try to catch the fish while they are blindfolded. After 5 minutes or so let other kids be the belugas.

# Print Outs

* Echolocation game instructions