

Ranger Rick's ADVENTURES

STORY BY GERRY BISHOP; ART BY THE CHARACTERSHOP

RANGER RICK RACCOON, SCARLETT FOX, AND BOOMER BADGER ARE KAYAKING IN THE CHUKCHI SEA OFF THE COAST OF NORTHERN ALASKA. A BELUGA WHALE NAMED BELLA HAD SENT THEM A MESSAGE ABOUT "BIG TROUBLE" AND ASKED THEM TO MEET HER HERE.



This water is FREEEEZING!

What do you expect? We're in the ARCTIC!

We don't want to fall in, that's for sure. We'd be FURsicles in minutes!

Look at that polar bear!

It's looking right at us, Rick.

Let's just keep paddling!

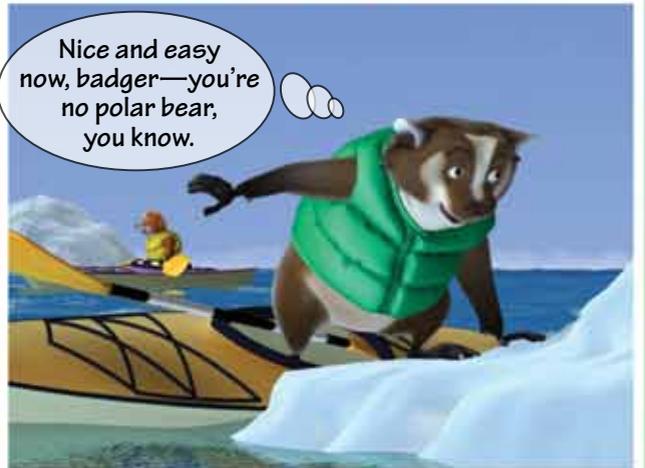


We should be getting close to where Bella said she'd be.

Wonder where she is.

Hmmm. I have an idea.

Nice and easy now, badger—you're no polar bear, you know.



Boomer! What are you DOING?

Gonna find Bella by getting a better view!

Careful—you don't have enough blubber to survive for long if you fall in THIS water!

Whoops!





Oh, NO!



Grab the paddle, Boomer!

I-I-I can't—my p-p-p-paws are too c-c-c-cold!



Huh???



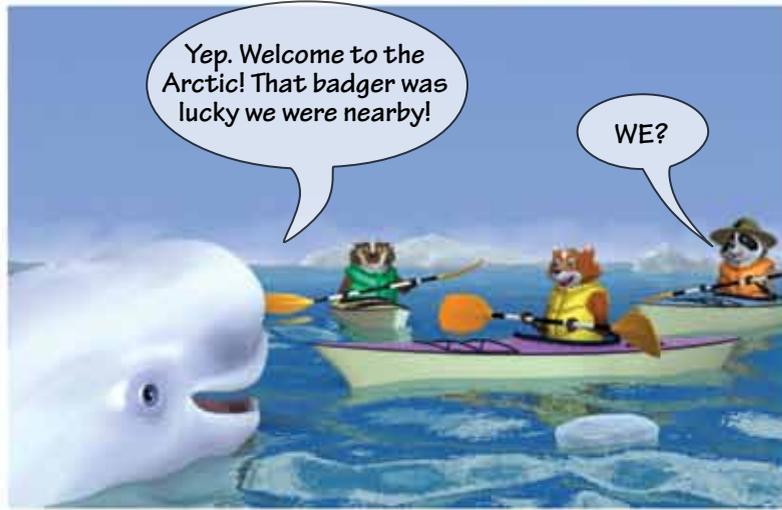
Whoa!



GLOP!

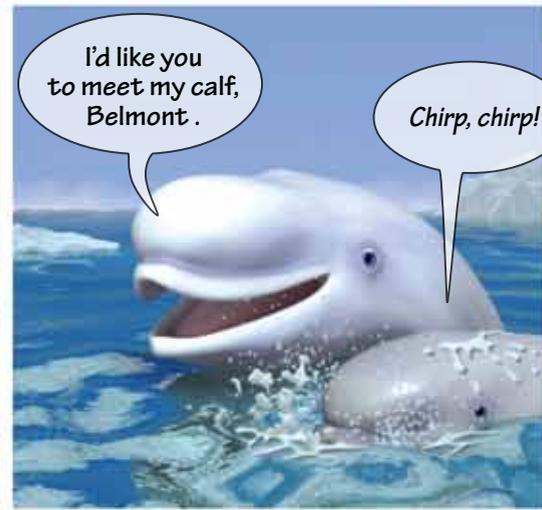


Is that you, Bella?



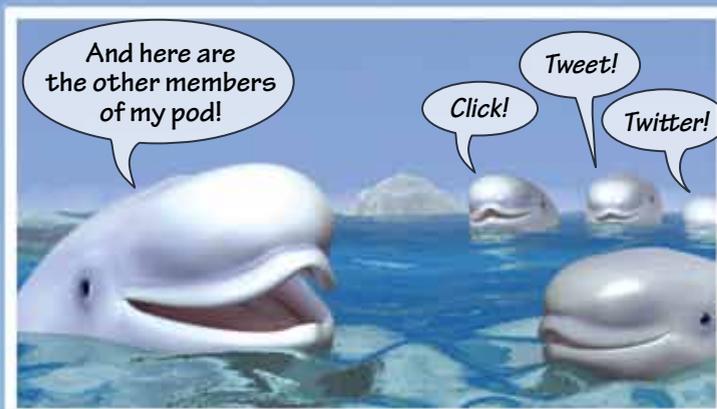
Yep. Welcome to the Arctic! That badger was lucky we were nearby!

WE?



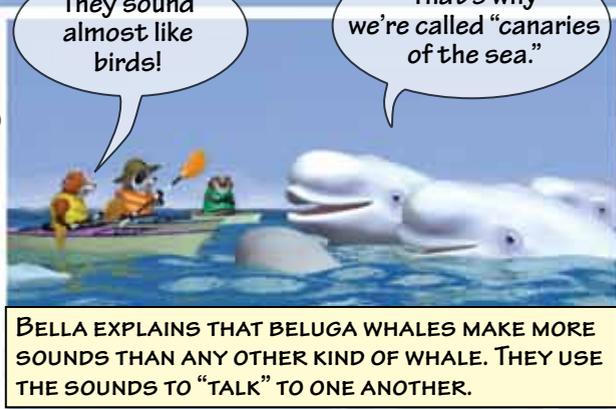
I'd like you to meet my calf, Belmont.

Chirp, chirp!



And here are the other members of my pod!

Click! Tweet! Twitter!



They sound almost like birds!

That's why we're called "canaries of the sea."

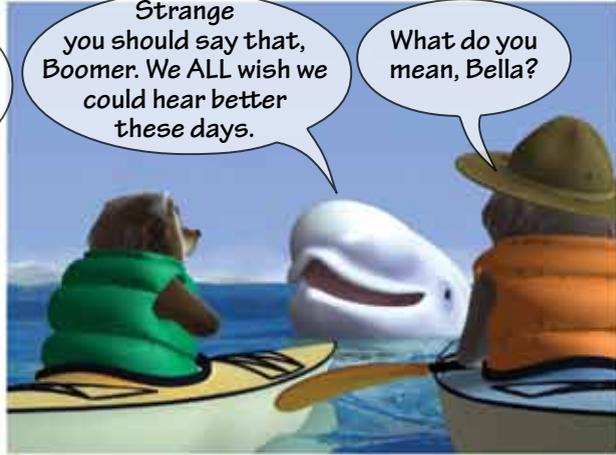
BELLA EXPLAINS THAT BELUGA WHALES MAKE MORE SOUNDS THAN ANY OTHER KIND OF WHALE. THEY USE THE SOUNDS TO "TALK" TO ONE ANOTHER.



That's very cool, Bella.

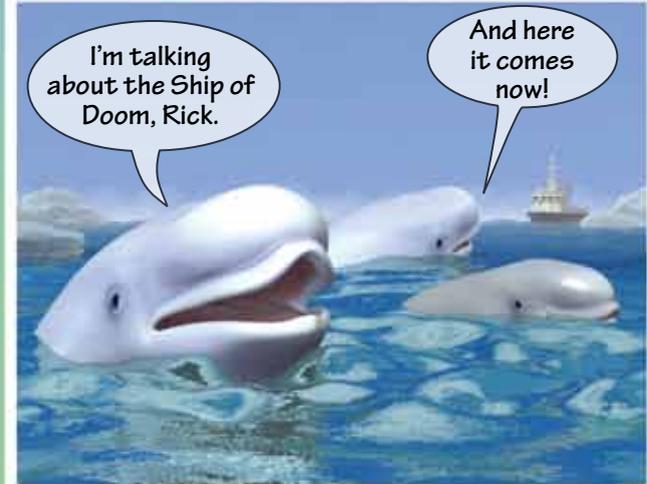
Speaking of "cool," how are you doing over there, Boomer?

O-K-K-K-K, I guess. But if my teeth stopped ch-ch-chattering, I could hear those whales a lot better.



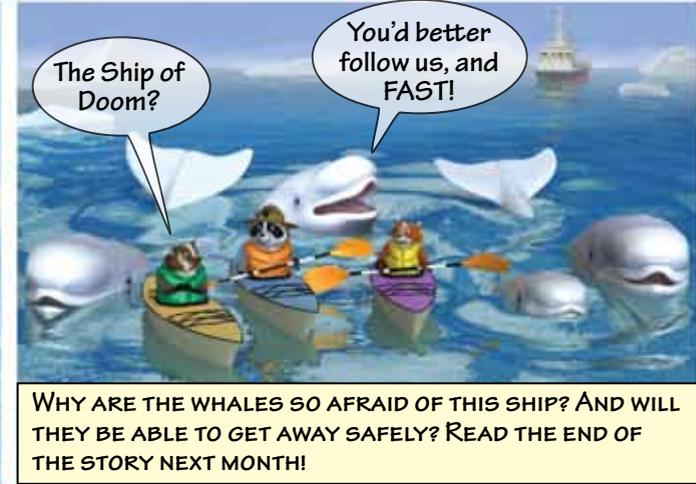
Strange you should say that, Boomer. We ALL wish we could hear better these days.

What do you mean, Bella?



I'm talking about the Ship of Doom, Rick.

And here it comes now!



The Ship of Doom?

You'd better follow us, and FAST!

WHY ARE THE WHALES SO AFRAID OF THIS SHIP? AND WILL THEY BE ABLE TO GET AWAY SAFELY? READ THE END OF THE STORY NEXT MONTH!

MORE FACTS

- The beluga whale gets its name from a Russian word meaning "white one." Belugas are the only all-white whales.
- Baby belugas are gray. But as they grow up, they slowly turn white.
- Belugas live only in the icy waters in and near the Arctic. They have thick layers of blubber (fat) under their skin that help keep them warm.
- Like dolphins, belugas make sounds that pass through the water and bounce off nearby objects. The sounds return to the whales as echoes. By listening to the echoes, the whales can figure out what and where the objects are (even when it's too dark or murky to see them). This ability is called echolocation.

RangerRick