

Make a Paper Whale Skeleton

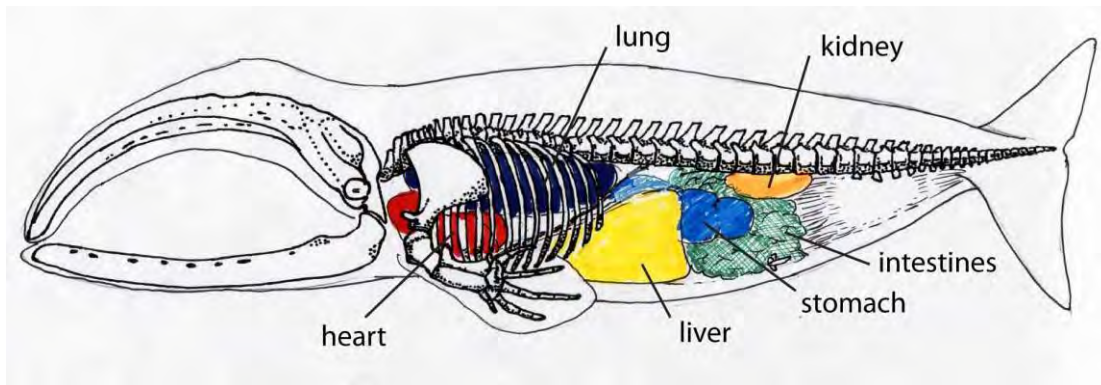
Make a mini version of a bowhead whale skeleton!

Bowhead whales are BIG animals with BIG heads! The bowhead (*aqviq*) is a BIG part of cultural traditions of the Iñupiat people.

Materials Needed: Bowhead Whale Skeleton printable (or draw your own), coloring materials, scissors, string. *Optional:* Hole punch, tape.

Instructions:

Step 1: Color the bowhead whale skeleton. You may choose to make it realistic and color the body black, gray, and white. Or use your imagination! Decorate the other side. One side could represent the outside of the whale, and the other side is the skeleton. You can even draw in the organs!



Step 2: Cut out the whale template.

Step 3: Use scissors or a hole punch to make a small hole and tie a piece of string through the hole to hang up your whale. You can also use tape to attach the string. You've made a hanging whale, like the one at the museum!

Bowhead Whales

Bowhead whales are not as big as blue whales (the largest animal), but they are still big! Bowheads have the largest mouth and head of all animals, and can live to be 200 years old. They can grow to 60 feet, weigh up to 120,000 pounds, and have a layer of up to 1.5 feet of thick blubber. Bowheads get so big by eating tiny zooplankton, less than 1 inch in length. Bowheads are an important food source for Iñupiat and Yup'ik peoples.



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Image: www.britannica.com/animal/bowhead-right-whale

Museum Bowhead

A 42-foot long bowhead skeleton was hung in the museum's lobby in 2021.

Bowheads have big heads! The skull is one-third of the body length. Watch as museum staff move the skull from the Gallery of Alaska to get it ready for display.

- Bowhead Articulation: Skull Move and Clean: www.youtube.com/watch?v=knZjBREYD-w

It takes a big team of people with different skills and expertise to create a museum exhibit. Watch videos of mammalogists piecing together the backbone and artists painting replica bones.

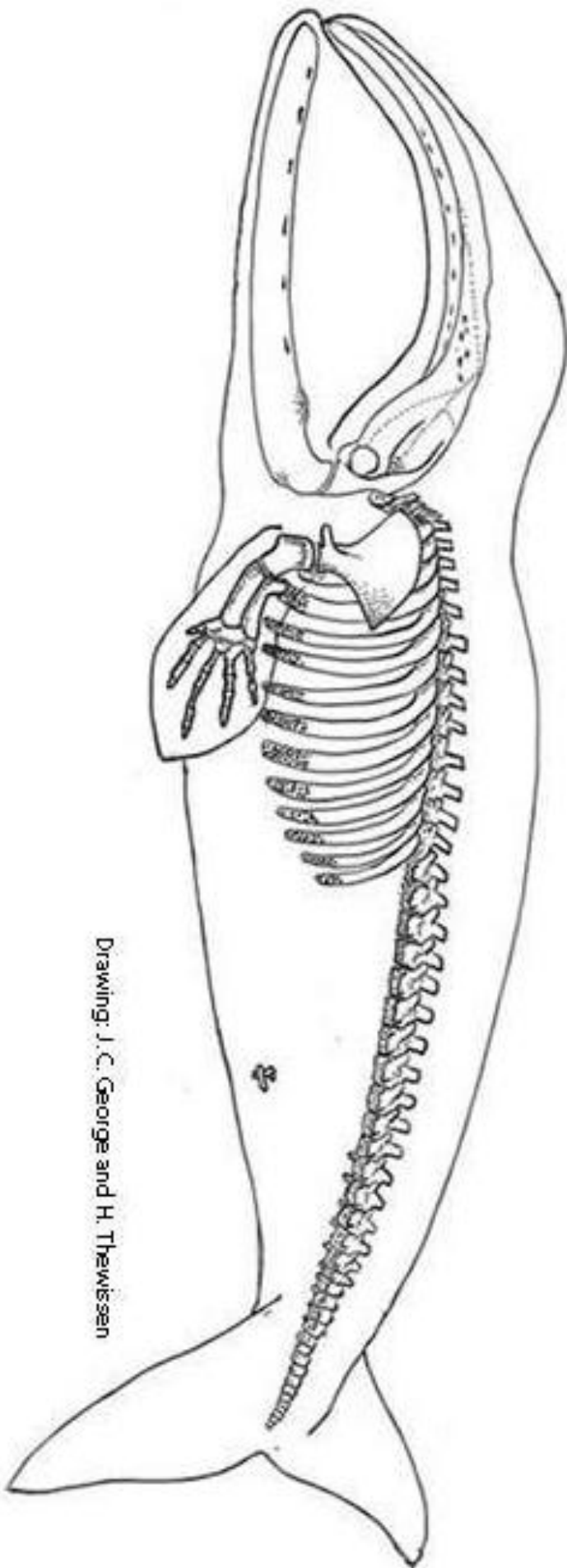
- Bowhead Articulation: The Backbone: www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5SYx2qzGRc
- Bowhead Articulation: Replica Bones: www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_D54kZsyek



UAF photo by JR Ancheta.

Bowhead Whale Skeleton Printable

Balaena mysticetus



Drawing: J. C. George and H. Thewissen