

NARWHAL

REVEALING AN ARCTIC LEGEND



EXHIBITION PROSPECTUS



Smithsonian

The elusive narwhal with its magnificent spiral tooth has inspired art, legend, and cultural practice for centuries. Today, Inuit knowledge coupled with scientific research help us better understand narwhals—and the changing Arctic. The exhibition features a full-scale narwhal model and engaging interactives that will appeal to all generations.

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Glenn Williams, Narwhal Tusk Research

UNIQUE IN NATURE

No animal on earth has anything quite like the narwhal's long, spiraled tooth. It is flexible up to 12 degrees in either direction, and has an “inside-out” construction, with a softer outside layer and a harder mineral core. Most male narwhals (and a few females) have the tusk, which pierces the upper lip, and likely serves multiple functions. Narwhals commonly travel in groups (or pods) of about 20, but these groups can be up to 1,000.

UNICORN OF THE SEA

The mysterious narwhal is in fact a mammal, part of the cetacean, or whale, lineage, and ranges from 13 to 18 feet long (not including the tusk). Narwhals only live near the Arctic Circle, where climate and sea ice changes pose a mounting challenge to their survival. Although called “unicorn of the sea,” the narwhal's distinctive spire is not a horn, but a tooth. This exhibition takes a fascinating look at evolving perceptions about these amazing creatures, from their depiction in the 1500s as angry sea monsters to their status as icons of pop culture today.





THE INUIT AND NARWHALS

The Inuit are the indigenous people in Arctic Canada, Greenland, and parts of Alaska. Nearly everything we know about narwhal behavior has been guided by the Inuit over generations, and the animals are crucial to their diet, economy, and community life.

Climate change is melting ice and altering weather patterns, which disrupts Inuit food supply and jeopardizes entire ecosystems.

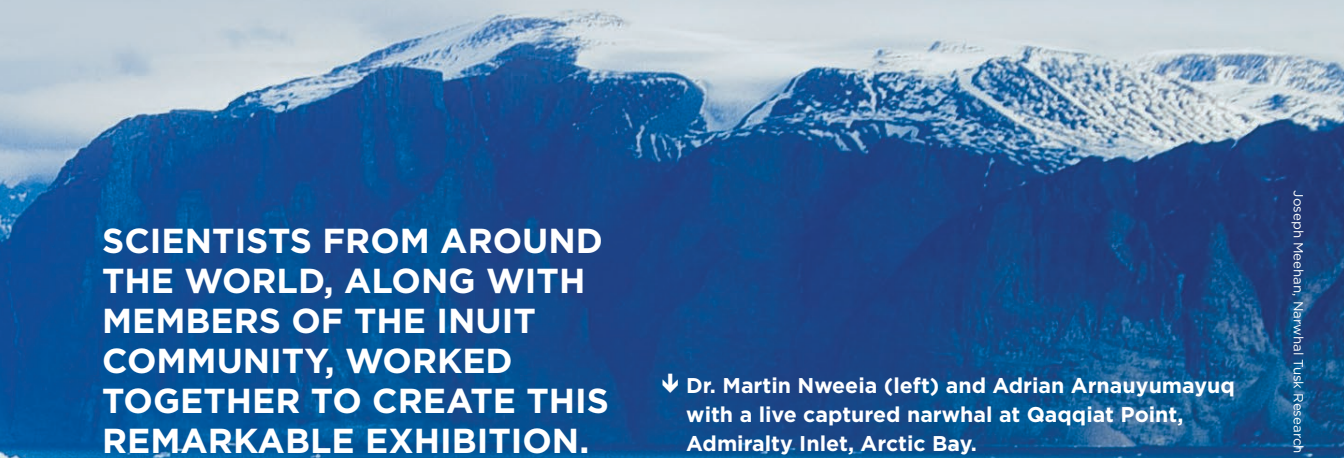
↑ *Narwhal: Revealing an Arctic Legend* has delighted huge crowds at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History since 2017.



Joseph Meehan, Narwhal Tusk Research

SCIENTISTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD, ALONG WITH MEMBERS OF THE INUIT COMMUNITY, WORKED TOGETHER TO CREATE THIS REMARKABLE EXHIBITION.

↓ Dr. Martin Nweeia (left) and Adrian Arnauyumayuq with a live captured narwhal at Qaqqiat Point, Admiralty Inlet, Arctic Bay.



Joseph Meehan, Narwhal Tusk Research



Gretchen Freund, Narwhal Tusk Research

EXHIBITION AT A GLANCE

- 16-foot, life-sized model of a male narwhal (requires 13-foot ceiling height)
- Five physical interactives, including touchable models of a narwhal tusk and prehistoric fossil
- Two videos (venue provides monitors)
- 2,000 square feet
- Moderate security*
- Participation fee: \$20,000 for 12 weeks, plus pro-rated shipping
- Tour begins March 2020

*This exhibition has been designated moderate security and will be offered to those institutions able to meet the Smithsonian's key requirements regarding exhibition space, fire protection, environmental controls, light levels, security, and handling.

To learn more about moderate security requirements, or to book this show, contact Minnie Russell, 202-633-3160, russellm@si.edu

For content/design questions, contact Carol Bossert, 202-633-2601, bossertc@si.edu

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

The exhibition is only a portion of what SITES delivers. As host of *Narwhal: Revealing an Arctic Legend* you will also receive:

- Complete curatorial and registration information
- Complete shipping, handling, and installation instructions
- Wall-to-wall fine arts insurance coverage under the Smithsonian's policy
- Public relations support, including templates for promotional materials, images, logos, and advice on promoting the exhibition and special events
- List of speakers and Smithsonian-developed educational materials for general audiences and school groups
- Companion book available, *Narwhal: Revealing an Arctic Legend* by William W. Fitzhugh and Martin Nweeia (eds.), 2018 winner of the William Mills Prize for Non-Fiction

Aliangua (Narwhal), Tim Pitsiulak, Lithograph, 2016



VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- **ENCOUNTER** first-hand accounts from international scientists and Inuit community members about their interactions and history with narwhals
- **BECOME** immersed in the narwhal's Arctic environment through breathtaking panoramic landscapes
- **LISTEN** to a soundscape of shifting ice, flowing water, narwhal vocalizations, and Arctic birdcalls
- **READ** the Inuit legend of the narwhal, illustrated by artwork from Inuit community members
- **LEARN** what the narwhal tusk is for, test your knowledge, and see a fossil whale skull from an extinct narwhal relative
- **COMPARE** the different ways that narwhals and their whale relatives have adapted to the Arctic environment
- **TOUCH** a replica of a narwhal tusk and measure your height against it
- **LOOK** at examples of the many ways that narwhals have inspired pop culture

Narwhal: Revealing an Arctic Legend is organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) in collaboration with the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

SITES has been sharing the wealth of the Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 65 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science, and history, which are shown wherever people live, work, and play. sites.si.edu

Special thanks to everyone who contributed their expertise to the exhibition, especially: Dr. William W. Fitzhugh, Arctic Studies Center at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History; Dr. Martin Nweeia, Harvard University; Dr. Marianne Marcoux, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

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