

CURRICULUM SUPPLEMENT

For use with the **Introduction** section of Watching Walrus

ACTIVITY ONE: ABANDONING A HAULOUT

Materials:

No materials are needed for this activity

Teaching Time: 10-15 minutes

Background:

When walrus haul out on land they expose themselves to new hazards, including the possibility of trampling. At land haulouts, like those seen in the Icy Cape videos, walrus may haul out in groups of thousands of animals. When startled (by a plane, boat or natural hazard), walrus may abandon a haulout en masse, rushing into the water. Floating sea ice haulouts present walrus with multiple access routes to water, while land haulouts limit water access. In this activity students will act out these haulout scenarios, illustrating the increased risks posed by land-based haulouts.

Directions:

1. Gather six student volunteers at the front of the room. Ask these students to make a circle facing each other. Explain to the class that these students represent walrus on a floating sea ice haulout. If these animals are startled and decide to abandon a haulout, what will they do?
2. Have student volunteers abandon the haulout. Students will probably scatter in all directions. Point out that when walrus haulout on sea ice they have many routes to the water. These animals were able to abandon the haulout without significant risk of injury.
3. Next have all students come out into the hallway. Have students stand close together in a group, facing in

random directions. Explain that the class represents walrus at a land-based haulout, and that the doorway to the classroom represents the route to the water. Have all students abandon the haulout*, exiting only through the classroom door. With only one access route to the water, abandoning a haulout becomes much more dangerous. Have students return to seats for discussion of activity.

**This activity mimics a potential trampling scenario, and can be dangerous. Before having students abandon the haulout, ask that all students be sure to walk and be conscious of the safety their classmates.*

Discussion:

Ask the group to compare the two types of haulouts. Spark discussion using questions like:

- How did it feel being a walrus at the first haulout?**
- What about at the second?**
- Were the risks to animals at these two haulouts the same, or were they different?**
- Who would be at the greatest risk for injury while abandoning a haulout? Why?**

Conclusions:

Land haulouts pose increased risks to walrus, especially calves. When walrus abandon a land haulout they have limited exit points, resulting in increased chance of trampling. Calves and juveniles are the most common victims of stampede events like the one at Icy Cape because they are smaller, weaker and less coordinated than adults. The size of sea ice platforms greatly limits the number of walrus that can haul out together; alternately, land haulouts allow large numbers of walrus to group together. Cramped conditions at land haulouts further increase the risk of trampling.



ACTIVITY TWO: BEGINNING YOUR RESEARCH MAP

Materials:

- Large Alaska wall map (crop and use either: [National Atlas map](#) or [USGS bathymetric map](#))
- Pens/ pencils
- Access to [maps.google.com](#) or Google EARTH, or a similar online mapping website.

Time: 10 minutes

Background:

Throughout this virtual fieldtrip students will be constructing a research map. Your class's research map will feature land and water features, as relevant to the walrus research project. Features will be added to the map as they are presented in the curriculum.

In this activity, students will add features introduced in the **Introduction** section of *Watching Walrus*, including:

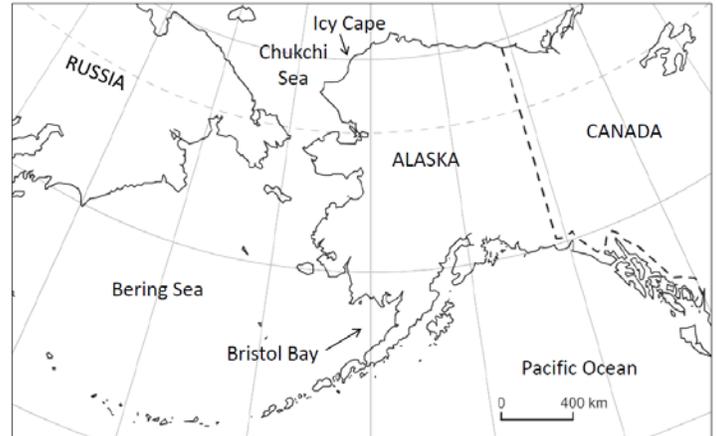
- Alaska*
- Russia*
- Canada*
- Pacific Ocean*
- Chukchi Sea*
- Bering Sea*
- Icy Cape*

Directions:

1. Display large Alaska wall map at the front of the room.
2. Explain to students that as they navigate through this virtual fieldtrip, they will be adding features this Alaska map. You can emphasize the size of Alaska by sharing the following fact with students: *Alaska is more than twice the size of Texas and has more coastline than the rest of the United State combined.* You may also choose

to show an image comparing the size of the state of Alaska to the rest of the United States (see below).

3. Using [maps.google.com](#) locate each of the locations listed above. Label them on your map. *As you do this, be conscious that many other features will be added later (so save some space).*



Discussion:

What do students already know about each feature added? Topics might include:

- regional climate*
- population density*
- known animal species in area*
- personal impressions*
- news stories about region*



