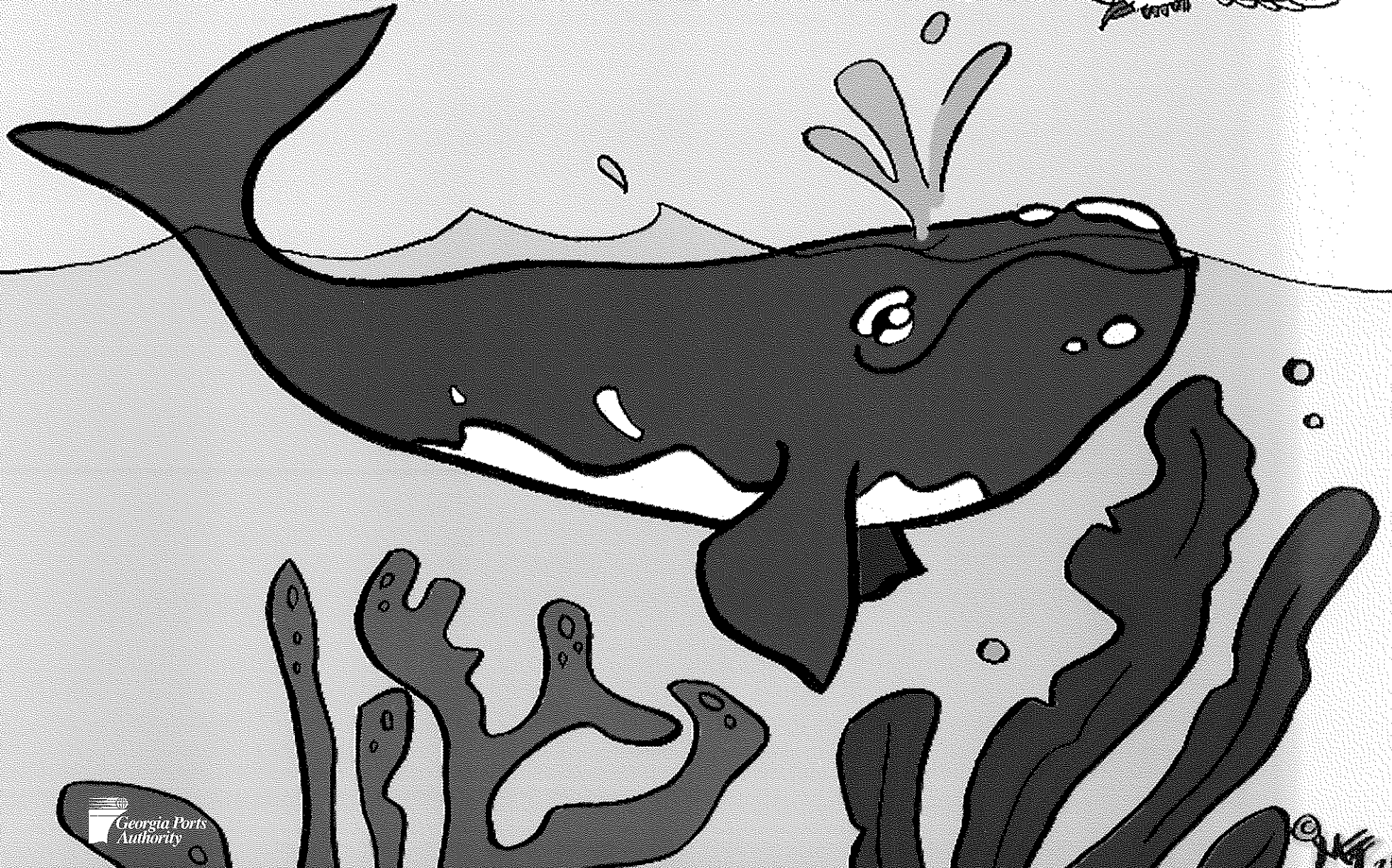
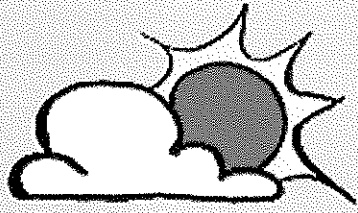


The North Atlantic Right Whale



About the North Atlantic Right Whale

The North Atlantic right whale* is one of the world's rarest, large whales there is today. For many reasons, this whale is very near extinction. Known also as *Eubalaena glacialis*, this mammal spends its entire life in the ocean.

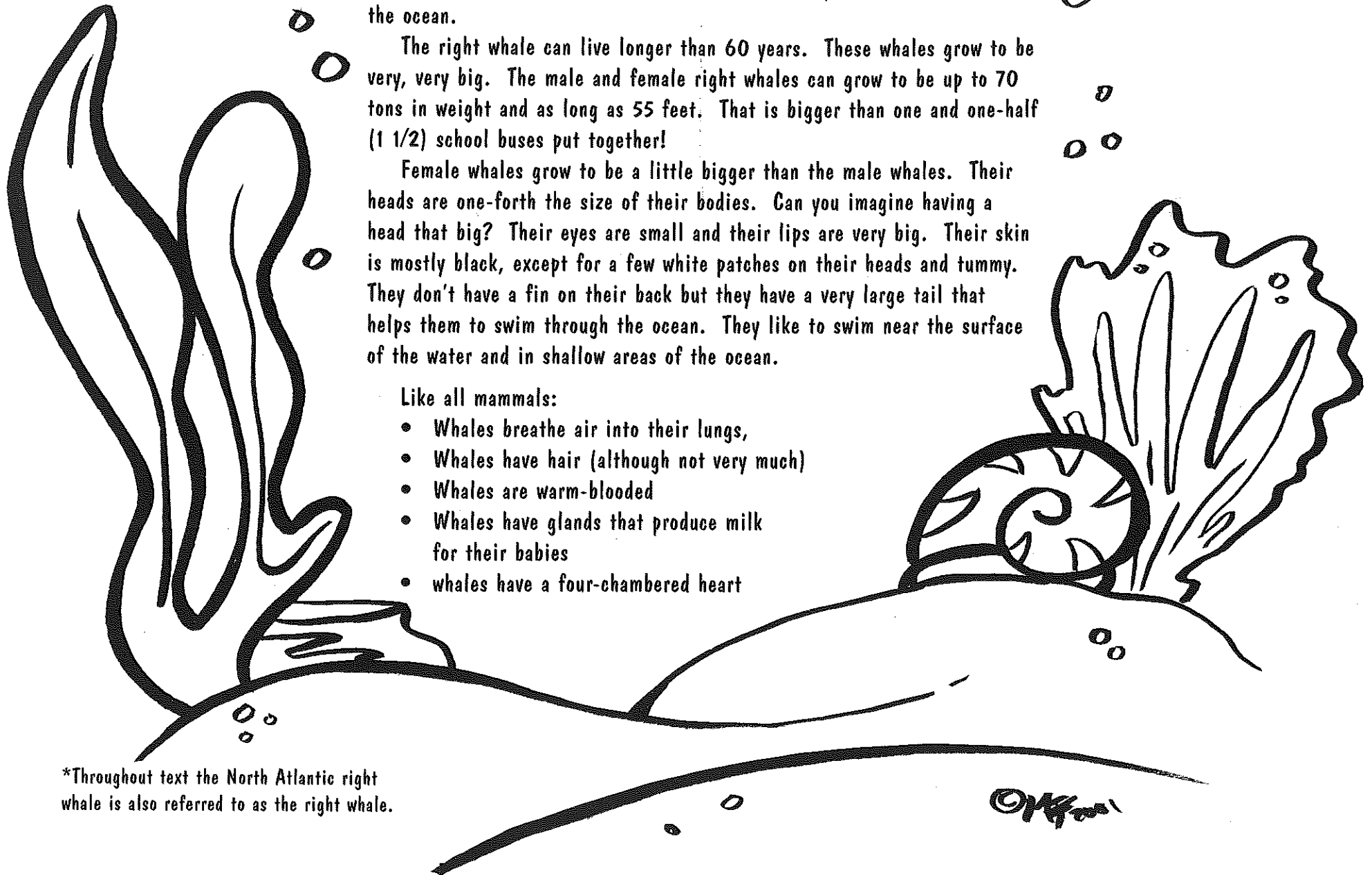
The right whale can live longer than 60 years. These whales grow to be very, very big. The male and female right whales can grow to be up to 70 tons in weight and as long as 55 feet. That is bigger than one and one-half (1 1/2) school buses put together!

Female whales grow to be a little bigger than the male whales. Their heads are one-fourth the size of their bodies. Can you imagine having a head that big? Their eyes are small and their lips are very big. Their skin is mostly black, except for a few white patches on their heads and tummy. They don't have a fin on their back but they have a very large tail that helps them to swim through the ocean. They like to swim near the surface of the water and in shallow areas of the ocean.

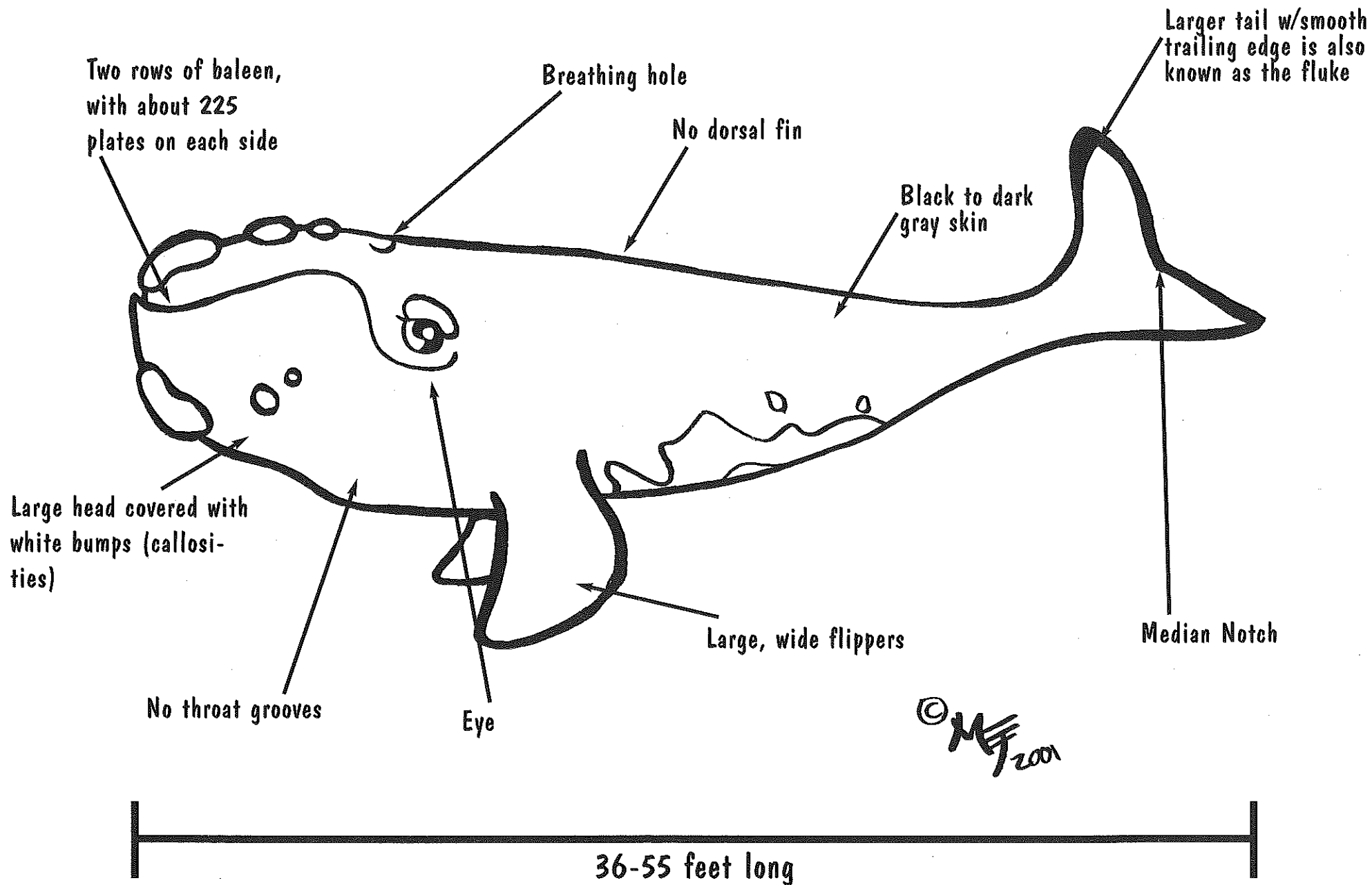
Like all mammals:

- Whales breathe air into their lungs,
- Whales have hair (although not very much)
- Whales are warm-blooded
- Whales have glands that produce milk for their babies
- whales have a four-chambered heart

*Throughout text the North Atlantic right whale is also referred to as the right whale.



North Atlantic Right Whale

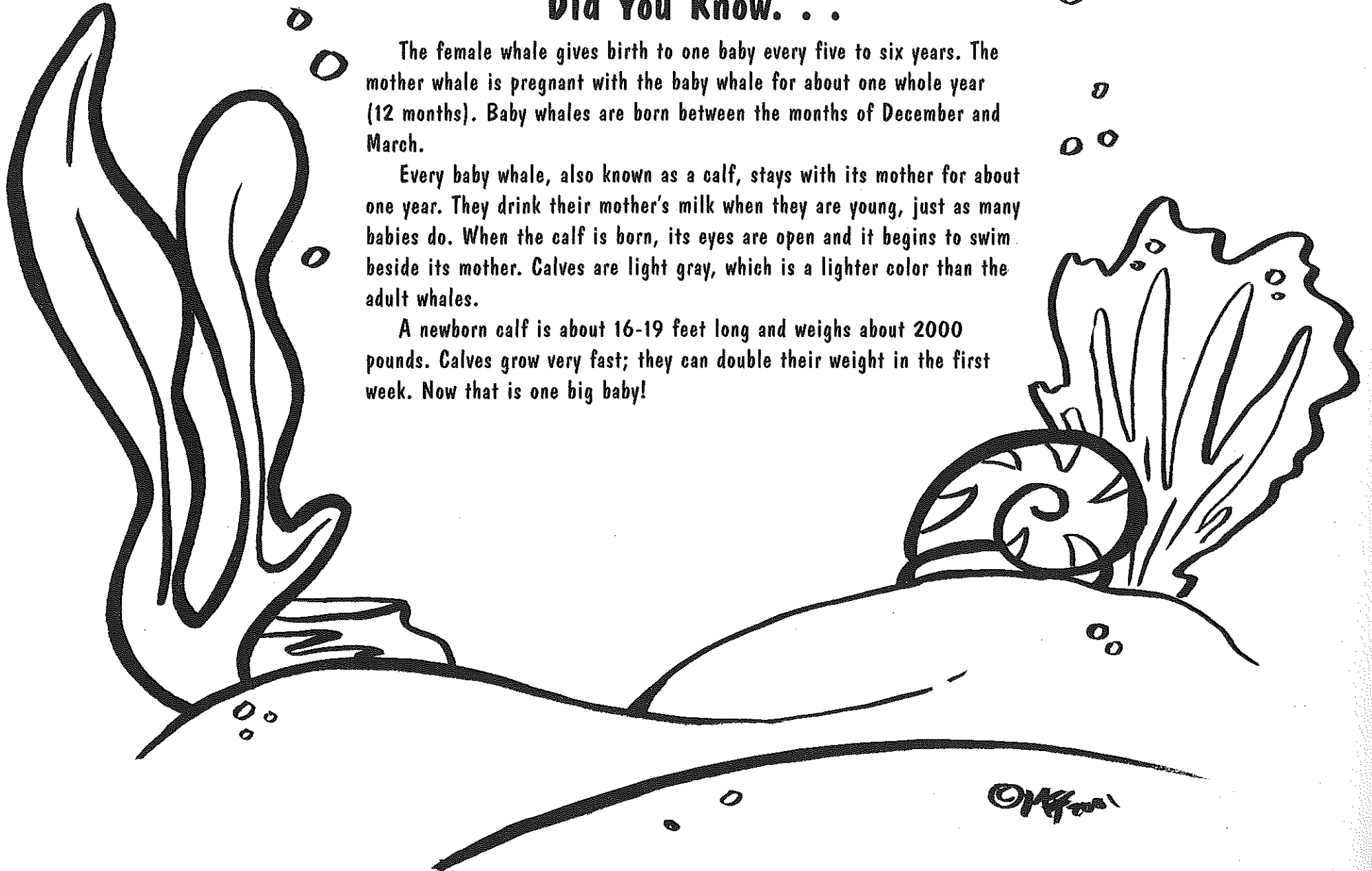


Did You Know. . .

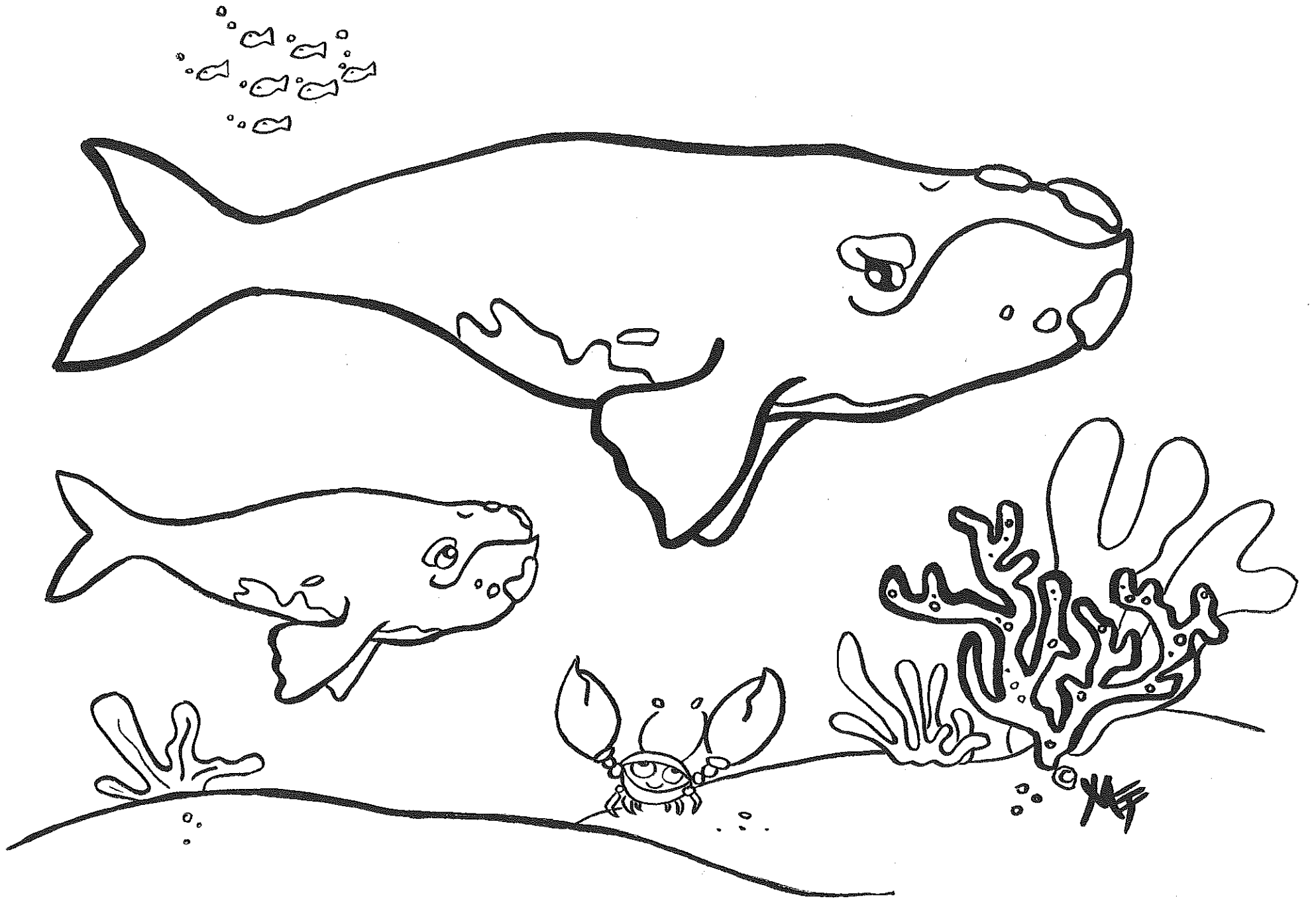
The female whale gives birth to one baby every five to six years. The mother whale is pregnant with the baby whale for about one whole year (12 months). Baby whales are born between the months of December and March.

Every baby whale, also known as a calf, stays with its mother for about one year. They drink their mother's milk when they are young, just as many babies do. When the calf is born, its eyes are open and it begins to swim beside its mother. Calves are light gray, which is a lighter color than the adult whales.

A newborn calf is about 16-19 feet long and weighs about 2000 pounds. Calves grow very fast; they can double their weight in the first week. Now that is one big baby!



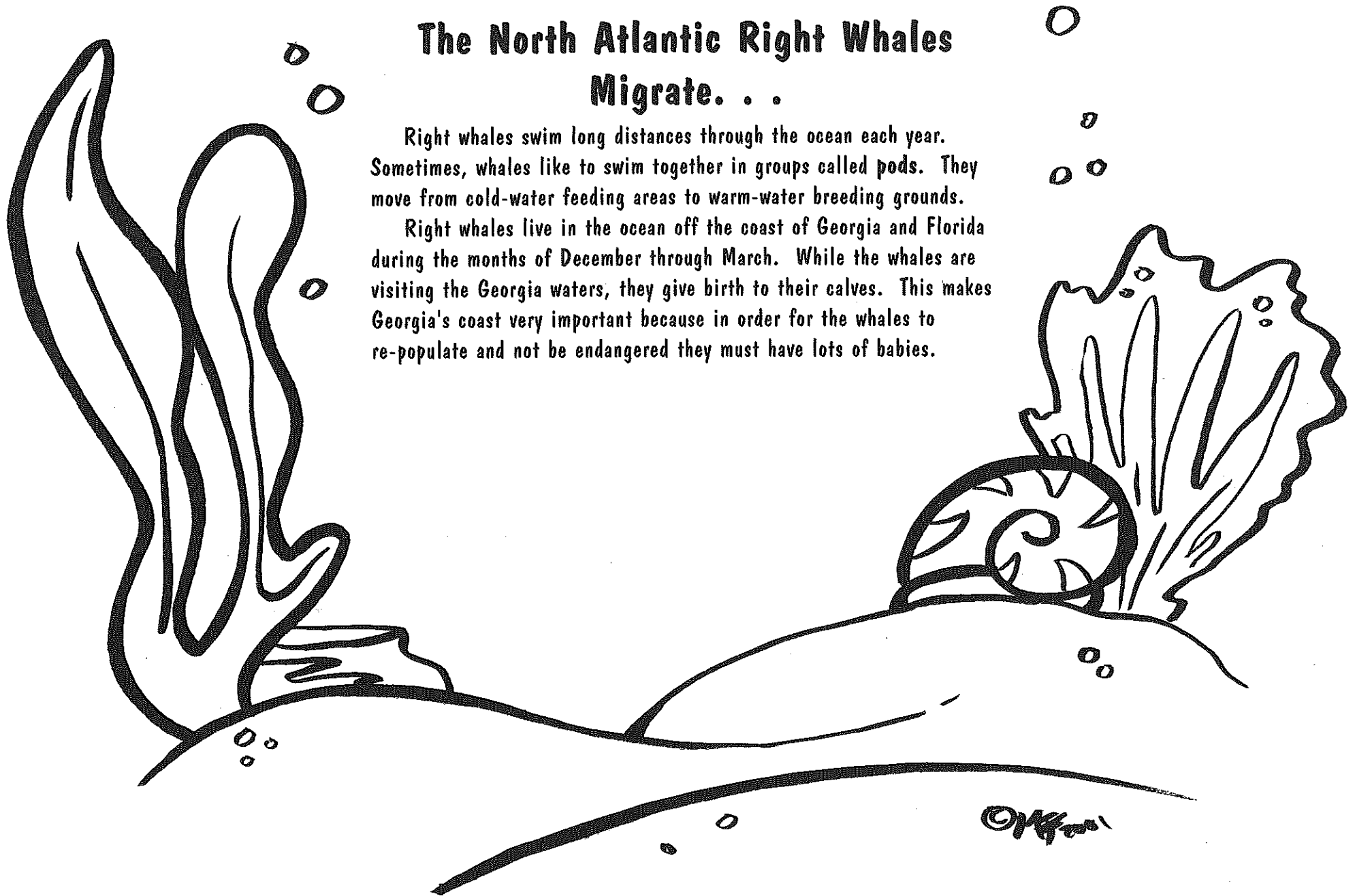
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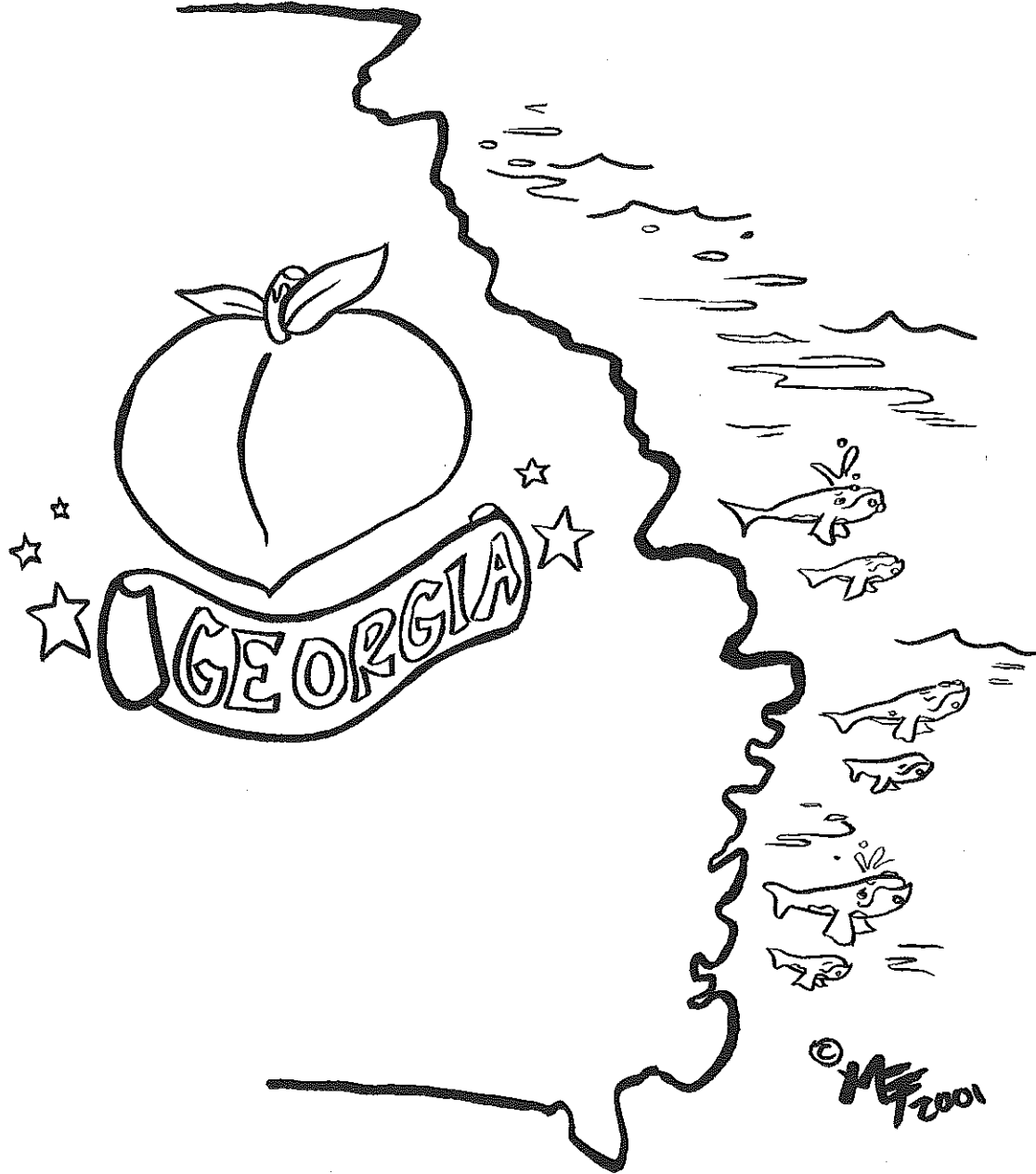
The North Atlantic Right Whales Migrate. . .

Right whales swim long distances through the ocean each year. Sometimes, whales like to swim together in groups called pods. They move from cold-water feeding areas to warm-water breeding grounds.

Right whales live in the ocean off the coast of Georgia and Florida during the months of December through March. While the whales are visiting the Georgia waters, they give birth to their calves. This makes Georgia's coast very important because in order for the whales to re-populate and not be endangered they must have lots of babies.



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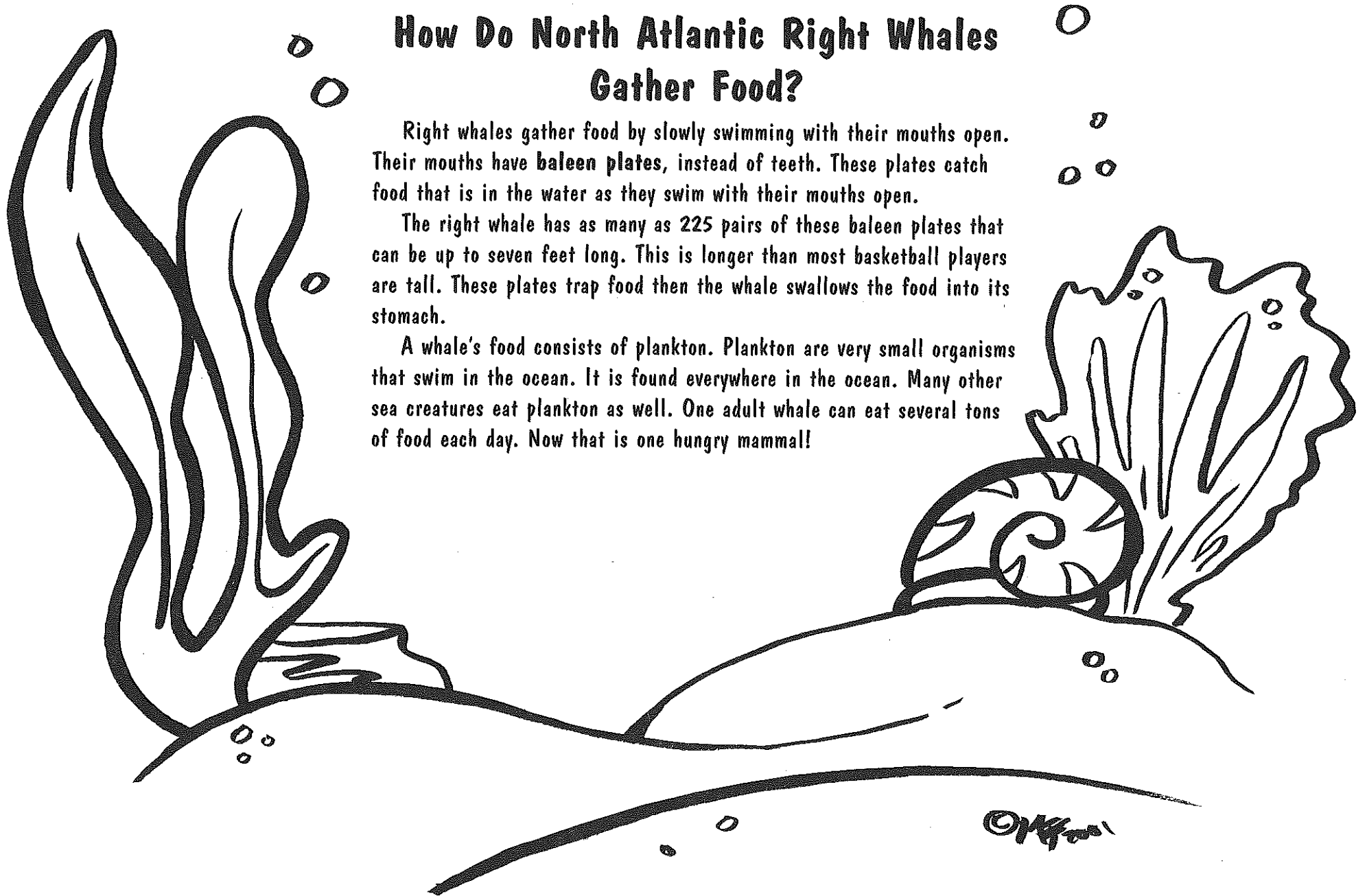


How Do North Atlantic Right Whales Gather Food?

Right whales gather food by slowly swimming with their mouths open. Their mouths have baleen plates, instead of teeth. These plates catch food that is in the water as they swim with their mouths open.

The right whale has as many as 225 pairs of these baleen plates that can be up to seven feet long. This is longer than most basketball players are tall. These plates trap food then the whale swallows the food into its stomach.

A whale's food consists of plankton. Plankton are very small organisms that swim in the ocean. It is found everywhere in the ocean. Many other sea creatures eat plankton as well. One adult whale can eat several tons of food each day. Now that is one hungry mammal!



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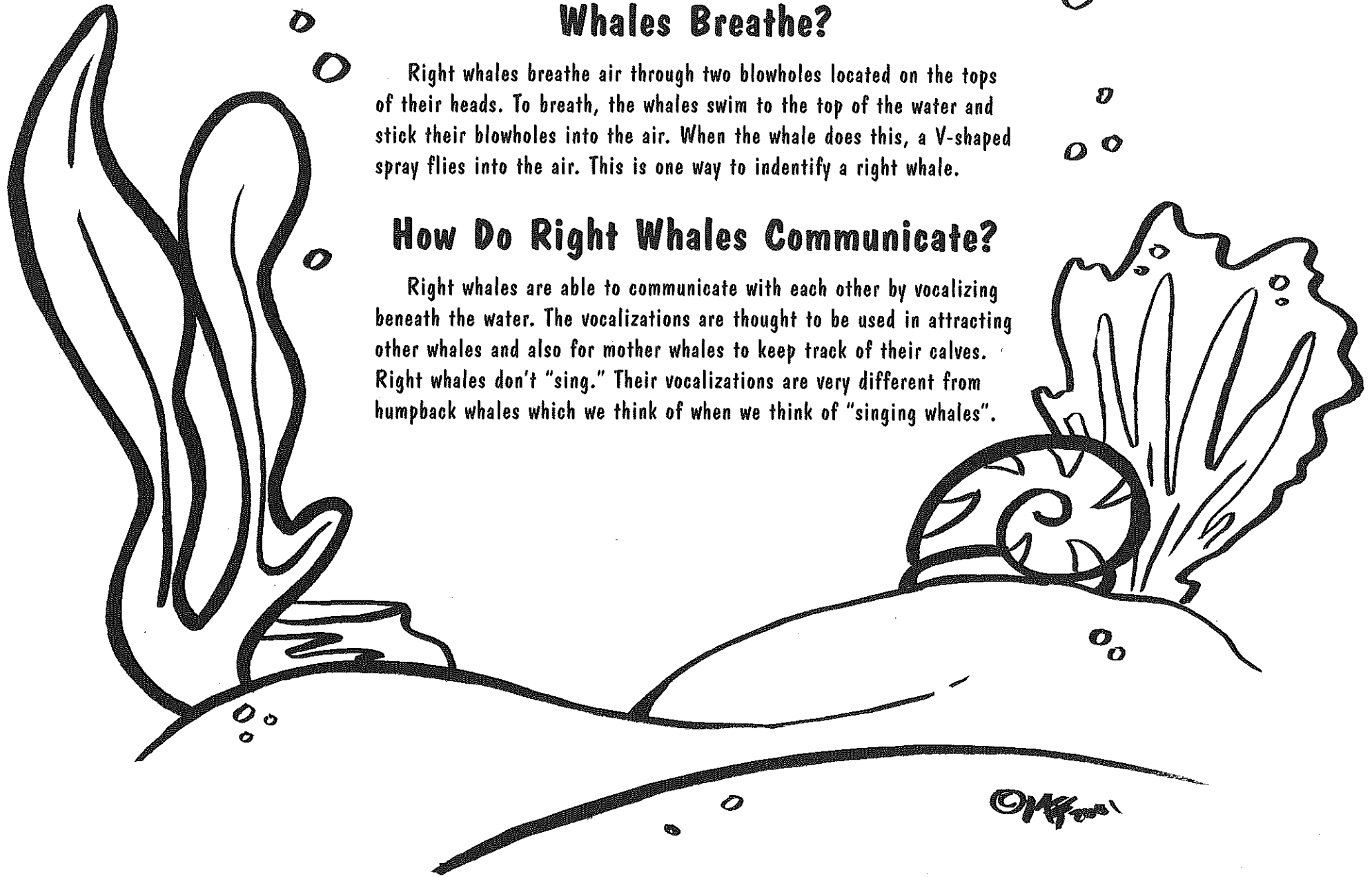


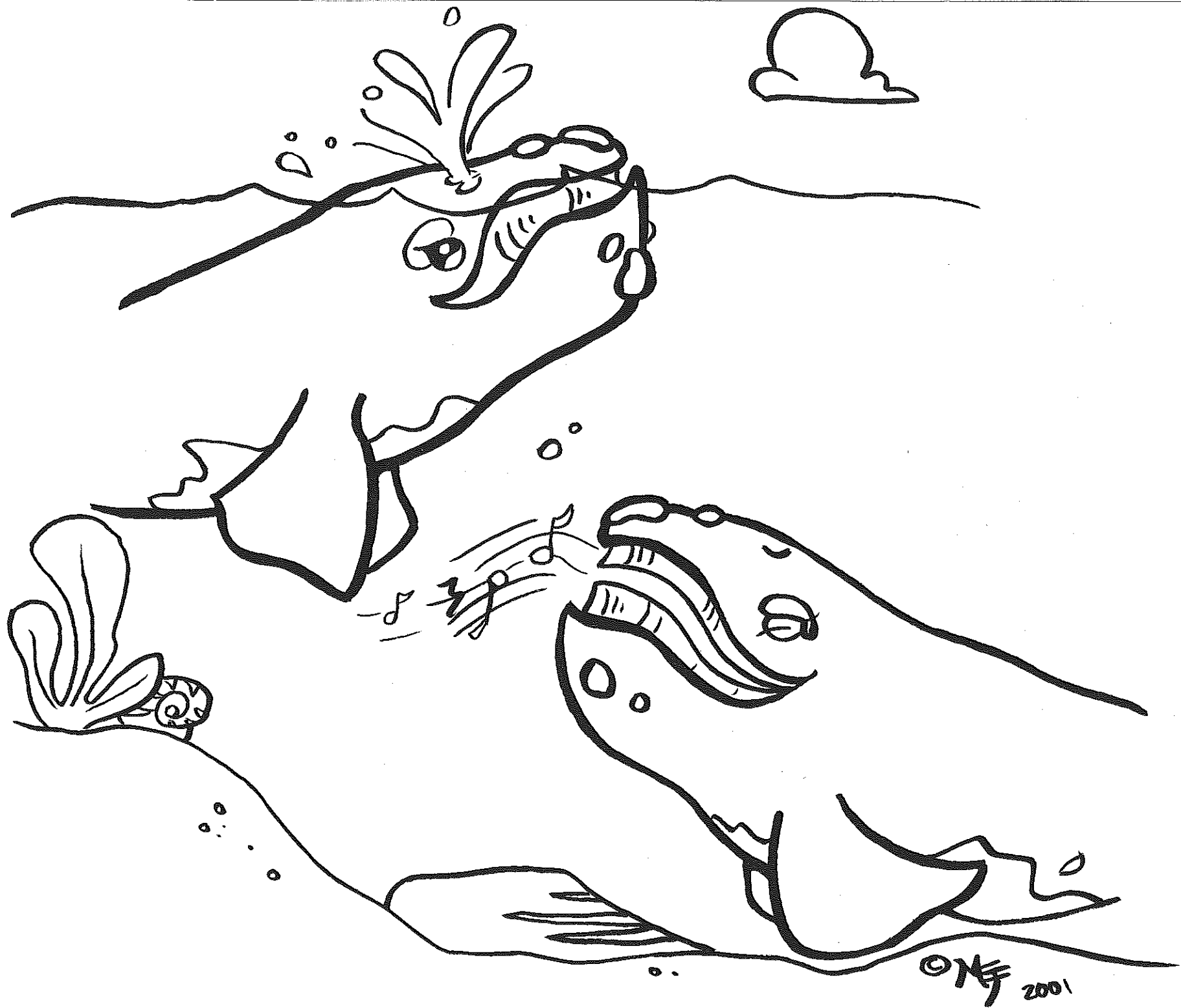
How Do North Atlantic Right Whales Breathe?

Right whales breathe air through two blowholes located on the tops of their heads. To breathe, the whales swim to the top of the water and stick their blowholes into the air. When the whale does this, a V-shaped spray flies into the air. This is one way to identify a right whale.

How Do Right Whales Communicate?

Right whales are able to communicate with each other by vocalizing beneath the water. The vocalizations are thought to be used in attracting other whales and also for mother whales to keep track of their calves. Right whales don't "sing." Their vocalizations are very different from humpback whales which we think of when we think of "singing whales".

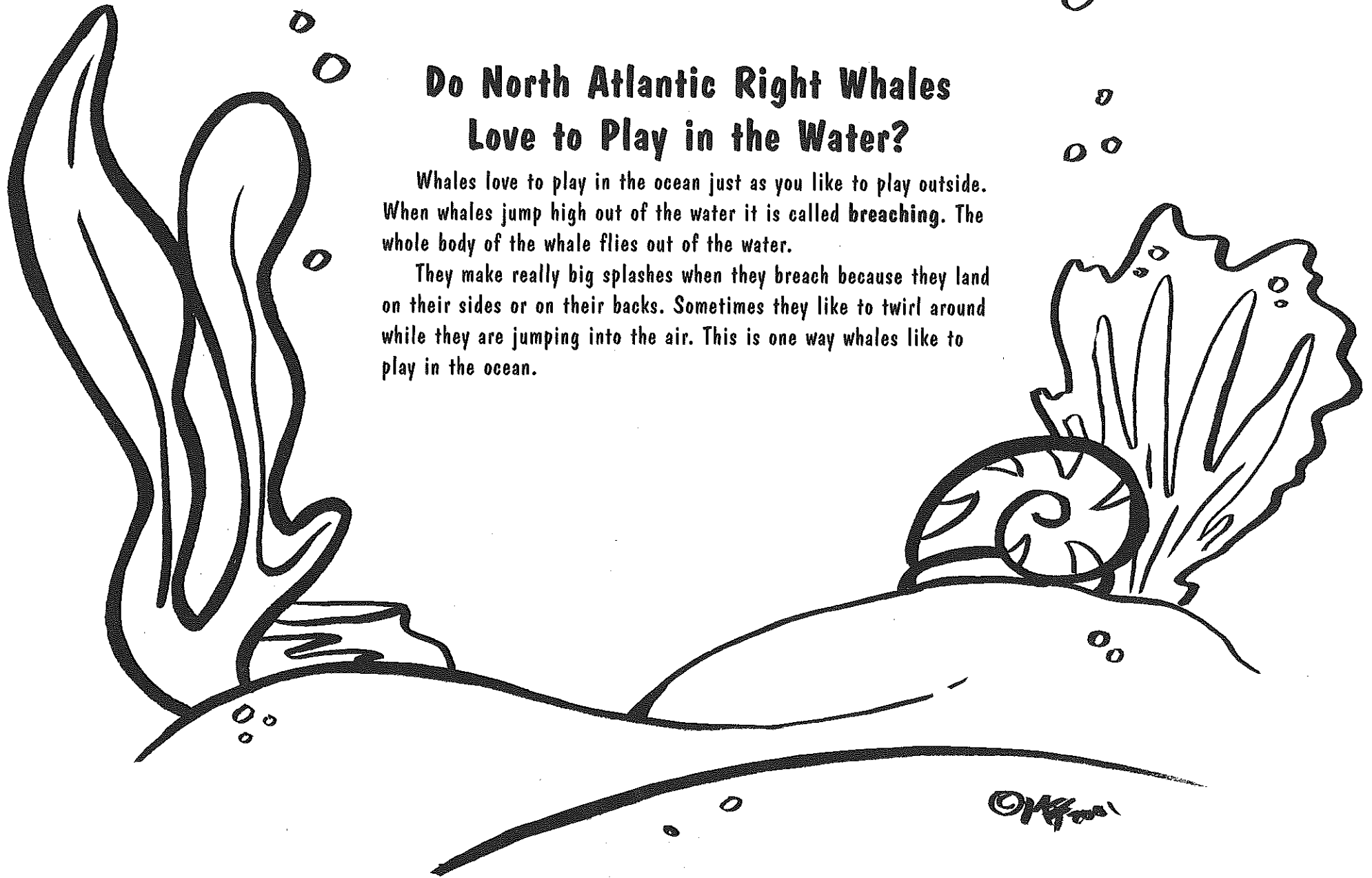


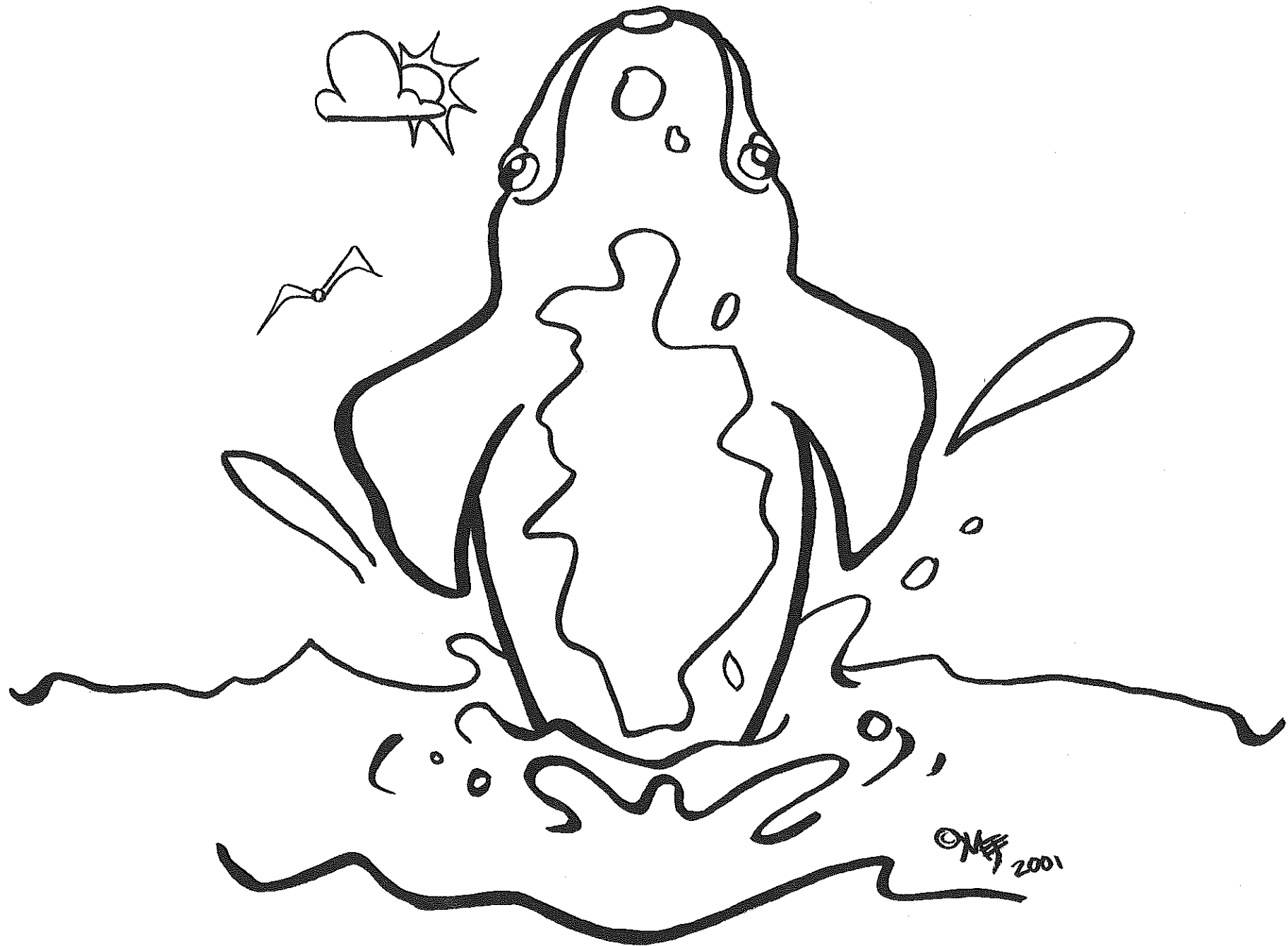


Do North Atlantic Right Whales Love to Play in the Water?

Whales love to play in the ocean just as you like to play outside. When whales jump high out of the water it is called breaching. The whole body of the whale flies out of the water.

They make really big splashes when they breach because they land on their sides or on their backs. Sometimes they like to twirl around while they are jumping into the air. This is one way whales like to play in the ocean.

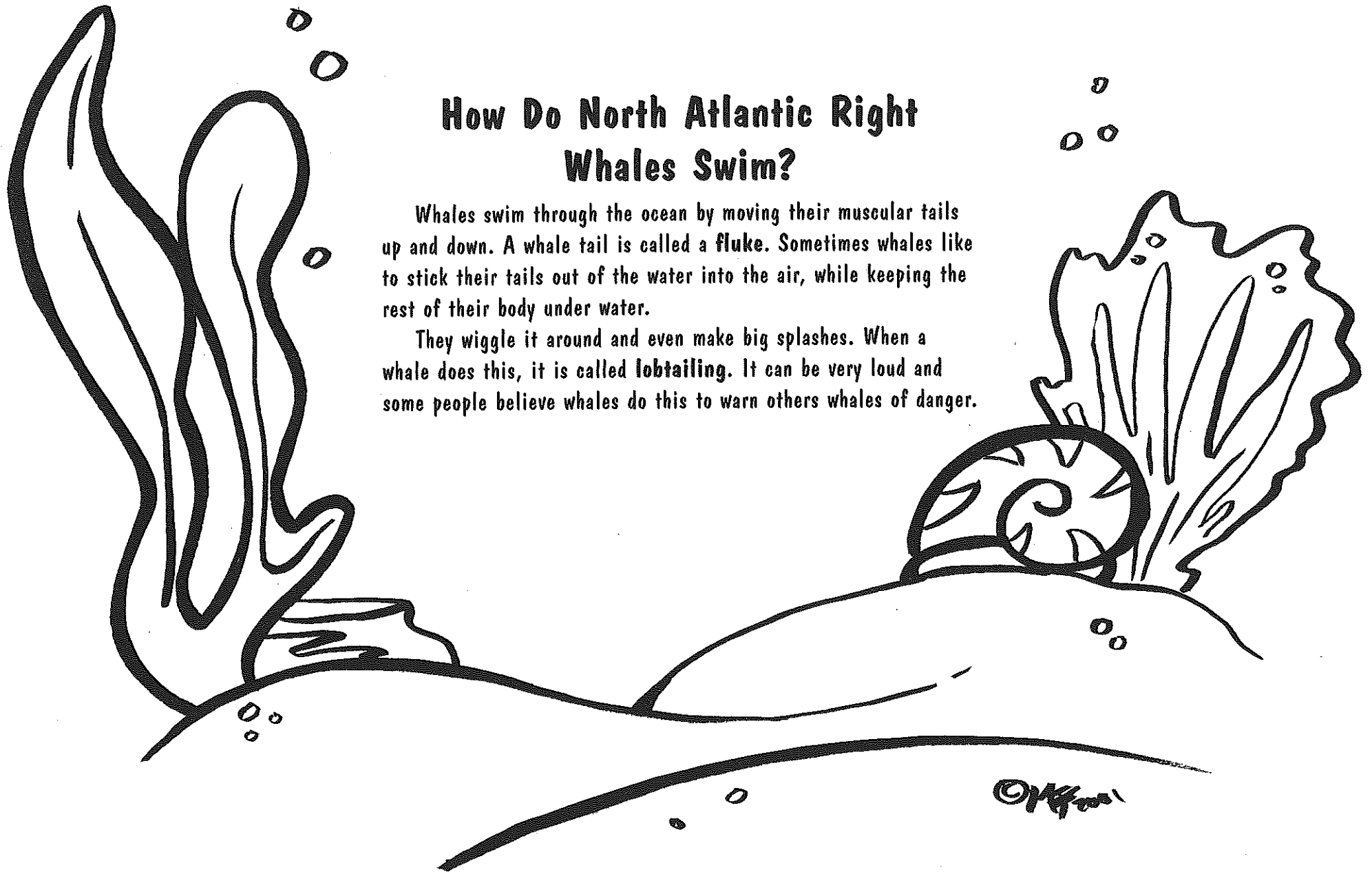




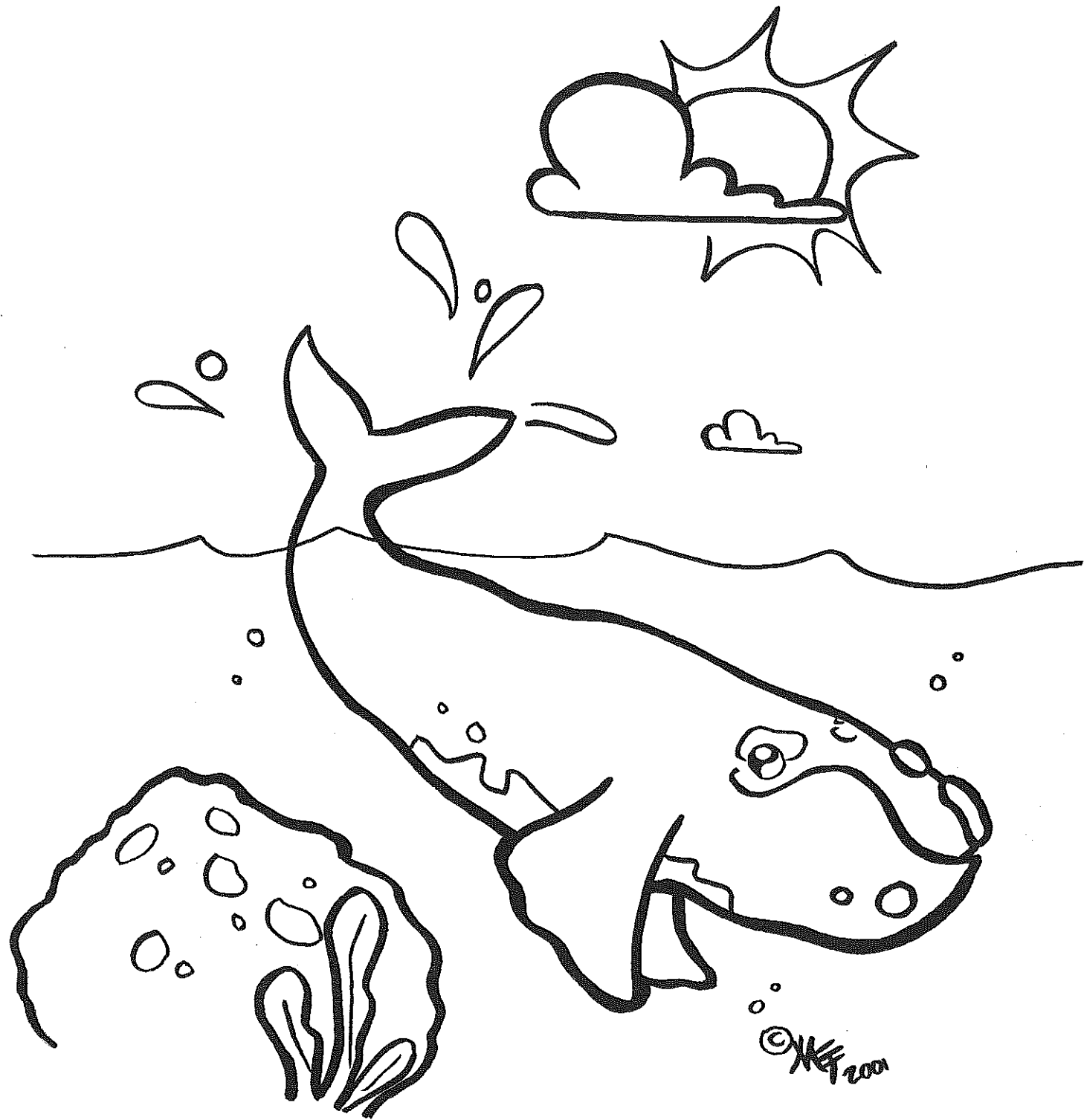
How Do North Atlantic Right Whales Swim?

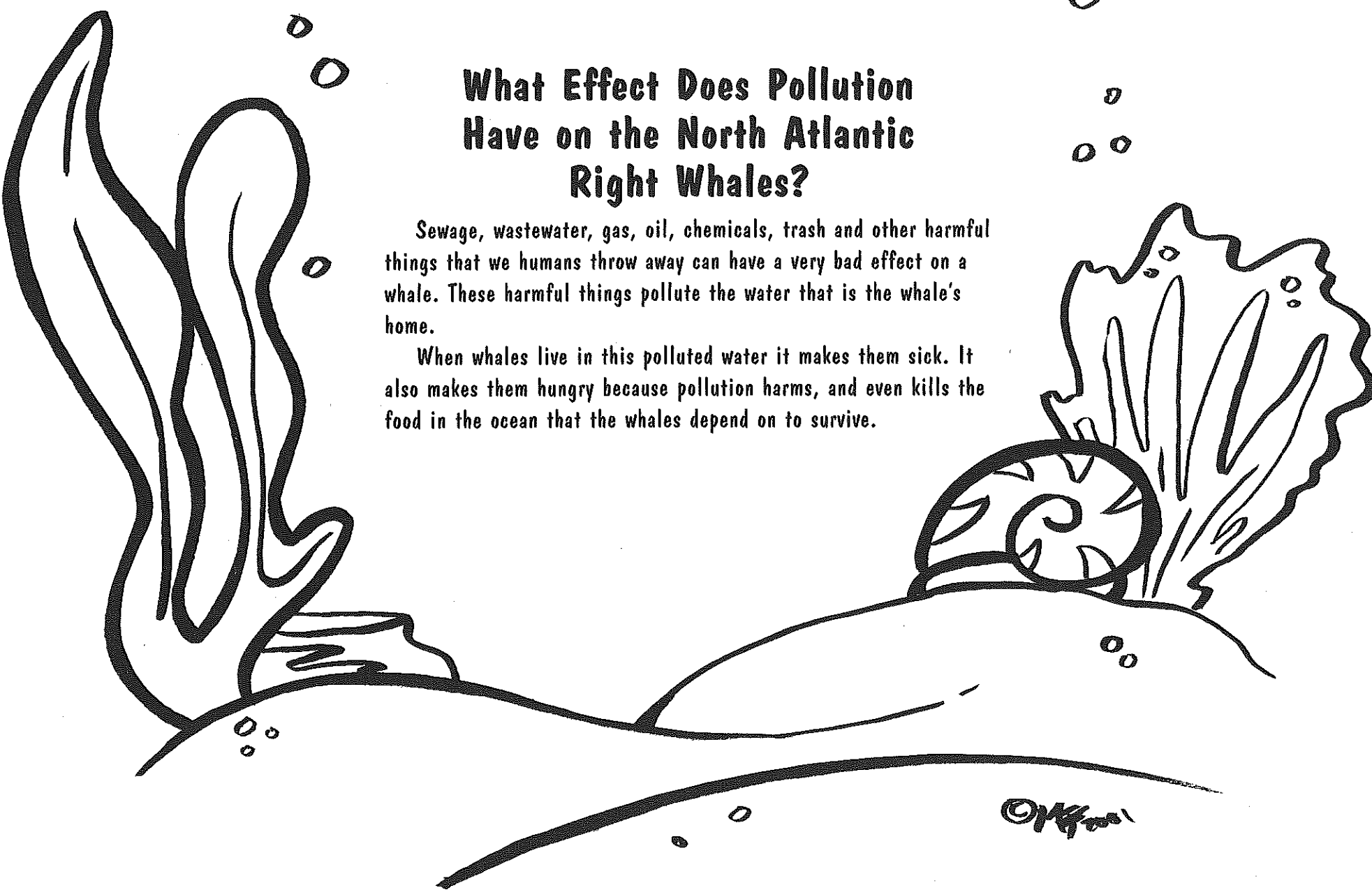
Whales swim through the ocean by moving their muscular tails up and down. A whale tail is called a fluke. Sometimes whales like to stick their tails out of the water into the air, while keeping the rest of their body under water.

They wiggle it around and even make big splashes. When a whale does this, it is called lobtailing. It can be very loud and some people believe whales do this to warn others whales of danger.



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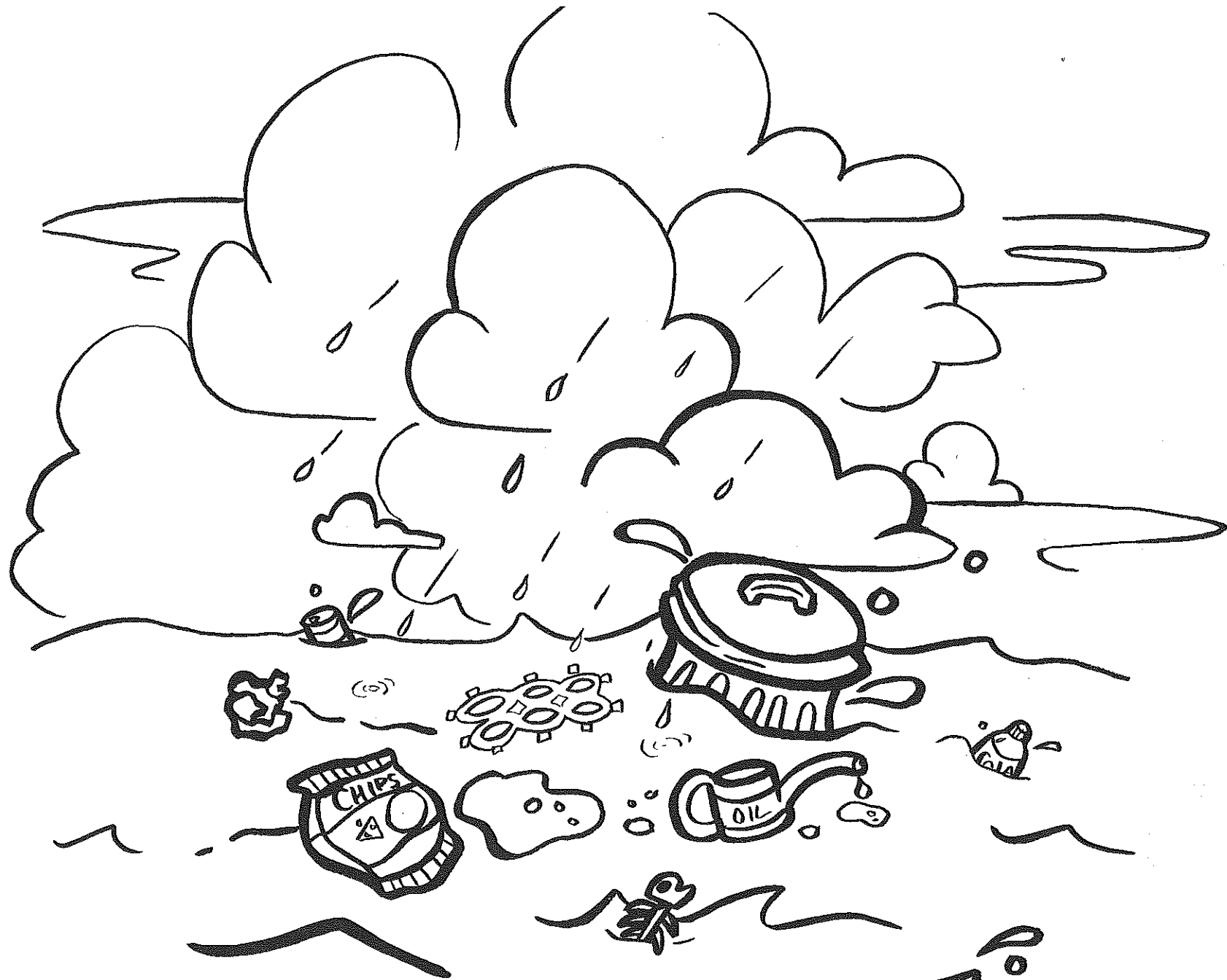


What Effect Does Pollution Have on the North Atlantic Right Whales?

Sewage, wastewater, gas, oil, chemicals, trash and other harmful things that we humans throw away can have a very bad effect on a whale. These harmful things pollute the water that is the whale's home.

When whales live in this polluted water it makes them sick. It also makes them hungry because pollution harms, and even kills the food in the ocean that the whales depend on to survive.

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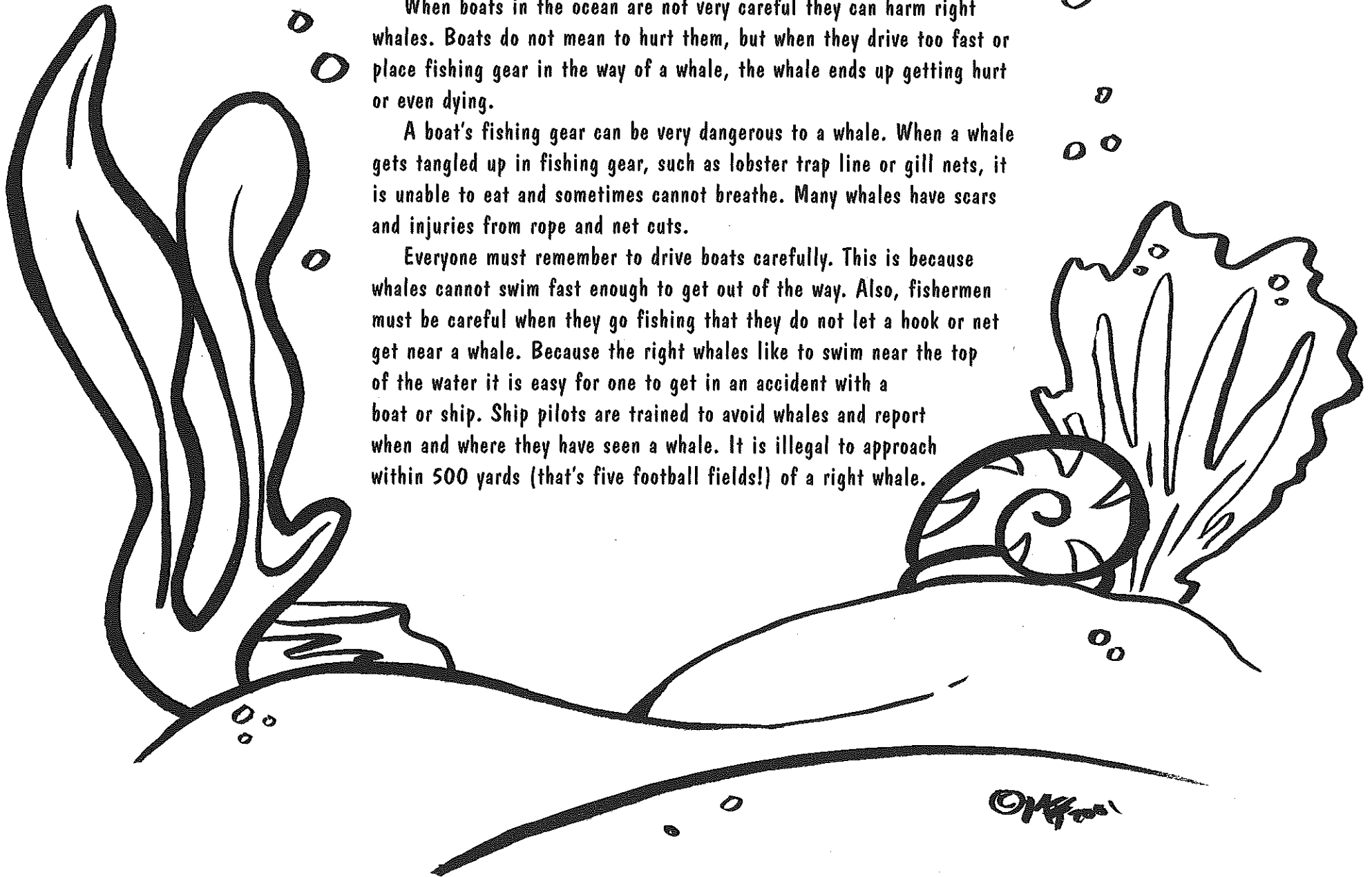
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Do Boaters Need to Be Careful?

When boats in the ocean are not very careful they can harm right whales. Boats do not mean to hurt them, but when they drive too fast or place fishing gear in the way of a whale, the whale ends up getting hurt or even dying.

A boat's fishing gear can be very dangerous to a whale. When a whale gets tangled up in fishing gear, such as lobster trap line or gill nets, it is unable to eat and sometimes cannot breathe. Many whales have scars and injuries from rope and net cuts.

Everyone must remember to drive boats carefully. This is because whales cannot swim fast enough to get out of the way. Also, fishermen must be careful when they go fishing that they do not let a hook or net get near a whale. Because the right whales like to swim near the top of the water it is easy for one to get in an accident with a boat or ship. Ship pilots are trained to avoid whales and report when and where they have seen a whale. It is illegal to approach within 500 yards (that's five football fields!) of a right whale.



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Now let's see what new vocabulary you have learned!
Draw a line and connect each vocabulary word with the correct definition.

NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE WORD MATCH

FLUKE

Scientific name for the North Atlantic Right Whale

POD

The name of a whale's tail

BALEEN PLATES

When a whale sticks its tail out of the water

BREACHING

What a whale eats its food with

CALF

A group of whales

EUBALAENA GLACIALIS

A baby whale

LOBTAILING

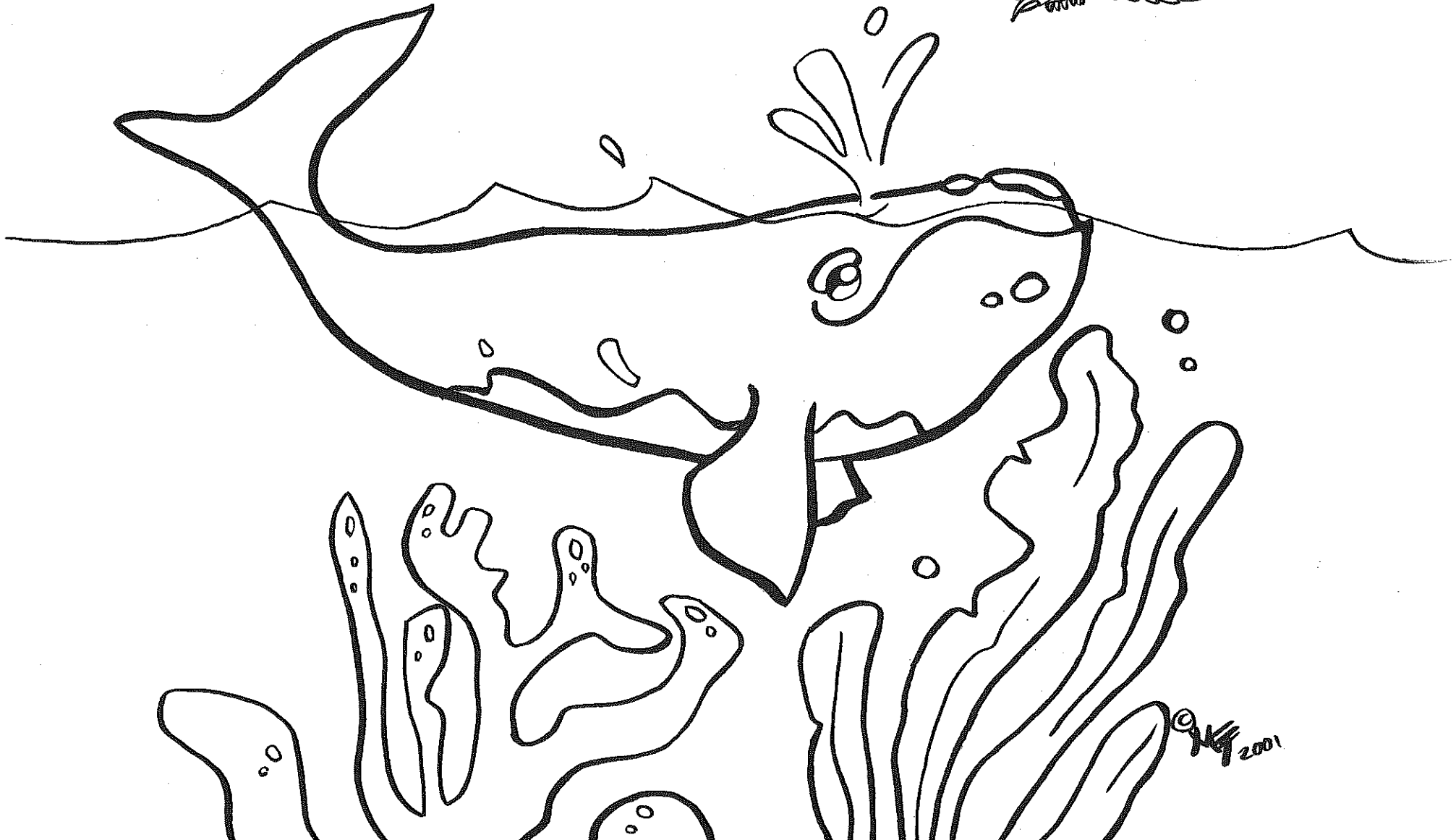
When a whale jumps out of the water

If you do not remember all of the answers or if you are not sure about an answer you can look back in the book. All of the vocabulary words are highlighted in the book. Once you have finished the word match you are an official "Whale Watcher," way to go!

The North Atlantic



Right Whale



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GPA ~ official ~ GPA

OFFICIAL WHALE WATCHER

NAME

DATE



GPA ~ official ~ GPA

GPA ~ official ~ GPA

GPA ~ official ~ GPA



Georgia Ports Authority

The Georgia Ports Authority is a member of the Southeast Implementation Team for recovery of the North Atlantic right whale. By working together with conservation organizations, scientists and government agencies, we can make a difference in preserving the endangered right whale.

For more information on The North Atlantic Right Whale recovery efforts, access the Georgia Department of Natural Resources web site at www.georgiawildlife.com and go to the nongame-endangered wildlife section and look under wildlife management, or contact:

Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Coastal Non-game Office
1 Conservation Way
Brunswick, GA 31523
(912) 264-7355

Illustrations by Michelle Fabie
Research by Sarah Lott

*Georgia Ports Authority's Right Whale Coloring Book
is also available at www.gaports.com*

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