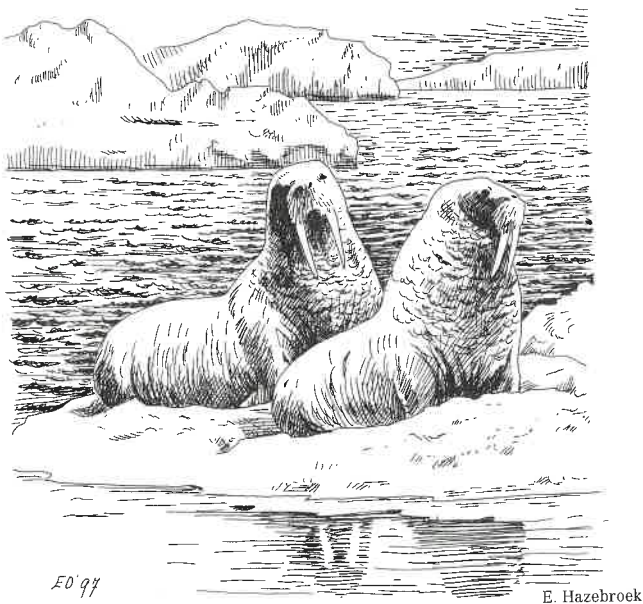


Odobenus rosmarus (LINNAEUS, 1758)



Walrus

AL	-	LT	Vėplys
BG	Морж	LU	Atlantescht Walross
CZ	Mrož	LV	Valzirgs
DE	Walroß	MK	Морж
DK	Hvalros	MT	-
EE	Morsk	NL	Walrus
ES	Morsa	NO	Hvalross
FI	Mursu	PL	Mors
FO	Roysningur	PT	Morsa
FR	Morse	RO	Morsă
GR	Θαλάσιος ίππος	RU	Морж
HR	Sjeverni morž	SE	Valross
HU	Rozmár	SI	Mrož
IR	-	SK	Mrož ľadový
IS	Rostungur	TR	Mors
IT	Tricheco	YU	Морж

Distribution

World: Arctic Atlantic, west to Foxe Basin in Canada and east to the Kara Sea; Arctic Pacific, north to Chukchi Sea; Laptev Sea. The Atlantic walrus is found in two distinct areas, the western and eastern Arctic Atlantic. The latter is mainly European and stretches from eastern Greenland to the Kara Sea.

Europe: Svalbard, Franz Josef Land, Novaya Zemlya and along the Norwegian coast (between 63° and 81°N, seldom south of 70°. Vagrants are occasionally observed on the Atlantic coasts south to the Gulf of Biscay. Prehistoric remains indicate that the species was more widely distributed than at present.

Geographic variation

Two subspecies are commonly recognized: the Atlantic walrus *O. rosmarus rosmarus*, and the Pacific walrus *O. rosmarus divergens* (Illiger, 1815). Anatomical and genetic differences between the two subspecies have been described. A third subspecies, the Laptev walrus *O. rosmarus laptevi* (Chapski, 1940), is not generally accepted.

Habitat

The walrus inhabits Arctic areas with moving pack ice, over shallow water not deeper than 80 m, along continental shelves. It forages in pebble seabeds in search for mainly molluscs and other invertebrates.

Population status

Walrus populations have declined severely owing to over-hunting in the past. The Atlantic subspecies was at the edge of extinction and the Pacific subspecies strongly reduced. In the early 1950s hunting was banned but populations started to recover only after 1970. At present, the east Atlantic population numbers several thousand animals. The Pacific population is estimated to number 230000 animals.

International legal & conservation status

Bern Convention, Appendix II.

IUCN Red List, Data Deficient (*O. r. laptevi*, Laptev walrus, only)

Other information

May be subject to some illegal persecution mainly in Russia. Some hunting licences are still issued in Greenland. When the animals haul out on land or pack ice, extreme gregariousness can be observed.

Literature

Born (1992)

Reijnders *et al.* (1993)

Reijnders *et al.* (1997)

E. H. Ries, S. M.J.M. Brasseur &
P. J.H. Reijnders

