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The Writing Works

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U.S. Geological Survey

Tracking Pacific Walrus:
Expedition to the Shrinking Chukchi Sea Ice

Rough Script

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Fade in:
THE MOST ENDEARING WALRUS SCENES
For example:
1. One large walrus on an ice floe. It turns its head to look at us. We see its tusks.
[WALRUS VID. mov, 00:00]
2. A great closeup of this walrus, scratching itself with its flipper as though it has
fleas. [WALRUS VID. mov, 00:34]

> **SFX:** Waves splashing and walrus grunting
> sounds UP AND UNDER

> Narrator: (voice over)
> What's endearing to be said
> about a 4,000 pound
> mammal with huge canine
> tusks?

3. The scientists in the Zodiac approach a single walrus that looks directly at
them. [SKIFF ONE n TWO.mov,11:33]

> Hear the scientists who
> work with them:
>
> **montage of voices: (voiceover)**

4. Two walruses are on an ice floe, criss-crossed by each other like a love seat.
They look up toward the camera and then back. [WALRUSES 2. mov., 13:52]

> **Tony Fischbach:**

"Walruses love to be next to each other..."
[TF interview, 132821]

5. About a half dozen walruses are in the water; they bob up and down and splash each other. [WALRUSES 2. mov., 124:35 and 28:42]

Sarah Sonsthagen:
" ... they're so gregarious..."
[SS interview, 144357]

6. A charming close shot of walruses all snuggled next to each other. They individually look up and around. One uses its flipper to rub another. [Walruses 2.mov, 1:15]

Tony Fischbach:
"When you see them on the ice together it's really quite remarkable... they kind of snuggle on top ..."
[TF interview, 132821]

7. Two walruses are in the water very close to the skiff. See the scientists' hands, hear the animals huffing. [WALRUS VID. mov, 11:35]
8. Scene 7 goes to an even closer shot of the walrus, and then it dives underwater. [WALRUS VID. mov, 11:35]

Chad Jay:
" ... they'll posey up ... and have these bluff charges ... then at the last minute dive under the water"...
[CJ interview, 141353]

9. About a half dozen walruses on an ice floe. One looks up and around, then two others do. One twists its head. Now they are getting a little more restless. [WALRUSES 2. mov., 2:46]

Tony Fischbach:
" ... as soon as they're concerned
about something their first
response is to turn to their
companions on the ice pan and
sort of sniff them and nudge
them, it's almost as if they're
saying, did you notice
something?..."
[TF interview, 33438]

10. Still photograph of a newborn walrus pup. (from other researchers)

Sarah Sonsthagen: (voiceover)
" ... the pups are like 150 lbs
when they're born."
[SS interview, 144357]

11. Still photograph of a young calf holding on the back of its mother. (from other researchers)
12. Another still photograph angle of the mother and pup.

Tony Fischbach:
... when you see them swimming
the calves will be holding on
tight to the mother's back...
[TF interview, 132759]

13. A pup is on an ice floe and the mother is in the water. They touch noses. The mother goes underwater, comes up and they rub their faces together. [WALRUS VID. mov, 17:58]

Sarah Sonsthagen:
" ... its just neat to see something
so big, so caring ..."
[SS interview, 144357]

14. Scene 13 continues: The mother goes underwater, comes up and they rub their faces together. [WALRUS VID. mov, 17:58]

SFX: Walrus breathing, grunting sounds

Narrator: (voice over)
Today, walruses are in
trouble.

dissolve to:
15. A beautiful shot of moving across a very blue sea, with sparing pieces of ice
scattered across the horizon. [ICE. mov, 1:47]

This is walrus territory – the
cold, remote Arctic.

16. Chad Jay inside the Norseman II looking out with binoculars to the open
water.
SUPER: **Chad Jay (or Chadwick V. Jay, Ph.D.)**
        Research ecologist, USGS Alaska Science Center

Chad Jay: (voiceover)
".. the Chukchi Sea ... is a vast
shallow sea which extends from
the coast of Alaska ...

17. An adaptation of the background map from the USGS Sea Ice poster that
shows (and identifies) the Chukchi Sea
(a) The first illustration shows the sea ice range from 1980 to 1995.

... over to Russia. This is the
summer range for Pacific walrus
females and their young. "
[CJ interview, 34247]

(b) Through simple animation, the Sea Ice retreats to the ranges shown for 2008
to 2011.

Narrator: (voice over)
In the last five years, it's
experienced a dramatic loss
of sea ice due to climate
change.

18. An extreme closeup of Tony looking out from the ship with binoculars.
SUPER: **Tony Fischbach**
     Wildlife biologist, USGS Alaska Science Center

> **Tony Fischbach: (voiceover)**
> **"We dropped our jaws. It really wasn't something we expected to see so soon..."**
> [TF interview, 133609]

19. Wide expansive shot of tens of thousands of walruses hauled out. (YouTube video)
20. Another angle moving past this multitude of walruses.

> **SFX:** Humongously loud walrus bellowing and grunting.

> **"This has forced walruses to come to shore to rest ...**
> **40 thousand at a time or so ...**
> **something that hadn't been seen before in the United States."**
> [TF interview, 32117, 133609]

> Narrator: (voice over)
> Why does this matter to the walruses?

dissolve to:

21. Underwater footage that shows the abundance of benthic creatures, thick and moving and filling the screen. [Source: Lee Cooper or other researcher]

> **Chad Jay: (voiceover)**
> **"Well, walruses, they eat things that live on the bottom ... Their main prey is clams... Marine worms and snails, large snails**

and other things are part of their diet as well.
[CJ interview, 141452]

dissolve to:
ILLUSTRATION AND ANIMATION THAT DEPICT THE CONTINENTAL SHELF UNDER THE CHUKCHI SEA AND WALRUS FEEDING
For example:
22. A split screen illustration:
-- On the left is an ocean at 10-12,000 feet deep
-- On the right is the continental shelf at the Chukchi Sea at 150 feet deep; see the sea ice covering the shelf.

Narrator: (voice over)
Most of the world's ocean is 10,000 feet deep.
Beneath the Chukchi Sea is an immense continental shelf that is only 150 feet deep.

(continues)