

Narwhal Tusk

1835

The ivory tusk of a male narwhal whale, *Monodon monoceras*. It was donated by Jabez Gibson one of the founders of Saffron Walden Museum.

The left canine tooth in the upper jaw of a male narwhal grows through the lip to form a tusk. It grows with age, spiralling clockwise until it reaches a length of about three metres. The tusk has lots of nerve endings which are used to sense the surrounding ocean. Tusks can also be rubbed together to communicate with other narwhals. The narwhal tusk may have been the inspiration for the legend of the unicorn.

Narwhals live in the Arctic Ocean. They eat fish, squid and shrimp. This picture shows narwhals at the surface of the ocean at a crack in the ice in Canada.