

Have you ever heard a whale sing?

The beach can be a very noisy place.
Wusssh, dussh. The waves rise and crash.
Wooooooo, hoooo. The wind howls.
Eeee, eee, eeee! The gulls cry.



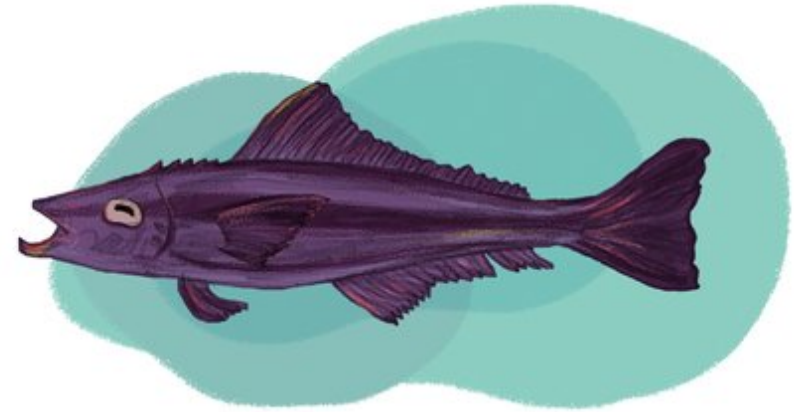
Now imagine that instead of being close to the ocean,
you are under it. It isn't much quieter down there!





Tuk, tuk, tuk!
crackles the snapping shrimp.

Hroah, hroah, hroak!
grunts the lemonfish.



Trrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr! A boat passes by.



Woaaaaah eee ee ooo woaaah
rrr aaah!
Woaaaaah eee ee ooo woaaah
rrr aaah!
What's that sound?



It's whales, singing in the distance—strong, loud and melodious!

Whales sing short and long songs. Some songs last just a few minutes. Some songs can go on for half an hour. Whales can also sing the same song for hours on end.



There are many kinds of whales.

Blue Whales and Grey Whales
are named after colours.



Humpback Whales and
Bowhead Whales are named
after the shapes of their
backs and heads.



Omura's Whales and
Bryde's Whales are
named after people.





Each kind of whale has its own song. Just listen and you will be able to tell who is singing!

Each species has different communities. They live in different parts of the ocean. Each community has its own songs.

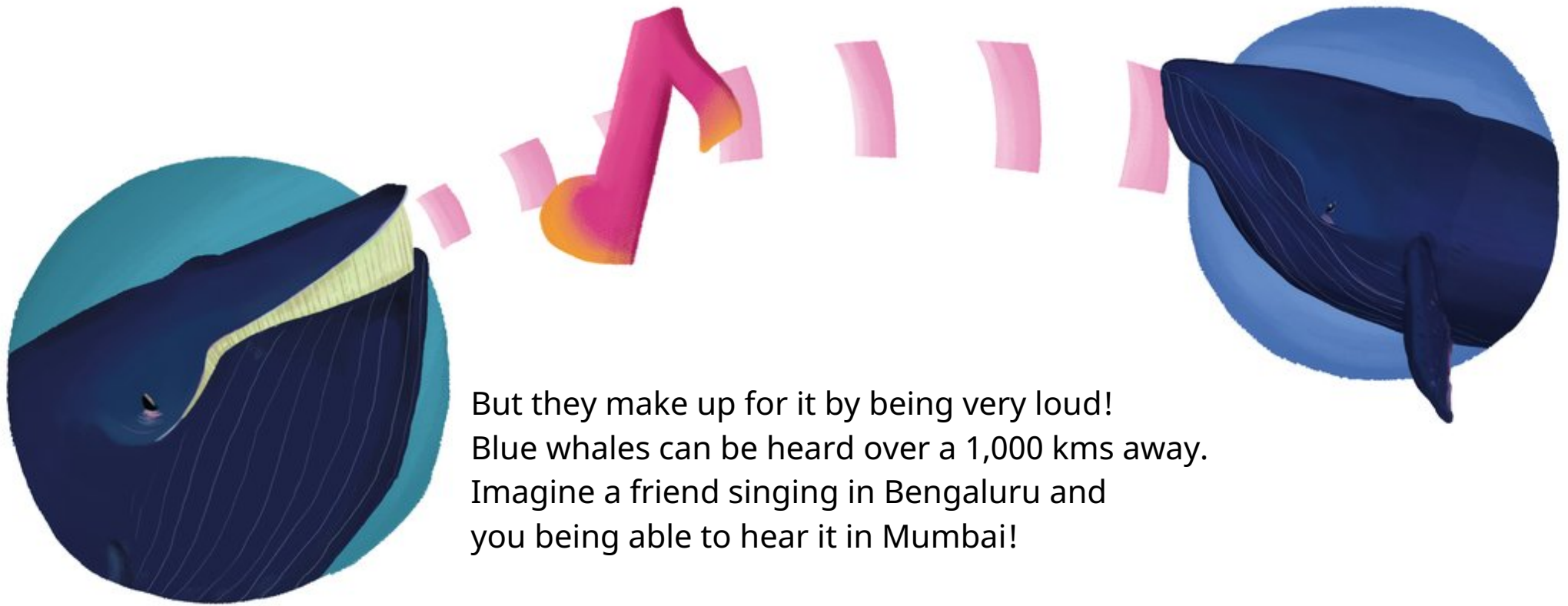
A blue whale in the Indian Ocean will sing a different song from his cousin in the Pacific. Just like humans speak several languages based on where they are from.

Humpback whales are excellent composers.
They mix and match several notes together.

When you listen carefully, you can tell that
each humpback whale song is made up of patterns of many notes.



Blue whales sing much simpler songs.
Their songs consist of just a note or two.



But they make up for it by being very loud!
Blue whales can be heard over a 1,000 kms away.
Imagine a friend singing in Bengaluru and
you being able to hear it in Mumbai!

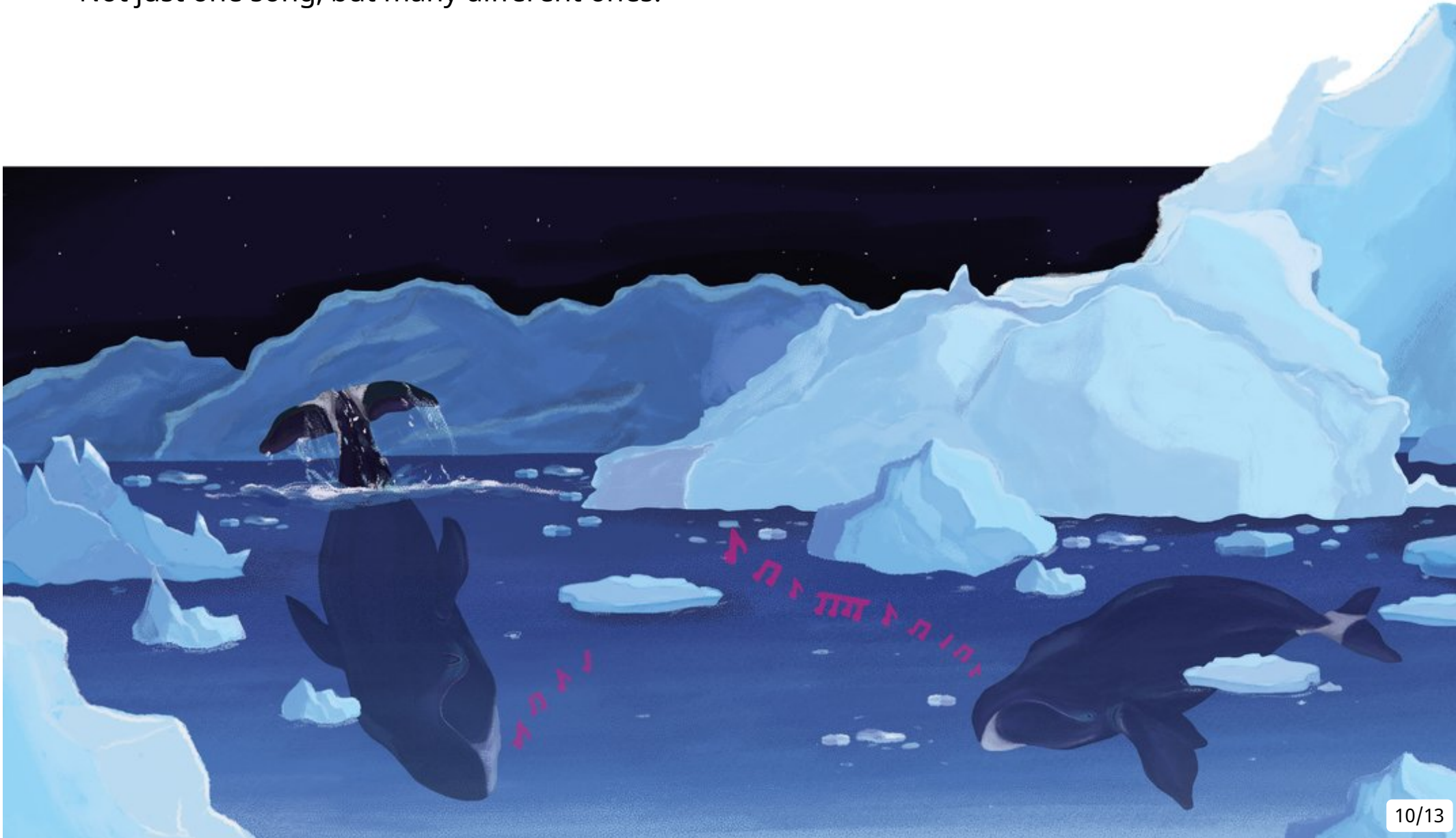


Bengaluru

Mumbai



Bowhead Whales that live in the cold Arctic ocean are also musicians.
All through winter, during days and nights of complete darkness,
Bowhead Whales sing their songs under the frozen sea.
Not just one song, but many different ones.





Fin Whale songs are so low-pitched that humans need help to listen to their songs.

Scientists place specially built microphones and recorders under the ocean to hear them properly!



Why do these whales sing? As far as we know, only male whales sing.
Scientists think that it is to impress female whales or tell each other,
“Look what a powerful voice I have, this means that I am bigger and stronger than you!”

As scientists learn more about whales and their songs, the biggest mystery
still remains—what are they saying to each other?

We may not understand what these songs are about,
but we do know that they are beautiful to listen to.

The End

