

## The Affectionate Walrus

Many different species of very young seal and sea lion pups are extremely friendly to man after they overcome their initial fear upon being captured. Sometimes this will require a matter of days but in other species, such as a few-days-old Steller sea lion pup, they will have lost all sense of fear within the first fifteen minutes after their capture. I have sat down cross-legged on the snow three feet in front of a Weddell seal cow and her pup to get some very close-up pictures and when the moving camera started the pup came forward and rested its head on my knee and watched. After five minutes of taking pictures, I got up and walked away and the cow never raised her head up off the snow. One might explain this on the basis of extremely little contact with man on the part of the Weddell seal in the Antarctic. But the walrus which has been hunted by the Eskimos for many years is the most naturally affectionate of all marine mammals.

They weigh about one hundred and twenty pounds at birth and show almost no fear of man even up to a year of age in the wild. Very young walrus can be easily trained to nurse a special formula from a bottle and they require about a gallon of formula per day. In order to make their formula compare favourably with their mother's milk, a gallon of formula requires three quarts of whipping cream with one pound of clam meat plus salt, minerals, and vitamins homogenized in it. As one would expect, they will gain as much as 12 pounds or more per week on such a diet.

Whereas the Weddell seal pup may rest its head upon your knee, the walrus is not satisfied unless it can climb all over you even after he gets up to fifteen hundred pounds or more.

It therefore soon becomes unsafe to get into a pool with them because of the danger of being drowned, and out of water one may be pinned down so as to require help to get up, particularly if there is more than one walrus. If anyone sits down where there are two or three young walrus being raised by hand, they will all try to climb upon you at the same time.

In the case of most marine mammals if any object such as a hydrophone is placed in their pool they completely ignore it, but the walrus is there almost immediately and has it in his mouth or is playing with it in his flippers. It is therefore difficult to obtain underwater recordings of them unless the hydrophone is placed in some inaccessible place. Even placing dummy hydrophones in the tank for

a week ahead of time helps very little if they see the new hydrophone go in.

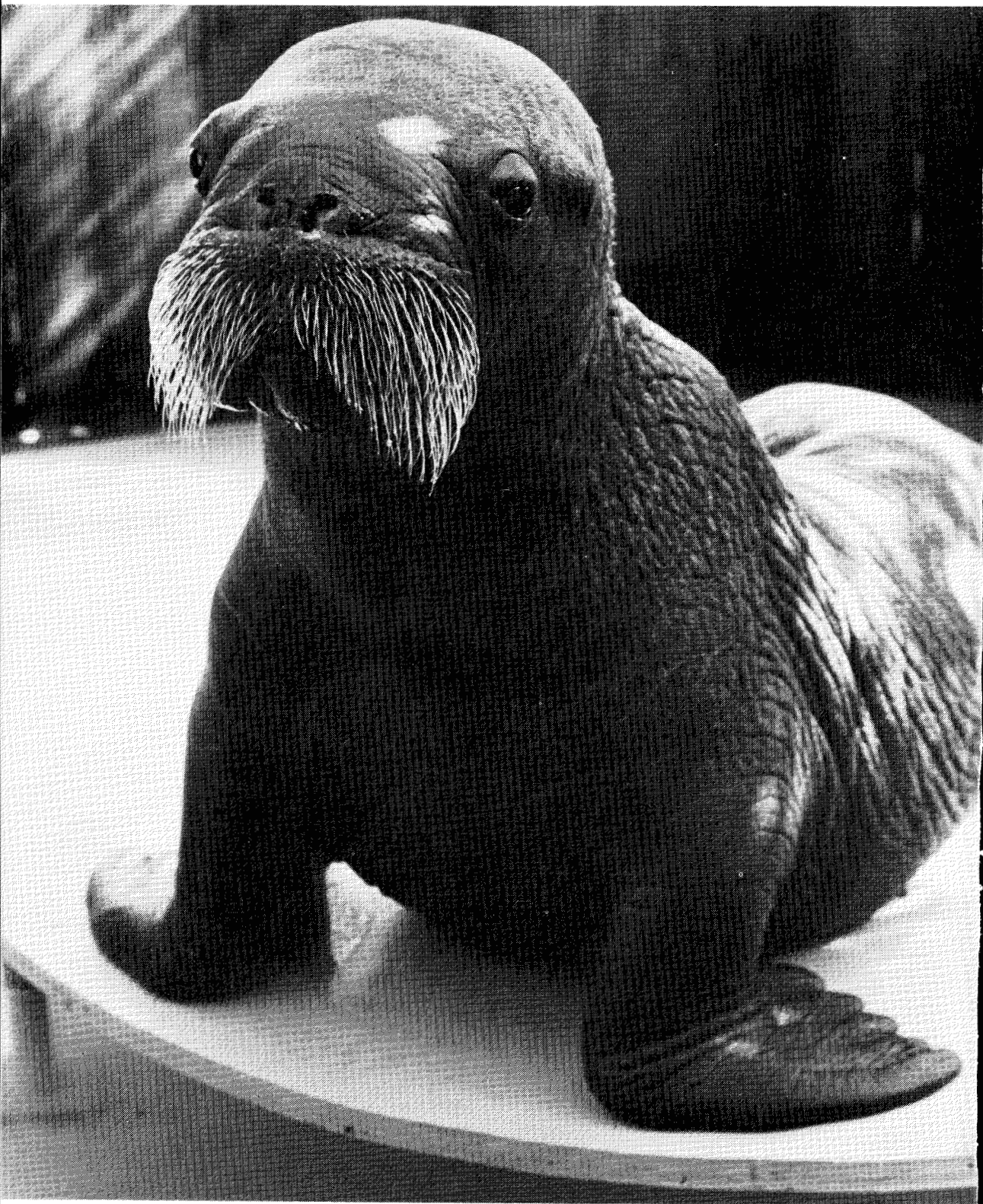
If one throws a half gallon nursing bottle half full of formula into their pool, they will occasionally pick it up in their flippers, lie on their back and nurse from the bottle while holding it up over them with their flippers. Their baby-like whimper and low-pitch woof! woof! and their apparent desire for physical contact with human beings make them one of the most attractive of the marine mammals.

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## The Geographical Position of the North Water

The name "North Water" was coined by the whalers in the last century to describe an area of open water that they almost invariably found at the head of Baffin Bay early in the season. It was the reward that made it worth while to batter their way, at considerable risk, up the Greenland coast and through the ice of Melville Bay as early as May or early June. If they were lucky they then had clear sailing to Lancaster Sound and Pond Inlet, if unlucky they ran into the "West Ice" on the west side of Baffin Bay, but in either case they were in whale country early in the season. The feature is still well known and the subject of much attention, but there is a regrettable tendency to corrupt the simple and effective historic name to the redundant form "North Open Water". May I therefore preface this note with a plea for the preservation of the original name.

The open water was also well known to the Eskimos of the Thule and Etah districts in Smith Sound and later to the Danes who founded the first trading settlement in northern Greenland at Thule. But whereas the whalers knew it only in spring, to the Greenlanders it was a winter phenomenon which restricted sledge travel but provided splendid hunting conditions, as the open water is a refuge for all kinds of marine mammals. Thus it is not surprising that past accounts have presented considerable variation and apparent disagreement in the actual position of the feature, positions given varying from the area east of Lancaster Sound to the head of Smith Sound. That this was due simply to observations being made at different places and different times of year has long been suspected by those attempting to synthesize the available data, and this fact is now con-



A fifteen-day-old walrus (*O. divergens*) weighing 120 pounds, and coming from Gambell on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska. The photograph was taken by Thomas C. Poulter who named her Roberta after a 9-year-old Eskimo girl, Roberta Siwooko, the youngest daughter of the family with whom he lived at Gambell. (See note page 438).