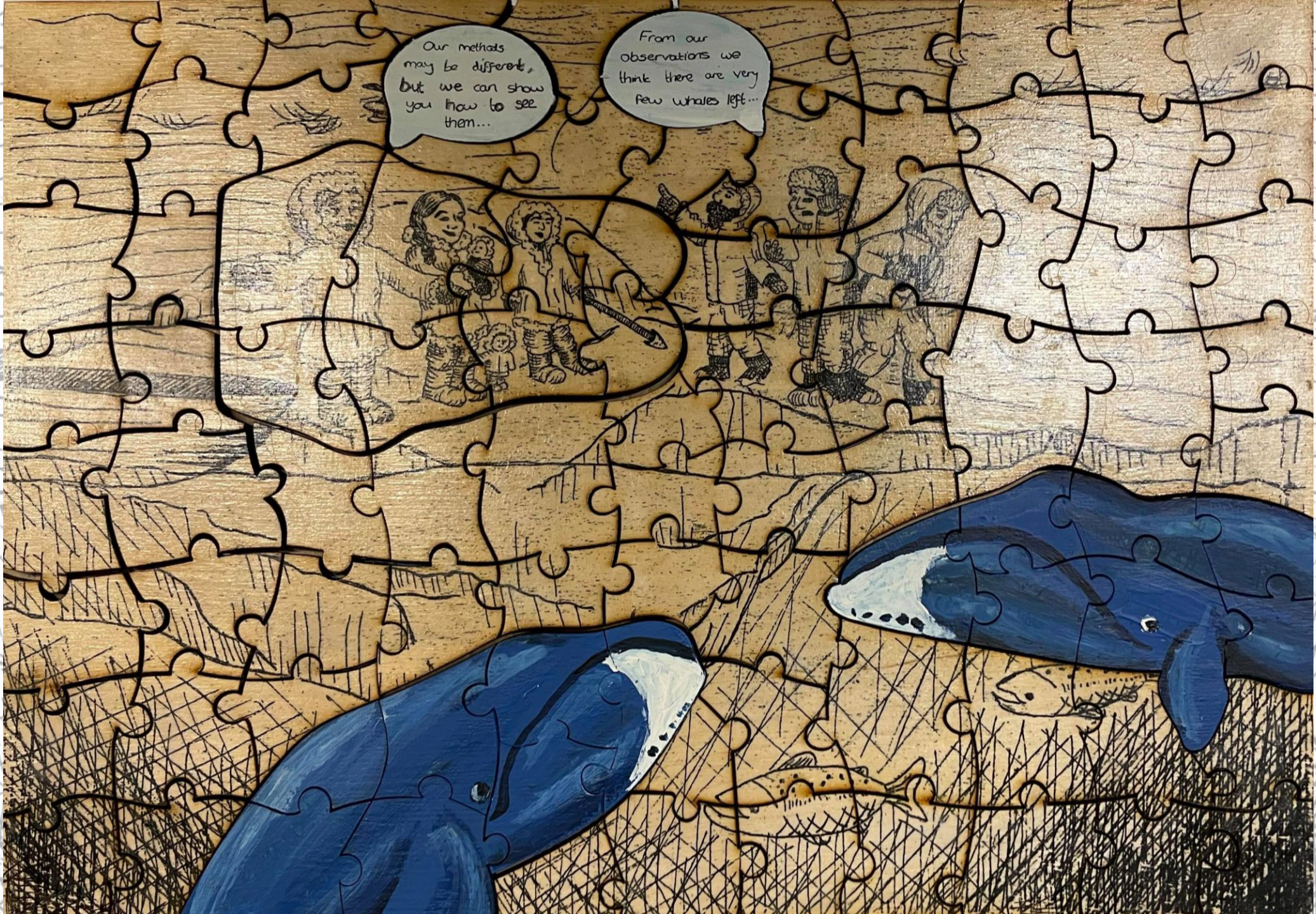


Our methods
may be different,
but we can show
you how to see
them...

From our
observations we
think there are very
few whales left...





HIDDEN SCIENCE: DISCOVERING THE BOWHEAD WHALE

For the Iñupiat in Point Barrow, Alaska, the ocean is their garden. They have hunted the same way for hundreds of years, passing down advice from generation to generation.

However, in the late 20th century things began to change. International commissions started regulating the amount that the Iñupiat could hunt, in an attempt to protect the oceans' biodiversity. Numbers of the bowhead whale – a species of great nutritional and cultural value to the Iñupiat – were thought to be dangerously low.

Scientists were sent out to Point Barrow to test this hypothesis and count the number bowhead whales. Using conventional scientific methods, including observation and aerial surveillance, the scientists concluded there were just 2,000 of the species remaining.

Yet, the Iñupiaq hunters were certain that there were more bowhead whales in the ocean than the scientists had counted, and they were wary of the limitations of the scientists' methods. After all, the Iñupiat have been observing and hunting whales for generations. They used different methods to the scientists, which enabled them to locate whales under the ice, using oral accounts and an in-depth knowledge of the species.

An experienced Iñupiaq hunter and leader, Harry Brower Senior, encouraged a group of hunters to share their knowledge of bowhead whales with the scientists. The hunters required some persuasion and encouragement in order to trust the government scientists, however they eventually agreed.

This collaboration resulted in the North Slope Borough research program, which brought together scientists and Iñupiat to share expertise on the bowhead whales. Thanks to this dialogue and through consideration of different kinds of expertise, the numbers of bowhead whales first estimated by the scientists is now known to be a large underestimate.

hai-kSues

*a crisp sea wind blows,
revealing tales from the past:
are you listening?*

*unafraid, they glide
beneath the icy surface,
waiting to be found*

*different pairs of eyes
can help provide new insights -
change your point of view*









Our interests
may be different,
but we can grow
to know to see
them...