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N is for the Northern Lights,
mysterious colored glow.
Sweeping across the sky,
a shimmering night time show.

The aurora borealis, also known as the northern lights, is a display of green, red, blue, and purple lights that stretch from horizon to horizon. The northern lights are created by electrons and protons striking gas particles in the earth's upper atmosphere. This mysterious natural show of lights brings many visitors to Alaska in the spring and fall. Be prepared to stay awake as the best show is from midnight to early morning when the sky has no moon and is very dark.



“Thar she blows!” we cry out in delight,
seeing the water spout blow.
Black and white with tall dorsal fin,
the Orca whale is our **O**.

An orca is called a killer whale because it attacks other whales, seals, and sea lions. The killer whale is really a member of the dolphin family. It can weigh up to 10 tons. A group of whales is called a pod and may include up to 40 whales in each pod. An orca's call is distinctive enough that each family member can recognize it. You can identify an orca whale by its tall dorsal fin which has white and black markings.

The humpback whale is seen most frequently along the southern coast of Alaska. A newborn humpback whale weighs 4,000 pounds and is 12 feet long.

The bowhead whale is the official ocean mammal of Alaska. It is the only whale that spends its entire life near sea ice and does not travel to warm waters to have its babies.

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