
MYSTERY PHOTO

DECEMBER 2006 MYSTERY PHOTO

The object, which resembles an umbrella with curled ribs, is about 2 cm long. What is it? (It was placed on a lichen covered log for this photo, but was not found there.)



ANSWER TO THE SEPTEMBER 2006 MYSTERY PHOTO



Figure 1

The short answer to the question posed with the September 2006 mystery photo is that both articles in Figure 1 collect small particles which are moved from one place to another. The object on the right collects dust, etc., for placing into the dustpan, under the rug or whatever. The object on the left is a baleen plate from a Bowhead

Whale and it traps the invertebrates or small fish that the whale feeds on. These are gathered up by the whale's tongue and swallowed.

This baleen plate comes from a female Bowhead Whale washed up on shore on 27 August 1973, and found by Ernie Kuyt while he was engaged in Arctic waterfowl surveys along the Beaufort Sea coast. (Figure 2) The location was Warren Point, about 50 km NE of Tuktoyaktuk.

The baleen plate, one of hundreds hanging from the upper jaw of the whale, measured about 1.7 metres (5.5 ft), excluding the tassels of black filaments at the narrow, lower end of the baleen.

The whale was a least 16.5 m long. This size, and that of the baleen plate shown in the photo, are by no means records; many of the plates were considerably longer than the one collected.

The editors thank Ernie Kuyt for providing the photos and the answer for the September mystery photo.



Figure 2