

May 31, 2023

Health and Welfare Assessment of Tokitae (also known as Lolita), killer whale housed at Miami Seaquarium, Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Report of James McBain, DVM retired, and Stephanie Norman, DVM, PhD
(Biographical statements below)

At the invitation of Friends of Toki, a non-profit organization co-founded by Pritam Singh and Charles Vinick, we are continuing our health and welfare assessments of Tokitae (Toki).

During May, Toki's condition has continued to remain relatively stable. Her energy, appetite, and engagement in daily activities were steady.

Her chuff cytology continues to remain unremarkable. Her bloodwork was overall unremarkable. Her body condition remains good based on morphometric measurements and BBI (body blubber index that determines the thickness of blubber related to her size). The lesion on her lung also remains unchanged as do the extremely low number of white blood cells (WBCs) in her chuff samples. She continues to receive daily Faropenem and therapeutic doses of antifungal medications. Although we would like to discontinue these therapies, as long as she is still fighting the infection, we cannot stop them. It is important to point out that although we are seeing incremental improvements in each parameter we monitor, we believe further treatment is beneficial.

Over the past several months the water quality team has made substantial changes to her life support system, including upgraded sand filters, addition of chillers to allow a faster water turn-over, and improvements to the older systems that were in place. As a result, water clarity, ammonia levels, and cleanliness of the water has improved while being able to maintain water temperatures in the mid-50s°F that is ideal for her. Round the clock maintenance of life support and water quality are being well managed by staff.

Respectfully submitted:



James McBain, DVM retired



Stephanie Norman, DVM, PhD

Dr. James McBain, DVM, Retired Vice President of Corporate Veterinary Services for SeaWorld and Busch Garden Parks. is considered a pioneering expert in marine mammal veterinary medicine. His career at SeaWorld included serving as senior staff veterinarian, corporate director of veterinary medicine and Vice President of Corporate Veterinary Services. He has authored and co authored more than 83 scientific papers, books and presentations on marine mammals and is recognized worldwide for his experience and expertise. Dr. McBain is seen by his peers as having fundamentally altered the way in which marine mammal medicine is practiced. Dr. McBain has served as a mentor and trained countless veterinarians seeking his specialized knowledge. In 2009 he received the Distinguished Veterinary Alumni Award for Outstanding Service from Washington State University.

Dr. Stephanie Norman, DVM, PhD, veterinary epidemiologist and wildlife veterinarian, received her DVM from Texas A&M University; her Master of Science in epidemiology from the University of Washington, Seattle; and her PhD in wildlife epidemiology from the University of California, Davis. She has been involved in the field of animal health, disease, and conservation for more than 20 years. Dr. Norman has extensive clinical and teaching experience, and has authored or co-authored more than 40 peer-reviewed scientific papers and reports. In addition, she has served as a wildlife epidemiologist for NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service.