

November 30, 2022

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 formed by Pritam Singh, we are continuing our health and welfare assessments of Tokitae (Toki).

Toki's acute episode of illness during the month of October improved. Drs. McBain and Norman completed a site visit to Miami Seaquarium on November 12-13. This visit included collaborative consultations with Toki's primary and consulting veterinarians and with the water quality and enrichment experts to evaluate her state of health since their last site visit in September. She is slowly being introduced to novel enrichment items such as a water spout and kelp.

During the first week of November, Toki's bloodwork parameters continued to decline while displaying abnormalities in her respiratory blow samples. A new oral antibiotic, Faropenem, an oral equivalent of Meropenem, was started on the evening of November 11th in light of her moderately declining blood test results and subtle clinical decline. During the first two weeks of receiving this new oral antibiotic her behavior has improved as has her bloodwork and cytology. To this day she continues to receive oral antibiotics, antifungal agents, and a decreasing dose of anti-inflammatory medications.

The life support systems in Toki's pool continue to be upgraded, resulting in continuing improvements in water quality. Changes in the sand filter media and improved operational procedures have resulted in sustained and desired pH water ranges and increased removal of organic particles from her pool. Water clarity is improved, as is her pool salinity with major repairs to her existing system. Her pool water temperatures have been stable within her prescribed range.

Respectfully submitted:

James McBain DVM

James McBain, DVM retired

Stephanie Norman

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 Sea World included serving as senior staff veterinarian corporate director of veterinarian medicine and Vice President of Corporate Veterinary Services. He has authored and coauthored 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.