

January 29, 2009

## 20 YEAR OLD BELUGA WHALE, AURORA, PREGNANT

**Vancouver, BC:** Staff and volunteers at the Vancouver Aquarium are thrilled to share news of 20-year-old Aurora's pregnancy. The gestation period for beluga whales is 14–16 months. Aurora's calf is due likely in June or July of this year.

Aurora's first pregnancy resulted in the birth of Qila on July 23, 1995. Qila's birth was historic since she was the first beluga whale to be conceived and born in a Canadian aquarium. Qila gave birth to her own calf, Tiqa, on June 10, 2008.

Tiqa, Qila and Aurora share the Arctic Canada habitat at the Vancouver Aquarium. A fourth female beluga, Kavna (approximately 39 years old) currently resides in a behind-the-scenes habitat with the Vancouver Aquarium's 20-year-old male beluga, Imaq.

The Vancouver Aquarium's expert animal care staff and the veterinary team closely monitor the health and well-being of Aurora and the rest of the beluga whales. Mother-to-be Aurora has proven herself to be an excellent mother and grandmother. She's highly interactive and vocal with her beluga companions and Aquarium animal care staff and volunteers.

"Aquarium members and visitors will have the opportunity to learn about the gestational development of these amazing animals in the coming months," said Dr. Martin Haulena, Staff Veterinarian, Vancouver Aquarium.

The Vancouver Aquarium is a self-supporting, non-profit association dedicated to effecting the conservation of aquatic life through display and interpretation, conservation practices, education, research, and direct action. To learn more about the Vancouver Aquarium, please visit [www.vanaqua.org](http://www.vanaqua.org).

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**Media Contact:**

Public Relations Coordinator  
publicrelations@vanaqua.org  
604.659.3752