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UPDATE: VANCOUVER AQUARIUM BELUGA WHALE CALF DIES

Vancouver, B.C. – Please read below for further information from Dr. Martin Haulena, Vancouver Aquarium veterinarian, explaining the necropsy of Vancouver Aquarium beluga whale calf, Nala.

Nala did not die from objects lodged in her airway. We have provided an illustration of normal Beluga anatomy and Nala’s anatomy. Following is an explanation that supports the illustration: Nala had a unique growth that looks like a “pocket” off her airway.

The growth is located outside of the larynx, and contained three foreign bodies (two rocks and a coin). The pocket-like growth had become inflamed resulting in obstruction to the airway (larynx), which led to an accumulation of fluid in the lungs.

Hence, the foreign bodies were not in the airway or blowhole but, rather, were found within the unique, pocket-like growth that sits outside of the airway.

Dr. Martin Haulena notes that the pocket-like growth is first of its kind to be discovered in a whale. Further investigation will be conducted.

About Nala

Aurora, a 23-year old beluga whale, gave birth to Nala, her third calf, on June 7, 2009. Nala was an energetic and curious calf who enjoyed socializing with the belugas in her Aquarium family, including playmate Tiqa—the Aquarium’s oldest calf—mom Aurora and Qila.

About Vancouver Aquarium

The Vancouver Aquarium is a global leader in connecting people to our natural world, and a self-supporting, non-profit association dedicated to effecting the conservation of aquatic life through display and interpretation, education, research, and direct action. Learn more at www.vanaqua.org.

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