



News Release

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SHEDD AQUARIUM ANNOUNCES THE DEATH OF WHALE CALF

CHICAGO - Shedd Aquarium is deeply saddened to announce the loss of the beluga whale calf born Sunday afternoon to 20-year-old Naya (NI-yah). Puiji's (poo-EE-gee) calf, born on Monday, Dec. 14, continues to progress well through his bonding and nursing milestones.

"This is an extremely sad day for the Shedd Aquarium family," said Ken Ramirez, senior vice president of animal collections and training. "Over the past 48 hours we provided round-the-clock care to the calf, and this morning, we became more concerned since he continued to be disoriented in his swimming and still had not reached two critical milestones of bonding with mom and nursing. Based on our knowledge of a healthy calf, we knew something was wrong."

"From his miraculous birth to the challenges he experienced the hours following, it is clear that this calf would probably have never been born successfully, let alone survived as long as he did, had it not been for the incredible care we were able to give him," added Ramirez.

According to Caryn Poll, DVM, Section Chief, Medicine at Shedd Aquarium, preliminary findings from the necropsy (animal autopsy) revealed no conclusive cause of death, though further tests will be conducted over the coming months.

"Because these amazing animals are in our care, we've learned so much over the past decade about beluga whale lifecycles. That knowledge allowed us to make decisions, which provided the best medical and animal care possible to this calf," said Dr. Poll. "There is more we will continue to learn about beluga whales as a result of this loss that will ultimately benefit beluga whales in the marine mammal community and in the wild."

"Shedd's animal health and care staff are some of the best in the world. While it is not the outcome we had hoped for, I'm extremely proud of the passionate, dedicated, and unrivaled care that our experts gave this calf," said Ted A. Beattie, president and CEO.

As Shedd has done with all mothers following a birth, Naya will continue to remain under 24-hour observation. Naya is doing well and is currently swimming with Puiji and her calf in Secluded Bay. All three whales are currently off public view in order to provide the best animal care.

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*Shedd Aquarium is supported by the people of Chicago and the State of Illinois.
Shedd Aquarium is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the
Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums.*