

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

During the month of January, Toki's condition has remained relatively stable. Her energy, appetite, and engagement in daily activities were steady. There have been no major changes to the treatment plan. Although Toki's stable condition throughout this month gives us some optimism, it is too early to draw conclusions.

During the week of January 23, her chuff cytology displayed high numbers of flagellates and variable high numbers of ciliates. After following daily chuff cytologies since these were found, their numbers dropped significantly and therefore, we chose not to treat her. Her white blood cell (WBC) parameters continue to improve with a number of values nearing levels we have not observed in many months.

Her body condition remains quite 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 WBCs in her chuff samples. She continues to receive daily antibiotic treatment of Faropenem and therapeutic doses of antifungal medications with no immediate plan to make any changes.

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 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.