



## Inspection Report

Sea Research Foundation, Inc  
55 Coogan Blvd.  
Mystic, CT 06355

Customer ID: **56**  
Certificate: **16-C-0025**  
Site: 001  
Mystic Life Aquarium

Type: FOCUSED INSPECTION  
Date: 30-JAN-2024

### 2.131(b)(1) Critical

#### Handling of animals.

APHIS reviewed the facility's records for "Kharabali", (a 9 year old female whale), which contained multiple entries documenting injuries the animal sustained on the surfaces of the primary enclosures where she was housed. For example, records note that on 26-Oct-2023, the rostrum was bleeding after contacting a corner, after which she bumped into a pole. Records document that Kharabali 'bumped' the wall and/or pole 11 times on 08-Nov-2023, and had increased respiratory rates, a possible indicator of pain and/or distress. Records note mandibular/maxillary osteomyelitis and a possible hairline fracture on 14-Nov-2023. Facility records note that on 28-Nov-2023 Kharabali injured herself again, and on 2-Dec-2023, she was diagnosed as having bilateral mandibular fractures. There are notations throughout the records of placing buoys, pads, and staff in the habitat intermittently to protect her from hitting surfaces. In the records, on 3-Dec-2023, it is noted that staff had been evacuated from water due to 'lighting', and Kharabali was noted to 'make contact' with rostrum on wall multiple times ('5x-1x was hard') during this timeframe. Approximately one hour later, a buoy wall was constructed and deployed from the skimmer box to the door at the surface level. Subsequently, the records show that on 8-Dec-2023 Kharabali hit the wall with her rostrum and sank to the bottom, and on 9-Dec-2023, the facility placed pool noodles to prevent contact with the walls. These reactive measures were inadequate protection for this animal, based on the progression of existing injuries, and continuing documentation of contact with the walls in the records. Handling of animals must be done in a manner that does not cause trauma, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort.  
Correct by 7-Feb-2024

### 3.110(g)(1)

#### Veterinary care.

Preliminary and final necropsy reports for "Kharabali", (a 9 year old female beluga whale), reported on 14-Dec-2023 and 30-Jan-2024, respectively, were reviewed by APHIS and other federal officials. Neither report described the oral lesions of dental disease and maxillary/mandibular fractures as described in the pre-mortem records as an 'open fracture' on 08-December-2023. The recorded reproductive ultrasounds performed for monitoring describes a prominent uterus on 27-October-2023, and also 07-December-2023, but no description of an evaluation of the uterus was recorded in necropsy records. A preliminary necropsy report must be prepared by the veterinarian listing all pathologic lesions observed.  
Correct by 18-Mar-2024

Prepared By: SARA TOBIAS

USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:  
16-JUL-2024

Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL  
OFFICER

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:  
16-JUL-2024



## Inspection Report

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This inspection and exit interview were conducted with the facility representatives.

Additional Inspectors:

Tonya Hadjis, Supervisory Animal Care Specialist

Carolyn McKinnie, Senior Veterinary Medical Officer - Marine Mammals and Exotics

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Species Inspected

Cust No	Cert No	Site	Site Name	Inspection
56	16-C-0025	001	Mystic Life Aquarium	30-JAN-2024

Count	Scientific Name	Common Name
000005	<i>Delphinapterus leucas</i>	BELUGA WHALE
000006	<i>Callorhinus ursinus</i>	NORTHERN FUR SEAL
000002	<i>Phoca largha</i>	LARGHA SEAL
000007	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	HARBOR SEAL
000020	<b>Total</b>	