



## Inspection Report

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Institute for Marine Mammal Studies, Inc.  
P.O. Box 207  
Gulfport, MS 39502

Customer ID: **322997**

Certificate: **65-C-0540**

Site: 001

INSTITUTE FOR MARINE  
MAMMAL STUDIES INC

Type: FOCUSED INSPECTION

Date: 22-APR-2025

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### 3.101(a)(1)

#### Facilities, general.

The walls in the back holding for the sea lions and the mural wall on the show stage for Ocean Adventures have sections of paint along the floor that are actively flaking off the walls. Flaking paint can come off the walls and have the potential to be ingested by the animals or end up in the water which can impact water quality. These sections of the wall where paint is actively flaking off need to be maintained in good repair for the health of the animals and the environment.

Correct by: May 1, 2025

### 3.106(b)(2)

#### Water quality.

High levels of total chlorine in the Ocean Adventure pools caused eye issues in the dolphins and sea lions. Beginning March 18, 2025 water quality records for these pools documented a significant increase in total chlorine values consistently over the next 31-day period. Values ranged from 1.20 to 4.30 parts per million (ppm) and multiple days noted a symbol of +++ in which the facility indicated that the numbers could not be ready by the facility equipment as their value was too high. During this period, the facility was actively trying to mitigate the high chlorine levels through water changes, filter changes, addition of salt and thiosulfate.

Despite the mitigation efforts, the high levels of chlorine did have a negative impact on the three dolphins. On March 25th, and 27th all the animals were examined by a veterinarian for documented intermittent eye squinting by the trainers. Medical notes stated that the OA pool water had intermittent increased levels of total chlorine and free chlorine for 7-10 days. All animals had an initial ophthalmic exam and then two days later a second exam was conducted and several animals put on medications to manage eye pain.

Trainers also began to document dolphins having eyes closed, tense when receiving eye medications, rubbing and scratching behaviors. When the dolphins were examined again on April 2, 2025, notations state that all three dolphins had blepharospasms, despite a treatment plan of multiple eye medications, NSAID's and antibiotics. At the time of the inspection, all dolphins were still under medical care and their eyes were open and alert.

The sea lions in these pools were also negatively impacted by the chlorine levels, and when seen by the veterinarian on March 25th they also were eye squinting intermittently. When examined two days later March 27th, two animals had mild

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USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Title: ANIMAL CARE INSPECTOR

Date:

25-APR-2025

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:

25-APR-2025



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corneal edema notated in one eye. Despite the treatment plan of multiple eye medications, NSAID's and antibiotics, three of the four sea lions also went off feed for a minimum of one feed session over a period of 10 days documented from March 20th through April 7th. On April 2, 2025, one sea lion was documented as having blepharospasms, for a period of 5 days and another has stage 1 keratitis. At the time of the inspection, all the sea lions were still under medical care and their eyes were open and alert.

In discussions with the attending veterinarian, he reiterated that the high chlorine levels did affect the animals through evidence of squinty eyes. For the facility the desired range according to the AV for total chlorine is .8 to 1 ppm and for free chlorine, a desired range is .3 to .5 ppm. Currently the facility is still showing numbers higher than 1.0 ppm for total chlorine as of April 19th. High chlorine levels, such as those measured by the facility, commonly cause serious, painful eye conditions in the animals exposed. When the water is chemically treated, the facility must work to ensure that the chemicals shall be added so as not to cause harm or physical discomfort to the marine mammals. This needs to be addressed for the overall health and comfort of the animals living in the Ocean Adventure pools.

Correct by: May 14, 2025

This inspection and exit interview were conducted with a facility representative.

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**Prepared By:** ANDREA D AMBROSIO  
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care  
**Title:** ANIMAL CARE INSPECTOR

**Date:**  
25-APR-2025

**Received by Title:** Facility Representative

**Date:**  
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**Species Inspected**

Cust No	Cert No	Site	Site Name	Inspection
322997	65-C-0540	001	INSTITUTE FOR MARINE MAMMAL STUDIES INC	22-APR-2025

Count	Scientific Name	Common Name
000008	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>	CALIFORNIA SEA LION
000010	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN
000018	<b>Total</b>	