

# SEAWORLD PARKS & ENTERTAINMENT.

## SeaWorld Prepares for Last Orca Birth

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**San Antonio, TX (March 7, 2017)** –SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment is preparing for the birth of its last orca, confirming the company’s commitment to make this the last generation of killer whales at its SeaWorld parks. The calf will be born at the company’s SeaWorld San Antonio park, where visitors will have the last opportunity to see a baby killer whale up close and watch one grow and mature.

Takara, a 25-year-old orca born at SeaWorld San Diego, was already pregnant when the announcement was made in March 2016 that SeaWorld would end orca breeding. The gestation period for a killer whale is approximately 18 months, so she is expected to deliver her calf in the next four-to-six weeks. This will be the last opportunity for guests to see a baby killer whale up close. SeaWorld visitors will continue to have the opportunity to see these animals at SeaWorld in an engaging environment for many years to come.

The birth of Takara’s calf is also the last chance for researchers to study orca development in ways that cannot be done in the wild, helping to benefit whales in the wild as well as those in SeaWorld’s care. Information learned from Takara and her calf will add to SeaWorld’s extensive database about killer whales and their calves, helping scientists studying the endangered Southern Resident killer whale population off the coast of Washington, where they are threatened by pollution, overfishing, and human development. Data and samples from the pair will contribute to studies focused on killer whale growth and metabolism: one looking at toxin transfer in milk when babies nurse from moms, and another evaluating changes in body shape to evaluate nutritional conditions for free-ranging killer whales. The calf, her mom, and other whales will also be monitored by a research team from St. Mary’s University in San Antonio to better understand the social impact of calves and their social development on the killer whale group.

SeaWorld has committed \$50 million over the next five years to be the world’s leading marine animal rescue organization, advocating for wild animals and protecting our oceans. This includes a commitment of \$10 million in matching funds dedicated to killer whale research and the creation of a multi-million dollar partnership focused on ocean health, the leading concern for all killer whales and marine mammals.

### **Visuals include:**

- Takara prenatal care including sonogram
- Takara interacting with SeaWorld San Antonio trainers
- Takara swimming with pod
- Close-up image of orca calf sonogram

**Sound bites include:**

- Dr. Hendrik Nollens, Vice President of Animal Health, SeaWorld Parks
- Amy McCoy, Supervisor, SeaWorld San Antonio
- Doug Acton, Senior Trainer, SeaWorld San Antonio

**About SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment**

SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment™ is a leading theme park and entertainment company providing experiences that matter and inspiring guests to protect animals and the wild wonders of our world. The company is one of the world's foremost zoological organizations and a global leader in animal welfare, training, husbandry and veterinary care. The company collectively cares for what it believes is one of the largest zoological collections in the world and has helped lead advances in the care of animals. The company also rescues and rehabilitates marine and terrestrial animals that are ill, injured, orphaned or abandoned, with the goal of returning them to the wild. The SeaWorld® rescue team has helped more than 29,000 animals in need over the last 50 years.

The company owns or licenses a portfolio of recognized brands including SeaWorld, Busch Gardens® and Sea Rescue®. Over its more than 50-year history, the company has built a diversified portfolio of 12 destination and regional theme parks that are grouped in key markets across the United States, many of which showcase its one-of-a-kind zoological collection. The company's theme parks feature a diverse array of rides, shows and other attractions with broad demographic appeal which deliver memorable experiences and a strong value proposition for its guests.

SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment is a wholly owned subsidiary of SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc., a publicly traded company. Visit [www.seaworldentertainment.com](http://www.seaworldentertainment.com) for more information.

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