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BELUGA WHALES

- Often called “canaries of the sea,” beluga whales (*Delphinapterus leucas*) broadcast squeals, trills, chirps and other sounds through their blowholes.
- Beluga whales are found in the frigid waters of the Arctic Circle.
- Beluga whale calves are born with grey, slate-colored skin, but as they mature, become a creamy white tone to blend into icy backgrounds.
- Shedd’s whales can even mimic the raspy, Darth Vader-like breathing sounds of the scuba divers who clean their habitat.
- Adult beluga whales can grow up to 18 feet long and weigh more than 3,000 pounds!
- Naturally social, belugas will often travel in pods of three to 10 whales.
- Belugas have a natural ability to twist and crane their necks to find prey, like herring, octopus and squid. These whales can eat up to 80 pounds of fish a day!
- Beluga whales have a gestation period of 14 -16 months. Newborn calves can weigh from 80 to 125 pounds and are between three and five feet long.
- Shedd trainers mothered Kayavak night and day after she became an orphan at only five months old, teaching her to eat fish rather than her mother’s milk and how to spin, spit, make noises, and show off other natural behaviors by interacting.
- Shedd has had four successful beluga calf births – Kayavak in 1999, Qannik in 2000, Bella in July 2006 and Miki in August 2007.
- Shedd is one of nine North American zoos and aquariums committed to public display and breeding of beluga whales.
- Almost all of Shedd’s beluga whales derive their names from the Inuit language of the native people who live among belugas in the Arctic region.

	<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u>MEASUREMENT</u>	<u>ESTIMATED YEAR OF BIRTH</u>
<i>Females:</i>			
Puiji	1,500 pounds	10 feet, 8 inches	1986
Naya	1,800 pounds	10 feet, 5 inches	1989
Mauyak	1,200 pounds	11 feet	1982
Kayavak	950 pounds	9 feet, 5 inches	Aug. 3, 1999
Bella	800 pounds	8 feet, 6 inches	July 17, 2006
<i>Males:</i>			
Naluark	2,000 pounds	13 feet	1986
Miki	450 pounds	8 feet, 6 inches	Aug. 16, 2007

Names and Inuit translations

Puiji (poo-EE-jee) means "those who show their noses."

Naya (NI-yah) means "little sister of a male."

*Mauyak (MI-yak) means "soft snow."

Kayavak (KAY-yah-vok) means "singing game producing soft echoes."

Bella (BEL-la), the only Shedd beluga without an Inuit name, was named in a contest by viewers of ABC's "Good Morning America." Bella means "beautiful" in Italian.

Naluark (Na-LOO-ark) means "whitened skin."

Miki (MEE-kee) means "little."

*Mauyak is on loan from the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium as part of a national cooperative breeding program.

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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 and Aquariums (AZA) and
the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums.*