

## **MEDIA CONTACT:**

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## **CALIFORNIA SEA LIONS**

- California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*) are found along the Pacific Ocean coast from British Columbia to northern Mexico.
- The scientific term, *Zalophus californianus*, means "Californian big-head."
- Adult male California sea lions, called bulls, can grow up to more than 1000 pounds and eight feet long. Adult females, called cows, can grow to reach over 200 pounds and six feet long.
- The coat of the adult male is a much darker brown than females and immature males, which have a tan appearance.
- California sea lions can swim up to 25 mph (40 km/h) and dive to depths of 450 ft while staying submerged for up to 20 minutes.
- Their diet consists of squid, octopus, abalone and more than 50 species of fish.
- California sea lions don't need to drink water to survive; they obtain the necessary amount of water from their food.
- Sea lions are the only mammals whose milk does not contain lactose, an essential nutrient for most mammals.
- Pups are born with their eyes open and can immediately vocalize with their mothers.
- The United States Navy trains these mammals to participate in certain military operations.
- About 200,000 California sea lions exist in the wild; the Japanese subspecies is now considered extinct.
- Male California sea lions can go without food for three months. Because they do not have to leave their breeding ground to hunt for food, this helps them protect their breeding territory.
- A group of sea lions in the water is called a raft.
- Threatened by dwindling natural habitats and aggressive commercial fishers, California sea lions are protected under the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act.
- Shedd Aquarium currently has three California sea lions. Tyler was born at SeaWorld, San Diego and Bif and Otis were rescued from the Bonneville Dam.
- Sea lions often capitalize on the existence of the Bonneville Dam along the Washington-Oregon border, where they climb ladders designed for spawning salmon and eat endangered species of salmon. In an effort to protect the salmon, the government began a culling program. Shedd was one of several facilities that stepped forward and offered to rescue a few of these animals.

## **Shedd's Sea Lions**

*Name (sex)    Birth Year    Weight*

Tyler (m)	2001	350
Bif (m)	1999	700
Otis (m)	1999	725

- **Tyler** was born at SeaWorld, San Diego and then brought to Shedd Aquarium and is involved with cooperative breeding efforts with other zoos and aquariums. He is named after Tyler Bight on San Miguel Island, a frequent hangout for sea lions.
- **Bif** was named after Bif's Beach on Lummi Island off the coast of Washington state, a place where sea lions swim on their way to richer feeding grounds. Biff was rescued from the Bonneville Dam.
- **Otis** was named after a town in Oregon where sea lions often must pass on their way to Bonneville Dam, where Shedd rescued him from the cull.
- The sea lions are named for places along the Pacific Coast where sea lions often live.

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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.*