



Fact Sheet

MEDIA CONTACT:

Shedd Aquarium Public Relations

(312) 692-3330

media@sheddaquarium.org

PACIFIC WHITE-SIDED DOLPHINS

- Pacific white-sided dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*) are distinguished by their black backs, gray sides and white bellies. A suspender-like stripe runs down each side.
- Nicknamed “lags” after their unwieldy scientific name, Pacific white-sided dolphins can leap effortlessly to towering heights of 15 to 20 feet, turn somersaults in the air, or belly flop with a dramatic splash.
- Clocked at 25 miles per hour, Pacific white-sided dolphins are the fastest swimmers in the ocean.
- Staying true to their name, these playful dolphins are from the cool waters of the North Pacific Ocean.
- Dolphins lack vocal chords. They use whistles, chirps and squawks (also called vocalization) as part of a wide array of communication interactions.
- Each dolphin has its own distinct whistle to identify itself, much like a name.
- It is believed that dolphins use echolocation to communicate, but it primarily helps the dolphin navigate and find food in murky water. A dolphin will send out sonar-like, high-frequency clicks, and they bounce off objects and return. The dolphin senses the echo in the bones of the lower jaw, and as the vibration travels to the inner ear, the dolphin interprets the "sound" to learn information about its environment.
- Scientists believe that their behaviors – such as tail slapping, biting, or rubbing – may be a means of keeping track of one another, courtship, or alerting others to danger.
- Dining mostly at night, lags eat squid and other small schooling fish such as anchovies, herring, hake and sardines.
- The names of Shedd’s Pacific white-sided dolphins are Tlingit, the endangered language of the native American tribe of the Pacific Northwest, specifically southeast Alaska and western Canada where these dolphins are found.
- Currently, aquariums and zoos in the United States house fewer than 20 Pacific white-sided dolphins. Shedd has four females, two of which are currently on a cooperative breeding loan at Miami Seaquarium. Miami Seaquarium has one dolphin on loan at Shedd Aquarium.

<i>Name (sex)</i>	<i>Translation of Names</i>	<i>Birth Year</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Piquet (f)	“Female of Small Structure”	1988	6’3”	200
Katrl (f)	“To Breathe Air”	1987	7’	260
Ohana (f)	“Family” in Hawaiian	2006	5’8”	170
*Kri (f)	“Nine”	1985	6’3”	210
*Tique (f)	“Water borne”	1985	6’2”	210

*Kri and Tique are currently on a cooperative breeding loan with Miami Seaquarium.

#

*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.*