

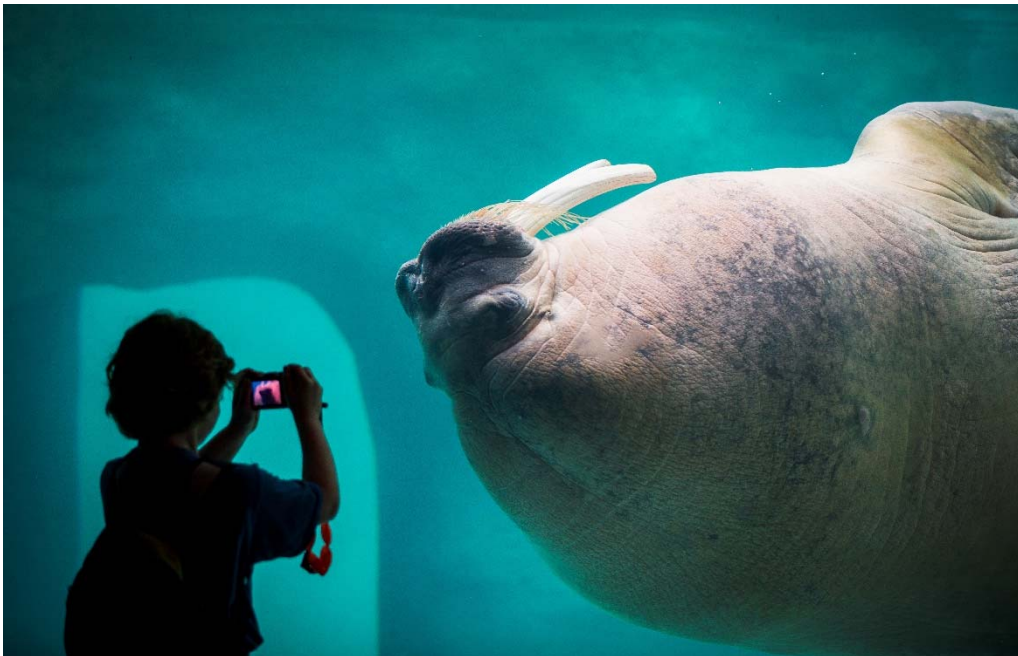


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AND NOW IT'S TIME TO SAY GOODBYE: DOZER THE HUMONGOUS WALRUS WITH LONG TUSKS IS LEAVING POINT DEFIANCE ZOO AFTER 8 MONTHS OF WHISTLING, BELLOWING AND MATING

Tacoma, Wash. – Dozer, the loveable 3,100-pound walrus with the 17-inch-long tusks and unmistakable whistle, is leaving Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium late this month. But visitors still have opportunities to see the massive mammal and bid him adieu.

He's scheduled to be featured during special Marine Mammal keeper talks at 3 p.m. on June 17, 18, 24 and 25.



The popular walrus came to Tacoma seven months ago through the Walrus Conservation Consortium, which is dedicated to aiding the imperiled species both in aquariums and in the Arctic.

At one point during his residence in Tacoma, he bulked up to around 3,700 pounds.

He has been not only a crowd favorite, but he completed his assigned task: While in Tacoma, Dozer bred with the zoo's three females, Joan,

Basilla and Kulu.

Zoo officials won't know until fall, however, whether the pairings were successful. Once an egg is fertilized, it's not implanted in the uterus for four to five months – a relatively unique process called delayed implantation. The gestation period is about 15 months.

"We brought Dozer to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in the hope that he and at least one of our female walruses might successfully produce a calf," said senior staff biologist Lisa Triggs, who has worked with and studied the species for a quarter century. She also earned her master's degree with scientific research on walrus reproduction.

"There are just 15 Pacific walruses in accredited zoos and aquariums in the United States," she said. "We are hopeful that we can increase that number. These animals are amazing ambassadors that help our visitors learn about the effects of climate change on marine mammals. They inspire us all to take action to reduce our carbon footprints."



Over the last several months, Dozer's whistle became an unmistakable call around the zoo. Male walrus have a number of interesting vocalizations, including bellowing and clacking to signal their desire for mating, give warnings or make other needs known in the wild. But the whistle is what impresses the ladies. And Dozer, in the height of rut, or mating, season made it well known that he was trying to attract the females.

Soon, he will be off to another Association of Zoos & Aquariums' accredited facility for potential mating with other females, Triggs said. He has been in Tacoma on loan from Sea World San Antonio.

"Visitors to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium have been fortunate to see this magnificent male walrus during the breeding season," said Dr. Karen Goodrowe Beck, the zoo's general curator, who holds a Ph.D. in reproductive biology. "We know our visitors will miss him; we hope he has motivated them to learn more about Pacific walrus and how to help them in the wild."

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is a recognized leader in walrus research and conservation.

The Zoo Society's Dr. Holly Reed Wildlife Conservation Fund supports a walrus research program at an Alaska Department of Fish and Game sanctuary in northern Bristol Bay.

In recent years, Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff members also have engaged in studies and aided other researchers to:

- Investigate the physical characteristics and mechanisms that allow walrus to produce a variety of unique sounds
- Assess variations in food consumption and body conditions of walrus

- Identify a reliable blubber measurement to assess body condition in marine mammals, using Pacific walrus as the model
- Study the development of diving physiology and capacity in walrus

“Each of these studies helps marine mammal experts and other researchers better understand these magnificent mammals,” Triggs said. “The more we learn about them, the more we can help wild walrus as they adapt to changing climates and altered landscapes.”

For more information, go to [pacificwalrus](#).

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest’s only combined zoo and aquarium, practices and promotes responsible stewardship of the world’s resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).

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