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SEA OTTER DIES AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

TACOMA, Wash. – Kaladi, a 6-year-old female sea otter, died Friday at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

Preliminary necropsy results suggest that Kaladi died from an intestinal torsion, said Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium head veterinarian Karen Wolf.

“Intestinal torsion or twisting in sea otters is unfortunately not uncommon,” said Wolf. “Hopefully, over time, the risk factors for this illness will be better understood so that future deaths can be prevented.”

Kaladi (kuh-lah-dee) arrived at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in June of 2010 as a 1-month-old orphaned pup. She was rescued on the shores of Alaska’s Kodiak Island, where sea otters are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The young otter was hand raised by veterinarians and biologists at the Alaska SeaLife Center in Seward before arriving at Point Defiance Zoo, where staff cared for her around the clock during her first few weeks in Tacoma.

“We are deeply saddened by the loss of Kaladi,” said Wolf. “She was hugely popular among our visitors for her playful antics and curious nature. While we take some comfort knowing that we likely could not have prevented her death, it is difficult to lose such a beloved member of our zoo family.”

Full necropsy results are pending.

Point Defiance Zoo is home to two remaining female sea otters.

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest’s only combined zoo and aquarium, 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).