

The Release of Tilikum



- **Tilikum's Retirement:**

Tilikum will be retired immediately from his work at SeaWorld and begin his rehabilitation process in order to be released into the [Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary](#), a US Federally protected marine area offshore of California's central coast. In his retirement...

- Tilikum will no longer be breeding with any of the other SeaWorld orcas.
- Tilikum will no longer be performing in any of the SeaWorld shows.

- **Tilikum's Rehabilitation:**

Tilikum will begin his rehabilitation on December 4th 2013 at SeaWorld Orlando and continue his rehabilitation at an ocean water sea pen near a protective cove in Kanaka Bay on the West side of San Juan Island. This will be the transition area where Tilikum will undergo the majority of his rehabilitation before he is released into the open waters of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Life.

Rehabilitation at SeaWorld Orlando

- Tilikum's diet will be mixed gradually with live salmon so he may get used to eating live fish and catching them when he is released into open waters. SeaWorld workers will observe and gauge his response to this change in his diet and make necessary increases or decreases with time. We hope to move his diet over to live salmon completely by the end of December.
- SeaWorld has been working with KSB Pumps to construct a Killer Whale Treadmill. Once the treadmill is finished, Tilikum will be the first whale that will begin exercising on this incredible device. Tilikum will begin training on the treadmill during this time in order to be ready to swim longer distances easily when he is released. Feasibility studies and 3D modeling were conducted for a device which would create water flow speeds up to 30 miles per hour, essentially simulating the sensation of endless swimming.

Rehabilitation at Kanaka Bay

- After being transported to Kanaka Bay, Tilikum will be given adequate time to adjust to his new environment and lifestyle before his more varied, flexible, and stimulating training period begins. Depending on how well Tilikum adjusts, we predict this period will last between 1-4 weeks.
- Once Tilikum adjusts to Kanaka Bay and the sea pen that will be his home before his release into the sanctuary, his new training will begin. This training will be done with three trainers and one supervisor. The supervisor will be the main trainer for Tilikum during this time to ensure consistency. All training sessions will be carefully monitored and documentation of each training session will be taken through written reports and video.
- Tilikum will be trained to hunt and consume his own food. The trainers feeding him live salmon will slowly be stopped in order for him to disassociate receiving food with humans. Tilikum will slowly be able to rely on himself for food.
- Tilikum will undergo general fitness training in order to be able to keep up with other orcas when in the sanctuary. This will be done with gradual open water exercises with progressively longer boat-follow training to further build her strength to eventually

approximate the physical condition of other orcas living in the sanctuary.

- **Tilikum's Transportation:**

- To make sure that no unforeseen complications occur, there will be a test before the actual transport of Tilikum occurs. The crane and the cradle that will hold Tilikum will be tested to make sure everything is in working order before the actual transportation.
- During transportation from Orlando to Kanaka Bay and from Kanaka Bay to Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Tilikum's veterinarian will travel with Tilikum to oversee the transportation and be available for any medical emergencies that may arise.
- Tilikum will be placed in the cradle (shipping crate) that will be specifically built for his weight, width, and height. During the test, the security of this cradle will be checked.
- During the transportation day, after Tilikum is placed in the cradle, he will be transported by airplane from Orlando to San Juan Island.

- **Tilikum's Release:**

- After Tilikum's rehabilitation at Kanaka Bay, he will be transported through the same methods to Monterey National Marine Sanctuary by plane, from San Juan Island to San Jose, California where he will be released into the Marine Sanctuary.
- Tilikum will be monitored by SeaWorld trainers and his veterinarian, as well as the staff at Monterey National Marine Sanctuary during the first month to make sure he is adjusting properly. After that he will be monitored by the staff of Monterey National Marine Sanctuary and Sea World will be kept up to date on Tilikum and his health, wellness, and overall happiness at the sanctuary.
- The public will be kept up to date with the entire process of Tilikum's release and Sea World hopes to be as transparent and open as possible with the process.