



BELUGA WHALE SANCTUARY UPDATE: Little Grey and Little White arrive safely after move to bay care area

10th August 2020: The SEA LIFE Trust is delighted to confirm that two beluga whales, Little Grey and Little White, are now safely in their new sea sanctuary care area at Klettsvik Bay in Iceland.

The moving of the whales into the world's first open water sanctuary for belugas, was completed on Friday 7th August at 12:30pm Icelandic time.

Little Grey and Little White are now in their bayside care pool and will need a short period of time to acclimatise to their new natural environment and all the outdoor elements before their final release into the wider sanctuary in Klettsvik Bay in the Westman Islands off the south coast of Iceland.

The expert team and the independent vets were with Little Grey and Little White throughout the move and said they are healthy and are feeding well after the short trip from their landside care facility back to the sea.

This is the first time Little Grey and Little White have been in the sea since they were taken from a Russian whale research centre in 2011.

Little Grey and Little White will now be assessed around the clock as they get used to being back in the ocean environment.

Andy Bool, Head of SEA LIFE Trust, said: *"We're absolutely delighted to be able to share the news that Little Grey and Little White are safely in their sea sanctuary care pools and are just one step away from being released into their open water home."*

"Following extensive planning and rehearsals, the first stage of their release back to the ocean was as smooth as we had hoped and planned for. We are carefully monitoring Little Grey and Little White with our expert care team and veterinarians and hope to announce their final release very soon."

The Sanctuary, operated by charity the SEA LIFE Trust and which is the first of its kind, was built with the support of a generous donation from Merlin Entertainments. Created in partnership with Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), the *SEA LIFE TRUST Beluga Whale Sanctuary* is one of the biggest developments in captive whale and dolphin care and protection in decades and the first of its kind to be created for cetaceans.

For more information about the *SEA LIFE TRUST Beluga Whale Sanctuary* or to make a donation, visit www.sealifetrust.org.

For further information please contact at Andrew Boocock at Stripe Communications on 07855795403 or email: belugasanctuary@stripecommunications.com

Notes to Editors:

How were Little Grey and Little White moved from the landside facility on the island of Vestmannaeyjar to Klettsvik Bay?

The complex challenge of transferring Little White and Little Grey a short distance to their new open water sanctuary home was carefully planned by a team of experts with experience in caring for marine mammals.

1. The whales were safely transferred from the landside care facility in specially designed slings with custom foam matting for cushioning during transportation using a truck and the harbour's tugboat.
2. The belugas' care team, along with local assistance, were with the whales throughout the duration of the move. The move took up to an hour with each whale to be moved individually. They were kept cool and damp using misters.
3. After reaching the bay, the whales were released into their sea sanctuary care pools. These sea sanctuary care pools are designed for monitoring the whales and providing veterinary care during a period of acclimatisation.
4. The time period in the care pools will be determined by the whales' health and well-being with a 24 hour watch for a period of time before the whales are assessed to be released into their new home, Klettsvik Bay, which measures approximately 32,000 sqm with a depth of up to 10m.

About SEA LIFE TRUST

SEA LIFE TRUST is a registered charity (no. 1175859) working globally to protect the world's oceans and the amazing marine life that lives within them. Our vision is of a world where our seas are healthy, protected and full of diverse life. We own and operate marine wildlife sanctuaries, run inspiring conservation campaigns and fund projects and education programmes that champion the need for plastic-free oceans, sustainable fishing, effective Marine Protected Areas and an end to over-exploitation of marine life. www.sealifetrust.org

About Merlin Entertainments

Merlin Entertainments is a global leader in location-based, family entertainment. As Europe's Number 1 and the world's second-largest visitor attraction operator, Merlin now operates over 130 attractions, 20 hotels and 6 holiday villages in 25 countries and across 4 continents. Merlin's purpose is to deliver memorable experiences to its 67 million guests around the world, through its iconic brands and multiple attraction formats, and the commitment and passion of its c.28,000 employees (peak season). www.merlinentertainments.biz

About WDC

WDC, Whale and Dolphin Conservation is the leading charity dedicated to the protection of whales and dolphins, working globally through campaigns, lobbying, advising governments, conservation projects, field research, rescue, education and much more. WDC operates through offices in the UK, North America, Germany and Australia. Our vision is a world where every whale and dolphin is safe and free. www.whales.org

Plimsoll Productions – making the documentary

Plimsoll Productions creates and produces non-scripted content from its offices in Bristol, Cardiff and Los Angeles. The creative team has produced many hits and won Baftas, Emmys and RTS awards. In little more than five years, the company has secured orders for more than 50 series, working for clients in the US, UK and Canada. Completed shows and formats are sold all over the world: Plimsoll controls distribution after acquiring a significant stake in Magnify Media. The company is now one of the fastest growing UK indies and already one of the largest: it's currently listed as 3rd in the annual Broadcast survey of true indies. We believe that diversity of talent, thought and experience are key elements of the creative process and we aim to promote equality, respect and inclusiveness across the company.

<http://www.plimsollproductions.com/>

