



Welcome to the SeaWorld Texas press room. For general information about the 2000 season, check out the [reference section](#) below. But for the newest scoop, here's something

**HOT OFF THE PRESS!**

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## Unique 'Symphony of the Whales' Set for April 18 at SeaWorld

**SAN ANTONIO (April 3, 2000)** – SeaWorld San Antonio's Shamu, companion killer whales, the San Antonio Symphony and The Rape Crisis Center (RCC) will orchestrate a unique performance Tuesday, April 18 – "Symphony of the Whales," the only concert anywhere by a full symphony orchestra and whales.

As the San Antonio Symphony fills Shamu Stadium with beautiful melodies, Shamu and company will perform a splashy water ballet choreographed to the music. Fellowship conductor Carlos Miguel Prieto will lead the orchestra in a program that includes Tchaikovsky's "Polonaise," Anderson's "Bugler's Holiday" and Rossini's "William Tell Overture." Proceeds will benefit the RCC.

SeaWorld's gates will open at 7 p.m. for pre-concert activities such as a raffle, a RCC car key give-away and a chance for guests to meet beautiful SeaWorld birds. The performance will begin at 8:15 p.m. and this year, for the first time, will incorporate new video technology at Shamu Stadium. TV cameras above and below water capture the exciting interaction between killer whales and trainers and project it in vivid color on a 2-story-high screen.

Tickets are priced at \$20 for adults, \$7.50 for children ages 13 and younger and free for youngsters 3 and under. In addition, a special family four-pack is available at \$50 for two adults and two children. Tickets for senior adults and the military are available at \$18 per person.

To reserve tickets at these prices, call the RCC at (210) 521-7273. Prices will be slightly higher at the gate.

At 6:30 p.m., a special "Pre-Splash Bash" VIP reception featuring heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be held backstage and poolside at Shamu Stadium. The cost is \$100 per adult and \$20 for those under 21 years of age. Children under 3 are free.

"The sight of powerful yet graceful killer whales moving in-sync with the elegant notes of the symphony is literally breathtaking," said M.

Lynn Blanco, executive director of The Rape Crisis Center.

SeaWorld's Vice President of Animal Training Dave Force said it takes practice, precision and teamwork to blend the talents of musicians, whales and trainers into a memorable performance. "It's an incredible challenge," Force noted, "yet it's one of the season's highlights at SeaWorld. The opportunity to perform with a magnificent orchestra really motivates our animal training staff."

RCC provides comprehensive services to rape victims and their families and friends. Sexual assault awareness programs are conducted throughout Bexar County and its surrounding areas, and an in-house, 24-hour hotline – (210) 349-RAPE – is provided for crisis calls. For general information about the RCC, call 521-7273.

SeaWorld San Antonio is an Anheuser-Busch Adventure Park. Other Anheuser-Busch parks are Busch Gardens in Tampa Bay, Fla., and Williamsburg, Va.; SeaWorld marine life adventure parks in Orlando, San Diego and Cleveland; Water Country USA in Williamsburg; Adventure Island in Tampa Bay; and Sesame Place in Langhorne, Pa., near Philadelphia.

A leader in conservation and education, the Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks maintain an animal information site on the World Wide Web designed especially for students and teachers at <http://www.seaworld.org>. To learn more about the Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks call toll-free (800) 4ADVENTURE.

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### **SEA LIONS 'SLIP' INTO SEAWORLD'S INTERACTIVE ANIMAL SPOTLIGHT**

SAN ANTONIO (Dec. 16, 1999) – Slipping into a wetsuit and slipping into the water with California sea lions used to be a dream for animal enthusiasts, but now it's reality at SeaWorld San Antonio.

During the new Sea Lion Interaction Program (SLIP), participants assume roles as "apprentice animal trainers" and engage in a splashy encounter of the sea lion kind.

This hands-on learning opportunity at the world's largest marine life adventure park begins with a classroom session on sea lion anatomy and physiology. Then SLIP participants head for Sea Lion, Walrus and Otter Stadium, where they "join" the animal training staff.

They meet with SeaWorld trainers to learn how sea lions are trained through "positive reinforcement," which rewards correct behavior and ignores undesirable behavior. Then, using the same facilities as the trainers, "SLIPers" suit up for an unforgettable 45-minute encounter with curious, energetic sea lions.

The animal interaction portion of SLIP takes place on both land and in 58-degree water. Participants learn hand signals to request various sea lion behaviors such as spins, hops, flips, vocalizations and even smiles. They also get to feed the animals and give them special treats such as rubdowns. Each two-hour SLIP session offers multiple opportunities for unforgettable photos.

The inspiration for SLIP came from SeaWorld's popular Beluga Interaction Program (BIP), the only adventure of its kind in the world offering memorable experiences with beautiful white whales.

"SLIP and BIP respond to the many requests from SeaWorld guests to

get up close to our fascinating animals," said Dave Force, SeaWorld San Antonio's vice president of animal training. "Coming nose-to-nose with a beluga whale or sea lion leaves many participants in total awe and almost speechless. Both SLIP and BIP deliver thrills that last a lifetime."

SLIP and BIP are available year-round, even when SeaWorld San Antonio is not open to the general public, Force noted. Those who participate on days when the park is closed to the general public receive a voucher for a return visit to SeaWorld when the park is in full operation.

Force said SLIP and BIP participants must be 10 years or older and at least 48 inches tall for SLIP and 52 inches tall for BIP. Those under 18 years old must be accompanied by an adult.

To obtain more details including costs and how to register, interested individuals can call (210) 523-3900. Gift certificates for SLIP and BIP are available.

General information about SeaWorld San Antonio, including the park's operating schedule, is available at (210) 523-3611.

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For more information: Bob McCullough or Rebecca Esparza (210) 523-3630

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### **HIGHLY ENDANGERED HAWAIIAN MONK SEALS THRIVING AT SEAWORLD**

SAN ANTONIO (January 10, 2000) – Ten endangered Hawaiian monk seals now make their home at SeaWorld San Antonio.

The animals – all young adult females about 3 years old – were transferred to the world's largest marine life adventure park with the approval of the National Marine Fisheries Service for long-term care and research.

SeaWorld San Antonio guests can observe the seals in their new home at SeaWorld's Seal and Sea Lion Community, adjacent to the Sea Lion, Walrus and Otter Stadium.

The Hawaiian monk seal, found only in the Hawaiian Islands, is the only endangered marine mammal that lives entirely within the borders of the U.S., said Dudley Wigdahl, SeaWorld San Antonio's general curator. It has been listed as an endangered species since 1976. Current population estimates of 1,300 to 1,400 animals represent a decline of approximately 60 percent since the late 1950s.

Wigdahl said eight of the monk seals have varying degrees of blindness from an unknown cause, while two others are key to research, not having contracted the undiagnosed ailment which caused the blindness.

Marine mammal veterinarians who have examined the Hawaiian monk seals say they don't believe the eye condition, which caused the animals to go blind, is contagious. All 10 monk seals appear to be healthy with the exception of the vision problems.

"When it was determined the monk seals could not forage or defend themselves in the wild, the National Marine Fisheries Service sought to relocate the entire group from the Kewalo Research Facility in Hawaii to a more spacious home for long-term care," Wigdahl explained.

"We have ample room at our Seal and Sea Lion Community, a habitat which already provides a home for California sea lions, harbor seals, North American river otters and Asian small-clawed otters. Our guests and participants in our education programs now have a tremendous opportunity to learn about a species that very few people see in the wild."

Researchers from SeaWorld and other zoological institutions also will observe and study the animals' physiology and behavior in hopes of finding answers that will contribute to the long-term survival of Hawaiian monk seals.

Adult Hawaiian monk seals measure about 7 feet in length and weigh between 400 and 600 pounds. Their diet primarily consists of fish (herring and smelt), and they consume approximately 12 to 15 pounds of fish a day.

SeaWorld's professional zoological staff provides year-round care for more than 11,000 marine mammals, birds and fishes, including endangered species like the Attwater prairie chicken, golden conure, Hawaiian NeNe goose, Kemp's ridley sea turtle, white-winged wood duck and spotted whistling duck. Threatened and protected species at SeaWorld San Antonio include the hyacinth macaw and the Asian small-clawed otter.

For more SeaWorld San Antonio information, call (210) 523-3611.





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For more information, members of the media should contact [swtpr@anheuser-busch.com](mailto:swtpr@anheuser-busch.com) or call (210) 523-3630.

## **Reference**

-  [2000 Facts and Information](#)
-  [2000 Press Kit Overview Story](#)
-  [2000 Press Kit Animal Interactions](#)
-  [2000 Press Kit Camps Release](#)

 [Photo Gallery](#)