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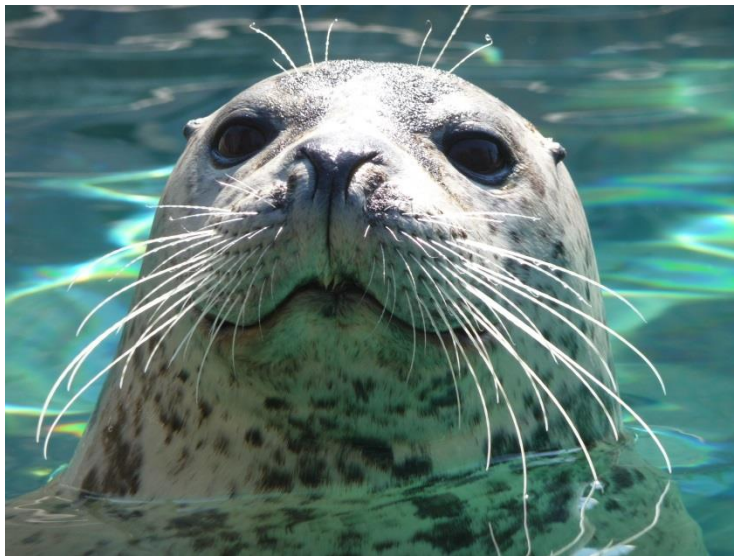
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### **GERIATRIC HARBOR SEAL HUMANELY EUTHANIZED AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM**

*39-year-old Blackie suffered from cancer that chemotherapy couldn't control, and she had stopped eating*

TACOMA, Wash. – Veterinarians humanely euthanized a 39-year-old harbor seal at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium this morning after chemotherapy treatments failed to halt the spread of cancer.



Blackie suffered from aggressive esophageal cancer, head veterinarian Dr. Karen Wolf said.

Wolf hoped oral chemotherapy could slow the spread of the disease, which was revealed during thorough medical testing last month.

But the treatments were ineffective, and the zoo's veterinary staff and a consulting oncologist agreed that humane euthanasia was necessary due to Blackie's quickly declining quality of life.

She had begun eating sporadically and on some days spurned her fish altogether.

At nearly 40, Blackie was among the oldest harbor seals in the nation.

She was born in April 1976. The average life expectancy for a harbor seal in the wild is 24 years, according to statistics compiled by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium has six other harbor seals, Louise, Qilak, Siku, Saya, Shila and Hogan.

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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).*

