



# Corky's Babies

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By about 11 years of age Corky began to mature sexually and she mated with Orky. On February 28, 1977, Corky delivered her first calf, a male. This was the first live orca to be born in captivity. Orky helped the calf to the surface after the difficult birth. The situation grew tense after the baby failed to nurse. The staff intervened, drained the pool, and force fed the calf several times each day. Despite these efforts the baby continued to lose weight, and died of pneumonia. He had lived for just 16 days.

Corky became pregnant again very soon after, and gave birth to another male calf on October 31, 1978. Again the baby failed to nurse and the staff again tried to force feed him in a desperate attempt to keep him alive. The calf died after 11 days. Pneumonia and colitis (brought on by a bacterial contamination in the formula) were the cause of death.

In 1980 Corky delivered an eight week premature stillborn calf, on April 1.

Then on June 18, 1982, Corky gave birth to a female calf. This was to be Corky's longest surviving baby. This baby also failed to nurse, and after 46 days Corky and Orky took the calf to the bottom of the tank and drowned her.

To encourage Corky to nurse properly, the Marineland staff made a dummy calf and "taught" Corky to position herself appropriately. Corky did well during training sessions but she did not do so well after her babies were born.

Corky had two more pregnancies. On July 22, 1985, she gave birth to another female calf who survived for a month. Again the calf failed to nurse. Corky's last pregnancy ended on July 27, 1986, when an aborted fetus was found at the bottom of the tank. Corky had been pregnant 6 times. This meant she had been almost continuously pregnant for ten years. Finally, at the age of 21, Corky stopped ovulating.

In the wild, even at her present age of 37, Corky would be considered still relatively young for a female orca. Swimming beside her would be her own babies, some already grown to adulthood, and potentially she would have several more reproductive years. A female orca in the wild typically has about 25 reproductive years during which she bears perhaps 4 to 6 offspring.



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