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Geriatric Seal Dies at Toledo Zoo *Grey Seal Neptune Assisted Navy*

Toledo, Ohio—Neptune, a grey seal that assisted the United States Navy during the 1970s, died earlier this week. A necropsy suggests that age-related natural causes including a thyroid tumor may have been the cause of death; results from further tests are pending. Neptune was approximately 36 years old, well above the average life expectancy for a male grey seal.

From 1975 to 1978, Neptune was one of many seals, sea lions and dolphins to assist the United States Navy in a number of undersea tasks, including the retrieval of tools and equipment for divers, the identification of mines, and the location of submarines. It is believed that he may have been the only grey seal to assist the Navy in this capacity. In 1978, the Navy donated Neptune to Mystic Aquarium in Connecticut, and in 1999 he arrived at The Toledo Zoo, where his story has engaged and inspired countless visitors to his home in the Arctic Encounter®.

According to the Zoo's Executive Director, Dr. Anne Baker, "Neptune's history and contributions remind us to thank the men and women who give of themselves in service to our country."

The Toledo Zoo's Arctic Encounter® is currently home to one male and two female grey seals, along with two harbor seals.

The Toledo Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is located on the Anthony Wayne Trail (US 25), four miles south of downtown Toledo. For more information, please visit www.toledozoo.org or call (419) 385-4040. Lucas County residents are admitted free of charge each Monday from 10 a.m. to noon. ID showing proof of residency is required.

The Toledo Zoo is committed to inspiring others to join in caring for animals and conserving the natural world. As part of that mission, The Toledo Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), a leader in global wildlife conservation. AZA member institutions are dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for visitors and a better future for all living things.

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