

Georgia Aquarium Transport Plan

A transport plan if beluga whale(s) should need to move from Mystic Aquarium to Georgia Aquarium including:

- a. **Mode(s) of transportation:** Describe the mode of transportation. Include a description of the vehicle or other platform used to transport animals.
- b. **The name of the transportation company, if applicable, and the qualifications of the common carrier to transport live animals. If a contract or other entity will do the transportation, enter the information.**
- c. **Maximum length of time from capture to arrival at destination: How long with the animals be in transport?**
- d. **Description of the container (e.g. cage, tank) used to hold the animal during transit. Include the material of the container and its dimensions.**
- e. **Any special care procedures (e.g. moisture, medicines) to be administered during transport: How will the animals be cared for during transport?**
- f. **A statement as to whether the animals will be accompanied by a veterinarian or some similarly qualified person: If so, give the name, affiliation, contact information for each person.**
- g. **Destination: If the animals will be taken to a laboratory or aquarium, provide details of the location.**
- h. **How will the animals be contained at the destination facility? Describe the containment system for the animals, quarantine procedures, and effluent treatment.**
- i. **The final destination of the animals: Describe whether the animal will be released or retained in permanent captivity.**

If there is a determination for whale(s) to be managed at Georgia Aquarium (located at 225 Baker Street NW, Atlanta, Georgia) the animals will be transported from Mystic Aquarium using the same techniques to move the animals from Marineland, Canada, to Mystic, CT. Georgia Aquarium will work collaboratively with Mystic Aquarium to assemble a team of transport personnel with extensive experience transporting beluga whales. The transport includes a combination of ground and air transport. Truck transportation will be used to move animals to and from airports for air transportation. Air transport with a reputable air charter transport company with a history of live animal transports will be used. A pressurized cargo configured wide bodied jet aircraft of appropriate size to handle load, will fly the beluga(s) direct from Bradley International Airport (Hartford, CT) to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport (Atlanta, GA), a flight duration of approximately 2 hours.

The population of beluga whales in human care in the United States is managed as a collective group. Quarantine will not be required for movement of beluga whales from Mystic Aquarium to Georgia Aquarium. Pre-transport health assessments will be conducted by the attending veterinarian on each whale 15 to 30 days preceding the transport. A final visual health assessment will be conducted by the attending veterinarian 3 to 7 days preceding the transport.

Each beluga will be placed into its own transport cradle approximately 30-60 minutes prior to departure from Mystic Aquarium. The beluga(s) will be supported in a customized beluga stretcher when in transport cradles. Individual beluga cradles meet and exceed standards set forth by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), which regulate the transport of animals. The cradles are 16' or 18' long, depending on the length of the beluga being transported, and are steel reinforced, with a plywood wall, and of fiber glass construction with a fiber glassed coated interior, lined with 1" closed cell foam padding and covered with a custom beaded vinyl liner. The cradles are then filled with fresh water to approximately 26 inches, a level that allows appropriate buoyancy for the whale and support, so it can easily maintain its blowhole above water. There are steel cross braces with chains for suspending beluga stretcher poles. Beluga cradles will be secured with web strapping, onto a flatbed truck and transported to the Bradley International Airport in Hartford, CT (approximately 75 miles/2-hour drive time) where they will be loaded on board a chartered jet aircraft for a flight to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, GA. During all truck transportations there will be two trained and experienced attendants and an experienced veterinarian to monitor water temperature, behavior, and wet the beluga's dorsal surface with ladles. On the aircraft, the transport cradle is placed on a 20' 'unit load device (ULD)/aircraft pallet cribbed with wood 2'x 12's running the length and width of the pallet to distribute load. During the entire transport there are at least 3 trained and experienced personnel accompanying the animal, at least one of whom is a licensed Veterinarian with extensive beluga whale experience who can administer emergency medications and provide emergency medical care if necessary. The attending veterinarian will bring a medical kit containing adequate equipment for medical situations including sedatives and emergency medications. Ice will be available through the duration of the transport to cool water as needed. The general monitoring routine during air transit is as follows:

- Feeding not anticipated during transport but food available if needed
- Constant air and water temperature monitoring
- Adjustment of cabin temperature as needed to be maintained at or below ~65° Fahrenheit
- Cabin pressure will be maintained by the flight crew at 4000-6000 ft.
- Attendants will keep the belugas' backs moist, adjust positioning of stretcher as needed.
- Temperature and respiration rates will be monitored and logged during the transport.

Upon arrival at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, GA., the transport cradle and beluga(s) will be transferred to a flatbed truck for truck transport to Georgia Aquarium (approximately 11 miles/ 15min drive time). The transport vehicles will have a police escort to mitigate travel time, stops and starts, and ensure maximum safety. Upon arrival at Georgia Aquarium they will be lifted from their cradle and placed into the beluga whale habitat medical pool for observation before being provided access to other portions of the habitat and introduced to conspecifics.

If beluga whales are moved to Georgia Aquarium, the animals will remain at Georgia or return to Mystic Aquarium for the life of the permit. The animals will not be released.

Beluga Transport Cradle Specifications

	Exterior (inches)			~Weight Dry (lbs.)	~Weight animal/stretcher/water/pallet, cribbing, & animal (lbs.)
	L	W	H		
16'	192	60	71	3,114	~14,000
18'	216	65	66	3,630	~18,000

Estimated length of Time To Complete Transport:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Approximate Duration</u>
Stretcher Beluga	Mystic Aquarium	30 minutes
Load Beluga in Transport Cradle/flatbed	Mystic Aquarium	30 minutes
Mystic Aquarium to Bradley International Airport	Hartford, CT	2 hours
Load Beluga onto Aircraft	Bradley International Airport, Hartford, CT	2 hours
Flight: Bradley International Airport to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport	Hartford, CT to Atlanta, GA	2 hours (est.)
Unload from Plane and onto Trucks	Hartsfield-International Airport, Hartford, CT	1 hour
Drive to Georgia Aquarium	Mystic, CT	15minutes
Unload beluga/move to med pool/release	Mystic Aquarium	45 minutes
	Total Time	Est. 9 Hours