

Drug Dose Kills Sea Life's Whale

Tita the false killer whale, one of the newest and rarest of Sea Life Park's exhibits, died about 8 a.m. yesterday of an overdose of tranquilizers.

Park Director Taylor A. Pryor said an autopsy on the 11-foot, 1,100-pound whale also showed it was a male. It was thought to have been a female.

"We're feeling fairly sunk about this, but we've learn-

ed something and I think we'll handle the next animal better," Pryor said.

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THE WHALE, third of its kind ever placed in captivity, had been given doses of tranquilizers to calm him after he became excited when introduced to his tank Wednesday.

The tranquilizers apparently worked at first, and the whale mingled happily with another of his kind caught here last month. Then he had difficulty breathing, and finally died.

Pryor said marine mammals such as the whale apparently don't have the abil-

ity to handle tranquilizers as well as land-bound mammals.

THE PARK'S collectors will seek to capture another one, he added. Chances are, however, it will be some time before this can be accomplished, since false killer whales move through the Islands rapidly.

"There are about 11 kinds of small whales and porpoises in the Islands," Pryor said. "We hope to have them all on exhibit eventually."

Meanwhile, Tita's skull has been preserved for study by a scientist. The rest of his body has been incinerated.

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