

A Family Reunion

In July [2002], a group of orcas swam to a beach in western Canada. There, they rubbed their bellies on the smooth pebbles along the beach. The group included a young female orca named Springer.

Orca Facts

- An orca is sometimes called a killer whale.
- A male orca can grow to weigh 9 tons.
- An orca is a mammal that breathes air.
- Orcas are dolphins.

The following January, a lone orca was spotted in Puget Sound near Washington state. Scientists figured out that the orca was about 2 years old and that she had been orphaned.

During spring, the orphaned orca stayed in Puget Sound. She swam near boats, and many people got to see her. They named her Springer.

As the months passed, the orca became sickly. She developed a skin rash. Scientists then captured Springer. They treated the rash, and Springer got better.

Like Peas in a Pod



NOAA

Orca

After Springer had recovered, scientists decided that they should return the orca to the ocean.

Before releasing her, they attached a radio transmitter to Springer. The radio allows scientists to track her.

In July, wildlife experts loaded Springer onto a jet-powered boat. The boat traveled about 400 miles north to western Canada. Scientists knew that a pod, or group of orcas, related to Springer was there.

Springer was put back into the ocean. Soon scientists saw her swimming with her pod. An aunt and three cousins are part of the pod. Springer's family reunion seemed to be a happy one.