

Panel 21

THE DEATH OF SCARLET

Scarlet (J50) was only three years old when she began to waste away.

When whales are starving, the blubber behind their blowholes disappears and causes a visible indentation called “peanut head.”

In 2018, Scarlet had peanut head, and officials from Canada, the United States and the Lummi Nation joined forces with others, some with wildly different ideas about orcas in captivity, to save her.

The group tried to run medical tests and give her antibiotics—something that had never been attempted in the open ocean. But the fight to save Scarlet started too late.

Scarlet died, but the failed rescue mission proved that people with very different perspectives on what’s best for whales could work together to try to save them.