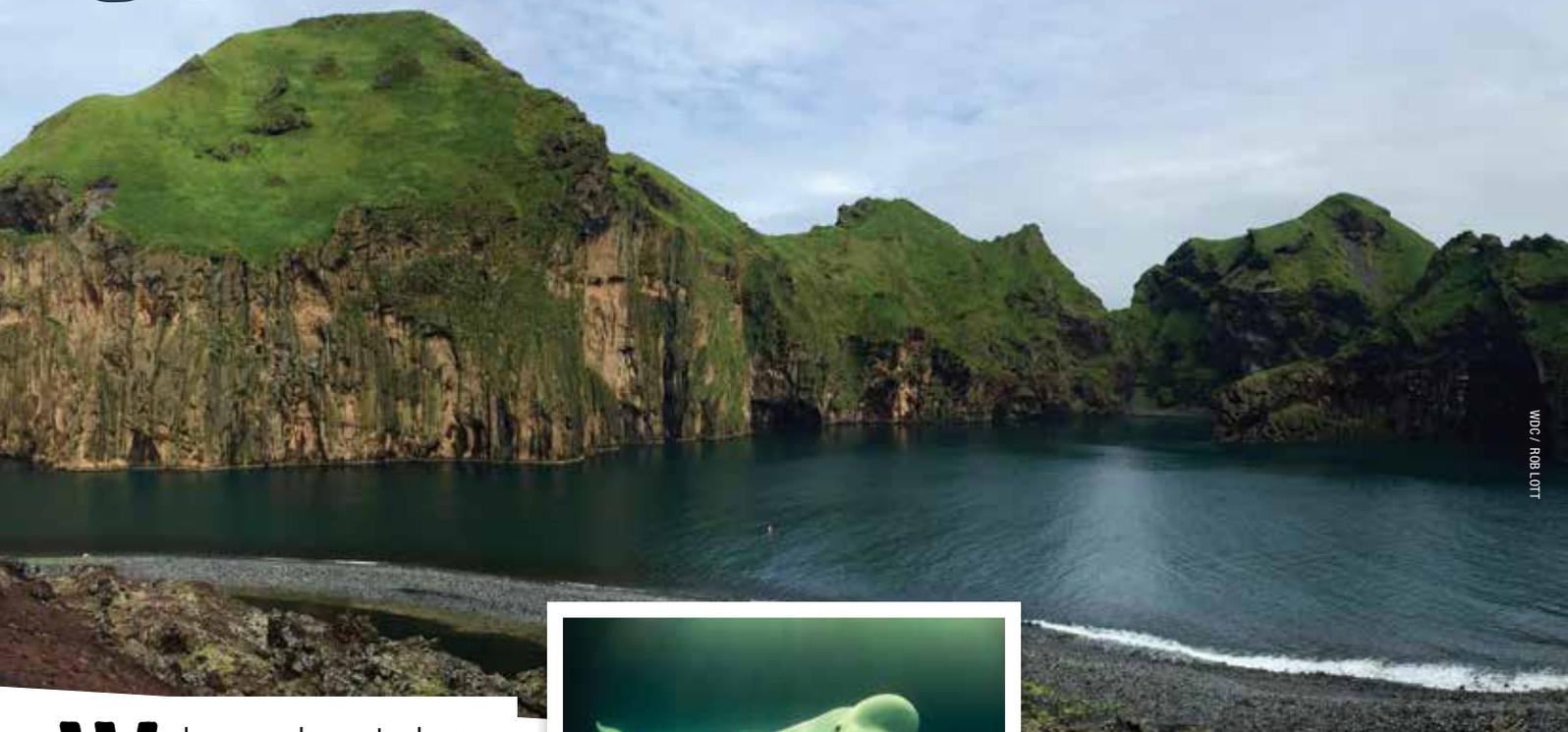


# Searching for sanctuary

Brilliant new home found for captive beluga whales



**W**e have good news to share; we've found the perfect site for the world's first beluga whale sea sanctuary, and it's in Iceland.

We searched in various suitable chilly sea areas in Russia and Norway before settling on Iceland as our number one choice for the beluga sanctuary. Klettsvik Bay is located in Iceland's Westman Islands and it won't be the first time this site has offered a home to a captive whale in need of sanctuary.

Following unprecedented public pressure, Keiko, the real-life captive orca 'star' of the film, *Free Willy*, was freed from his cramped, shallow tank in Mexico City. Eventually he was flown to Klettsvik Bay, where he was able to begin his recovery and preparation for release within the safety of a giant sea pen. Each month, following Keiko's return to Iceland, he became more independent, his health improved,



STEPHEN MACCULLOUGH

## DID YOU KNOW!

**Belugas do not have a dorsal fin. For these arctic adventurers, lacking a dorsal fin cuts down on surface area, preventing extra heat loss in the cold conditions and allowing them to travel closely under ice sheets.**

he made contact with local wild orcas and was able to explore the rich ocean environment of his birth.

### BUILDING A BETTER LIFE

There is overwhelming local support in Iceland for our beluga sanctuary

project. WDC and Merlin Entertainments hope that Klettsvik Bay will provide a perfect sea sanctuary for Little Grey and Little White, the two belugas currently cared for by Merlin in an aquarium in China.

To create a safe environment for belugas, part of the bay will be closed off and protected by netting. In the future this protected area can be expanded to welcome more ex-captive belugas. We will also need to build nearby facilities for people working hard to take care of the belugas, as well as visitors to the sanctuary.

Little White and Little Grey are still being prepared for their extraordinary journey to sanctuary and greater freedom, and we are working on securing permission from the Chinese government for Little White and Little Grey to leave China.