



EAZA Executive Office

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RE: Bottlenose dolphins currently held at Barcelona Zoo

To whom it may concern,

The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) represents and links over 350 leading zoo and aquarium member institutions across 44 countries. EAZA's mission is to facilitate cooperation within the European zoo and aquarium community towards the goals of conservation, education and research. This is achieved by ensuring that EAZA Member zoos and aquariums maintain the highest standards of care and breeding for the species they keep and follow EAZA procedures related to this. Barcelona zoo joined EAZA in 1992 and is an active Member in good standing.

EAZA has been informed that Barcelona City Council is exploring several options to solve the non-compliance of Barcelona Zoo with Standards and Guidelines set by the European Association of Aquatic Mammals (EAAM) in relation the dolphin facility. It is understood that the different options are: building a new dolphin facility, transferring the animals to another zoo or transferring the animals to a marine sanctuary.

EAZA applauds the willingness of the City Council to explore different options to address these concerns. We would like to take this opportunity to make the City Council aware that the bottlenose dolphins are part of EAZA's EEP (breeding and management programme) and the associated procedures that come with this as part of being an EAZA Member. To ensure effective management of the populations of animals in our care all EAZA Members are obliged to follow transfer and breeding recommendations as provided by EAZA's EEPs, including the bottlenose dolphin EEP.

If an EAZA Member wishes to move dolphins away from their facility, then an official request needs to be made to the EEP coordinator. The EEP coordinator has been made aware of the situation and is thinking of the best options but, at present he has received no such official request of recommendation to transfer the dolphins from Barcelona Zoo. If the zoo decides not to continue to house dolphins a formal request needs to be made, then a place for the dolphins can and will be found for the animals among the existing EEP participants. The EEPs first priority lies with providing the needs of the EEP bottlenose dolphin population and the existing EEP participants.

Currently the bottlenose dolphin population populaton is doing well and there are sufficient EEP participants so that dolphins do not need to be placed outside of these existing zoo and aquarium members. A strategy of placing dolphins outside of the existing EEP participants is not supported by EAZA.

With specific reference to the option to transfer animals to a marine sanctuary, as there are no current EEP participants with such a facility this move would also not be supported by EAZA. In addition, there are no sea pens in Europe today. Although certain organizations are publicizing their ideas and proposals to build sanctuaries or 'sea pens' in various Member States these are seen by



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many to be an attempt to win public support but, demonstrate very little practical application. Numerous concerns over appropriate sites, construction, legalities, the health and welfare of the animals housed in sea pens make them an unrealistic option for housing Bottlenose dolphins in the foreseeable future.

In summary, any movement of dolphins from Barcelona Zoo to another facility needs to be formally requested and approved by the bottlenose dolphin EEP coordinator. EAZA and the Bottlenose dolphin EEP are more than willing to help support the City Council provide for the best possible future care for the dolphins currently housed at the zoo and look forward to continued communication on this topic.

Yours faithfully,

Bengt Holst
Chairman EAZA EEP Committee

Niels van Elk
Bottlenose dolphin EEP coordinator