



European Association for Aquatic Mammals

Devoted to marine mammal conservation since 1972.

EAAM Statement on Breeding of Cetaceans

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, 19 March 2016 - The European Association of Aquatic Mammals (EAAM) was created 44 years ago to bring together zoological parks and professionals devoted to the conservation and welfare of aquatic mammals both in human care and in the wild. From the founding of the peer-reviewed *Aquatic Mammal Journal* in 1974 to its most recent scientific symposium convened just last week, EAAM's main goal has always been to promote the sharing of knowledge and best practices pertaining to scientific research, public education, species conservation and management of aquatic mammals.

The EAAM views the breeding of cetaceans under human care as essential to expanding scientific knowledge and to ensure their sustainability and well-being in zoological parks that play a fundamental role in raising public awareness and motivating conservation-minded behaviour. The more that is known, shared and experienced, the more likely the success of efforts to preserve cetacean species from the many anthropogenic threats to their survival. The EAAM therefore regrets the decision made by SeaWorld management to end its *Orcinus orca* breeding program.

The vast majority of cetaceans in EAAM facilities are bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), a species classified for *in situ* conservation purposes by the IUCN as "of least concern." Breeding, together with high quality animal care and modern facilities, has resulted in a self-sustaining population of dolphins that on average live far longer than their counterparts in the wild. More than 70 per cent of the dolphins in EAAM parks in Europe today were born under human care and no wild-caught dolphin has been imported into an EAAM park in more than a decade. All bottlenose dolphins residing in EAAM parks are integrated in a single European studbook and are managed through the collective decisions of experts in the aquatic mammal community for the benefit of the European population as a whole.

EAAM parks based in the EU are accredited in accordance with EAAM Standards & Guidelines and are inspected and licensed by Member State authorities in accordance with national legislation pursuant to Council Directive 1999/22/EC, which recognizes the central role of zoological institutions in public education and scientific research. The Directive requires all zoos to undertake conservation measures including research benefiting the species, training in conservation skills, knowledge sharing, and/or breeding. A written breeding programme for each animal is mandated by the EAAM and also is obligatory under the laws of a number of Member States.

The EAAM is proud of its members' contributions to the conservation of cetacean species through public display and related activities and rejects partnering with politically-driven campaign organisations that aim to close down zoological parks altogether through restrictions and bans of one species after another. The EAAM will continue working with *bona fide* conservation organisations that share EAAM's commitment to concrete species and habitat conservation and the promotion of conservation-minded behaviour through public education and local action.

SeaWorld is a world-recognized leader in animal care and welfare, cutting edge research, and rescue and rehabilitation work that has helped more than 27,000 animals in need in the wild over the past fifty years. Its achievements are the result of its dedicated animal professionals. None of

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this would have been possible, however, without the 400 million people who have patronized its parks over the last five decades, including millions who have continued to be inspired and informed by visits to SeaWorld in recent months despite highly financed smear campaigns and untrue propaganda spread by animal rights activists.

The EAAM stands ready and willing to engage in dialogue with the public, government officials, and politicians concerning its ongoing commitment to research, education and conservation of aquatic mammal species, including the breeding of cetacean species housed and managed by European zoological parks.

About EAAM:

Founded in 1972, the EAAM is a non-profit organisation that brings together zoological parks and professionals devoted to the *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and welfare of aquatic mammals. Visited by more than 21 million people annually, EAAM's zoological park members in Europe are based in Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

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