

SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

(In association with R.S.P.C.A. England) Patroness: LADY Y.P. McNEICE



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Forum Editor
Straits Times Press

Dear Sirs,

I refer to the article "RWS: Marine parks contribute to Conservation" (S.T. 5 June), in particular to the comments that Resorts World Sentosa (RWS) is "committed to animal welfare". RWS has purchased 25 wild-caught dolphins as an attraction for its Marine Life Park. These animals no doubt, have suffered throughout the whole capture process involving transportation, being subjected to an alien lifestyle in captivity and tamed against their will; two have tragically lost their lives whilst being held in holding pens in Langkawi Island, Malaysia last year. Under the circumstances, Resorts World's continued justification and defence of its actions is morally reprehensible, and it has failed to address the cruelty involved in removing the dolphins from their natural habitat and "domesticating" them. Whilst citing that dolphins in captivity live longer, RWS has not given any universal statistics on the number of those that have died prematurely after capture – whether during transportation or during their life in aquarium structures/marine parks.

Their claim that the "Marine Life Park is designed to exceed international standards for animal care and welfare", again ignores the mental stress and suffering that has been imposed on these dolphins since the time they were captured. What the public will eventually see (if RWS continues with its plans), will not reflect the true character of the dolphins; prolonged conditioning (through countless training sessions) will have taught them to accept dead fish as rewards for induced behaviour.

Another key issue which RWS has overlooked (assuming that there will be interaction between park visitors and the dolphins), is the public safety factor; these animals are inherently wild which makes them unpredictable and potentially dangerous. It is regrettable that whilst there is a government ban here on wild animal performances in circuses since 2002 (on animal welfare and public safety grounds), this does not extend to wild animals in local attractions.

Singapore's Wild Animals & Birds Act prohibits the taking, keeping or killing of wild animals – RWS in securing these 25 dolphins for the purpose of public entertainment, has not acted in a responsible manner and has gone against the spirit of what is morally acceptable.

Yours sincerely,

Deirdre Moss (Ms)
Executive Director