

CETACEAN SPECIALIST GROUP

21 February 2013

Mr Zulkifli Hasan, SE, MM
Ministry of Forestry
Gedung Mangala Wanabakti Blok I Lt 4
Jalan Gatot Subroto Senayan, Jakarta
Republic of Indonesia

Subject: Support for ban on certain facilities holding captive dolphins

Dear Mr Zulkifli Hasan:

I have been advised of the intention of your ministry to place a ban on dolphin circuses and restaurant or hotel swim-with-the-dolphins facilities in Indonesia. I am speaking for many, and probably all 90, members of the Cetacean Specialist Group when I express our support and appreciation for this decision. Besides basic humane concern for the animals being maintained in what are often sub-standard conditions, we have a particular concern about the conservation implications of this practice. Captive animals that do not receive proper medical care and a healthy diet, live in unsanitary water, and are not provided with appropriate training and adequate space, are likely to die early, leading to a need for more dolphins to be caught and permanently removed from wild populations. Since dolphins in the wild are facing ever more serious threats from things like over-fishing, underwater noise and chemical pollution, it is vital that governments like yours support stronger species and habitat protection for cetaceans, with still largely unknown populations in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the poor survival record of dolphins returned to the wild elsewhere means that this delicate and risky process should follow a carefully planned protocol, taking fully into account the welfare of the animals being released and ensuring that the recipient wild populations are not exposed to novel pathogens as a result of the release. A thorough medical examination prior to release, a period of acclimation including habituation to catching live prey, and finding a release site where the chances are good for the animal to join a suitable pod (preferably its original one), are essential elements of such a protocol.

Our membership, and specifically the three members based in Indonesia, would be pleased to provide additional advice (see our website <http://www.iucn-csg.org/>). Again, congratulations on an admirable decision, and please do not hesitate to contact me if our group can assist you in any way with this important initiative.

Yours sincerely,



cc: Jakarta Animal Aid Network
Yayasan Konservasi RASI

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