

Inquirer Opinion

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RWS' actuations suggest it has something to hide

This is in response to the letter of Lim Soon Hua, director for communications of Resorts World Singapore or RWS. (Inquirer, 11/22/11)

We beg to disagree that the method RWS used to obtain the dolphins conforms to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) requirements. In fact, the export of dolphins from the Solomon Islands was put under the Review of Significant Trade in the Animals Committee of CITES in 2008 due to the issue of sustainability.

In that meeting in 2008, the Solomon Islands government committed to stopping the export of dolphins if it was proven to be unsustainable. This September 2011, the government of the Solomon Islands announced that all dolphin exports will be banned starting January 2012, an admission that the past dolphin hunts have been largely unregulated and unsustainable.

It is also doubtful that the facility where the dolphins are being kept is truly a "well-established facility." The Ocean Adventure Park which houses the dolphins has had four out of its five false killer whales die in just a few years of operation. All four false killer whales were all juveniles and died before they were sexually mature.

Moreover, Ocean Adventure Park has been sued for violating the Environmental Impact Statement System of the Philippines (Presidential Decree 1586) as well as the Animal Welfare Act (Republic Act 8485)—a well-established facility, indeed!

As for the 25 dolphins from the Solomon Islands, none of the government officials from the Philippine Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and Bureau of Animal Industry-Animal Welfare Division (BAI-AWD) can verify their current condition based on our meetings with these two agencies. In fact, both the BFAR and BAI-AWD have not inspected the dolphins in their facility and could not even tell us if all 25 dolphins are alive.

If the animals are really being given the best care, then why are their enclosures off-limits to the public? Why were members of the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society of Singapore (ACRES), Earth Island Institute (EII) and the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) not allowed to see the animals as they were being trained last Nov. 14? It is clear that Ocean Adventure and Resorts World Singapore have something to hide, and it is spelled C-R-U-E-L-T-Y.

—TRIXIE CONCEPCION,
regional director,
Earth Island Institute,
eiiphils@earthislandph.org;
ANNA CABRERA, director,
Philippine Animal Welfare Society,
philpaws@yahoo.com