

TODAY

28 October 2011

ACRES to RWS: Set the record straight

Letter from Christina Lee Jiawai Campaigns Officer, Animal Concerns Research & Education Society

I refer to the letter "Marine life parks both educational and inspirational" (Oct 26). Resorts World Sentosa states its belief that "controlled collection of wildlife in well-run zoological facilities is essential" and that it complied with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

However, can RWS clarify if it conducted proper scientific studies into the status of the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins in the Solomon Islands prior to their capture?

Can RWS scientifically state that its capture of the 27 dolphins was not detrimental to the survival of this species in the Solomon Islands?

Lastly, does RWS agree with the statement that the preference for Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins as a captive, display species "makes them vulnerable to depletion from such catches"?

Due to the lack of scientific data, the world conservation union IUCN urged CITES parties in 2003 to not issue import permits for dolphins captured in the Solomon Islands (www.ssn.org/Documents/IUCN_CSG_to_CITES.pdf). RWS previously stated that it would be "gravely irresponsible" to re-introduce captured dolphins into the wild, indicating its position that re-introductions are not possible.

In its letter, RWS now speaks about how marine parks can help in the rescue and rehabilitation of marine animals in the wild. Has RWS changed its position?

The Animal Concerns Research & Education Society (ACRES) urges RWS to respond to all the concerns we raised in the letter "Swim at RWS or in the ocean?" (Oct 21).

ACRES supports the establishment of the Marine Life Park, but we hope that RWS opens a park that focuses on ethical acquisition of animals, the keeping of animals that can cope with captivity and a park that focuses on proper, in-situ conservation efforts.