

**Change.org**

05 August 2011

### **Resort Responds to Change.org Petition With Misleading Claims About Captive Dolphins**

*By Stephanie Feldstein*

Yesterday, AsiaOne reported that more than 100,000 people have signed a petition on Change.org to free 25 dolphins being held captive for a new exhibit at Resorts World Sentosa in Singapore.

The petition, started by dolphin activist, Barbara Napoles, urges Resorts World Sentosa (RWS) to show good corporate citizenship by releasing the dolphins instead of condemning them to a life in captivity.

Instead, RWS responded by attempting to mislead people into believing that their program is beneficial to the dolphins and resort guests.

The Marine Life Park of RWS told AsiaOne that it "provides strong and inspiring messages to visitors" that documentaries are unable to provide. As dolphin activist Ric O'Barry has said, the message provided by captive dolphin exhibits is anything but inspiring. "What does it teach you to see a dolphin suffer and what do the young children really learn from the dolphin? They learn that abusing nature is alright and that is really dangerous to their young minds."

Chris Porter, the trafficker who originally caught the dolphins for RWS, has even stated that the resort "is using the animals primarily to make money while telling the public that its aim is to educate the public on marine conservation."

The 25 dolphins were purchased for what RWS is calling an "interactive dolphin spa programme." Yet there is no scientific proof that so-called "dolphin therapy" provides any benefits to people.

But the Marine Life Park tried to distract from that lack of evidence by claiming that scientific data "proved that dolphins have been able to breed and survive successfully in marine parks" and "that dolphins in captivity have lived beyond 40 years, which is double the average life span of dolphins in the wild."

They left out the key information that while some dolphins in captivity may live into their 40s (which is the lifespan of wild dolphins, contrary to what Marine Life Park wants you to believe), many die prematurely, including two dolphins that have already died since being captured for RWS. More than 50 percent of dolphins who survive being captured will die within the first 90 days in captivity.

The issue isn't whether dolphins are able to breed or survive in captivity, but whether they should be forced to do so. And more than 100,000 people who signed the Change.org petition believe the answer is a resounding "no."

"The lives of the remaining 25 dolphins lie in our hands and we need to take action," said Louis Ng, Executive Director of the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES), the Singaporebased group fighting for the dolphins' freedom. "We need to remember that these are 25 sentient beings who were quite recently living in the wild, vast, open oceans. The public has shown

their strong support for the dolphins' release and we are confident that an increasing number of people will sign the petition urging RWS to make a moral and ethical decision to let the dolphins go.”

Two years ago, Resorts World Sentosa responded to public outcry and canceled plans for a whale shark exhibit. Let them know the public outcry for the dolphins isn't going away .