

Ocean Conservation Society Celebrates SeaWorld's Decision Regarding Killer Whale Captivity

Local Marina del Rey Marine Biologist Dr. Maddalena Bearzi, who conducts her marine mammal studies in the Santa Monica Bay, is deeply invested and concerned with the issue of wild animals being held in captivity for the purposes of public showing and entertainment. She recognizes the argument organizations like SeaWorld make about the benefits of public awareness, but ultimately feels strongly that in practice the animal's suffering is not worth any gain.



the tanks of SeaWorld facilities.

The entertainment enterprise is also phasing out its killer whale theatrical shows at its three U.S. theme parks in favor of other types of exhibits emphasizing these animals' natural behavior. As the cherry on top, SeaWorld let the public know about "a new partnership with the Humane Society of the United States to protect our oceans and the animals that call them home". The company stated that is "committing to educating its more than 20 million annual visitors on

"I think it's important for people living near the oceans to know that these animals should not be kept in captivity," she recently told *The Mariner*.

Here is an excerpt from a story she wrote for *National Geographic* that outlines her perspective:

There is light at the end of the tunnel. As *Tilikum*, the captive killer whale at the focus of the documentary *Blackfish*, is approaching death from an untreatable drug-resistant lung infection, SeaWorld just announced it will end all orca breeding.

No more orcas will be kept in any of their new parks around the world. The remaining captive killer whales will be the last generation enclosed in

animal welfare and conservation issues through interpretative programs at the parks and expanded advocacy for wild whales, seals, and other marine creatures."

This is not just good news; it's a great step in the right direction for these complex, cognitive and wide-ranging wild animals that should have never been kept imprisoned in the first place. It is also a terrific example of how public pressure can induce real change when we truly care about an issue. This is something we all need to remember: we do have the power to change things if we decide to use it.

To read the rest of the story go to <http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2016/03/18/the-dark-era-of-orca-shows-is-ending/>

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