

June 12, 2006

To John Nightingale
The Vancouver Aquarium
Stanley Park, Vancouver, Canada

Re: DOLPHINS PURCHASED FROM JAPAN

Dear John,

Over the years the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society has opposed the Vancouver Aquarium on some issues and we have supported the Aquarium on some issues. We have always approached the issues individually and we have never condemned the Vancouver Aquarium as an institution.

In fact as someone who grew up with the Aquarium I have seen it grow and evolve. I remember participating in educational classes at the Aquarium. In fact my first year biology professor was the wife of Murray Newman. I even remember when the Aquarium gift shop sold Sperm whale teeth for \$10 each. I protested that issue then over three decades ago and today I am certain that there is no employee, officer or member of the Aquarium that would approve the sale of whale teeth today. On that issue we were right and the Aquarium staff were wrong although there were some who vigorously supported the sale of whale teeth at the time.

The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society publicly supported the expansion of the pools despite this being an unpopular position for us amongst other groups. We did so because the welfare of the whales was paramount to us and expansion of the pool was in the interest of the captive Orcas and Belugas.

We supported you when you rightfully spoke out against the destruction of crustaceans on Vancouver beaches and where some accused you of being culturally insensitive we knew that your outspoken ecological concerns were more important than the demands of Vietnamese cultural cuisine. In fact I remember when every rock overturned on a Vancouver beach revealed tiny crabs and various other marine invertebrates that have disappeared from these ravaged habitats. Your courage in speaking out on this was greatly appreciated.

There have been many initiatives that the Aquarium has proposed that the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society has supported and there have been many that we have opposed. Our position has always been guided by what is good for wildlife and habitat and we have never been influenced by political correctness or politics. As a result this has made us unpopular on both sides of various issues.

Which brings us to the present controversial issue.

Purchasing dolphins from Japan is something that we must oppose and speak out against. Every year the Japanese drive thousands of these intelligent and wonderful mammals onto Japanese beaches where they are brutally slaughtered. But before they are killed, a select few are spared for the captive dolphin industry. This slaughter is

encouraged by the high prices these few spared dolphins yield to those who drive and slaughter entire pods.

This is no different than the slaughter of entire families of Mountain Gorillas in the early part of the 20th Century for the purpose of capturing young gorillas to be displayed in zoos.

I know you are aware of the annual mass slaughter of dolphins in Japan and the captive dolphin industry in Japan is intimately connected to this obscene and brutal drive and slaughter.

In October 2003, Sea Shepherd captured photos of the dolphin slaughtered that appeared on the front pages of newspapers worldwide and our video was broadcasted on CNN and throughout the world. That same year my wife Allison and one of my crewmembers Alex Cornelissen dove into the harbour at Taiji, Japan to cut the nets to free 15 dolphins and pilot whales that were condemned to die within the next few hours. They freed the animals at the cost of being incarcerated for three weeks in a Japanese jail. They both would do it again.

I say this to illustrate the passionate concerns that many people have for the way these dolphins are being harassed and slaughtered. We need to stop this killing and this objective is difficult with the capture and sale of dolphins being a major incentive encouraging the killing.

In addition, Japan is illegally killing over 1,000 whales a year and this year intends to target 50 endangered Humpbacks and 50 endangered Fins.

The Vancouver Aquarium should be sending a message loud and clear that the Aquarium and all Canadians do not support illegal Japanese whaling and we do not support the horrific mass slaughter of dolphins.

If the Vancouver Aquarium brings dolphins from Japan, the Aquarium will be implicated directly with the mass killings of dolphins in Japan and the public will be constantly reminded that the dolphins on display are there because the Vancouver Aquarium supports, through its actions, the brutal dolphin death drives in Japan.

Therefore I respectfully request that you not bring in dolphins from Japan and that you not be associated with the shameful bloody slaughter on Japanese beaches.

Sincerely

Captain Paul Watson

Captain Paul Watson

Founder and President of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (1977-

Co-Founder - The Greenpeace Foundation (1972)

Co-Founder - Greenpeace International (1979)

Director of the Sierra Club USA (2003-2006)

Director - The Farley Mowat Institute

Director - www.harpseals.org

Director - Ocean Outfall Group of California

Advisory Board Member - Telluride Mountain Film Festival

Advisory Board Member - The Animals Voice Magazine

Whom when I asked from what place he came,
And how he hight, himselfe he did ycleepe,
The Shepheard of the Ocean by Name,
And said he came far from
the main-sea deepe.
- Edmund Spenser
A.C.E. 1590

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