



Mr Huynh Duc Tho
Chairman
Da Nang People's Committee
42 Bach Dang Street
Hai Chau District
Da Nang City
Viet Nam

November 2015

Dear Mr Huynh Duc Tho

We are writing on behalf of the Asia for Animals coalition, representing international organisations with extensive knowledge of animal welfare and conservation issues. We express our deep concerns with regards to recent media reports suggesting that a dolphinarium is due to be built in Da Nang City.

We are concerned about this development on the grounds of animal welfare and conservation, and the negative image that it will portray of Da Nang City globally.

The keeping of whales and dolphins (also known as cetaceans) in captivity is being opposed internationally. This public opposition has led to a significant number of countries adopting legislation which forbids this practice. Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Slovenia and Switzerland have prohibitions in place due to the commercial nature of dolphinarium; Chile and Costa Rica, have prohibited the keeping of cetaceans since 2005; and in 2013, India, the world's largest democracy, passed legislation prohibiting the development of dolphinarium, referring to dolphins as "non-human persons". Greece banned all animal performances in 2012, whilst countries, such as the United Kingdom, have no captive dolphin facilities because imposed standards likely exceed the viability of establishing a dolphinarium in the country.

The news of the dolphinarium development in Da Nang City is in direct opposition to this current international trend and will therefore be seen as a retrograde step for such a forward thinking and internationally focused city as Da Nang. It is also likely to lead to a significant amount of negative press associated with this development and the subsequent incarceration of wild caught cetaceans.

The opposition to the capture and subsequent captivity of wild dolphins for dolphinarium is based on the significant conservation, animal welfare and public safety concerns that this industry presents.

The removal of individual dolphins from wild populations has serious animal welfare as well as potential conservation implications for the survival of the targeted populations. Certain live capture techniques are extremely traumatic and violent¹, but all share the following characteristics;

- Members of families or other social groups may be separated from each other;
- Dolphins can be injured and killed during the capture process;
- Studies are rarely conducted to ascertain what happens to those animals left behind;
- Once removed from their natural environment dolphins are transported to small enclosures which lack not only their social groups but also the open space to which they are accustomed;
- Research shows that death rates increase six-fold during and immediately after capture.²

Once confined, dolphins must adapt to an artificial diet, excessive noise and the proximity of people and unknown animals, and impacts from chemical treatment of the water are not uncommon. No captive facility can provide for the needs of dolphins. They are social and wide-ranging animals, capable of swimming up to 60 miles a day, attaining speeds up to 22 mph, and often diving deep below the surface. Captivity presents a lack of the social, visual and auditory stimuli of their natural environment, and many suffer from the stress of confinement, often resulting in increased aggression, illness and death.^{3 4}

Allowing the public to swim with dolphins, presents additional concerns for both the dolphins and the public. Dolphins have been observed demonstrating signs of stress when they are in close proximity to people. The dolphins are often not provided with a refuge area and cannot escape from human swimmers they don't want to interact with.

Many dolphins in such facilities exhibit behavioural traits which make them unsuitable to be used within human-animal interaction sessions. Dolphins are wild and unpredictable animals. People have been injured, sometimes seriously, swimming with dolphins. In 2008 a dolphin at the Dolphin Academy Curacao breached the water surface and landed on top of three swimmers. One person was hospitalized with symptoms of paralysis.⁵ The public may also be at risk of transmitting diseases to and contracting diseases from dolphins. A survey of people who came into contact with marine mammals resulted in 23% of respondents reporting the development of skin rashes or similar ailments.⁶

Globally, we are seeing an ever-growing number of countries passing laws prohibiting the capture and keeping of cetaceans in captivity in recognition of the risk the trade in and keeping of these animals poses to animal welfare and conservation.

We urge you not to grant permission for the construction of the dolphinarium, thereby

¹ C. S. Vail and D. Risch Driven by Demand: Dolphin Drive Hunts in Japan and the Involvement of the Aquarium Industry (Chippenham, United Kingdom: WDCS, 2006) http://www.wdcs.org/submissions_bin/drivenbydemand.pdf

² R. J. Small and D. P. DeMaster, "Acclimation to captivity: A quantitative estimate based on survival of bottlenose dolphins and California sea lions," *Marine Mammal Science* 11 (1995): 510-519

³ A. Samuels and T. Gifford, "A qualitative assessment of dominance relations amongst bottlenose dolphins," *Marine Mammal Science* 13 (1997): 70-99

⁴ K. A. Waples and N. J. Gales, "Evaluating and minimizing social stress in the care of captive bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*)," *Zoo Biology* 21 (2002): 5-26.

⁵ The case against marine mammals in captivity, WSPA/HSUS 2009;

http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/marine_mammals/case_against_marine_captivity.pdf p.29/30

⁶ T.D.Hunt et al., 'Health risks for marine mammals workers,' *Diseases of Aquatic Organisms* 81 (2008); 81-92

sending a clear message to the international community, and the many tourists that visit Da Nang each year, that the keeping of cetaceans in captivity poses a significant risk to animal welfare, the conservation of wild dolphin populations and public safety.

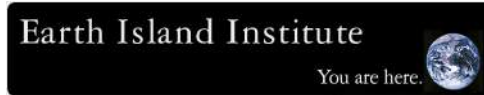
Sent on behalf of the following organizations

- Animal Guardians
- Animal People
- Animals Asia Foundation
- ACRES
- Blue Cross of India
- Change for Animals Foundation
- Earth Island Institute
- Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations
- Humane Society International
- International Animal Rescue
- International Fund for Animal Welfare
- Philippine Animal Welfare Society
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (UK)
- Sarawak Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Hong Kong
- World Animal Protection

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Supported by;

1. AAP Rescue Centre for Exotic Animals, NETHERLANDS
2. Action for Animals, KOREA
3. All Life In A Viable Environment, JAPAN
4. Andhra PRadesh Goshalala Federation, INDIA
5. Anima, MACAU
6. Animal Conservation & Welfare Foundation, POLAND
7. Animal Friends, CROATIA
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39. Centre for Orangutan Protection, INDONESIA
40. Cetacean Society International
41. Changchun 3.10 Shanxiao Fund, CHINA
42. Changsha Small Animal Protection Association, CHINA
43. Chengde Cat Forest, CHINA
44. Chengdu Home of Love Small Animal Rescue, CHINA
45. China Farm Animal Protection Coalition, CHINA
46. China Journalists Salon for Animal Protection, CHINA
47. China Youth Animal Protection Alliance, CHINA
48. China Zoo Watch, CHINA

49. Compassion Unlimited Plus Action, Bangalore, INDIA
50. CPR Environmental Education Centre, INDIA
51. Dalian VSHINE Protection of Animals SPCA, CHINA
52. Darjeeling Animal Shelter, INDIA
53. David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, UK
54. Djurskyddet Sverige (Animal Welfare Sweden), SWEDEN
55. Dobro Surtse, BULGARIA
56. DOGSTOP, HONG KONG
57. Dolphin Project, USA
58. Dzivnieku Draugs, LATVIA
59. Egyptian Society of Animal Friends, EGYPT
60. Elephant Aid International, USA
61. Elephant Asia Rescue & Survival Foundation, HONG KONG
62. ElephantVoices, KENYA
63. Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali – Onlus, ITALY
64. Environment Films, UK
65. European Animal Protection Foundation / Europaeische Tierschutzstiftung, SWITZERLAND
66. FAADA, SPAIN
67. Fanciers Nanning Stray Cats, CHINA
68. Finnish Federation for Animal Welfare Organisations (SEY), FINLAND
69. For Elephants International,
70. Four Paws, UK
71. Four Paws International
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83. Hefei Kennel Association Care Center, CHINA
84. Help Animals India, INDIA
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87. Huhhot Angel Guardian, CHINA
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96. Karuna Society for Animals & Nature, INDIA
97. Kathmandu Animal Treatment Centre, NEPAL

98. Korea Animal Rights Advocate, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
99. Korean Animal Welfare Association, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
100. Lanta Animal Welfare, HONG KONG
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102. Life Conservationist Association, TAIWAN
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105. Love Wildlife Foundation, THAILAND
106. Lucky Cats, CHINA
107. Marine Connection, UK
108. Melbourn Dolphin, AUSTRALIA
109. moonbears.org
110. Nanchang Small Animal Protection Association, CHINA
111. Nanjing Ping An A Fu Stray Animal Rescue Association, CHINA
112. National Council of SPCAs. SOUTH AFRICA
113. Navale Consulting Group, INDIA
114. NY Class, USA
115. Ocean Care
116. Otara Foundation, SRI LANKA
117. Orangutan Aid, HONG KONG
118. Palawan Animal Welfare Association, PHILIPPINES
119. People For Animals – Chennai, INDIA
120. People For Animals – Hooghly, INDIA
121. Performing Animal Welfare Society, USA
122. Pet Orphans Home, CHINA
123. PETA, UK
124. PETA Asia, HONG KONG
125. PhaNgan Animal Care for Strays, THAILAND
126. Plant & Animal Welfare Society, INDIA
127. ProWildlife, GERMANY
128. Qingdao Society for the Protection of Animals, CHINA
129. RAKSHA - Voice of the Voiceless, INDIA
130. Rattle the Cage Productions, THAILAND
131. reEarth, BAHAMAS
132. Royal Veterinary College, University of London, HONG KONG
133. RSPCA Victoria, AUSTRALIA
134. Sahayog Organisation, Andhra Pradesh Goshalala Federation, Hyderabad, INDIA
135. Save Animals Initiative Sanctuary Trust, INDIA
136. Save Vietnam's Wildlife, VIETNAM
137. Shandong Yantai Caring Street Animals Rescue Shelter, CHINA
138. Sichuan Qiming Companion Animal Protection Center, CHINA
139. SJZ One Meter More Love stray cats rescue group, CHINA
140. Society for Animal Welfare and Management, NEPAL
141. Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – Penang, MALAYSIA
142. Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – Selangor, MALAYSIA
143. Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – SINGAPORE
144. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Xiangzhou, Zhuhai), CHINA
145. Soi Dog Foundation, THAILAND
146. Stiftung fuer Baeren / Foundation for Bears, SWITZERLAND
147. Stray Relief and Animal Welfare, INDIA

148. Sun Bear Centre – Kalimantan, INDONESIA
149. Swiss Animal Protection SAP / Schweizer Tierschutz STS / Protection Suisse des Animaux PSA, SWITZERLAND
150. Taiwan SPCA, TAIWAN
151. Thai Fund for Elephant Foundation, THAILAND
152. Thane SPCA, INDIA
153. The Cattitude Trust – Chennai, INDIA
154. The Corbett Foundation, INDIA
155. The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, KENYA
156. The Home of Love, CHINA
157. The Humane Education Trust, SOUTH AFRICA
158. The Welfare of Stray Dogs – Mumbai, INDIA
159. The Winsome Constance Kindness Trust, AUSTRALIA
160. Tianjin Common Home, CHINA
161. Together for Animals in China, CHINA
162. United Against Elephant Polo, INDIA
163. Vegan Virtues, AUSTRALIA
164. Vietnam Animal Welfare Organisation, VIETNAM
165. Voice for Zoo Animals, JAPAN
166. “We Are One Family” Charity Association of Chongqing Normal University, CHINA
167. Whale and Dolphin Conservation, UK
168. Wild Futures, UK
169. Wildlife Alliance, CAMBODIA
170. Wildlife in Need (and Active Environments), PHILIPPINES
171. Wildlife Protection Society of India, INDIA
172. Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation Centre, Bangalore, INDIA
173. Wildlife Salvation, SINGAPORE
174. Wolf Watch UK
175. Wuhan Small Animal Protection Association, CHINA
176. Xi’an Grenadine Companion Animal Rescue, CHINA
177. Xiamen Animal Protection Education Association, CHINA
178. Xiamen Pet Web, CHINA
179. Xinjiang Karamay City Street Animal Protection Centre, CHINA
180. YeuDongVat, VIETNAM
181. Zhangzhou Small Animal Scientifically Rescue Center, CHINA
182. Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force, ZIMBABWE
183. Zoocheck Canada, CANADA
184. Da Nang Animals Rescue Centre, VIETNAM

Animals Australia
the voice for animals



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