



Students prefer dolphins in the wild

In light of the global popularity downtrend of cetacean captivity, the ISB Green Panthers (an environmental club in Bangkok), a kindergarten and grade 3 class, and many student volunteers in the institutions's middle and high schools, are all raising their voices to protect dolphins.

Students are aware that dolphins are intelligent and amazing animals that belong in the ocean where they are free; not in pools performing tricks for humans. Students are more and more aware of the issues with dolphins in captivity.

Instructor Kerry Dyke explained: "In some classes I asked the students 'Who would like to go see the dolphins?'. Most put up their hand. Of course they did, who wouldn't want to see these incredible animals. But then we had them analyse the situation from four 'compass' perspectives"

The compass points Mr Dyke are referring to are: N = Nature, E = Economy, S = Society, W = Wellbeing.

"We purposely did not guide the students in one direction or another, but helped them dig deeper past the shows, which led them to have even more questions. In the end, when I asked them the same question, the answer was 'Well, we still want to see the dolphins, but we won't go to the show, we want to

take a tour and see them in the wild.'"

Their main reasons were, Mr Dyke clarified, that animals belong in a natural setting. Although, a dolphinarium in places like Phuket or Pattaya could make a lot of money, wild dolphin tours could do this as well without the harm.

As a society we can do better than this and we should be protecting animals, not capturing them.

"For Wellbeing, customers were happy to see the shows unless they knew the truth behind the scenes and we know the dolphins are not in a good situation. Moreover, the way dolphins are caught and many killed was very disturbing. If more customers knew the real story they would not support the shows," he said.

The Green Panther Middle School student reps – Mao, Marcelina, Neel and Darin – issued the following statement.

"ISB students are against the opening of the dolphinarium in Phuket. We surveyed around 250 students and ALL of them were against keeping dolphins in captivity. Dolphinariums, though enjoyed by some young kids and adults, are a health risk for the dolphins themselves. Putting dolphins in a cramped space like this is like putting a human into a cage. A dolphin swims up to 100 miles per day; their range is the ocean, therefore a pool the size of a kid's backyard is not enough.

"Dolphins should not live their entire lives in captivity. To capture the dolphins, fishermen use nets to herd the dolphins into one area, and then trap them. Some will be taken to dolphinariums, while the rest will either die of shock or are slaughtered.

"We feel that Thailand does not need another dolphinarium as there are many other attractions for tourists. If the dolphinarium in Phuket opens, we will not be visiting"

Likewise, Lily and Anna, Green Panther co-presidents were firm in their stance:

"As young children, we all wanted to visit dolphinariums and watch dolphins do tricks. We saw dolphins 'smile', and so we all believed that the dolphins were enjoying themselves. Being exposed to the harsh reality of dolphin shows, the inhumane treatment, health risks and slaughter associated with their capture, we now know that dolphin shows are anything but enjoyable for dolphins.

"By supporting dolphinariums, we would be supporting all of these horrific deeds. We, along with many others, do not support the new dolphinarium, and urge others to think about the effects of how they spend their money."

Their teacher sent out the following statement, and has asked citizens, educators, students, conservationists, environmentalists and all protectors of

our planet and its ecosystems, to spread the word:

Dear global citizens,

Your voice and the voice of others is needed. Phuket is planning on opening a dolphinarium soon. Many people are upset by this because they know dolphins are very intelligent creatures who belong in the wild where they are free; not in a prison where they perform tricks for human entertainment.

There is a call for all schools, locals, and even tourists to speak up on this issue and let the government know we do not want a dolphinarium in Phuket.

If you think dolphins don't belong in a show, please sign this petition. It has over 13,000 signatures at this point.

<http://www.change.org/p/phuket-tourism-board-stop-the-nemo-dolphinarium-in-phuket-thailand>

If you want to write a letter concerning this distressing issue, please write to:

1. Director General of the Dept of Fisheries in Bangkok, Mr.Niwat Sutem-echaikulniwatddgof@gmail.com or:
2. Tourism Authority of Thailand (Ministry of Tourism and Sports)

Tel: +66 (0) 2219 4010 – 17

Fax: +66 (0) 2216 6906

E-mail: webmaster@tourism.go.th

Web site: www.mots.go.th

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