

= Dolphinarium =

A dolphinarium is an aquarium for dolphins . The dolphins are usually kept in a large pool , though occasionally they may be kept in pens in the open sea , either for research or for public performances . Some dolphinariums consist of one pool where dolphins perform for the public , others are part of larger parks , such as marine mammal parks , zoos or theme parks , with other animals and attractions as well .

While cetaceans have been held in captivity since the 1860s , the first commercial dolphinarium was opened only in 1938 . Their popularity increased rapidly until the 1960s . Since the 1970s , increasing concern for animal welfare led to stricter regulation , which in several countries ultimately resulted in the closure of some dolphinariums . Despite this trend , dolphinariums are still widespread in Europe , Japan and North America .

The most common species of dolphin kept in dolphinariums is the bottlenose dolphin , as it is relatively easy to train and has a long lifespan in captivity . While trade in dolphins is internationally regulated , other aspects of keeping dolphins in captivity , such as the minimum size and characteristics of pools , vary among countries . Though animal welfare is perceived to have improved significantly over the last few decades , many animal rights groups still consider keeping dolphins captive to be a form of animal abuse .

= History =

Though cetaceans have been held in captivity in both North America and Europe since the 1860s , the first being a pair of Beluga Whales in the New York museum , dolphins were first kept for paid entertainment in the Marine Studios dolphinarium founded in 1938 in St. Augustine , Florida . It was here that it was discovered that dolphins could be trained to perform tricks . Recognizing the success of Marine Studios , more dolphinariums began keeping dolphins for entertainment . In the 1960s , keeping dolphins in zoos and aquariums for entertainment purposes increased in popularity after the 1963 Flipper movie and subsequent Flipper television series . In 1966 , the first dolphin was exported to Europe . In these early days , dolphinariums could grow quickly due to a lack of legislation and lack of concern for animal welfare .

New legislation , most notably the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act in the United States , combined with a more critical view on animal welfare , forced many dolphinariums around the world to close . A prominent example is the United Kingdom ; in the early 1970s there were at least 36 dolphinariums and traveling dolphin shows , however , the last dolphinarium closed its doors in 1993 . The last dolphinarium in Hungary was closed in 1992 . In 2005 both Chile and Costa Rica prohibited keeping cetaceans captive . However , around 60 dolphinariums currently exist across Europe , of which 34 are within the EU . Japan , Mexico and the United States are also home to a relatively large number of dolphinariums .

= Design =

Many varied designs exist , but basic dolphinarium design for public performances often consists of stands for the public around a semi @-@ circular pool , sometimes with glass walls which allow underwater viewing , and a platform in the middle from which the trainers direct and present the show .

The water in the pools has to be constantly filtered to keep it clean for the dolphins and the spectators , and the temperature and composition of the water has to be controlled to match the conditions dolphins experience in the wild . In the absence of a common international regulation , guidelines regarding the minimum size of the pools vary between countries . To give an indication of pool sizes , the European Association for Aquatic Mammals recommends that a pool for five dolphins should have a surface area of 275 m² (2 @,@ 960 sq ft) plus an additional 75 m² (810 sq ft) for every additional animal , have a depth of 3 @.@ 5 m (11 ft) and have a water volume of at least 1 @,@ 000 m³ (35 @,@ 000 cu ft) with an additional 200 m³ (7 @,@ 100 cu ft) for every

additional animal . If two of these three conditions are met , and the third is not more than 10 % below standard , the EAAM considers the pool size to be acceptable .

= = Animals = =

= = = Species = = =

Various species of dolphins are kept in captivity as well as several other small whale species such as Harbour Porpoises , Finless Porpoises and Belugas , though in those cases the word dolphinarium may not be fitting as these are not true dolphins . Bottlenose Dolphins are the most common species of dolphin kept in dolphinariums as they are relatively easy to train , have a long lifespan in captivity and a friendly appearance . Hundreds if not thousands of Bottlenose Dolphins live in captivity across the world , though exact numbers are hard to determine . Orcas are well known for their performances in shows , but the number of Orcas kept in captivity is very small , especially when compared to the number of bottlenose dolphins , with only 44 captive orcas being held in aquaria as of 2012 . Of all Orcas kept in captivity , the majority are located in the various SeaWorld parks in the United States . Other species kept in captivity are Spotted Dolphins , False Killer Whales , Pilot Whales and Common Dolphins , Commerson 's Dolphins , as well as Rough @-@ toothed Dolphins , but all in much lower numbers than the Bottlenose Dolphin . There are also fewer than ten , Amazon River Dolphins , Risso 's Dolphins , Spinner Dolphins , or Tucuxi in captivity . Two unusual and very rare hybrid dolphins known as Wolphins are kept at the Sea Life Park in Hawaii , which are a cross between a Bottlenose Dolphin and a False Killer Whale . Also two Common / Bottlenose hybrids reside in captivity : one at Discovery Cove and the other SeaWorld San Diego .

= = = Trade and capture = = =

In the early days , many Bottlenose dolphins were wild @-@ caught off the coast of Florida . Though the Marine Mammal Protection Act , established in 1972 , allows an exception for the collection of dolphins for public display and research purposes when a permit is obtained , Bottlenose dolphins have not been captured in American waters since 1989 . In most Western countries , breeding programs have been set up to provide the dolphinariums with new animals . To achieve a sufficient birth rate and to prevent inbreeding , artificial insemination (AI) is occasionally used . The use of AI also allows dolphinariums to increase the genetic diversity of their population without having to bring in any dolphins from other facilities .

The trade of dolphins is regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (also known as the Washington Convention or CITES) . Endangered dolphin species are included in CITES ? Appendix I , in which case trade is permitted only in exceptional circumstances . Species considered not to be threatened with extinction are included in Appendix II , in which case trade ? must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival ? . Most cetacean species traded for display in captivity to the public or for use in swimming with dolphins and other interaction programs are listed on Appendix II .

However , live dolphins trade still continues . A live Bottlenose Dolphin is estimated to be worth between a few thousand to several tens of thousands of US dollars , depending on age , condition and prior training . Captures are reported to be on the rise in the South Pacific and the Caribbean , Cuba has also been an exporter of dolphins in recent years , this being organized by the Acuario Nacional de Cuba . In recent years , the Solomon Islands have also allowed the collection and export of dolphins for public display facilities . A 2005 law banned the export of dolphins , however , this ban was seemingly overturned in 2007 when some 28 dolphins were shipped to Dubai . Some , mainly Japanese , dolphinariums obtain their dolphins from local drive hunts , though several other countries in Asia also import dolphins from Japan . Several American dolphinariums had also done so . This practice was halted in 1993 , when the US National Marine Fisheries Service refused a

permit for Marine World Africa USA to import four False Killer Whales caught in a Japanese drive hunt .

= = Criticism = =

= = = Animal welfare = = =

Many animal welfare groups such as the World Animal Protection consider keeping dolphins in captivity to be a form of animal abuse . The main arguments are that dolphins do not have enough freedom of movement in pools , regardless of pool size , (in the wild , dolphins swim hundreds of miles every day) and do not get enough stimulation . Dolphins often show repetitive behavior in captivity and sometimes become aggressive towards other animals or people . In some cases , the behavior of dolphins in captivity also results in their own death .

The lifespan of dolphins in captivity is another subject of debate . Research has shown that Orcas indeed have a much lower survival rate in captivity ; however , there is no significant difference between wild and captive survival rates for Bottlenose dolphins . This does not , however , reflect a global state of affairs : for example , Bottlenose dolphins in captive facilities in Jamaica suffer from extremely high mortality rates .

Some scientists suggest that the " unusually high " intelligence of dolphins means that they should be recognized as " non @-@ human persons " . In 2013 , the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests prohibited the captivity of dolphins on these grounds , finding it " morally unacceptable to keep them captive for entertainment purpose " .