



Sakae Hemmi, ELSA Nature Conservancy
Yukari Sugisaka, Help Animas
Sachiko Azuma, Put an End to Animal Cruelty
and Exploitation

Gland, 13 December 2013

Dear Sakee Hemmi:

We received and reviewed your letter and materials, and we respect your groups' commitment to dolphin welfare. In fact, WAZA shares your commitment and places the highest priority on animal care and on sustaining wildlife populations -- from the smallest frog to elephants to dolphins. Members of our global network of zoos and aquariums play an important role in biodiversity conservation and environmental education, and they serve as social centres that connect more than 700 million visitors annually with animals and nature.

WAZA works to make positive changes that benefit wildlife. We do so by promoting cooperation and dialogue not only among zoos and aquariums, but organizations and communities regionally and globally. We do not regulate, control or even accredit members but instead work to unite them for conservation.

As advocacy organization representatives, you know that influencing attitudes and inspiring people to change their actions requires considerable time and strategic effort. It is this approach that WAZA is using to help address inhumane treatment or death of dolphins that can occur in drive fisheries. For example, we are continuing to facilitate productive discussions among people from diverse cultures that have a variety of opinions on drive fisheries. As you know, in some Japanese communities these drives have been part of the culture for centuries.

Through WAZA's leadership and the work of experts on the Animal Welfare Committee, we are committed to working with groups holding differing opinions to help define and address these complex and sensitive issues. This process does not equate to condoning any particular practice, and know that we stand by WAZA's previous statements that **cruelty to any animal is not acceptable**.

Our goals include working in partnership with groups to develop collaborative relationships that will result in a shared standard of animal welfare and in long-term wildlife conservation. This approach helps us make progress on issues that advance marine mammal welfare. For example:

- WAZA member facilities place animal welfare at the forefront of all animal acquisitions. Animals cared for at zoos and aquariums contribute to the overall genetic and demographic health of populations in human care. There is a strong and continuing trend of achieving self-sustaining populations in member institutions, driven by WAZA members' own inherent ethical standards. Such populations can help reduce the need for further acquisitions.

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- WAZA is committed to humane treatment of all animals. WAZA members take responsibility for caring for marine mammals that serve as public ambassadors for marine life conservation and ocean protection. The emotional and inspiring connections created between visitors and all animals play a key role in providing the support, research and public engagement needed to help conserve and protect wildlife.

Be assured that WAZA is taking action to address points raised by your groups. That said it is important to understand that WAZA does not believe censuring members from cultures with different views will help achieve the goal of humane treatment of dolphins involved in drive fisheries. Engaging in constructive, ongoing dialogue is an effective and appropriate approach for WAZA in advancing long-term animal welfare and wildlife conservation. Thank you for your interest in these important issues.

Yours sincerely,

Gerald Dick, PhD, MAS
Executive Director
World Association of Zoos and Aquariums

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