

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

DOLPHINS
IN CAPTIVITY

Wild vs Captive Dolphins:
10 things you didn't know about dolphins!



SUMMARY

This 8-minute educational video invites students to consider the issue of dolphin captivity.

It provides a brief overview of dolphin biology and behaviour, and outlines the various ways their natural behaviours can be frustrated under captive conditions.

The video features interviews with legal and scientific experts, as well as animal protection advocates and Australian high school students.

Through reflection, students are encouraged to critically think about the impacts of captivity on dolphin welfare.

Contains no graphic footage. Suitable for use in high school classrooms for Years 7 and above.

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DR. DROR BEN-AMI

Dolphins are amazing, amazing creatures. They are super smart. They have the brain nearly the size of human beings. They rely on group activity for hunting and for day to day survival needs in the ocean.

ONDINE SHERMAN

Dolphins are really sociable animals; they can remember other dolphins that they met twenty years ago. If a dolphin owes them a favour, they'll also remember.

STUDENT 1

I think dolphins are really beautiful creatures, because they are so unique in the way they interact with other dolphins. You know, they have social hierarchies, they're really intelligent.

STUDENT 2

While in the wild, dolphins live up to around 50 years.

JACKSON
WALKDEN-BROWN

Humans and animals have had long existing relationships across a variety of spheres, and entertainment is definitely one of those. I think we've had a long-found interest in being entertained by animals, starting from the ancient times.

STUDENT 3

Dolphins that are captive usually die earlier. In the US, it is found that 83% of captive dolphins died within the age of twenty.

JASMINE

So, the results of confining dolphins to human made pools, is that naturally they can swim up to 60km a day. But when they are in a human made pool, they have a few metres to move around, and also, they can't use echo location which is like sight for them.

ONDINE SHERMAN

Dolphins are considered to be one of the most intelligent animals on earth. A lovely example of something that they do is when they are foraging for food - finding food under water, sea urchins are very spiky - they'll put a sponge on their nose or on their beak to protect themselves from getting hurt.

DR. DROR BEN-AMI

They use fantastic capabilities such as echo sonar to locate their prey. They can defend themselves from sharks by head butting the sharks. And as we all probably know they are mammals, like us, that have adapted to living in the ocean.

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In captivity dolphins have no choice about what they eat, where they go, who they socialise with. They are totally restricted, and humans decide everything for them. So the captive environment can never ever replicate the wild ocean environment.

STUDENT 4

I think that dolphins behave a lot like us humans, they have the same needs as us.

JASMINE

Dolphins do get stressed out. Their stress comes from being forced to interact with humans, like in swimming programs.

STUDENT 5

Unfortunately dolphins that are born in captivity, stay in captivity. So if dolphins are born in captivity or have been captivity for a certain amount of years, for seven years or so, they may not be able to return to the wild. This is because they lack the fundamental skills and knowledge to survive.

JACKSON
WALKDEN-BROWN

What really saddens me is to see how the captive situation hinders the dolphins from fulfilling part of their potential. They are extremely intelligent and very inquisitive creatures and being in a confined space really limits their ability to investigate, and to explore, all those things which would make their life probably meaningful and fulfilled.

ONDINE SHERMAN

Sixty-three countries around the world still keep dolphins in captivity for our entertainment, and it's not only dolphins who are held by these marine parks. It's also Beluga whales, porpoises, orcas, and other marine mammals.

ONDINE SHERMAN

One of the most notorious examples of dolphins being captured is in Taiji, in Japan. Where fishermen will drive dolphins using noise and boats into a shallow netted area of the water, and in one year for example, 177 dolphins were caught and then sold to marine parks around the world.

JACKSON
WALKDEN-BROWN

The capture from the wild and then placing them in captivity is generally seen as a more serious welfare issue, and one in which the law really fails.

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STUDENT 6

It's great at least that a lot of countries are helping them out, like India, Switzerland and the UK, and also many organisations are helping them out to stop dolphin captivity.

STUDENTS

[agreeing] Yeah, that's awesome.

ONDINE SHERMAN

Other countries are working to also ban captivity.

JACKSON
WALKDEN-BROWN

It really comes down to the consumer in this context, the people being entertained by animals, becoming more conscious of the circumstances in which those animals exist. And generally speaking, connecting with the idea of suffering.