

# Canada Just Officially Banned Dolphin and Whale Captivity



By Elias Marat | [The Mind Unleashed](#)

([TMU](#)) – In a big win for animal rights advocates, Canada will no longer allow whales, dolphins, and porpoises to be bred and held in captivity for the purpose of entertainment.

The [Ending the Captivity of Whales and Dolphins Act](#), which was passed by Canada's parliament on Monday, will ensure that cetaceans—or aquatic mammals—will no longer be subject to the trauma of confinement in aquatic entertainment parks, which animal rights activists have blasted as amounting to a system of animal cruelty.

The new law also prevents marine animals from being subject to captive breeding, the import-export market, live captures, and also outlaws the possession of reproductive matter.

However, the bill does include some notable exceptions while

allowing for marine mammals who are already held to remain in captivity, including those who were rescued, are being rehabilitated from injuries, or are the subjects of limited scientific research. Aquariums, parks, and zoos will be allowed to keep their captive performing cetaceans but can no longer replace them.

The bill, which was tabled by former Sen. Wilfred Moore of Nova Scotia in 2010, hailed the passage of the law in a [statement](#) from the Humane Society International/Canada. The former Liberal Party senator said:

*“We have a moral obligation to phase out the capture and retention of animals for profit and entertainment. Canadians are calling upon us to do better—and we have listened.”*

Animal rights defenders and marine scientists have also celebrated news of the bill’s passage, which they have endorsed through tweets under the hashtags #EmptyTheTanks and #FreeWilly.

*[#Breaking](#): When we work together, good things happen.*

*This is a combined effort from [@ElizabethMay](#), Senators Moore and Sinclair, key Liberal and NDP MPs, NGOs, marine scientists and everyday people across Canada. [#FreeWilly pic.twitter.com/RRPB91tT9y](#)*

*– Green Party Canada (@CanadianGreens) [June 10, 2019](#)*

Experts have argued that whales and dolphins face tremendous psychological and physical suffering while in captivity, including chronic health problems, abnormal behavior, prolonged isolation and extreme boredom, and high infant mortality.

The move brings Canada up to speed with a growing list of countries seeking an end to cetacean captivity. HSI/Canada

executive director Rebecca Aldworth described the passage of the bill as a “watershed moment” in the protection of the sea creatures as well as a victory for the people of Canada who want “a more humane country,” explaining:

*“Whales and dolphins don’t belong in tanks, and the inherent suffering these highly social and intelligent animals endure in intensive confinement can no longer be tolerated.”*

The two main facilities impacted by the law are Marineland in Niagara Falls and the Vancouver Aquarium. [According to CBC](#), Marineland holds about 61 cetaceans in captivity, including “55 beluga whales, five bottlenose dolphins, and one orca.”

While the park initially opposed the ban, Marineland conceded Monday in a [statement](#) that its operations have evolved since the park was founded in the 1960s and it would comply with the new legislation.

The Vancouver Aquarium had already bent to public opposition last year with its pledge to no longer hold cetaceans for entertainment purposes. At the time, only one dolphin was being held at the facility.

*Dolphin and whale captivity was just banned in an historic law by Canada!*

*Thank you Canada! 🐬 🐬 and all the animal activists who keep fighting for them! 🐬 [@Dolphin\\_Project](#) [#EmptyTheTanks](#) [pic.twitter.com/92mCQH42QR](https://pic.twitter.com/92mCQH42QR)*

*– Giving Gecko (@givinggecko) [June 10, 2019](#)*

In a [statement](#) released Monday, Vancouver Park Board Chair Stuart Mackinnon said:

*“The public told us they believed the continuing importation*

*and display of these intelligent and sociable mammals was unethical and incompatible with evolving public opinion and we amended our bylaws accordingly."*

In 2016, U.S.-based SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment announced an end to breeding captive killer whales and pledged to shift its focus to marine mammal rescue operations instead. The company has SeaWorld Parks in California, Florida, and Texas.

Almost 60 orcas are held in captivity worldwide at various parks and aquariums, with about a third of those orcas living in the U.S.—and all but one are captives at SeaWorld Parks in Orlando, San Diego, and San Antonio, *National Geographic* [reports](#).

*"I've released a number of captive dolphins back into the wild..."* – [@RichardOBarry](#)

□ *More on dolphins we've helped readapt and release:* <https://t.co/qtMKcDoM9a#DolphinProject> [#EmptyTheTanks](#) <pic.twitter.com/t6bcTSVpFh>

– *Dolphin Project (@Dolphin\_Project)* [June 10, 2019](#)

Despite the company's pledges, its main attractions include dolphin shows. The company's vice president of animal health and welfare, Hendrik Nollens, has [defended the shows](#), claiming that dolphins *"are faster than us. They are stronger than us."* Nollens added:

*"They are in charge. They choose ... They decide whether to do the interaction or not."*

However, Canadian marine scientist Hal Whitehead, who backed the new law, argues:

*"The living conditions for captive marine mammals cannot compare to their natural ocean environments in size, nor in quality."*

By [Elias Marat](#) | [Creative Commons](#) | [TheMindUnleashed.com](#)

[\*\*Read more great articles at The Mind Unleashed.\*\*](#)