



20 December 2024

Cabinet de Madame la Ministre de la Transition écologique, de l'Énergie, du Climat et de la Prévention des risques
Hôtel de Roquelaure
244 Boulevard Saint-Germain
75007
PARIS
France

Dear Minister,

The undersigned 33 organizations from around the globe wish to convey our continued concerns regarding the future of the two orcas held at Marineland d'Antibes.

We strongly endorse the Inspector General's report recommendation that the best option for captive orcas Wikie and Keijo is their relocation to a seaside sanctuary. We strongly believe that the sanctuary option would provide the best health and welfare for these two orcas and this is also the option that coincides with the spirit and intent of the French law prohibiting the display and holding of captive cetaceans.

We also commend Mme Agnès Pannier-Runacher, Minister of the Ministry for the Ecological Transition, Energy, the Climate and Risk Prevention, for her public announcement rejecting the option of exporting the two orcas to Japan's Kobe Suma Sea World facility (KSSW) due to Japan's substandard animal welfare regulations. There are several compelling reasons why the option of relocating the orcas to this facility in Japan warranted rejection. First, KSSW's tank capacity for additional orcas is grossly inadequate, offering less than one-fifth the volume of the French orcas' current facility. KSSW would subject Wikie and Keijo to a forced breeding program, likely resulting in separation of mother and son. Moreover, Japan continues to permit and subsidize the commercial killing of dolphins and whales, practices that are fundamentally at odds with conservation principles and have been rejected by most countries of the world. Collectively, these issues contradict the spirit and intent of the 2021 French law.

Meanwhile, our organisations must express our urgent concerns with the option of relocating the two orcas to Loro Parque Zoo located in the Canary Islands. It is our collective view that Loro Parque Zoo option should be rejected as a relocation site for Wikie and Keijo. Relocating these orcas to Loro Parque Zoo would pose severe threats to their health and welfare.

We urge you to undertake investigations regarding the following issues:

1. Scientists and veterinarians have documented that Loro Parque Zoo has a poor track record relating to the mortality and welfare of orcas. Attached is a copy of a recent *The Case Against Transferring Orcas Wikie and Keijo to Entertainment Parks* by Heather Rally, DMV, Thrive Wild. We find it appalling that four orcas have died at their facilities since 2021.
2. Loro Parque Zoo uses artificial insemination as part of the forced breeding of orcas at their facilities. This practice has been prohibited in various countries including by SeaWorld in the USA and by Canada, as it is highly invasive and results in increasing the numbers of

orcas held in inhumane conditions. Loro Parque Zoo has indicated that Wikie and Keijo would be part of their breeding programme.

3. Relocating Wikie and Keijo to Loro Parque Zoo runs the risk that these orcas will be subject to aggression from the more dominant orcas held at their facilities. This could result in injuries and stress that pose risk to their health and survival.
4. The orca Keto died at Loro Parque Zoo on 20 November, 2024. Loro Parque Zoo has thus far failed to provide a necropsy report documenting the cause of his death.
5. Loro Parque Zoo has a long history of lack of transparency and mischaracterization of incidents at their facility. This includes multiple instances of false representations by claiming that orca attacks on trainers were simply accidents. Also, when an orca calf was observed to be sick, Loro Parque Zoo falsely claimed that the calf was in perfect health.

These issues make clear that Loro Parque Zoo is an unacceptable choice for Wikie and her son Keijo. We request that the Ministry discards the option of relocating the two orcas from Marineland d'Antibes to Loro Parque Zoo

We appreciate your consideration of these concerns. We consider this a matter of urgency because Marineland d'Antibes has threatened to proceed with rapid export of the two orcas, despite an order from the Aix-en-Provence Court of Appeal not to relocate until the independent analyses of the health of the orcas have been completed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Dodds', with a large, stylized flourish underneath.

Margaux Dodds

Executive Director

Marine Connection

margaux@marineconnection.org

+44 (0)7588 681247

Copy sent via email to:

Véronique Menez, Consillor to the Minister
Isabelle Petermin

secretariat.menez@ecologie.gouv.fr
secretariat.menez@ecologie.gouv.fr

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

Animals Asia, UK
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British Divers Marine Life Rescue, UK
Dolphin Connection, US
East Caribbean Coalition for Environmental Awareness
Freedom For Animals, UK
Free Morgan Foundation, Netherlands
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