



Vimeo: Where Your Entertainment Comes From

Instructor Guide

REASONS FOR DOLPHIN CAPTURES

- Dolphins may be captured to be used for research
- In some countries, dolphins are captured to be used for military purposes due to their incredible sonar and their intelligence which makes it possible to train them for activities such as located underwater mines, placing explosives on ships and submarines along with other military purposes
- Dolphins are protected in the United States under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, however, exceptions can be made for capturing dolphins - a permit is needed
- Can be captured for research and “educational” display - problem is that there is no definition for “education” in the Marine Mammal Protection Act
- The main reason dolphins are captured is to be trained and sold to aquariums and marine parks around the world
- Dolphins are also captive bred
- Some species breed in captivity better than others

DOLPHIN CAPTURES IN TAIJI, JAPAN

- Offshore from Taiji is a major migration route used by dolphins as they follow their food sources along the coast making Taiji an ideal spot to capture dolphins
- WAZA, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums has declared that its member facilities may NOT purchase dolphins captured in the drive hunts in Taiji
- However, many aquariums and marine parks are not members of WAZA and continue to purchase dolphins captured in Taiji
- Taiji runs one of the biggest businesses for dolphin captures and sales
- Dolphins are also captured in Russia, Mexico and in various countries in the Caribbean
- The United States no longer imports dolphins from Taiji due to the cruelty and brutality of the hunts and capture process
- Many of the dolphins captured in Taiji are sold within Japan and to China but they have also been sold to aquariums and marine parks around the world
- The captive dolphin industry is a business based on supply and demand

CAPTIVE DOLPHIN DEMAND

- The species in highest demand are bottlenose dolphins
- Popularity due to “Flipper” television series , their numbers in aquariums and marine parks and their “smile”
- Dolphins lack facial muscles and cannot change their facial expressions so they always appear to be “smiling”
- Survive and adapt to captivity better than other species
- The public continues to buy tickets to facilities that hold dolphins in captivity, to see the dolphin show or “swim” with captive dolphins
- As long as there is money to be made, dolphins will be captured
- Important message is “Don’t Buy a Ticket”, no demand = no supply

SELECTION PROCESS

- After a grueling drive where large motorized boats with “banger poles” create a wall of sound which is used to herd dolphins into a small cove, the dolphin hunters must work with the dolphin trainers to select which dolphins they want to take for captivity
- Dolphin trainers will wait on the shore for the hunters to bring the dolphins to them where they can examine the dolphin and determine if they want it or not
- Dolphin trainers prefer young dolphins with no marks on their skin so they are “pretty”
- The preferred sex is female so they can give birth in captivity
- One male can impregnate many females, making them less desirable
- Cove Monitors have documented mothers being separated from their calves and taken for captivity
- A calf separated from its mother has little chance of survival when driven back out to sea with other “rejected” dolphins
- A dolphin that is not selected will often have a white mark placed on its back so that the divers that are wrestling with the dolphins don’t bring it to the trainers again
- Dolphins that are selected will be placed in slings at the side of a boat and carried to a sea pen which is an aquatic cage
- Dolphins that are not selected are usually driven back out to sea
- Scientists believe the effects of a pod losing many family members can be devastating but it is impossible to know just how those dolphins driven back to sea adapt to the loss
- Survival rate of dolphins driven back to sea is unknown as well
- Cove Monitors have also documented “accidental” deaths during the selection process
- Those most affected by the stress of the process seem to be very young dolphins as dolphin calves have been seen floating lifelessly in the Cove during and after the selection process

PACIFIC WHITE-SIDED DOLPHINS

- Another valuable species in the captive industry due to their beautiful coloration and their athletic, acrobatic abilities
- Captured off-shore due to their tendency to panic when driven into the Cove and throw themselves on the rocks, injuring themselves
- The dolphins are trapped within a large circular net which is drawn tighter and tighter until divers can get in the water and wrestle them over to slings attached to waiting boats
- Dolphins panic when lifted up into the boats and often injure themselves
- Small numbers of Pacific white-sided dolphins are captured in Taiji resulting in entire pods being captured when they are found
- Usually no release of any Pacific white-sided dolphins