

June 14, 2006

NEWS RELEASE

Re: Vancouver Aquarium Supports Aquatic Circus Cruelty. How Many More Dolphins Will Die?

The Vancouver Aquarium 50th Anniversary Contest is to win a trip to Sea World San Diego to "dine with Shamu" an aquatic circus with orcas. Sea World San Diego has had at least 18 orca deaths and 21 other dolphin deaths. The total number of deaths at all four Sea Worlds is at least 40 orcas and 49 other dolphins. The Vancouver Aquarium has had at least 9 orcas and 17 other dolphins deaths. The Vancouver Aquarium continues to promote keeping orcas in captivity and how many dolphins have really died at the Vancouver Aquarium?

There are several dolphins that are unaccounted for and Lifeforce requests to the Aquarium have not been answered. A recent Vancouver Province article (June 11) stated that 3 dolphins were caught off California in 1966 and "Whitewings" was formerly named Diana who was captured in 1971. However, newspapers report that dolphins "Splasher" and "Diana" were doing shows in 1967. Splasher died in 1969 so Diana could have been one of the 3 females from 1966 and all died. Lifeforce also has reports that Whitewings was one of four dolphins with one dieing during transport and two dieing shortly after arrival.

In addition, according government permit records there was a beluga "Titch" who was sent to Flamingo Land Zoo in UK from "Vancouver" and died shortly afterwards. Was this beluga from the Vancouver Aquarium? And how many porpoises were kept in the Fred Brown porpoise pool?

"The Vancouver Aquarium continues to support the dolphin slave trade," states Peter Hamilton, Director of the Vancouver-based ecology organization Lifeforce, "They started the exploitation of orcas when they hired a sculpture to harpoon one to kill as a model for a sculpture. The orca slowly died during the following 86 days and they later thought they should try to train a live one. This led to 68 orcas being captured off the BC and WA. 48 orcas being captured from the now endangered Southern Community whose family lost a generation of young orcas and now have a low birth rate/abnormal age and sex ratio."

The latest Vancouver Aquarium \$80 million expansion plans has been criticize as a violation of democratic process and animal rights with the culpability of NPA Commissioners rescinding past resolutions for a public vote on expansions and the imprisonment of whales and dolphins. The Aquarium has admitted that they want more dolphins. The public has a right to know how many have died.

Lifeforce's research has uncovered at least 26 deaths of cetaceans but there may be many more. The Vancouver Aquarium is an unethical business and must not be allowed to further exploit dolphins and destroy Stanley Park. The public should boycott the Vancouver Aquarium and stop funding animal abuse.

-30-

For further information: Peter Hamilton 604-669-4673