

boycott the aquarium 10 reasons to



SEA LIES

8. Endangered species are not protected by aquariums

Even though SEA LIFE claims that: "many of our creatures are on the endangered list", only 2.5% of the exhibits observed during the recent study housed animals belonging to endangered species. The vast majority of species housed in SEA LIFE aquariums have not been assessed for conservation purposes.

9. Penguins held in aquariums suffer from depression

News reports from early 2014 stated that penguins from Scarborough SEA LIFE had to be given anti-depressants due to the unnatural climate they are kept in. A member of staff was quoted as saying the weather had caused them to be "thoroughly fed-up and miserable".

10. Staff give visitors "vastly incorrect" information

The recent study showed that SEA LIFE staff were giving out inaccurate information to visitors. One staff member told an investigator that a lot of the information his colleague, who was employed in an educational role, gave out was "vastly incorrect".

ABOUT THE SEA LIES CAMPAIGN

In the second half of 2013, UK-based animal protection charity, the Captive Animals' Protection Society (CAPS), commissioned a detailed investigation into the operation of the UK's largest chain of aquariums, SEA LIFE; a brand owned by the global company, Merlin Entertainments. The results of this investigation were published in spring 2014 in the form of a summary report, a detailed analysis document and a dedicated website: www.sea-lies.org.uk.

This leaflet gives a brief overview of some of the themes covered by the investigation. More information and detailed references and source material can be found on the website.

www.sea-lies.org.uk

1. Animals are taken from the wild

Despite telling an investigator that no animals are ever taken from the wild, fish, sharks, octopuses, crabs and other animals have all been taken from their ocean homes and transported to live in SEA LIFE fish tanks. The company refuses to reveal exactly how many of the thousands of animals held captive by it have been stolen from their natural home.

2. SEA LIFE has a secret cetacean circus that it doesn't want you to know about

Cetaceans are marine mammals such as whales and dolphins. It is widely accepted that these animals suffer immensely in captivity and there have been no captive whales or dolphins held in the UK for a number of decades. SEA LIFE claims to campaign to see dolphinariums banned in Europe; saying that the company is opposed to the keeping of cetaceans in captivity. However, in the SEA LIFE centre in Shanghai, a daily circus-style show is staged where beluga whales perform tricks in front of screaming crowds. The beluga whales are not mentioned anywhere on other SEA LIFE or parent company, Merlin Entertainments, websites.



Photo: Animals Asia Foundation

3. Animals show signs of distress and ill health

Various incidences of captivity-related stress behaviours were recognised during a recent study of SEA LIFE aquariums as well as recurring health issues which, staff admitted, had resulted in high numbers of deaths.

4. Claims of "animal rescue" raise concerning questions

SEA LIFE bought crabs directly from fisherman for thousands of pounds at a time and 20 turtles were acquired from a turtle farm in the Cayman Islands in 2006. The turtles were acquired despite opposition from conservation organisations which said the import of the animals breached international rules on trade in endangered species. SEA LIFE publicised these acquisitions as "rescues".

Photo: Animals Asia Foundation



5. Claims that healthy animals are never killed are not true

Staff told an investigator that SEA LIFE "never kills a healthy animal". But killing healthy animals because they are "surplus to requirements" or "too large to house" is permitted in SEA LIFE aquariums but must be discussed by the company's ethics committee. No information has been made available as to how many animals are killed for these reasons.

6. Breeding programmes serve little conservation purpose

Evidence of release of species bred in SEA LIFE centres is notably absent, with the exception of lobsters (who, in any case, are released to "sustainable fisheries"). SEA LIFE confirms in published information that breeding programmes serve the purpose of ensuring that their own tanks remain stocked to avoid having to take animals from the wild.

7. Fish have feelings too!

It was long-thought that fish could not feel pain or suffer. Research carried out in the last decade has shown that this is simply not the case. Fish suffer in captivity, much like other animals do.

FROM THE OPEN OCEAN
TO A TINY FISH TANK

SEA
LIES



BOYCOTT THE CRUEL AQUARIUM