



**HUMANE SOCIETY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## **STATEMENT ON PROPOSED IMPORT OF BELUGA WHALES TO OCEAN PARK, HONG KONG**

Humane Society International (HSI) and WDCS (Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society) are aware that Ocean Park in Hong Kong has plans to open an Arctic exhibit, in which among other species beluga whales (*Delphinapterus leucas*) will be displayed. We understand these whales will come from wild captures in Russia.

HSI and WDCS oppose any plans to import wild-caught beluga whales to Hong Kong. We believe such captures are both inhumane and unsustainable. In addition, we understand that any import prior to the completion of field research and the satisfactory determination that it is sustainable to remove individuals from the population would be counter to Ocean Park's own animal acquisition policy.

Ocean Park has reportedly been conducting research in Russia to determine a safe removal level for this species, but has to date not released results of that research, or even any significant details about the work. Until such research is completed – ideally when at least three years and preferably five years or more of population and demographic data have been collected and analyzed – no imports should be allowed. It is not scientifically sound for captures and trade involving a long-lived mammal to occur before sufficient population and demographic data have been collected and analyzed.

Together, HSI and WDCS represent over 11 million members and supporters around the world. We are leading non-governmental authorities on the treaties, laws, and regulations governing the public display and international trade of captive cetaceans.

Naomi A. Rose, Ph.D.  
Senior Scientist  
Humane Society International

Cathy Williamson  
Captivity Programme Manager  
WDCS, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society