

Agenda Item 8

Any other Business

Document 8-02

Why orca Morgan cannot be set free

Action Requested

- Take note

Submitted by

Netherlands



NOTE:
IN THE INTERESTS OF ECONOMY, DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED TO BRING THEIR
OWN COPIES OF DOCUMENTS TO THE MEETING



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**Nature, Landscape and Rural
Affairs**

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Date

Re Why orca Morgan cannot be set free

Our ref.
180009

Thank you for writing to express your concern about the orca Morgan at the Dolfinarium in Harderwijk, the Netherlands. This young female had obviously lost her family group and ended up in the Wadden Sea on the Dutch coast, which is several thousands miles from her presumed birthplace. The orca was ill and almost dying.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation was asked if there was a possibility of capturing her, in order to rehabilitate her. The Dolfinarium is the only location in the Netherlands which has a government permit allowing it to keep small cetaceans. The exemption on which this permit is based contains the condition that a wild animal may be kept for revalidation for a limited time only if there is a reasonable chance that return to the wild is a viable option.

Morgan was saved on 23 June 2010, after she nearly stranded on a pier and was taken to the Dolfinarium. There she was examined and it was concluded that she had a chance of survival. She was given medical treatment and nursed intensively to get her into a better condition.

The revalidation of Morgan has been successful in that within six months she has almost tripled in weight. To discover whether she had a chance of survival in the wild, the Dolfinarium asked the advice of a group of seven independent scientists with expertise in small cetaceans and especially orcas. In November these scientists unanimously concluded that this very social and intelligent animal had no chance of survival if she were to be released without knowing her family group. It was therefore concluded that Morgan should be either euthanized or kept in captivity for the rest of her life.

The conditions under which Morgan may remain in captivity are that she be kept:

- with other orcas
- at a location with good facilities suitable for such large predatory animals
- at a location which places emphasis on education.

The Dutch Ministry does not own animals collected from the wild. It only issues permits to keep wounded, traumatised, injured or orphaned animals with the intention of releasing these animals into the wild after revalidation. If no other possibility is available then a different solution based on solid scientific evidence is permitted.

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In the case of Morgan the orca, all legal procedures have been followed. It's now up to the Dolfinarium to find a good new home for the orca where she can be an ambassador for her species and help to raise awareness of the beauty of wildlife.

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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Dr. Menk Bleker
Minister of Agriculture and Foreign Trade