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The short and long term effects on Dolphins (Cetacea) in captivity and how these affects their behaviour and welfare.



Jessica Sheppard (20143390)



1.0 Introduction

Dolphins were first introduced into captivity by the early 1860's, and started to be trained from 1938 after Cecil M. Walker first discovered how easily trainable dolphins were (Messenger, 2014). There are roughly 54 countries and 336 facilities in these countries that house Bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), Atlantic Striped Dolphins (*Stenella coeruleoalba*), Common Dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) and Spinner Dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*). These facilities are made up of dolphinariums in marine parks, military dolphins in the USA, rehabilitation centres and open water pens for release (McCarthy, 2019).

2.0 Aims, Objectives and hypothesis

Aims:

- Investigate whether short term and long-term effects on captive dolphins affect their behaviour and welfare overall.
- Investigate whether captivity has any short and long term effects on the behaviour and welfare of dolphins

Objectives:

1. To critically evaluate the literature of the short- term and long-term effects of captivity on dolphins
2. To compare the reported data relating to short term effects to the long-term effects of dolphins in captivity
3. To evaluate the effects of different forms of captivity (e.g rehabilitation centre, military dolphins) on the behaviour and welfare of dolphins.

Hypothesis:

Null (H0) – Captivity has no effect on the behaviour and welfare of dolphins.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1) – Captivity does have effects on dolphins causing them to change their behaviour and affecting their welfare.

3.0 Methodology

- Scholarly sources such as science direct, google scholar, Oxford academic, Wiley online library, EBSCOhost, Cambridge core and springer will be used to find online journals.
- Inclusion words include dolphin, captivity, behaviour and welfare
- Exclusion words include blackfish, Seaworld and protest.
- Literature used was between the 1st January 1990 up until any recent literature.
- Papers were first put into categories: Behavioural effects, welfare effects, long term problems and short term problems.

4.0 Results

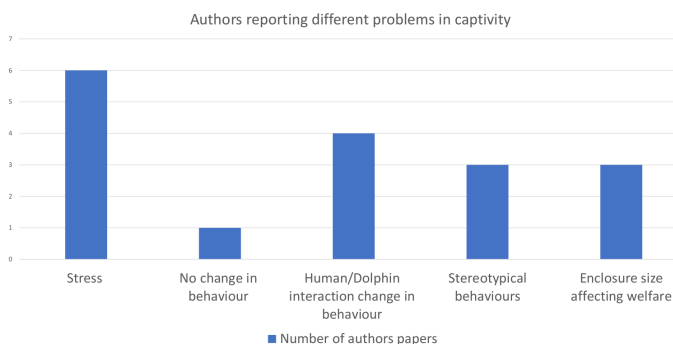


Figure 1: Number of authors reporting problems in captivity

There was a significant difference between the authors reporting behaviour disturbances rather than no behavioural change. From looking at figure 1, there was 1 paper that mentioned no behavioural changes in the dolphins behaviour and welfare, however all other categories that are presented show at least more than 3 papers noting a behavioural disturbance in a negative manner. The highest amount of papers during this study was stress related papers, with a high number of 6 papers presenting with signs of stress.

5.0 Discussion

The highest level of papers reviewed were negative, mostly to do with stress levels being above the average rate. However, there was a paper that did conclude that there was no change in behaviour noted. There were more papers investigating welfare rather than behaviour in captivity, and focused on short term behavioural and welfare rather than long term. There were short term behavioural and welfare problems noted such as special issues, stereotypical behaviour heightening and dolphin human interaction programmes. However, the only long term problems noted were health concerns and special awareness falling into this category as well. Considering all of this information, the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

6.0 Further research

Research needs to be conducted into the long and short term solutions for captive dolphins, as information available was limited. Although dolphin welfare research is out there, there is a lot of bias opinions influencing some authors. More research needs to be conducted in the behaviour of captive dolphins, as lack of research was evident.

7.0 References

- McCarthy (2019) *The countries keeping the most dolphins in captivity [Infographic]* [Online] Available at: <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2019/11/12/the-countries-keeping-the-most-dolphins-in-captivity-infographic/?sh=15f326a437e3>> [Accessed 10/5/23]
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GENERAL COMMENTS

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