

Media response

Re: Dolphin recapture, Moreton Bay

For: Kirsty Cranitch, Wynnum Herald cranitchk@qst.newsltd.com.au

Date: 17 July 2009

Response: *Please attribute the following to Terry Harper, DERM Senior Director Marine*

It's unfortunate that the dolphin had to go back into care, but it was removed for its own welfare. There were risks to the dolphin and risks to public safety.

If the interaction had continued, the risk would have only increased as more people and boats were drawn to that area. It's best that it be held in a secure environment. We agreed with Seaworld that the dolphin was at risk and supported them taking it back into their care.

Dolphins aren't domestic pets — they're wild creatures. People can't feed them unless it's part of an approved feeding program.

Seaworld had rehabilitated this dolphin, and released him back into the bay at DERM's request. For more than three months we attempted to give him a chance in the wild, but he continued to seek out humans not dolphins. These sorts of "solitary sociable" dolphins that like human interaction sometimes continue to seek out humans in preference to dolphins' company.

This example of a solitary dolphin is not a common problem but it does occur and can lead to injury or ill-health for the dolphin. There are many similar examples in the scientific literature from here and overseas.

Dolphins feeding from trawler bycatch would also hunt and feed naturally, not exclusively from bycatch, while other dolphins would rarely use trawler bycatch.

ENDS

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Department of Environment and Resource Management Media Unit

Ph: (07) 3227 8452

The Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) is an amalgamation of the former Department of Natural Resources and Water and the Environmental Protection Agency.

For environmental inquiries, Ph: 07 3227 8452 or media.unit@epa.qld.gov.au

For resource management inquiries, Ph: 07 3247 4610 or media@derm.qld.gov.au