

New Study Reveals Ongoing Suffering of Captive Whales and Dolphins

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, November 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A newly published [peer-reviewed paper](#) in the journal PeerJ shows that, despite some limited improvements for bottlenose dolphins in accredited facilities, serious welfare challenges persist for captive cetaceans, especially for orcas and belugas.

The paper provides the most comprehensive review to date of the challenges faced by captive cetaceans. While acknowledging species-specific variations and some areas of progress, the authors present clear evidence that captivity continues to compromise the health and welfare of all cetaceans held in marine parks and aquariums.

“The current state of captive cetacean welfare shows that, while incremental improvement can be made, there are some aspects of marine park and aquarium living that remain incompatible with well-being and flourishing,” stated lead author Dr. Lori Marino.

The findings echo growing concern among scientists and the public, who increasingly question the ethics of confining such intelligent and socially complex animals for entertainment and display. The authors conclude that cetaceans are fundamentally unsuited to life in captivity – both ethically and practically.

The paper was co-authored by six animal behavior and welfare experts:

Lori Marino, Ph.D., neuroscientist and President of the Whale Sanctuary Project,
Catherine Doyle, M.S., Director of Science, Research and Public Policy, Performing Animal Welfare Society,
Heather Rally, D.V.M. medical director, ThriveWild
Lester O'Brien, Palladium Elephant Consulting,
Mackenzie Tennison, M.A., University of Washington, and
Bob Jacobs, Ph.D., neuroscientist and emeritus professor at Colorado College.

Read the paper at <https://peerj.com/articles/19878/>

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