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## Solomon Islands Dolphin Trade Confirmed As Illegal

Wednesday, 23 July 2003, 2:31 pm

Press Release: World Society For The Protection Of Animals

News Release

For immediate release: Tuesday 22nd July 2003

Solomon Islands Dolphin Trade Confirmed As Illegal

New evidence that the Guadalcanal Provincial government did not give approval for the export trade in wild dolphins confirms that the capture and subsequent import of the Solomon Islands dolphins to Mexico was illegal.

Documents obtained by the World Society for Protection of Animals (WSPA) also show that the government had grave concerns about the practice and called for a stop to export licences as far back as March this year.

WSPA has forwarded the documents to the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, as well as to other government departments in the Pacific region.

"Twenty-eight dolphins arrived in Mexico overnight and there are up to another 170 still in sea cages in the Solomon Islands," says WSPA Australia/New Zealand Regional Director Georgia Stephenson. "At least four dolphins have died as a direct result of being incarcerated in the makeshift sea cages and eyewitness accounts have confirmed that the dolphins still in captivity in the Solomons are not being fed enough or being given proper care."

Any foreign venture in the Solomons must have approval from both the central and provincial government to carry out its business. This material verifies that a Provincial Business Licence from Guadalcanal Province - which makes up the main island, including Honiara, from where the majority of the dolphins have been caught - was not given.

"The attached letters - from the highest elected provincial official, Premier Waeta Ben Tabusasi, and the Director of the Environment and Conservation Division of the Ministry of Forests, Environment and Conservation - are incontrovertible evidence that the law was broken and that concerns were held about the overexploitation of wild dolphin stocks," says Ms Stephenson.

"Export permits can also only be granted according to CITES when an appropriate equivalent of a CITES Scientific Authority has advised that such export will not be detrimental to the survival of that species. The Solomons currently lacks the data on wild dolphin stock to safely make that assessment."

Foreign business interests are believed to be collecting and training a number of the dolphins for shipment abroad, where a single captive dolphin can be worth up to \$30,000. WSPA is concerned at reports of plans to import a number of these dolphins for use in controversial captive swim-with-dolphin programmes, at the very time when a ban on the capture of dolphins from Mexican waters is going through the legislative process.

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8:08 pm Diebold Election Systems

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6:09 pm

### Integrity of Georgia's Elections at Risk!

10:44 am VoterChoice Coalition

### Seabiscuit And Kucinich: Long Shots Do Win

10:26 am Dennis Kucinich 2004 Campaign

### AIDS Activists Disrupt Karl Rove's Speech

9:31 am ACT UP

### Facts & Figures On Albatross Deaths

8:50 am Birdlife International

### Expedition targets pirates to halt albatross death

8:49 am Birdlife International

### Solomons Is. Force Must Uphold Human Rights - NGOs

3:36 pm Amnesty International

### Powell IV with The Washington Times Editorial Bd.

2:01 pm US State Department

"Long plane journeys such as the one the 28 dolphins were being subjected to are excruciating for these marine mammals, as their internal organs are susceptible to being damaged by their body weight once out of water. "

We are very concerned with the welfare of the remaining dolphins in the Solomon Islands. Some of them haven been there since November. WSPA finds it appalling that 28 dolphins have been taken to Mexico under questionable circumstances for an industry we are completely opposed to - the animal entertainment industry. This situation is inexcusable and should serve as a grim example to ensure the dolphins left in the Solomon Islands will not be exported and will be released. "

Locals are also angry at the export. Chief Matthew Kuri, 98, from Gela Island, said there has not been a proper consultation with locals about the trade and the operation is illegal because traditional landowners had not given their approval. Dolphins have long been a cherished part of the Solomon Islands' cultural heritage. In certain areas, it is taboo to harm a dolphin, based on the ancient belief that humans with mystical powers could transform themselves into sea creatures.

For more information, including copies of documents proving illegality of trade contact:

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[www.wspa.org.nz](http://www.wspa.org.nz)

#### Editors' Notes

1. An estimated 1,000 dolphins are currently held in captivity worldwide.
2. All species of dolphin are protected from illegal trade under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).
3. A pod of dolphins can number from 30 to 600 dolphins. The main species caught in the waters surrounding the Solomon Islands are Spinner (*Stenella longirostris*) and Spotted (*Stenella attenuata*). Other species include Striped (*S coeruleoalba*), Common (Delphinus delphis), Bottlenose (*Tursiops truncatus*), Frasers (*Lagenodelphis hosei*) and Risso's (*Grampus griseus*).
4. WSPA is recognised by the UN and works to raise the standards of animal welfare throughout the world. As the leading international federation of animal welfare organisations, WSPA's campaigns and projects are developed in partnership with more than 440 member societies in over 100 countries. Through its campaigns, education, training and animal rescue initiatives, WSPA seeks to ensure that the principles of animal welfare are universally understood and respected, and protected by effectively enforced legislation.
5. For details of how people can help WSPA in its campaign to free the dolphins, please go to [www.wspa-international.org](http://www.wspa-international.org)

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2:31 pm World Society For The Protection Of Animals

#### 930,000 new mini-jobs in one hundred days

11:34 am German Government

#### European Union Midday Express

11:17 am European Union

#### Palestinian PM Meets with Mabarak, Abdullah II

11:00 am Palestine Media Center - PMC

#### PNA Pleased Israel Accepts EU Peace Process Role

10:59 am Palestine Media Center - PMC

#### PNA Dismisses Int. Law Violations Report

10:56 am Palestine Media Center - PMC

#### Sharon Hails Settlers, Challenges 'Roadmap'

10:55 am Palestine Media Center - PMC

#### UN Radio: UN Calls End Military Occupation Of Iraq

10:53 am United Nations

#### Annan welcomes Iraqis at Security Council session

10:47 am United Nations

#### UN And Iraqi Delegation Call For Occupation To End

10:46 am United Nations

#### Security Council: Iraqi Governing Council 1st Step

10:43 am United Nations

#### UN closes camp along Pakistani-Afghan border

10:42 am United Nations

#### PM takes questions from Chinese students

10:39 am UK Government

#### U.S. Military Seeks Influential Adult Recruits

10:24 am US State Department

#### U.S. Committed to Partnership with "United Europe"

10:22 am US State Department

#### U.S. Kills Saddam's Sons Uday and Qusay

10:16 am US State Department

#### 'Child Survival Crisis' in Caucasus & Central Asia

10:02 am UNICEF

#### State Dept. Daily Press Briefing for July 21

9:54 am US State Department

#### Israeli Breaches of Ceasefire

9:10 am Middle East Watch

#### International Solidarity Movement Updates

8:50 am International Solidarity Movement

#### Ariel Three Still Being Held Illegally

8:47 am International Solidarity Movement

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