

VIDEO NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Wild vs Captive: 10 things you didn't know about dolphins

1. Dolphins have complex social relationships

- Dolphins are highly intelligent. They have brains nearly the size of those of human beings.
- They rely on group activity for hunting and for day to day survival needs in the ocean.
- Dolphins are very sociable animals.
- They can remember other dolphins they met twenty years ago.
- They can remember favours owed to them.

2. Wild bottle nose dolphins can live for over 50 years

- In the wild, bottle nose dolphins can live for over 50 years.
- In captivity, they often die earlier. In the US, for example, it was found that 83% of captive dolphins died within 20 years of age.

3. Dolphins can swim over 60 km every day

- Dolphins in captivity are confined to human made pools, with limited swimming space.
- In the wild, they can swim up to 60km a day.

4. Dolphins are very smart

- Dolphins are considered to be one of the most intelligent animals on earth.
- For example, dolphins have been observed covering their beaks with sponges to protect them from urchins while foraging.
- They have special capabilities, such as echolocation to locate their prey.
- They can defend themselves from sharks.
- In captivity, dolphins have no choice about what they eat, where they go, or who they socialise with. They are completely restricted and humans decide everything for them.
- The captive environment cannot adequately replicate their natural wild ocean environment.

5. Dolphins, like us, get stressed out

- Dolphins can suffer from stress caused by conditions in captivity.
- In addition to emotional impacts, stress can manifest in physical ways, such as reduced immune function leading to illness and disease.
- One significant cause of stress is forced interaction with humans, such as swimming with dolphin programs. Continuous stress can lead to higher mortality rates.

6. Dolphins born in captivity are likely to remain in captivity

- Dolphins bred in captivity, or who have lived in captivity for many years, may not be able to be returned to the wild. They might lack the knowledge and skills to survive.

7. About 2000 dolphins are in captivity today

- Sixty-three countries around the world still keep dolphins in captivity.
- While some of these dolphins are being held for research, therapy or military purposes, most of them are being held captive in marine parks for entertainment.
- Beluga whales, porpoises, orcas, and other marine mammals are also held in captivity

8. Some captive dolphins have been taken from the wild

- The most notorious dolphin capture in the world occurs in Taiji, Japan, where fishermen use boats and noise to drive dolphins into shallow netted water. These dolphins are either killed for their meat or sold into captivity.
- In one season in the small town of Taiji, Japan, 177 dolphins were captured for sale into captivity.

9. Dolphin captivity is banned in many countries

- Keeping dolphins in captivity is banned in various countries, including the UK, Switzerland, Costa Rica and India.
- Other countries are also working to ban captivity.

10. Your opinion matters

- Question/consider/discuss (see Dolphins in Captivity Fact Sheet).