Delphinids on Display: The Capture, Care, and Exhibition of Cetaceans at Marineland of the Pacific, 1954-1967

Taylor Michael Bailey, Portland State University

Sponsor
Portland State University. Department of History

Advisor
Catherine McNeur

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Abstract
When Marineland of the Pacific opened in 1954 on the Palos Verdes Peninsula in greater Los Angeles, it was the second oceanarium in the world and the first on the West Coast. An initial investment of $3 million by Oceanarium Inc., owners of the popular Marine Studios park located near St. Augustine, Florida, ensured that Marineland was built with the same state of the art facilities needed to produce an authentic representation of the ocean floor on land. Building on Marine Studios' success exhibiting bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus), Marineland's central draw was its performing cetaceans. During the park's early years, its collectors pioneered the capture of Pacific dolphin species, such as the Common dolphin (Delphinus delphis) and the Pacific white-sided dolphin (Lagenorhynchus obliquidens), the short-finned pilot whale (Globicephala macrorhynchus), and were the first to capture a live killer whale (Orcinus orca) in 1961. By exposing audiences to previously unknown species through circus-like performances, Marineland played a central role in changing public perceptions of small cetaceans in the post-World War II era. However, with few prior studies to consult, Marineland curators experimented with their own methods of capture, husbandry, and veterinary care that often resulted in the harm or death of cetaceans under their care. Caretakers contended with animal aggression and sexual behavior, the refusal of animals to perform in show routines, and high mortality. Despite the difficulties posed by exhibiting cetaceans, advertisements, press interviews, and films advanced a contrary narrative that animals under Marineland's care enjoyed the conditions of captivity and performing for an audience. This thesis explores the tension between entertainment and animal care that defined the early years of cetacean captivity in North America.

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Marineland of the Pacific. Date opened: August 28, 1954[1]. Date closed: February 11, 1987[1]. Marineland was home to Orky and Corky, two of the most famous orcas on exhibit at any oceanarium at the time. They should not be confused with the original "Orky" and "Corky", which did not live long in captivity and had no calves. Marineland was also home to the first pilot whales ("Bubbles" and "Bimbo") ever captured for display,[2] as well as dolphins, sea lions, harbor seals, sharks, and a variety of other related sea creatures. Closing[edit]. Pilot Whale & Dolphin Show, August, 1962. One of the original dolphin statues that formerly adorned the entrance to Marineland is also on display. Historical Society[edit].