

Trainers barred from performing with Miami Seaquarium orca

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The Miami Seaquarium said in a statement to AFP on Tuesday that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued a citation ordering an end to performance with the whale, named Lolita.

"As a result of OSHA's concerns (and not based on any safety incidents with Lolita), Miami Seaquarium has agreed to remove trainers from the water during show performances with Lolita," Seaquarium said.

In February, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) granted Lolita, who has spent nearly 45 years in captivity, the same endangered species protection as her wild relatives, and animal rights groups have long called for the 3.2-ton creature's return to the wild.

The 20-foot (six-meter) orca lives in a 35-foot wide and 20-foot deep tank at the Seaquarium.

OSHA slapped a similar ban on SeaWorld's aquatic theme parks after the [killer whale](#) Tilikum—a five-ton orca linked to two other human deaths since 1991—grabbed a trainer by her ponytail and drowned her at the end of a show.

Tilikum was the subject of the 2013 documentary "Blackfish."

Despite the ruling, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals urged people to boycott the Miami Seaquarium.

"Even with this ruling, Lolita remains alone in the smallest orca tank in the US, and PETA urges people to boycott the Miami Seaquarium until it releases Lolita to a seaside sanctuary where she would be reunited with family and the feel of the ocean's currents," the PETA Foundation's director of animal law Jared Goodman said.

"Had the Seaquarium continued to expose trainers to the danger of direct contact with orcas, it could well have followed in SeaWorld's footsteps with the loss of human life by deeply frustrated captive marine mammals," Goodman said.

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