

Efforts are needed to enrich the lives of killer whales in captivity

January 5 2017

Keeping Killer whales in zoos and aquariums has become highly controversial. In a new paper, experts outline several novel ideas for improving the lives of Killer whales in zoological institutions by enhancing the communication, feeding, environment, and health of the animals in order to elicit natural behaviours seen in the wild.

"The fact that these [animals](#) can be kept in captivity is amazing in itself from a zoological perspective. We are now moving into a time when animals that we could not conceive being kept in zoological institutions are becoming relatively common; however once the difficult initial stages of keeping them alive have been achieved, people want to know that their psychological and physical welfare is also being considered," said Prof. Graham Law, co-author of the *International Zoo Yearbook* article.

"So a change in the way that animals have been kept in captivity has been slowly evolving using [environmental enrichment](#). For many species the changes have been great, but for other less well-understood species change has been slow as the need for change has been poorly understood."

With this Killer whale article, Prof. Law and his colleagues hope to start a process whereby people become more critical and questioning of the husbandry systems in place for all [species](#) in captivity, with the goal of achieving a better balance between their physical and psychological wellbeing.

More information: *International Zoo Yearbook* [DOI: 10.1111/izy.12152](https://doi.org/10.1111/izy.12152)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: Efforts are needed to enrich the lives of killer whales in captivity (2017, January 5)
retrieved 30 April 2024 from
<https://phys.org/news/2017-01-efforts-enrich-killer-whales-captivity.html>

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