



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## ENDING THE CAPTIVITY OF WHALES AND DOLPHINS BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—  
DEBATE CONTINUED

Speech by:

The Honourable Larry W. Campbell

Wednesday, June 1, 2016

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**Hon. Larry W. Campbell:** Honourable senators, in the immortal words of Senator Baker, I will be brief. I rise to speak to Bill S-203, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and other Acts (ending the captivity of whales and dolphins). I want to thank the sponsor of this bill, Senator Moore, for his patience.

I took the adjournment in my name from Senator Plett. I promised him I would speak at the first chance, and here I am.

I am unable to support this proposed legislation. I would invite you to review the comments made by Senator Plett. I echo his thoughts regarding the constitutionality of this bill and the lack of scientific facts to support this bill.

I confess that I am not well-versed in the operations at MarineLand in Niagara Falls. I am, however, very familiar with the operations of the Vancouver Aquarium, the second facility in Canada that has cetaceans in captivity. The aquarium is a member of Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums, or CAZA. The main objectives of CAZA are stimulating public interest in nature and conservation, conducting conservation-oriented research, and advancing the sciences of animal care and management. To do that, each CAZA institution has a mandate to develop self-sustaining populations of captive species to the degree it is possible.

With regard to the keeping of cetaceans, CAZA recognizes there are emotional and philosophical arguments about housing dolphins, porpoises and whales in zoological parks and aquariums. I agree with CAZA in the belief that with all animals, including cetaceans, the value that seeing the living animal brings to the process of engagement, awareness, learning and motivation far outweighs the negative arguments.

In fact, it is through the public displays of cetaceans and the educational thrust of our zoological parks and aquariums that public concern and appreciation for the plight of cetaceans and their habitat has grown.

Honourable senators, I live on Galiano Island, which is part of the Southern Gulf Islands in the Salish Sea. This sea is home to killer whales. I vividly remember when it was thought that this species would become extinct. The Vancouver Aquarium and other like-minded organizations, as well as private citizens, took up the call. Important studies were conducted to determine the ecological and environmental challenges that caused the decline.

Increased shipping along the coast, noise, contaminants in the water, global warming and how whales communicate have all been studied. As a result, our pod is growing in size. I realize also that in the wild there are high mortality rates, as evidenced by the calves that we found washed up this summer.

Like most people, I do not support the capture of cetaceans from the wild. I accept that orcas are highly intelligent creatures and should be allowed to flourish in the wild. That being said, it would be unjust to not allow those already in captivity to live out their lives alone. These animals should be allowed to share the space and breed if they are so inclined.

On the West Coast, we believe in procreation and are big fans of this activity. Animals born in captivity can be viewed, studied and admired. It makes no sense whatsoever to shut off this line of science. Further, it has been through captive breeding that we have helped species recover from disastrous human decisions.

We know that critical research findings have come from the studies of dolphins and related species in managed care environments, which have provided the vast majority of what is known about their perception, psychology and cognition. This includes both basic facts about these animals, for example, echolocation and how it works, diving physiology, energetics, gestation period, hearing range, signature whistles and so forth, and applied information, such as how they react to environmental stressors and how to diagnose and treat their diseases.

The benefits of such research extend well beyond the animals in zoological facilities. The interpretation of data from field studies is directly informed by what we have learned about the cognition and physiology of these animals in managed care settings. Moreover, because science is inherently a collaborative endeavour, research findings from these animals contribute to our collective understanding across the animal kingdom. Finally, research in managed care settings impacts conservation efforts by providing the baseline information necessary to inform conservation plans and practices, for instance, typical respiration rates, metabolic rates, gestation length, hearing range and thresholds; documenting physiological and behavioural responses to environmental stressors, such as sound and contaminants to inform population managers; and developing and testing techniques and tools for assessing animals in the field.

The advances that have come from this research in marine mammal facilities could not have come from studies of animals in the wild. Field studies are crucial; however, many research questions are unsuited to discovery at a distance. Studies of pregnancy, birth, and fine-scale calf development require the type of close and consistent observation that is only possible in zoological settings.

The hypothesis testing required for questions about cognition, perception and physiology requires the ability to present animals with specific situations and challenges utilizing the necessary controls, consistency and repetition that are impossible to achieve in the wild. Indeed, as with research in any discipline, a comprehensive understanding of these animals requires a combination of both in-situ and ex-situ studies, studies based in the wild and in zoological settings.

This idea is neither new nor specific to marine animals, but it is critical to the way scientific discovery works.

Honourable senators, I believe this bill is an answer looking for a question. I look forward to this bill getting a fulsome study at

committee, and it is my hope that after said study the committee will recommend making amendments to take out sections dealing with the activities of whales in captivity.

I thank you for your attention.

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