

Dear colleagues,

Oceanogràfic de Valencia (Oceanogràfic) is Europe's largest aquarium, and fourth largest aquarium worldwide. It houses 45,000 animals of 500 different species including birds, fish, reptiles, invertebrates, and marine mammals. Oceanografic currently houses 3 belugas, 16 bottlenose dolphins, 9 harbor seals, 3 California and 13 South American sea lions. The aquarium actively participates in research programs where researchers and veterinarians from international institutions are invited to study the animals Oceanogràfic houses. Marine mammals housed under human care are critical to our understanding of not only these animals, but these species' wild counterparts. Oceanogràfic's marine mammals have participated in studies on acoustics, cognition, behavior, and physiological research which have provided vital information for conservation of their conspecifics in the wild. This research also provides opportunities to educate our visitors through a number of internal programs, educational presentations, and through media exposure. Further, the research provides the animals with enrichment and during all research programs the animals are free to participate at their own decision. Oceanogràfic strives to be a role model for other facilities that currently do not engage in active research. Not only is research important for animals in human care, but also for public education and a fluid exchange between professional care and research in the wild. Oceanogràfic's vision includes continuing research with our animals in order to contribute knowledge regarding the species in our care to the public and scientific communities.

Sincerely,



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