

Press notice

Attention: Chiefs of Staff and Environment Reporters

Release date: Thursday 20th May 2010

Cetacean Rights: Conference on Fostering Moral and Legal Change

Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland 21st May 2010

In spite of some forms of conservation measures, cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) are currently treated as resources to be harvested. And yet, many elements point in a different direction. International law manifests a growing sense of duty to whales and dolphins; contemporary ethical reflection brings new theoretical tools to bear on cetacean moral status; and scientific research gives us novel insights into the complexities of cetacean minds and societies. In the light of this, scholars from the relevant disciplines draw together to spell out all the implications of such developments, and to build a collective case for the attribution of basic moral and legal rights to cetaceans, great and small.

Conference presenters

Thomas Wilhelmsson, Rector of the University of Helsinki
Chris Butler-Stroud, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (International), United Kingdom
Matti Häyry, University of Manchester, United Kingdom
Sudhir Chopra, Cambridge Central Asia Forum, United Kingdom
Thomas White, Loyola Marymount University, United States of America
Hal Whitehead, Dalhousie University, Canada
Lori Marino, Emory University, United States of America
Nicholas Entrup, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (International), Germany
Paola Cavalieri, Etica & Animali/Conference organizer, Italy

Conference outcomes

It is anticipated that a formal statement will be developed in a speaker's forum, for public release on the 22nd May.

This statement will articulate the appropriate attribution of basic moral and legal rights to cetaceans with implications spanning philosophy, law, science and policy.

Media comment

Media comment can be arranged through Nicholas Entrup +49 171 1423 117