

Dolphins are Vulnerable to Exploitation

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Dolphins are one of the endangered marine mammals. This intelligent animal is threatened to extinction due to numerous murders. The dolphin is also vulnerable to acts of exploitation. "There is significant number of attraction , such as circus, which utilizes the dolphins in their interest. The dolphins were told to beg to meet human needs, serve as a business means," said Femke den Haas, a researcher of Jakarta Animal Aid Network (JAAN) when giving a public lecture at the UGM Faculty of Biology on Monday (21/3).

Placing a dolphin in the pool, not in its original habitat, makes this animals lose their function. In addition to the corrupted sonar capability, this animal will also experience stress. "In the high seas dolphin can travel up to tens of kilometers per day, while in the pool they can only spin in the shallow water. This will make them stress," he explained.

Femke mentioned that autism therapy with dolphins is also one form of exploitation of this mammal. This therapy has not proven to cure disease in autistic children. "Nowadays many people use dolphin for autism therapy. Whereas in fact, there is no scientific evidence to suggest that therapy with dolphins is able to cure the disease of autism. The truth is that the dolphin only helps autistic children to interact," he said.

Femke said that conservation is often one of the excuses that come with the exploitation act, so is the excuse to make dolphin attraction as a means of learning. "In fact, we still can study these animals from the wild. We will never learn to love the dolphin in the manner previously mentioned," he explained.

Femke added that the presence of dolphin became one tourist attraction in Indonesia. There is significant number of tourists who want to visit Indonesian waters only to see the dolphins in the wild. "This is proved in Lovina, Bali, many tourists visit the place to see the dolphins in the open sea. Therefore, it is very important to maintain dolphin's sustainability and let them live in their habitat," he added.

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