



PRESS RELEASE

23 February 2006

WELFARE CONCERNS FOR TWO METRE LONG PET SHARK AT CONDOMINIUM

SINGAPORE 23 February - The Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (Acres) yesterday responded to tip-off from concerned members of the public with regard to the welfare of a shark being kept at Parc Palais condominium.

Upon viewing the shark, Acres confirmed that it was a nurse shark of about two metres in length. Nurse sharks can potentially grow to a length of approximately four metres. The tank also houses two black tip reef sharks which can potentially grow to about one metre in length.

It is clear that residents and management are concerned about the welfare of the shark. According to a resident, the Parc Palais management conducted a survey to find out if the residents thought it was acceptable for them to give the shark to Underwater World Singapore (UWS). However, nothing happened after that.

The keeping of this large species of shark raises several concerns. It is clear that the current tank the shark is living in is far too small, and these suboptimal conditions undoubtedly compromise the animal's welfare.

"Sharks are adapted to life in the open ocean and to confine them to a small tank denying them the freedom to express their natural behaviours is cruel. Many captive sharks die from unsuitable living conditions. Acres hopes that the management will agree to send this shark to UWS where the shark will at least have a larger tank to live in" said Amy Corrigan, Acres' Director of Zoology.

Acres understands that one of the considerations in releasing the shark to UWS was the cost involved in removing the shark from the aquarium. However, the fact remains that as the ones who had brought in the shark, the management are obliged to take responsibility for its long-term welfare.

It was also observed that the access hatch into the aquarium was not locked and was accessible to the residents. Therefore, if a resident wanted to enter the aquarium and touch the shark, the resident could do so. This poses serious safety concerns as even children can gain access to the sharks.

Parc Palais does not have a license to keep sharks. Section 5 of the Wild Animals and Birds Act (Penalty for killing or keeping wild animals or birds without licence) states: "Any person who kills, takes or keeps any wild animal or bird, other than those specified in the Schedule, without a licence shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$1,000 and to the forfeiture of the wild animal or bird." The schedule only lists six species of bird.

Acres is of the opinion that the private ownership of dangerous animals should be strictly controlled.

Acres is currently waiting to be contacted by the management of Parc Palais condominium and we look forward to working with them to improve the welfare of the sharks. Acres also understands that the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority is investigating this case.

Contact:

Louis Ng (President and Executive Director)
Email: louis@acres.org.sg Handphone: +65 97968592

- ends -

Notes to editors

- Photos of the shark and the tank are available on request.
- To date, the work of Acres has led to the rescue of more than 160 animals from the illegal wildlife trade.
- Founded by a group of Singaporeans in 2001, Acres is a local charity aimed at fostering respect and compassion for all animals.