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PRESS RELEASE

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PARC PALAIS CONDOMINIUM ADVISED TO REMOVE SHARKS

SINGAPORE 2 March - The Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (Acres) congratulates the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) for advising the Parc Palais condominium to remove the two black tip reef sharks currently kept at the condominium. However, Acres remains concerned about the nurse shark kept in the same tank as the black tip reef sharks.

According to a statement from AVA (1 March 2006), “AVA has advised the condominium management to remove the two black tipped reef sharks in view that the capacity of the tank may not be able to accommodate them when they are fully grown.”

Black tip reef sharks can potentially grow to about one metre in length. If the tank is not able to accommodate them when they are fully grown, then clearly it will not be able to accommodate the nurse shark.

The nurse shark is currently about two metres in length and can potentially grow to a length of approximately four metres. The length of the nurse shark is already longer than the width of the tank.

AVA prohibits the sale of sharks in pet shops. According to the license conditions issued under the Animals and Birds (Pet Shop and Exhibition) Rules 2004, AVA states, “The following fish are not permitted: Fish that have a large territorial range in their natural habitat, e.g. sharks, rays.”

“It would be contradictory to state that pet shops are not allowed to sell sharks because they have a large territorial range in their natural habitat but on the other hand say it is acceptable to keep a pet shark in a small tank.” said Mr Louis Ng, Acres’ Executive Director.

Acres has received scores of letters from members of the public supporting our call for the release of the sharks. We urge AVA to advise the Parc Palais condominium to remove the nurse shark and send the shark to Underwater World Singapore.

Acres also urges AVA to reconsider its position on not regulating the pet shark trade. A recent study published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B, a British journal, indicated that sharks may be more vulnerable to over-exploitation than previously thought. According to the World Conservation Union, 25 species of shark are already endangered or facing extinction. The unregulated private ownership of sharks in Singapore will potentially contribute to the decline of shark populations in the wild.

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Notes to editors

- Photos of the shark and the tank are available on request.
- Copies of letters sent by members of the public to AVA 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.