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PRESS RELEASE

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SINGAPORE ZOO URGED TO RECONSIDER THE USE OF WILD ANIMALS IN SHOWS

SINGAPORE 6 July – In April 2005, the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (Acres) called for a ban on the use of wild animals in animal shows at the Singapore Zoo and Night Safari.

The campaign has received strong international support. The recent Asia for Animals Conference held in Singapore, attended by more than 200 delegates from 19 countries, adopted a resolution supporting Acres' call for the ban on the use of wild animals in circuses to be extended to captive facilities in Singapore where circus-like shows are performed. This includes Singapore Zoo and Dolphin Lagoon.

Acres is still strongly against the use of wild animals in shows. However, in an effort to reach an amicable solution with the Singapore Zoo and Night Safari, Acres proposes the following guidelines which have been forward to the management of the Singapore Zoo and Night Safari.

If the Singapore Zoo and Night Safari continue to use wild animals in animal shows, they must:

- Install barriers at the show areas which make it physically impossible for all show animals to come into contact with the public at all times.
- Enforce a policy of the display of only natural behaviours by the show animals.
- Ensure that the show animals live in naturalistic enclosures when they are not performing.
- Ensure that each animal performs not more than once every two days, allowing them to rest at least for a day after every performance. (Performance is no longer enriching if it is performed on a daily basis at a specific time. It merely becomes a routine and clearly does not meet the guidelines on enrichment.)
- Use only training methods that do not involve the physical and mental abuse of the animals.

Most of the guidelines are in line with the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority's (AVA) conditions for animal performances which include:

- The animals must not be forced to perform acts considered unnatural for the animal.
- The animals must not pose a danger to the public.

Acres urges the Singapore Zoo and Night Safari to implement all the above guidelines as soon as possible. If these guidelines are not met, Acres will continue to campaign for a ban on the use of wild animals in animals shows at the Singapore Zoo and Night Safari.

Acres understands that the Singapore Zoo is in the process of thoroughly reviewing its shows and aims to decrease the use of mammals. We congratulate the zoo for taking this initiative.

Acres will continue to monitor the animal shows and we would also like to kindly request for a meeting with the Singapore Zoo and Night Safari to hold further discussions.

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- Acres is a local animal welfare charity aimed at fostering respect and compassion for all animals. Acres' approach to raising animal welfare issues is to focus on education and back up our advocacy with scientific clarity accrued through research. Using our findings, we will inform the public and work towards synergistic partnerships with the authorities and related parties to improve animal welfare.