

SHOULD REINTRODUCTIONS BE USED AS A MEANS OF MANAGING CAPTIVE BOTTLENOSE DOLPHINS?

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With the concern of the welfare of captive bottlenose dolphins (*tursiops truncatus*) increasing over the years, the issue of possible reintroduction of these animals has come into question. Reintroduction programs are the introduction of captive-bred animals to their native habitat from which the animal has disappeared in order to establish a new, viable population. Because bottlenose dolphins have not disappeared from their native habitat, using reintroduction programs is questionable as to whether or not they actually increase their welfare. This paper was designed to investigate the issue of reintroduction as a means of increasing the welfare of bottlenose dolphins. It researched nine categories: 1) The reintroduction issue, 2) Reasons why a reintroduction should be an option, 3) The means of determining animal welfare: differences between wild and captive bottlenose dolphins, 4) Other release programs, 5) What makes a release a success, 6) What impact the reintroduction has on the environment, indigenous population and the individual, 7) The candidates for release 8) Previous reintroduction, 9) People's opinions on the reintroduction issue. After reviewing these areas, it concluded that the best uses of reintroduction programs on bottlenose dolphins were to either avoid using them or to possibly use them as means to find protocols for more endangered marine mammal species.