

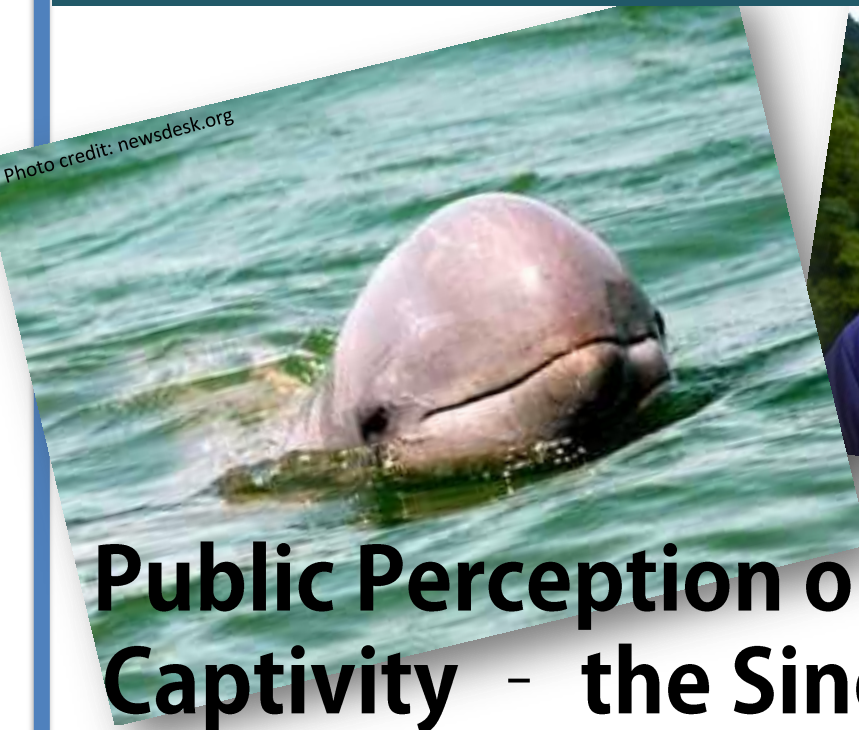
SEMINAR

Department of Biological Sciences



Friday, 13 April 2012 | 11am | DBS Conference Room 2

Hosted by Dr Zeehan Jaafar



Public Perception on Dolphins in Captivity - the Singapore Story

By Li Jinghan

About the Speaker:

is an undergraduate student at the Department of Biological Sciences and University Scholar's Program, supervised by Dr Zeehan Jaafar. She has a strong interest on conservation of marine organisms at large. Jinghan carried out this study for four months gathering responses from over 1200 individuals. She is keen to share her findings with interested stakeholders and aims for a healthy discussion following the talk.

Approximately 60% of captive dolphins in Asia are obtained from the wild. Singapore recently acquired 27 wild dolphins from the coast of Solomon Islands for a recently-built aqua-park. The seemingly widespread opposition towards cetacean captivity stems from studies on public attitudes conducted in developed western countries. This study aims to understand attitudes of Singaporeans towards dolphins in captivity, and reasons for visitation (or non-visitation) of these parks. We found that the majority of Singaporeans support the acquisition and captivity of dolphins for educational purposes. Park visitations with captive dolphins were perceived favorably, and as a means to learn of the habits and conservation potential of these animals. Support for the acquisition and captivity of dolphins occurred among all age groups, although to a lesser degree among youths. Children and females in particular, cited close and interactive encounters with dolphins as reasons for visitation. Understanding public attitudes can thus positively aid the identification of areas to be implemented in public education programs with long-term impacts towards the conservation of cetaceans.