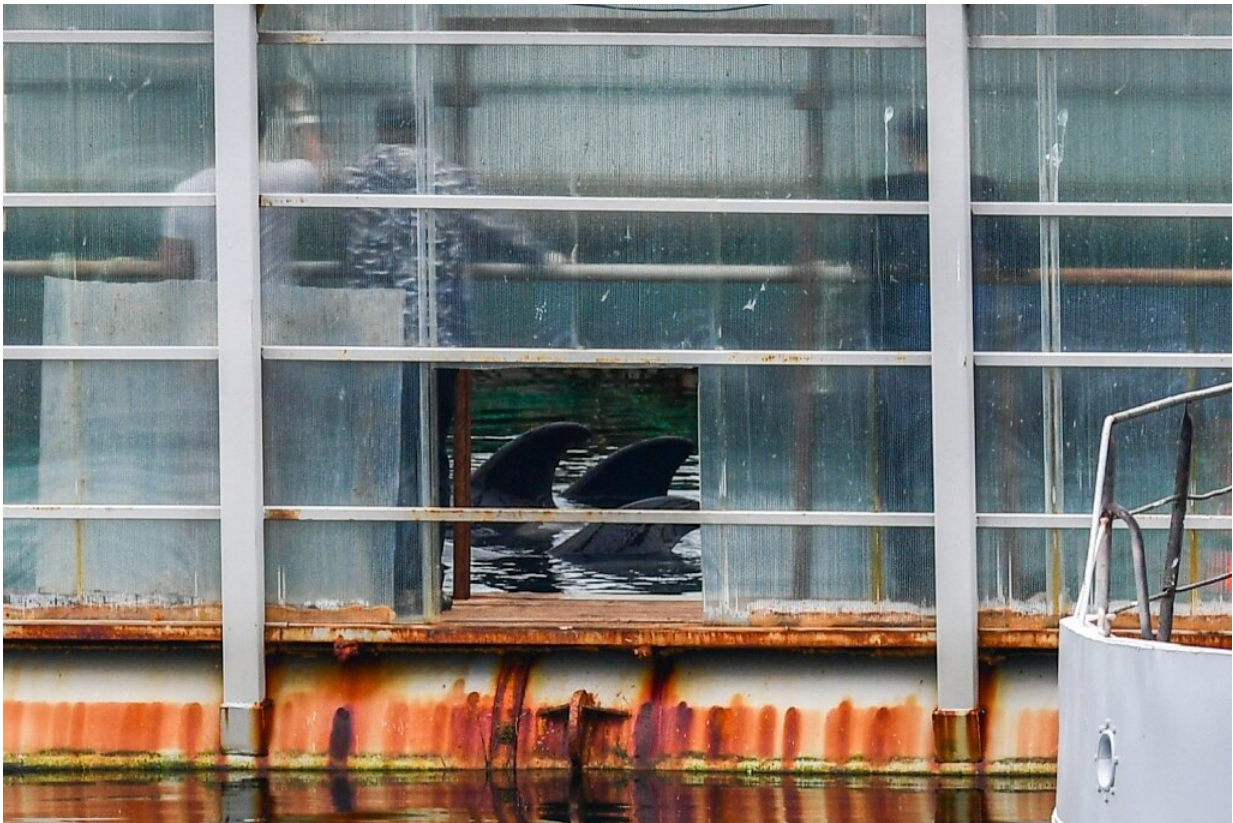


Russia to ban capturing whales for aquariums

December 11 2021



Killer whales are seen in 2019 at a holding facility, known as "whale jail", in Srednyaya Bay, Russia—President Vladimir Putin has moved to close a legal loophole that allowed sea creatures, especially whales, to be captured to perform at venues.

Russian activists on Friday welcomed a move by President Vladimir

Putin to close a legal loophole that allowed sea creatures, particularly whales, to be captured to perform in aquariums and other venues.

Images of 100 whales cramped into a notorious facility dubbed the "[whale jail](#)" in Russia's far east sparked an international outcry in 2019.

The whales, which were destined for aquariums, were freed after an intense campaign by rights groups and earlier this month Russia said it had fully dismantled the secretive facility.

Greenpeace Russia director Sergei Tsyplyonkov had asked Putin to get rid of a legal loophole that allowed the capture of sea animals, most of them destined for aquariums in China.

"Are you suggesting a ban on catching (the animals) for entertainment? Yes, I agree, let's do it this way," Putin said during a meeting with the presidential rights council on Thursday.

Speaking at a press conference the next day, Tsyplyonkov said closing the loophole was "very important".

"The attitude towards children, the elderly and animals says a lot about a society," said Tsyplyonkov, adding that he was "happy" that Putin agreed with him.

Environmental groups put huge efforts into closing the notorious whale facility in Srednyaya Bay near the far eastern town of Nakhodka and releasing the [whales](#) into the wild.

All of the animals—many of them calves—went through a rehabilitation programme before being released into the Sea of Okhotsk between Russia and Japan.

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Citation: Russia to ban capturing whales for aquariums (2021, December 11) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-12-russia-capturing-whales-aquariums.html>

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