



Zoologische Gesellschaft für Arten- und Populationsschutz e.V.

ZGAP • c/o Zoo • Hindenburgstr. 12 • D-76829 Landau in der Pfalz

Vereinssitz: München

Thomas Cook Group plc
Dr. Peter Fankhauser
Group CEO
3rd Floor, South Building
200 Aldergate
London, EC1A 4HD
United Kingdom

Statement on a recent Thomas Cook Group announcement

29.08.2018

Dear Dr. Frankhauser,

The travel company, Thomas Cook, recently announced that as of summer 2019 they will no longer sell trips to facilities that care for orcas (*Orcinus orca*).

We, the Zoologische Gesellschaft für Arten und Populationsschutz. e.V./Zoological Society for the Conservation of Species and Conservation (ZGAP) are certain that Loro Parque, as our long-term species conservation partner, has been caring successfully and to the highest welfare standards for orcas for 20 years. Therefore, the husbandry of orcas in this institution is by no means an “animal welfare” matter, but most unfortunately, triggered by the extremist animal rights industry, solely a matter of animal rights ideology.

Loro Parque is with no doubt and for very good reasons recognized as a leader in Conservation, Education and Research and, in addition, they recently achieved a 100% rating in a focused animal welfare audit as part of requirements laid down by Thomas Cook. Global conservation research programs involving orca at the park have also contributed to the development of prototype devices that use vocalizations to aid open sea orca protection and welfare.

The announcement by Thomas Cook cites “animal welfare” as a driver for their decision. However, to our greatest disappointment and concern they do not appear to have considered the proven high animal welfare record that Loro Parque has. It is also difficult to understand the motives of Thomas Cook whereby they require a facility to undergo a welfare audit and then disregard the results.

ZGAP strongly and kindly encourages Thomas Cook to reconsider their decision, specifically as it relates to EAZA Accredited facilities like Loro Parque who, in addition, have passed the Thomas Cook welfare audit requirements.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Jens-Ove Heckel
ZGAP president