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EAZA Statement on Recent Thomas Cook Announcement

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*). The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) Accredited Member, Loro Parque, Spain is one such facility that this news affects. Loro Parque has been successfully caring for orcas for over 12 years and has a wealth of experience meeting their welfare and management requirements. Loro Parque passed the rigorous, holistic, EAZA Accreditation that covers Standards on Animal Accommodation and Care, 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. 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, 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. EAZA 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.

EAZA's [Accreditation process](#) and [Standards](#) are publicly available as part of our commitment to transparency and professionalism.