

Russian Schoolchildren Brought on 'Whale Jail' Tours, Activist Says

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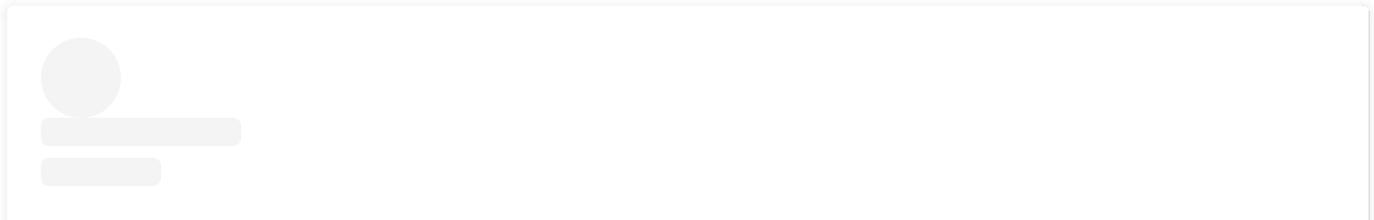


Yury Smityuk / TASS

Russian kindergarteners are being given tours of the controversial pens that hold 10 killer whales and 87 beluga whales in the country's Far East, an animal rights activist said Monday.

Images of the mammals kept in enclosures in a bay near the Sea of Japan port of Nakhodka first [appeared](#) after they were caught for export to China last summer. Under international pressure, Russia in April [signed](#) an agreement with a group of international scientists to release the orcas and the belugas.

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A post shared by Nina HappyRich (@ninahappyrich) on Jun 1, 2019 at 9:16pm PDT

Videos shared by activist Nina Zyryanova on Sunday [showed](#) a group of children accompanied by adults stepping out of a bus and being led into an enclosed area at Srednyaya Bay. A photograph of a poster advertises excursions and lectures “on the life of marine mammals in captivity.”

Related article: [Russian Plan to Free Whales Risks Their Survival, Say Scientists](#)

“This proves that the ‘whale prison’ isn’t rehabilitating the killer whales and belugas as promised, meaning it’s not preparing them for release,” Interfax [quoted](#) Zyryanova as saying.

She estimated the number of children from a Nakhodka kindergarten during Sunday’s

excursion at between 40 and 100.

Russian scientists announced that the orcas would be freed by June 10 directly from their holding pens into the Sea of Japan, some 1,290 kilometers south of their original habitat in the Sea of Okhotsk. International scientists [said](#) the plan could harm the orcas.

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