



Wild orcas play at left. Above, two images show Katina's teeth before (top) and after damage caused by chewing on her enclosure.

captivity. "It doesn't work out for the animals and it's never going to work out for the animals," he says. "I think you can put all the money into bigger pools that you want but never recreate the ocean."

Jett explains that killer whales in captivity tend to experience social problems and health problems. For example, captive whales often chew on the concrete edges of their pools or the steel bars that separate different areas. As a result, "most of their teeth are broken, missing, ground down, or drilled out," says Jett. The whales may also float near the top of the pool for long periods. As a result, they may end up with a sunburn or a flopped-over dorsal fin—a common sight on captive male killer whales. Wild whales' fins are almost always straight.

Of course, life in the wild isn't perfect, either. In fact, a whale in captivity now has about the same chance of surviving the year as a whale in the wild. "Survival of killer whales in captivity has increased over the past 30 years," says Doug DeMaster, Science and Research

Director of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. In addition, research with captive whales has added to our knowledge about their physiology and life history. On several occasions, scientists have used this knowledge to aid wild killer whales in trouble.

Jett concedes that parks such as SeaWorld have done some good for killer whales. "We no longer fear them," he says. "People have come to appreciate the need to protect them." However, he feels that the time has come to stop keeping Katina and other whales captive.

What do you think? Have you been to a show at SeaWorld or a similar park? Is there any way for these parks to make life more comfortable for killer whales?

Your Decision

Next time you're at a zoo or aquarium, think about what life must be like for the animals there. Talk to

your family and the zookeepers about the ethics of protecting animals both in the zoo and in the wild. Then make your own decisions. Right . . . or wrong?

Kathryn Hulick has had many pets throughout her life—from iguanas and fish to rabbits and dogs. She feels that caring for animals from a young age made her a more responsible, compassionate person. Hopefully the pets were happy too!

