



## **A holistic approach to a new exhibit: animal acquisition for Ocean Park's Polar Adventure**

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After the 1997 financial crisis, Ocean Park in Hong Kong was facing challenging times. We realised that redevelopment and expansion were essential for the Park's survival. In 1999 the Hong Kong Government signed a deal with Disney, and in 2004 a team was formed to develop a Master Redevelopment Plan for Ocean Park. We decided to retain the existing mix of 65% animal attractions and 35% rides during the Park's redevelopment. We determined which animal stories to tell, through what types of exhibit, and developed animal acquisition plans, guided by the Park's Acquisition Policy. Most animals could be sourced from other zoological facilities through captive breeding exchanges.

For the Polar Adventure exhibit, which was to highlight climate change and advocate for the reduction of our carbon footprints, we needed to collect some animals from the wild, including the beluga whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*). We undertook a five-year study to determine if removal of animals would negatively affect the population's sustainability, and this was peer-reviewed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). This presentation will introduce the process of designing and undertaking this study, as well as the exhibit in which the animals could be displayed.