Wednesday 28 September 2016

Statement from NEWS re CAPTURE OF MARINE WILDLIFE

The Namibian Environment and Wildlife Society (NEWS) wishes to clarify our position regarding the application by a Chinese company to MFMR for the live-capture of whales, dolphins, seals and penguins.

We requested information on this matter from MFMR but received no reply by the cut-off date. NEWS, represented by John Pallett, has subsequently discussed this with the Deputy PS of MFMR, Mr Kauaria, and can report as follows:

According to Mr Kauaria, the application received by MFMR is only for live capture of seals. Mr Kauaria gave the assurance that if an application to capture live whales and dolphins was to be received, MFMR would definitely refuse to grant it. Killer whale and other whale species, bottlenose dolphin and African penguin are protected, and capture or disturbance of these animals would be illegal under Namibia’s Marine Resources Act.

NEWS remains suspicious of the presence of the vessel Ryazanovka in Walvis Bay, since capture of live seals would be land-based, and would not require facilities for sea-capture and transport of whales and dolphins. The Ryazanovka is equipped with these facilities, and is presently applying to be reflagged as a Namibian vessel. There is clearly a high level of investment, and leads NEWS to believe that the company has not received any indication that its plans would be blocked by Namibian authorities. Mr Kauaria assured NEWS that any movements or activities of this ship will be closely monitored by MFMR officials to ensure that it does not undertake illegal activities.

NEWS urges the full spectrum of authorities (i.e. NamPort, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibian Police, Ministry of Fisheries inspectors) to be vigilant over the actions and intentions of the company that has submitted this application, and the activities of the vessel Ryazanovka in Namibian waters.