

## **Transcript of Interview with Keith Sciarra by Joan Church**

**Interviewee:** Keith Sciarra

**Interviewer:** Joan Church

**Date:** 04/03/2021

**Location (Interviewee):** Tempe, Arizona

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**Transcriber:** Joan Church

### **Abstract:**

Keith Sciarra grew up in Somerset, NJ where he earned his bachelor's degree in Psychology. He then moved to California and continued his studies in exotic animal training at Moorpark College, where he also began her career in the animal field. From there he moved to Arizona to be a dolphin trainer at Dolphinaris, Arizona. He was a trainer there for 4 years until they were shut down. From there he continued his career with dolphins in Miami, Florida at Miami Seaquarium. He was there for 6 months before moving back to Arizona and switching his career to finances. Although he no longer works in the animal industry he has a passion for animals and wildlife. In this interview Keith goes into detail about the effects of COVID on wildlife, specifically marine wildlife.

### **JC: 00:00**

Hi, my name is Joan Church and I'm an undergraduate student at Arizona State University enrolled in History 494. The date is April 3 2021 and the time is 4:55pm. I'm speaking with Keith Sciarra, Keith I want to ask you a few questions about COVID-19 and wildlife. But before I do, I would like to ask for your consent to record this response for the COVID-19 archive. The COVID-19 archive is a digital archive at ASU that is collecting pandemic experiences. Do I have your consent to record your response and add it to the archive with your name?

### **KS 00:29**

Yes, you have my consent.

### **JC 00:31**

Thank you. Okay, so we're going to start off a little bit with your background, and then we'll get into the other questions. So the first question I want to ask you is, can you describe your background you have in the wildlife field?

### **KS 00:43**

So, I have a degree in exotic animal training and management and wildlife conservation. And I worked as an animal trainer for about five years

### **JC 00:52**

Okay, and what job position do you hold currently?

### **KS 00:55**

Currently, I'm a licensed stock broker.

**JC 00:58**

Okay, thank you, we're going to switch into the more in-depth questions. So what kind of changes did you expect to see in wildlife when COVID happened given your background?

**KS 01:10**

It's actually a complicated question because when COVID hit, you expect more people to stay inside, which in turn, you would think initially would generate less waste. The wildlife is most impacted by humans and the waste that we generate. But when everyone stays inside and less people go into restaurants, there's less chances for that waste to get out in the environment. However, if people that stayed inside, lived a more sedentary lifestyle, ordered more things, ate more, went through more single use disposable things that could eventually when they throw that out, get out into the environment as well. So it really depends on whether or not people use less when they were staying inside

**JC 01:55**

What changes have you seen in wildlife or the last year compared to what changes you expected?

**KS 02:04**

I think as a whole with less people going out wildlife has boosted a little bit. Like I said, that waste is still out there. But with less people outside, less chances for wildlife to run into people, we may have seen an increase in some of the populations as in birds and deer.

**JC 02:22**

Okay, and that kind of ties into my next question, which is what areas specifically in wildlife do you think were affected most during COVID and why?

**KS 02:32**

When we talk about waste, the big part of the big population that gets hurt by human waste is in the oceans. Even if you're living in a part of the world, or a part of the country that isn't directly next to an ocean, the waterways all eventually lead there. And that's where waste hurts wildlife the most. Not to say it doesn't hurt birds and other wildlife too. We see birds getting plastic in their nests and in their bodies. But a lot of that waste ends up going out in the ocean. So hopefully, a lot of that waste didn't go out to the ocean while people were staying indoors and hopefully using less.

**JC 03:13**

Okay, and do you think there was a positive or a negative impact on wildlife with COVID-19 or both and why?

**KS 0:23**

I think there could be some brief positive impact. But after COVID-19 it is as people were getting vaccinated, and it's ending. More people are going out and people are just going to return to the ways we were and even if there was a brief relief for wildlife. Still, if we don't change our ways, we're gonna see that temporary relief, go back to normal very soon, and wildlife is gonna be in trouble if we don't start producing less waste and start taking care of our wildlife a little better.

**JC 03:56**

Okay, and are there any specific outside factors that you think affected wildlife during this time during COVID and the pandemic, whether that be in a positive or negative way?

**KS 04:07**

I think you definitely see, for example, the deer population and the rabbits, and all kinds of wildlife like that, that get typically hit by cars. I think with a lot less traffic on the road, you'll probably see less of that. I think hunters were definitely going out less even though some people may have been hunting more if you live in a really rural area. So I think, you know, some, again, some relief might have been provided to the wildlife population. And they may have experienced some more comfortability just being outside less humans around but again, that's probably temporary when we look at the big picture.

**JC 04:52**

Okay. What kinds of things can we do to help this cause after COVID because you did state earlier that you know, after COVID, the positive things that happened may go back to normal. So do you have any advice or anything about that?

**KS 05:09**

The biggest thing people can do to help protect wildlife, whether it's in the ocean or whether they're on land is just recycling, reducing their use of plastic and single use products and really just be more conscious of things like having less of a, of an impact on our carbon footprint, and really just being conscious and making a change worldwide. You know, straws are a huge problem. Plastic bags are a huge problem. But it's not just the plastic, it's our carbon emissions. It's everything that as humans grow, and our populations grow, and the wildlife suffers more and more. So it's just our behavior that we have to change whether it's during COVID or not.

**JC 05:51**

Alright, and that's going to wrap up our interview. I'm gonna ask you one last question, though. Do you have any last thoughts or advice for anybody? Again, just,

**KS 06:00**

Again, just, I think it's really important to care about this stuff, help spread the word as much as possible. A lot of people were out there preaching it, not as many people are doing it. And it's the people that really, really care and help spread the message to others that are just going to help our wildlife in the future. So as much as you can get the word out. That's, that would be my advice.

**JC 06:25**

All right. Thank you so much.