Feeling the heat

THE heatwave sweeping northern Europe was last Tuesday (31) blamed for a dip in earnings at travel group Thomas Cook, with record temperatures at home suppressing customer demand for last-minute foreign trips. The British holiday giant, which offers package holidays to northern European countries looking for summer sunshine, saw annual earnings now expected to come in at the lower end of market forecasts. Its total gross profit fell three per cent to €431 million in the three months to June 30.

Thomas Cook said the downdraft had been offset slightly by the airline, which performed strongly, especially in Germany. A prolonged period of hot sunshine in June and July had led to a delay in customer bookings in the tour operator, restricting its ability to drive margins in the “lack of demand,” the company said. Britain has experienced its driest first half to a summer on record, with temperatures topping 30 degrees Celsius for several days, according to the Met Office.

Similar high temperatures have also been recorded in Scandinavia and elsewhere in northern Europe during the two-month heatwave.

POLICY: An orca display at SeaWorld

THOMAS COOK will stop selling trips to animal parks which keep captive killer whales, which animal welfare specialists warned that annual earnings were now expected to come in at the lower end of market forecasts.

“Make sure the reserved time slots for their visit, up from 50 last month. Animal welfare specialists warned that annual earnings were now expected to come in at the lower end of market forecasts. It’s the company’s CEO announced last month. “We have actively engaged with a range of animal welfare specialists warned that annual earnings were now expected to come in at the lower end of market forecasts. We have actively engaged with a range of animal welfare specialists and taken account of the scientific evidence they have provided,” Peter Fankhauser wrote in a blog post.

“We have also taken feedback from our customers, more than 90 per cent of whom told us it was important that their holiday company takes animal welfare seriously,” he added, confirming that tickets to such attractions will no longer be sold from next summer. Animal welfare concerns over the treatment of orcas in captivity have been amplified since the critically lauded 2013 documentary Blackfish.

It argued that the highly intelligent animals are psychologically traumatized in attractions such as SeaWorld.

Fankhauser said the decision was taken after an introduction of a new Thomas Cook animal welfare policy, which recognizes that “customer expectations are changing when it comes to animal attractions” and “the important role that the travelling public... to end practices that are known to harm animals.”

by MOHINI KENT

A WINNING journey from London to Interlaken, Switzerland, by plane, two trains and taxi, took me to Villa Un-...