



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fishing for Aquarium fun facts

- The Eurasian eagle owl in Ranger Rick's Backyard Safari is one of the largest owls in the world. Guests might also see one of the smallest owl species here, the Eastern screech owl.
- The arapaima in the River Giants exhibit has grown from just 12 inches to more than six feet.
- Alligator snapping turtles grow very slowly after reaching adulthood. The large male alligator snapping turtle in the Delta Country gallery weighs 160 pounds, and could be more than a century old.
- Weighing in at more than 70 pounds, the big blue catfish in the River Giants exhibit is one big fish. But the giant pangassius catfish may soon outgrow this whopper. In the wild, giant pangassius catfish grow to more than nine feet in length .
- Gentoo penguins are the third largest penguin species in the world. (Emperor penguins are the largest, followed by king and then gentoo.)
- Macaroni penguins are the largest members of the crested penguin species.
- Birds and amphibians at the Tennessee Aquarium eat nearly 300,000 worms and mealworms each year.
- Fish in the Tennessee Aquarium eat more than 1,200 pounds of restaurant-quality seafood, 336 heads of romaine lettuce and 168 bunches of broccoli each month.
- Red piranhas, despite their sharp teeth, are relatively timid and rarely bite humans.

- Sharks never run out of teeth. When the front teeth become worn or break off, new ones replace them. During its lifetime, a shark will produce thousands of teeth.

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- Sharks have the same five senses as people, but they also have a sixth sense that allows them to detect weak electrical signals generated by their prey.
- Snakes do not have external ears, but an internal ear allows them to pick up vibrations in the ground through the lower jaw.
- A snake's forked tongue picks up molecules in the air that give it a sense of smell.
- Amphibians not only have the five basic senses - touch, taste, sight, hearing and smell - but they can also detect ultraviolet and infrared light in the earth's magnetic field.
- Frogs are by far the largest and most flourishing group of modern amphibians and are found on each continent, except Antarctica.
- The sex of many reptiles - lizards, turtles and crocodilians - is determined by the incubation temperature of their eggs.
- The age of some turtles can be determined by counting the growth rings on the plates of their shell like counting the rings of a tree.
- Sturgeon have pharyngeal teeth in their throats that are used to "chew" their food.
- Despite the rock-like or plant-like appearance of corals, they are animals – tiny creatures that live together in large colonies.
- Although bamboo sharks breathe oxygen in the water through their gills, the brown-banded bamboo shark has been known to survive up to 12 hours out of the water.
- White-spotted bamboo sharks are regularly consumed by humans and used in Chinese medicine.

- Octopi are considered the most intelligent of all the invertebrates. Although they are shy, they are also curious and explore their environments.
- An octopus has the ability to change colors, which helps the octopus hide or hunt or reflects its mood.
- A cuttlefish can change the texture of its skin, raising or lowering it to help the animal blend in with rocks or coral.

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- To protect itself from predators, the giant spider crab uses its bumpy carapace to blend into the rocky ocean floor, or it will adorn its shell with sponges and other animals.
- There are nearly 265,000 species of butterflies and moths in the world.
- Butterflies eat nectar from the blooming flowers in the sunlit garden, artificial nectar and fruit.
- Seahorses and pipefish are the only fish with prehensile tails that are designed to grasp or hold. They use their tails to hold onto objects-like sea grass, coral or each other.
- The bony plates on seahorses provide protection from predators and in some species, make the body semi-rigid. Because of this, seahorses don't move their bodies in a wavelike fashion as most fish do, but glide gracefully by fanning their delicate fins.

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The Tennessee Aquarium inspires wonder, appreciation and protection of water and all life that it sustains. Admission is \$24.95 per adult and \$14.95 per child, ages 3-12. Each ticket purchased helps support Aquarium conservation programs. The IMAX® 3D Theater is next door to the Aquarium. Ticket prices are \$8.50 per adult and \$6.00 per child. Aquarium/IMAX combo tickets are \$29.95 for adults and \$19.95 for children. Excursions aboard the new River Gorge Explorer depart daily into "Tennessee's Grand Canyon." Cruise tickets are \$29.00 per adult and \$21.50 per child (3-12). Advance tickets may be purchased online at www.tnaqua.org or by phone at 1-800-262-0695. The Aquarium, located on the banks of the Tennessee River in Chattanooga, is a non-profit organization. Open every day except Thanksgiving and Christmas, the Aquarium and IMAX are accessible to people with disabilities.

ONLINE press kits & downloadable images: <http://www.tnaqua.org/News/Newsroom.aspx>