



# Overview

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## SHEDD AQUARIUM OVERVIEW

The John G. Shedd Aquarium, a nonprofit institution dedicated to public education and conservation, is known as “The World’s Aquarium.” Beautifully situated on the shores of Lake Michigan, the facility houses nearly 22,000 aquatic animals representing some 1,500 species of fishes, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, birds and mammals from waters around the world. Since its opening in 1930, the Aquarium’s mission has been to enhance public understanding and appreciation of the aquatic world. Today, this educational goal has gained urgency as more species acquire endangered status. Shedd Aquarium is committed to a number of projects designed to preserve threatened or endangered aquatic species.

- YEARLY ATTENDANCE:** approximately 2 million
- FUNDING:** Shedd Aquarium is a nonprofit institution supported by the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District and from revenues from admissions, memberships, programs, donations, facility rentals and proceeds from on-premises gift stores and restaurants.
- GOVERNANCE:** Shedd Aquarium is owned and operated by the Shedd Aquarium Society, comprised of volunteer community and civic leaders.
- HISTORY:**
- Feb. 11, 1924 - Incorporation
  - Nov. 2, 1927 - Aquarium groundbreaking
  - May 30, 1930 - Aquarium public opening
  - Sept. 17, 1987 - Oceanarium groundbreaking
  - April 27, 1991 - Oceanarium public opening
  - August 8, 2000 - Wild Reef groundbreaking
  - April 15, 2003 - Wild Reef public opening
- The John G. Shedd Aquarium was a gift to the people of Chicago from John Graves Shedd, president and chairman of the board of Marshall Field & Company.
- CONSTRUCTION COST:**
- Original Aquarium: \$3.25 million
  - Oceanarium: \$45 million
  - Wild Reef: \$45 million
- FACILITY:**
- 422,000 sq. ft.
  - Original Aquarium: 225,000 sq. ft.
  - Oceanarium: 170,000 sq. ft.
  - Wild Reef: 27,000 sq. ft.

**ARCHITECTURE:** The architectural firm of Graham, Anderson, Probst and White designed Shedd Aquarium in the classic Greek style to harmonize with the neighboring Field Museum. The original Aquarium is an octagonal building constructed of white Georgian marble. Aquatic motifs adorn the interior and exterior of the building. Near the entrance, octopuses are draped over shell-shaped lamps suspended from bronze ropes. Lamps in the foyer are designed in the likeness of nautilus shells. Even the marble wainscoting in the foyer is set to create an effect of waves.

The four-level **Oceanarium**, designed by the architectural firm of Lohan and Associates, expands from the east wall of the original Aquarium and is built on 1.8 acres of landfill. The building's low profile and circular shape complement the Aquarium's Greek-inspired Beaux Arts style architecture. The white Georgian marble on the exterior of the **Oceanarium** is the original marble removed from the east facade of the Aquarium to construct the new facility. The curved wall of glass windows ensures plenty of natural lighting and treats guests to a sweeping vista of Lake Michigan.

**WATER SYSTEM:** *ORIGINAL AQUARIUM:* The aquatic environments in the original Aquarium contain more than 1.5 million gallons of water. Water quality is maintained by computer and a modern life-support system that involves 75 miles of PVC pipe, pneumatic valving, mixed-media filters and high-rate industrial pumps. The water is moved through the exhibits at a 90-minute turnover rate, providing optimum water quality for the animals.

*OCEANARIUM:* The water system in the **Oceanarium** cleans the facility's 3 million gallons of water every two hours. Eleven miles of plumbing and life-support pipes service the system. Computer and a state-of-the-art system that involves 27 mixed-media filters and industrial pumps maintain water quality.

Shedd Aquarium originally transported salt water from Florida in railroad cars. The facility started formulating its own salt water on site in the early 1970s.

**EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS:**

**WATERS OF THE WORLD:**

The galleries in the original Aquarium contain a wide variety of freshwater and saltwater exhibits. Animals from regions as far away as Asia, Africa and Australia and as close as Lake Michigan show the diversity of aquatic life from the world's oceans, rivers and lakes.

**AMAZON RISING: SEASON OF THE RIVER**

This new, award-winning exhibit takes guests on a journey along the banks of the Amazon River during the rainy season into the flooding forests. Curious guests can see the vast diversity of this tropical world through an up-close look at animals such as piranhas, birds, sloths, insects, snakes, catfish, stingrays, iguanas and a caiman.

**Oceans Coast Gallery (salt water animals of cold oceans)**

Animals from northern tide pools and cold oceans are exhibited. A free-standing display features sea anemones, small oceanic animals frequently mistaken as "flowers" of the sea.

### **Illinois Lakes and Rivers Gallery Including Invasive Species (fresh water animals of the Great Lakes Region)**

Cold freshwater animals found throughout the Great Lakes can be seen, including river otters in a re-creation of the sandstone bluffs of the Fox River in Illinois.

#### **Invasive Species**

Asian and snakehead carp have the potential to devastate the Great Lakes, and for the first time the public can see these invasive species firsthand. This permanent exhibit highlights numerous invasive species - including the Asian and snakehead carp - threatening our Great Lakes. The exhibit is an important part of Shedd's public awareness campaign to draw attention to the value - and the vulnerability - of the complex Great Lakes ecosystem.

#### **Tropical Waters Gallery (fresh water animals of Americas)**

These animals live in shallow rivers and warm lakes throughout the Americas from Illinois to South America.

#### **Asia, Africa and Australia Gallery (warm fresh water animals)**

Discover the exotic animals from lakes and rivers in Asia, Africa, South America and Australia.

**CARIBBEAN REEF:** The 90,000-gallon **Caribbean Reef** is home to more than 250 tropical Caribbean reef animals including sharks, eel, a sea turtle and a host of colorful fish. Five times daily a diver plunges into the water to hand-feed the animals and talk about these amazing animals. Video monitors surrounding the reef and video cameras give guests an up close look at the incredible animals. Behind the scenes, the latest technology in life-support systems provides reef residents with the best possible environment and gives guests a crystal-clear window into the underwater world of a Caribbean coral reef.

**OCEANARIUM:** The marine mammal pavilion features beluga whales, Pacific white-sided dolphins, Alaska sea otters and harbor seals in a dramatic re-creation of a Pacific Northwest coastal environment. Winding nature trails lead guests through a rugged stretch of temperate rain forest including realistic plant life, streams and tide pools, illustrating the fragile relationship that exists among animals, plants, land and ocean. **Oceanarium** guests can watch the dolphins' natural behaviors such as dives, breaches, porpoising and spyhopping during educational presentations scheduled daily. Large windows in the underwater viewing gallery of the **Oceanarium** offer guests face-to-face encounters with the whales and dolphins. A series of hands-on exhibits explain how marine mammals and birds are adapted to survive in their watery environment. In a separate exhibit area, a colony of penguins live in a naturalistic Falkland Islands habitat.

**WILD REEF:** Wild Reef is the Shedd Aquarium's newest exhibit. Guests have the opportunity to explore a Philippine coral reef - the most diverse underwater ecosystem in the world. They are able to come face-to-face with more than 25 sharks and enjoy the beauty of corals in the largest public display of live corals in the Midwest. Adults and children alike get a glimpse of island life through this multi-sensory, interactive exhibit. The exhibit's 26 interconnected habitats - totaling more than 750,000 gallons of water - are housed in a new \$45 million underground wing.

**CONSERVATION PROJECTS:**

Shedd Aquarium is committed to the conservation of aquatic species, creating several initiatives to study aquatic animals at Shedd and in the wild. Shedd has implemented breeding programs for a small Tahitian land snail, African cichlids (small freshwater fish native to Lake Victoria) and West Indian rock iguanas. In addition, Shedd began a coral propagation program to share information regarding the natural history and propagation of coral species with other institutions to foster a joint effort to preserve corals.

Shedd also participates in field studies of river mussels in the Fox River, West Indian rock iguanas in the Bahamas and seahorses in the Philippines. A new initiative also has been developed with Project Seahorse, an integrated program of conservation and management initiatives working to ensure long-term survival of wild populations of seahorses, their relatives and their habitats. This strong collaboration includes community-based field projects, scientific research and public education. Shedd Aquarium and Project Seahorse worked together to help the villagers of Handumon, an island community in the Philippines, create a line of handicrafts that are sold in Shedd Aquarium stores. The programs gives fishermen in Handumon an opportunity to acquire skills that will help supplement their income and decrease their reliance on seahorse fishing.

**EDUCATION PROGRAMS:**

Throughout the year, Shedd Aquarium offers innovative programs for children, adults, families and school groups on aquatic and conservation-related subjects. Programs include college-accredited courses, excursions to exotic locales, local field trips, hands-on workshops and overnight stays. The Aquatic Science Center on the lower level of the original Aquarium has three fully equipped classrooms and two study laboratories. Shedd Aquarium's research and collection vessel, the **R/V Coral Reef II**, also is used in education programming for adults and students. The Aquarium provides outreach services for schools, libraries, community organizations, nursing homes and hospitals.

**RESTAURANTS:**

Guests may relax and enjoy a "meal with a view" in Soundings, Shedd Aquarium's fine dining restaurant, or the Bubble Net food court. Service hours for these facilities are seasonal. Call (312) 692-3277 for information and hours.

**STORES:**

Shedd Aquarium goes overboard for its guests in its two on-site stores. Each store features a variety of fine gifts, jewelry, souvenirs and books focusing on aquatic life such as marine mammals, coral reefs, fishes, iguanas and frogs. To order merchandise from around the world, shoppers can call 1-888-SEASTUFF.

**VOLUNTEERS:**

Shedd Aquarium benefits from a large, dedicated corps of volunteers who perform diverse duties from dive presentations in the **Caribbean Reef** to public interpretation on the nature trail in the **Oceanarium**. Shedd Aquarium is looking for enthusiastic and energetic people to volunteer in a variety of departments. No prior experience is necessary. Training is provided. For more information, call (312) 692-3309.

**MEMBERSHIP:**

Shedd Aquarium offers several different membership opportunities that provide special services and resources to individuals, families and corporations interested in aquatic life and conservation issues. For more information, call (312) 692-3284.

**HOURS:** 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekends, selected holidays and weekdays Memorial Day through Labor Day.

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays Labor Day through Memorial Day.

Shedd Aquarium is closed Christmas Day.

Every Thursday night, from June through August, Shedd Aquarium will be open until 10 p.m. for its special program, *Jazzin' at the Shedd*. The **Oceanarium** closes at 8 p.m.

**ADMISSION:** An all Access Pass, Mini Pass and discounted admission available daily. Call (312) 939-2438 for ticketing information or purchase tickets in advance through Ticketmaster centers, Charge-By-Phone at (312) 559-0200 or visit [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

**GROUP SALES:** Groups of 15 or more can enjoy special incentives. For more information, or to make a reservation, call (312) 692-3333 or fax a reservation request to (312) 939-2195.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Available in Chicago Park District lots near Shedd Aquarium and metered parking along Solidarity Drive. Free trolley's shuttle guests from the parking lots to the front door of Shedd Aquarium. Free trolley hours are 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily. Shedd Aquarium is also served by free City of Chicago trolleys, as well as CTA buses #146, #12 and #130. Cabs are plentiful.

For more information about Shedd Aquarium, call (312) 939-2438 or check out Shedd's new Web site at [www.sheddaquarium.org](http://www.sheddaquarium.org).

*Shedd Aquarium is generously supported by the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District.*

