



# Two Oceans AQUARIUM

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## HISTORY

*Two Oceans Aquarium – Media Pack*

### 1995

- The city of Cape Town, the original maritime gateway to southern Africa, is an obvious site for a world-class aquarium. Few places in the world are in a more favourable position to feature the rich diversity of life found in the convergence of two oceans - the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. After eight years of research and 18 months of construction, the Two Oceans Aquarium opens on 13 November 1995.
- Longfin tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*) and snoek (*Thyrsites atun*) are displayed for the first time in the world.

### 1996

- The Minister of Trade and Industry, Trevor Manuel, officially opens the Two Oceans Aquarium on 10 February.

### 1997

- In recognition of fishing company Irvin & Johnson's (I&J) continuing contribution to the upkeep of the animals in the Aquarium, the *Open Ocean Exhibit* is renamed the *I&J Predator Exhibit*.
- The Aquarium's Adventure Dive Programme is launched – sport divers take the plunge with our ragged-tooth sharks, turtles, rays, and fishes in the *I&J Predator Exhibit*.

### 1998

- On 2 December, the *Strategic Fuel Fund (SFF) Sunfish Rehabilitation Centre* opens. This facility provides an ideal opportunity to help sunfishes in distress and to gain much-needed knowledge about these mysterious fishes.

### 1999

- The Aquarium opens its first large-scale temporary exhibit, *Fangs*, which features a global collection of eels, sea snakes, and others. The *Fangs* marketing and advertising campaign claims the annual Marketing Organisation of the Year Award presented by the Institute of Marketing Management (IMM).

### 2000



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- With generous sponsorship from BoE Limited, visitors to the Aquarium can appreciate the vast size of the Southern right whale (*Balaena glacialis*) in the form of a skeleton loaned to the Aquarium by the Marine Environmental Education Trust.

## 2001

- On 8 December, the Aquarium opens its second large-scale temporary exhibit, *The Living Dead - travelled in time, locked in rock*. The exhibit includes living fossils such as crocodiles, iguanas, and giant deep-water isopods. Many of the animals on display have remained virtually unchanged over millions of years.

## 2002

- The first fully equipped wet laboratory opens in the *Old Mutual Environmental Education Centre*. This exciting new facility, complete with aquariums, terrariums, microscopes, and other laboratory equipment, provides opportunities for hands-on experiential learning and close inspection of a range of animals and plants.
- Eighteen smooth-hound sharks (*Mustelus mustelus*) are born in the *I&J Predator Exhibit* on 17 August.

## 2003

- In partnership with the City of Cape Town, the Aquarium opens the *Children's Puppet Theatre* on 10 March 2003. This fully automated three-act marionette presentation depicts a young boy, Tshepo, who learns about various water-related dilemmas. Using humour and music, a cast of vibrant, colourful characters conveys important environmental messages to the audience in a unique and fun way.

## 2004

- On 18 March, in collaboration with the AfriOceans Conservation Alliance, the Aquarium releases Maxine, a 197kg ragged-tooth shark (*Carcharias taurus*) back into the ocean. Maxine is the iconic ambassador for the Save our Seas Foundation M-Sea (Maxine Science, Education and Awareness) Programme. With assistance from South Africa's leading shark experts, the M-Sea Programme provides a unique opportunity to learn more about the lifestyle of ragged-tooth sharks and to raise public awareness of the plight of sharks worldwide.
- President Thabo Mbeki and Zanele Dlamini visit the Aquarium on Christmas Eve.

## 2005



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- Baroness Margaret Thatcher and the Prince of Denmark visit the Aquarium in January.
- In collaboration with the AfriOceans Conservation Alliance, the Aquarium releases its second ragged-tooth shark (*Carcharias taurus*), Val, back into the ocean as part of the ongoing Save our Seas Foundation M-Sea Programme.
- Extensive renovation accommodates a larger, more defined tropical gallery to differentiate the unique features of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans more clearly.
- The Aquarium initiated a sponsored pensioner programme, which to date has enabled over 5 000 disadvantaged pensioners to visit the Aquarium for free.
- The introduction of the Adopt A School programme enables the corporate sector to assist the Aquarium in bringing in over 11 000 previously disadvantaged school children.
- On 13 November, the Aquarium celebrates its 10th birthday.

## 2006

- July marks the beginning of five months of major renovations to the East Wing of our building, culminating in the opening of Shoreline Café, our new restaurant with the first dedicated children's area in the Waterfront.
- Our Managing Director, Dr Patrick Garratt, is nominated as Vice-Chairman of the newly formed International Aquarium Forum. His standing and involvement in the international aquarium arena is a great credit to the Two Oceans Aquarium.

## 2007

- The Two Oceans Aquarium receives a silver rating for its environmentally responsible operations from the Heritage Environmental Rating Programme on its first audit. The Two Oceans Aquarium is the second aquarium in South Africa to receive this rating after uShaka Marine World.

## 2008

- In partnership with the City of Cape Town and recognition of the World Association of Zoos and Aquarium (WAZA)'s Year of the Frog 2008, the Aquarium opens its third large-scale temporary exhibit hall in September. *Frogs - Beyond the Pond* is a themed and highly interactive gallery which immerses visitors in the world of frogs and invites them to jump in to find out more about these quirky yet extremely threatened creatures.



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- In September, the Two Oceans Aquarium is awarded its gold status in the Heritage Environmental Rating Programme for its efforts to minimise the impact of its operations on the environment.

## 2009

- The Two Oceans Aquarium retains its gold status in the Heritage Environmental Rating Programme in the most recent audit in October.

## 2010

- Bianca Engel, Deputy Head of Education at the Two Oceans Aquarium, receives the award for Best Marine Educator of the Year at the annual National Marine and Coastal Educators' Network (MCEN) gala prize-giving evening. Engel's efforts in securing the future of marine resources and her ability to engage people and captivate audiences make her a worthy winner.
- *Tranquillity* is the newest venue to be added to the Aquarium's impressive repertoire. With a window looking into the *Kelp Forest Exhibit*, it provides a magnificent backdrop for meetings or intimate dinner experiences.

## 2011

- Project 90 x 2030 selects the Two Oceans Aquarium as one of six renewable energy demonstration sites in South Africa. A wind turbine and solar panels are installed with funding from the German government.
- Shoreline Café, the Aquarium's restaurant, becomes the first restaurant in Africa to be awarded Chain-of-Custody certification from the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC).
- The Aquarium is certified Platinum by the Heritage Environmental Management Company in recognition of its sustainability initiatives. The Aquarium is currently one of only three attractions in the Western Cape to hold Platinum status.

## 2012

- The Two Oceans Aquarium hosts the 8th International Aquarium Congress - the first time it is held in the southern hemisphere and on African soil.

## 2013

- The Two Oceans Aquarium assists with an exciting long-term research project on broadnose sevengill sharks (*Notorynchus cepedianus*). The project involves gaining a better understanding of



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their feeding and spatial and reproductive ecology. It ultimately aims to define their role as apex predators in South Africa. Sevengill sharks are being tagged with acoustic and pop-off archival satellite transmitters (PAT tags). PAT tags are programmed to collect and archive data such as depth and temperature before the tag releases from the animal at a pre-programmed time.

## 2014

- The Aquarium begins construction of a brand-new, large-scale exhibit. The new predator exhibit will contain 1.5 million litres of seawater and will be six metres in depth. A single acrylic panel measuring nine metres long and four metres wide will provide a seamless window into the exhibit. The most exciting aspect of this new exhibit is a 10-metre-long tunnel, the first of its kind in South Africa.
- Roxy and Grommet, the Northern rockhopper penguins, produce the first of their chicks, named Clax.

## 2015

- Long-standing partner, De Beers Marine, sponsors the 10th Young Biologist Course.
- The colourful ramp mural by Nardstar is revealed.
- Otto the hawksbill turtle is released. Otto was the first turtle that we tagged with a satellite tag.
- A shark rescue turns into the first tagging of a male sevengill shark in conjunction with Dr Alison Kock.

## 2016

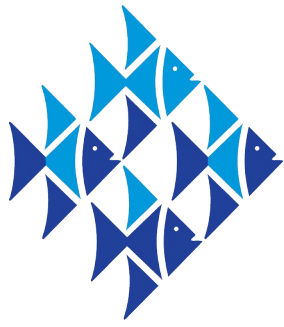
- Roxy and Grommet, the Northern rockhopper penguins, produce a second chick named Harold Custard by SANCCOB.
- The *I&J Ocean Exhibit* and *Jelly Gallery* open to the public on 16 June.
- Michael Farquhar takes over as the Two Oceans Aquarium's CEO.

## 2017

- After 20 years at the Two Oceans Aquarium, Yoshi the loggerhead turtle is successfully released back into the ocean. She is fitted with a satellite tag and begins her journey of discovery and adjustment back into the wild.

## 2018

- The Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation, the non-profit, public benefit organisation (PBO) of the Aquarium, is officially launched. The



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Foundation is focused on inspiring people to take action for the ocean and building connections between communities and the marine ecosystem. The Foundation continues the Aquarium's legacy of marine sciences education, conservation, and research efforts – a key player in environmental awareness and action in Cape Town's V&A Waterfront.

- The Two Oceans Aquarium's beach cleanup series, Trash Bash, is launched in partnership with The Beach Co-op.

## 2019

- The Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation's Marine Sciences curriculum is introduced into three node schools. Later the same year, the curriculum was gazetted and made available for public comment.
- The Turtle Rescue Rehabilitation and Release Programme records a bumper year of turtle hatchling rescues – more than 200 are rescued, rehabilitated, and released.
- The Two Oceans Aquarium hosts the 2019 South African Shark and Ray Symposium.
- The first Puppet Storybook is translated into isiXhosa.
- The Two Oceans Aquarium wins Gold in the World Travel Market Africa Responsible Tourism awards for Best Responsible Attraction and Silver in the Global Goals Reporting category.

## 2020

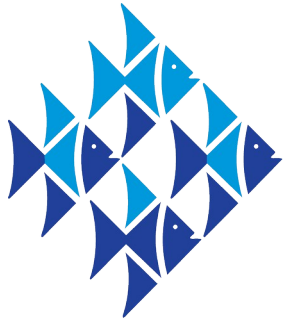
- In March, the Two Oceans Aquarium closes its doors to the public temporarily in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Essential staff remain working in the building, looking after the animals and life support systems. This is the first time in 24 years that the Aquarium has closed its doors in such a way.
- Yoshi the loggerhead turtle reaches Australia, becoming a record holder for the longest animal migration ever recorded by satellite tag. She also leads Australian scientists to previously unknown loggerhead feeding grounds.

## 2021

- The Two Oceans Aquarium reopens after the pandemic.
- Our dive school is established as a PADI Dive Resort.
- We celebrate the first Marine Protected Areas Day on 1 August.

## 2022

- The Two Oceans Aquarium's PADI Dive School is recognised as a PADI Five Star Dive Centre.



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- The Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation welcomed Dr Judy Mann-Lang as its newly appointed Executive for Strategic Projects, where she oversees research and adult training programmes.

## 2023

- Bob the green turtle is released in Durban, KwaZulu Natal, after eight years of rehabilitation with the Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation's Turtle Conservation Centre!
- Dané, a ragged-tooth shark fitted with a spaghetti tag, was released in Struisbaai.
- We host the first waddle in support of the African Penguin #NotOnOurWatch campaign on International African Penguin Awareness Day.
- The Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation celebrated 20 years of the Young Biologist Course.

## 2024

- The Two Oceans Aquarium and its Foundation become co-champions of Mission Blue's Hope Spot in False Bay.
- In collaboration with Upwell and Florida Atlantic University, our Turtle Conservation Centre releases 14 satellite-tagged loggerhead turtle hatchlings in an African first!
- The Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation launches Ocean Campus, where children and adults alike can access our exciting, interactive, and unique educational offerings, all in one place!