

press release

S.E.A. Aquarium Unveils Quirky Fishes and New Sleepover Programme on Nocturnal Animals

- *New and strange-looking sea creatures such as the bumphead parrotfish, elephant fish and vampire fish take centre stage at S.E.A. Aquarium's annual Spooky Seas event*
- *Award-winning Ocean Dreams programme now features comfy tents and brand new content on the mysterious behaviours of animals at night as well as enrichment of manta rays*



From September, guests to S.E.A. Aquarium can come up-close with the latest quirky animal residents such as the elephant fish (left) and the bumphead parrotfish (centre) as part of the annual Halloween-themed Spooky Seas event. In addition, guests can also immerse in the new Ocean Dreams sleepover programme (right) which now features brand-new content that unravels the night life of sea creatures. PHOTO CREDITS: RESORTS WORLD SENTOSA.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

SINGAPORE, 23 August 2018 – A deep sea creature with a trunk-like snout, a giant sand-pooing fish with a parrot-like beak, and a toothy Amazonian beast which pierces its prey with sharp fangs – these descriptions may sound bizarre, quirky and bordering on fake news, but these real sea creatures are amongst the latest animal residents to call S.E.A. Aquarium home.

From 1 September to 28 October, guests to S.E.A. Aquarium at Resorts World Sentosa can come up-close with the aquarium's latest weird and wonderful animals and learn more about them as part of its annual family-friendly Spooky Seas event in celebration of Halloween.

In addition to the activities at Spooky Seas, families can also embark on an intimate night-time adventure to discover the strange, nocturnal behaviours of sea dwellers, and observe an eye-opening enrichment session with the manta rays, as S.E.A. Aquarium launches its revamped Ocean Dreams sleepover programme beginning 2 September.

Quirky animals unveiled at Spooky Seas

Four new spectacular aquatic species – the bumphead parrotfish, elephant fish, vampire fish and paddlefish – have joined the S.E.A. Aquarium family in the past four months. These quirky species, many

with bizarre anatomical features and weird natural behaviours, will take centre stage at this year's Spooky Seas, along with the tasselled wobbegong.

One of the largest reef fishes, the bumphead parrotfish can grow up to 1.3m in length and weigh 46 kilogrammes. It can be recognised by the bulbous forehead and powerful beak that allows them to crush corals and to scrape rocks for their main diet – algae – that grows in the crevices. By pruning the corals and removing the algae and parasites that compete with these corals, bumpheads play an important role in maintaining healthy coral reef ecosystems. Known as “sand machines”, their beaks and jaws are so strong they grind the corals they eat into sand, which is necessary to build and maintain islands and sandy beaches. S.E.A. Aquarium is one of the few institutions worldwide to feature the bumphead parrotfish.

Joining the list of weird and wild creatures is the elephant fish found in the dark depths of the ocean. It is so-named because of its flexible, trunk-like projection at the tip of the long snout that it uses to probe the sea floor for shellfish, small fishes and invertebrates. S.E.A. Aquarium is one of the few aquariums to feature this species to educate guests on the wonders and diversity of marine ecosystems. They can be found in the shallow waters of Australia and New Zealand during breeding season, but spend most of their time in waters at depths of 2,500 metres.

From 1 September to 28 October, kids can take part in a scavenger hunt to learn about the weird and wonderful marine species in the aquarium, and even mimic the animals' unique behaviours at various interactive stations as part of Spooky Seas. Singapore Residents can enjoy discounts on bundled packages to Resorts World Sentosa's attractions from 1 September to 31 October. These include two adult one-day tickets to S.E.A. Aquarium and the Maritime Experiential Museum at only S\$60 (U.P. S\$78).

More information about the five quirky fishes can be found in Appendix A.

Marvel at marine wonders in a new light with the all-new Ocean Dreams

Families looking for an enriching and an intimate time with their little ones can look forward to the Ocean Dreams sleepover programme which now features brand-new content that unravels mysteries of the marine world at night. Guests will get the rare opportunity of exploring the aquarium after-hours and see the animals in a different light, while basking in the serene underwater setting without the daytime crowds.

The new programme features a guided tour around the aquarium, interactive activities and a behind-the-scenes look at the iconic Open Ocean Habitat. Kids can look forward to rubbing shoulders with Mai the manta or Sam the shark – the aquarium's adorable mascots.

A highlight of the latest Ocean Dreams programme is a brand-new manta interaction and enrichment presentation titled “Manta Moments” which will showcase the close bonds between the aquarists and S.E.A. Aquarium’s iconic species – manta rays. This underwater presentation at the Open Ocean Habitat feature aquarists hand feeding the mantas, illustrating the intelligence and curiosity of the animals (which have the largest brain of all fish known today) as well as their ability to hold extended play interactions with humans. Enrichment activities not only encourage mental and physical stimulation which will enhance the well-being of the animals, they allow the animal care team to conduct physical and health checks on the manta rays safely and easily.

As part of the guided tour, participants will not only discover the world of nocturnal sea creatures such as sharks, they will also observe the unusual sleeping behaviours of some unique fishes, from the foxface rabbitfish that changes its body colours to avoid detection by predators, to the blue-barred parrotfish that secretes mucus to spin cocoons where they can retreat safely into.

Over at the night reef habitat, participants can marvel at the rainbow of colourful corals which are actually animals often mistaken as plants. These corals have been illuminated with blue or ultraviolet light—mimicking what is found in the ocean depths. At this habitat, participants can put on yellow filter glasses that allow them to see much more fluorescence, which is used to attract prey.

The latest Ocean Dreams programme now includes comfy tents where participants can snooze in privacy while soaking in the view of the mesmerising Open Ocean Habitat, in the company of 40,000 marine animals including majestic manta rays and hundreds of schooling fishes.

Ocean Dreams is available at S\$158 (Adult) and S138 (Child / Senior Citizen). The two-day-one-night programme launches 2 September, commencing at 6.30pm and concluding the following day at 10am. Tents, sleeping bags and food will be provided. The programme is recommended for participants aged six years and above. Interested participants can call +65 6577 7515 or email public.programmes@rwsentosa.com to make a reservation.

For more information on Spooky Seas and Ocean Dreams, visit www.rwsentosa.com/seaa

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ABOUT S.E.A. AQUARIUM

Opened in November 2012, S.E.A. Aquarium at Resorts World Sentosa is one of the world's largest aquariums home to more than 100,000 marine animals from across 1,000 species. Featuring more than 50 diverse habitats, S.E.A. Aquarium exhibits close to 80 threatened species including the manta ray, Clarion angelfish and a variety of beautiful corals that mirror a pristine aquatic environment. Through interactive programmes, up-close animal encounters and immersive learning journeys, S.E.A. Aquarium aims to inspire visitors to protect the world's oceans.

S.E.A. Aquarium collaborates with local and regional partners in marine conservation projects and is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA).

ABOUT RESORTS WORLD SENTOSA

Resorts World Sentosa (RWS), Asia's premium lifestyle destination resort, is located on Singapore's resort island of Sentosa. Spanning 49 hectares, RWS is home to world-class attractions including Universal Studios Singapore, S.E.A. Aquarium, the Maritime Experiential Museum, Dolphin Island and Adventure Cove Waterpark. Complementing the adventure and adrenaline of its theme parks and attractions are six unique luxury hotels, the world-class Resorts World Convention Centre, a casino and the Asian flagship of a world-renowned destination spa. RWS offers award-winning dining experiences and exciting cuisine from around the world across its many renowned celebrity chef restaurants, establishing itself as a key player in Singapore's vibrant and diverse dining scene and a leading gourmet destination in Asia for epicureans. The integrated resort also offers world-class entertainment, from original resident productions to concerts and public shows such as Crane Dance and Lake of Dreams. RWS has been named "Best Integrated Resort" since 2011 for seven consecutive years at the TTG Travel Awards which recognises the best of Asia-Pacific's travel industry.

RWS is wholly owned by Genting Singapore, a company of the Genting Group. For more information, please visit www.rwsentosa.com.

 /ResortsWorldatSentosa   @rwsentosa  www.rwsentosablog.com

MEDIA CONTACTS

Resorts World Sentosa

Shaiful Rizal

Tel: +65 6577 9761 / +65 9170 2542

E-mail: shaiful.malek@RWSentosa.com

Audrey Lee

Tel: +65 6577 9766 / +65 8198 0047

E-mail: audrey.sylee@RWSentosa.com

APPENDIX A – MEET THE FIVE QUIRKY FISHES

Note to Editors

1. Photos and videos can be downloaded from <https://app.box.com/v/SpookySeasOceanDreams>
2. All photos and video are to be attributed to Resorts World Sentosa



The **elephant fish** is commonly known as an elephant shark or a ghost shark, even though it is not a shark but a member of the chimaera family. Chimaeras are a very primitive group of fish that are distant cousins of sharks and rays, and have existed long before the time of dinosaurs. They have a network of lines over their surface that make the fish look as though it has been stitched together from pieces of other creatures. The appearance is reminiscent of the “chimera”, a creature in ancient Greek mythology that consisted of parts of different animals joined together. The elephant fish flap its large pectoral fins on the sides of its body, which makes them like they are flying through the water.



The **bumphead parrotfish** can be recognised by its bulbous forehead and powerful beak-like teeth that allows them to scrape their main diet – algae – off the corals where algae is typically found. Known as ‘sand machines’, they turn the corals they eat into sand, which is necessary to build and maintain islands and sandy beaches. Parrotfish are unique in that they have the ability to change their sex throughout their lifetime.



Often regarded as one of the scariest freshwater fishes in the world, the payara or **vampire fish** is found in the Amazon basin. The fish uses its sharp fangs, which can grow up to two inches (five centimetres) long, to impale its prey. Despite the name, the vampire fish does not suck blood. It feeds on smaller fishes.



The American **paddlefish** is a freshwater giant whose spatula-shaped rostrum can measure up to one third its total length. The rostrum is covered in electroreceptors that allows it to find plankton, its favourite food. This paddlefish is a filter feeder, and feeds by swimming through the water with its mouth wide open.



The tassled **wobbegong** is a type of carpet shark which stays mainly on the ocean floor. Their greenish or brownish skin, which is covered in a unique pattern of bold markings, keeps them camouflaged against the sand. Instead of actively looking for food or chasing after prey, wobbegongs are effective ambush predators, using their barbels to attract curious prey closer.