On 150 YEARS | AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY ANNOUNCES NEW EXHIBITION: *SHARKS*

FEATURING DOZENS OF LIFE-SIZED MODELS RANGING FROM 33 FEET TO 5 INCHES LONG, NEW EXHIBITION BRINGS VISITORS FACE TO FACE WITH VAST DIVERSITY OF SHARK SPECIES, FROM THE ANCIENT MEGAPREDATOR MEGALODON TO THE TINY POCKET SHARK

OPENS TO MUSEUM MEMBERS ON DECEMBER 10 AND TO THE PUBLIC ON DECEMBER 15

MEDIA PREVIEW TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8—RSVP HERE

People have been fascinated by sharks for as long as we have been exploring the oceans. Fixed in the public imagination as toothy, fearsome predators, sharks are far more fascinating, and more complex, than their depiction in popular culture. *Sharks,* a new exhibition opening at the American Museum of Natural History this winter, will bring to life the incredible diversity of this ancient group of fishes and will offer visitors a unique look at pre-historic and modern shark species, their habitats and hunting styles, and the conservation threats these magnificent animals are facing today.

The evolutionary history of sharks began nearly 450 million years ago, more than 200 million years before the first dinosaur. Today, there are more than 500 species of sharks and

more than 650 species of their close relatives—rays, skates, and chimaeras—inhabiting nearly all of the world's aquatic environments, from coral reefs to the polar seas, and even freshwater rivers. While the terrifying monster from the movie *Jaws* is what many might imagine when they think of sharks, today's scientists are uncovering many surprising facts about this diverse group. Convinced that all sharks are carnivores? (Fact: Recent research shows that bonnethead sharks eat seagrass and can digest plants). Where do great white sharks give birth to their young? (Fact: By tracking females, scientists recently discovered a great white shark nursery off the coast of Long Island, New York). Can shark tourism be more profitable than shark fishing? (Fact: where fishing and ecotourism are regulated, tourism can support shark communities for generations. In fact, a single whale shark has been shown to bring thousands of more dollars as a beacon for tourism than could be earned by killing it). ***Sharks*** addresses these exciting questions and reveals more secrets of the ocean's top predators through life-sized models, touch-free interactives, real fossils, and dynamic media presentations.

Visitors to *Sharks* will explore the diversity, anatomy and behavior of sharks and their close relatives through encounters with tiger sharks, great whites, and other familiar favorites along with little-known creatures such as the torpedo ray, the longnose chimaera, and the tiny dwarf lantern shark, which glows in the dark and is small enough to hold in your hand. The exhibition will showcase fossils from the Museum's extensive collections, current Museum research, and a spectacular "parade" of sharks highlighting the diversity of ancient and modern shark species through 30 lifelike models that range from 33 feet to 5 inches long, including the prehistoric megapredator megalodon, the "*Tyrannosaurus rex* of the seas," which was so large it preyed on whales. Other exhibition highlights include an interactive that challenges visitors to hunt like a hammerhead and touch-free media that reveals distinctive shark traits with the wave of a hand. *Sharks* also delves into the serious conservation issues facing sharks today, including overfishing and habitat destruction, demonstrating that while these amazing animals pose few threats to people, we represent a serious danger to them.

Sharks is curated by John Sparks, curator in the Museum's Department of Ichthyology in the Division of Vertebrate Zoology, who previously curated ***Unseen Oceans***, which explored the latest ocean science, and ***Creatures of Light: Nature's Bioluminescence***, which focused on the diversity of organisms that produce light. He also co-curated ***Life at the Limits: Stories of***

Amazing Species, about organisms with surprising abilities and those that thrive in extreme habitats. Sparks' recent research explores the role that bioluminescence and biofluorescence play in the diversification of both shallow-reef and deep-sea fishes. His current projects include investigating the evolution and function of bioluminescent signaling systems in ponyfishes (Leiognathidae), lanternfishes (Myctophiformes), and dragonfishes (Stomiiformes), the origins of Madagascar's freshwater and nearshore marine fishes, and the evolution and function of biofluorescence in marine fishes. ***Sharks*** has also drawn on the expertise of John Maisey, curator-in-charge *emeritus*, fossil fish, Division of Paleontology, whose research focuses on early chondrichthyans and shark evolution.

Sharks will open to the public on Wednesday, December 15, 2021. Museum Members will be able to preview the exhibition from Friday, December 10, through Sunday, December 12.

American Museum of Natural History (amnh.org)

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869, is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The Museum encompasses more than 40 permanent exhibition halls, including those in the Rose Center for Earth and Space, and the Hayden Planetarium, as well as galleries for temporary exhibitions. The Museum's scientists draw on a world-class permanent collection of more than 34 million specimens and artifacts, some of which are billions of years old, and on one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, the Museum grants the Ph.D. degree in Comparative Biology and the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree, the only such freestanding, degree-granting program at any museum in the United States. The Museum's website, digital videos, and apps for mobile devices bring its collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to millions around the world. Visit amnh.org for more information.

Hours
The Museum is open Wednesday-Sunday, 10 am–5:30 pm. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Admission

Museum admission is free to all New York City school and camp groups.
New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut residents (with ID) have the option to pay what they wish for General Admission; the reservation must be made online and the transaction must be completed at a Museum ticket counter.

General Admission, which includes admission to all permanent exhibition halls and the Rose Center for Earth and Space but does not include special exhibitions, giant-screen 2D or 3D film, or Space Show, is $23 (adults), $18 (students/seniors), and $13 (children ages 3–12). All prices are subject to change.

General Admission Plus One includes general admission plus one special exhibition, giant-screen 2D or 3D film, or Space Show: $28 (adults), $22.50 (students/seniors), $16.50 (children ages 3–12).

General Admission Plus All includes general admission plus all special exhibitions, giant-screen 2D or 3D film, and Space Show: $33 (adults), $27 (students/seniors), $20 (children ages 3–12).

Health Protocols

The Museum maintains COVID-19 protocols to protect the health and safety of visitors and has taken steps to maintain a safe environment, including requiring facial coverings for visitors ages 2 and up and upgrading ventilation. As of August 25, 2021, in accordance with the New York City vaccination requirement, visitors ages 12 and older must be vaccinated against COVID-19 to enter the Museum and show proof of vaccination. Personal identification is required for visitors ages 18 and over. Visit amnh.org/plan-your-visit/covid-19-visitors-staff for more information about these and other health and safety protocols.

Public Information

For additional information, the public may call 212-769-5100 or visit the Museum's website at amnh.org.

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Become a fan of the American Museum of Natural History on Facebook at facebook.com/naturalhistory and follow us on Instagram at @AMNH or Twitter at twitter.com/AMNH.

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Creatures of Light: Nature's Bioluminescence is organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York (www.amnh.org) in collaboration with the Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, Canada and The Field Museum, Chicago.

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