

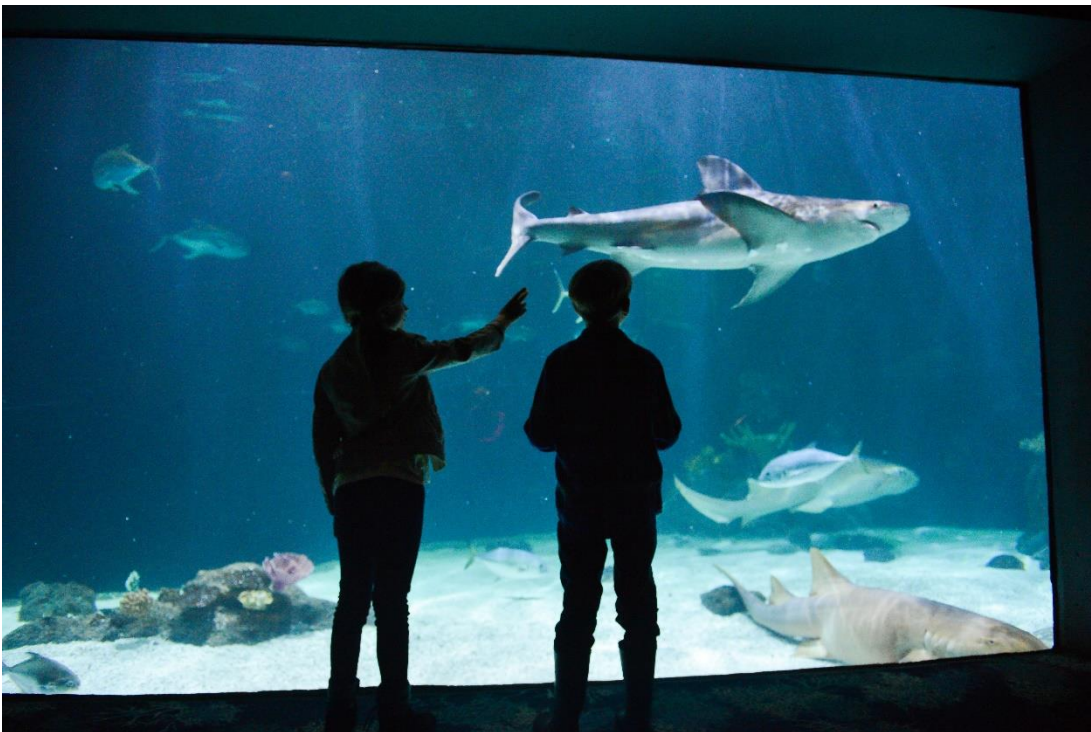


A GIANT SAND SCULPTURE OF SEA ANIMALS AND ACTIVITIES GALORE WILL HIGHLIGHT WORLD OCEAN WEEKEND AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

International sculptor to create three-dimensional Pacific Seas Aquarium-themed artwork for event June 2 and 3

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 16, 2018

TACOMA, Wash. – Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium will celebrate World Ocean Weekend in a very *big* way on June 2 and 3.



Think oceans of sand.

Think a giant kids' play area.

And perhaps best of all, imagine a humongous three-dimensional sand sculpture depicting a hammerhead shark swimming atop a sea of kelp; a green sea turtle moving placidly with the currents and trailed by schooling fish; a giant Pacific octopus with its bulbous head taller than a child; a spotted eagle ray moving rapidly along on waves of sand; dozens of jellyfish and more.

All carefully sculpted of sand.
Yep. We said sand.

The 16 sharks in the South Pacific Aquarium at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium are visitor favorites.

International sand sculptor Sue McGrew, a Tacoma native, will create the 12-foot-by-24-foot, 360-degree sculpture on the zoo's central lawn beginning around the middle of next month. The artwork will pay tribute to the Pacific Seas Aquarium, which is due to open this summer.

It will be ready for the Big Reveal in time for World Ocean Weekend, a two-day celebration of all the world's seas and the magnificent creatures that inhabit them.

The zoo's many marine animals will receive special enrichments during the weekend, and Conservation Education staff members are working on a variety of ocean-themed activities for visitors to enjoy.

While the weekend will be chock-a-block with fun activities, there also will be some sobering facts presented. The world's ocean covers more than 70 percent of the Earth's surface – but it's in trouble. Pollution from items such as plastics, petroleum and other materials, overfishing, and a number of other factors are creating troubled waters. Coral reefs are damaged. Many species that call the seas home are threatened or endangered.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff want visitors to be inspired by the sharks, stingrays, walruses, sea lions, sea otters, polar bears and other marine animals at the zoo – and then learn more about actions people can take to help make the ocean a healthier place to nurture and sustain life.

All that – and more – will be happening at the zoo for World Ocean Weekend.

For more information, go to www.pdza.org.

###

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, practices and promotes responsible stewardship of the world's resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).

Contacts

Kris Sherman, 253-226-6718 or kris.sherman@pdza.org

Whitney DalBalcon, 253-404-3637; 253-278-6343 or whitney.dalbalcon@pdza.org