



AQUARIUM
OF THE **PACIFIC**®

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For Release Friday, July 17, 2009
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A RARE SIGHT! A TIGER SHARK NOW AT THE AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC FOR THE 1st Time

The public can learn about & see the only tiger shark currently on exhibit on our nation's mainland at the Aquarium of the Pacific—a 5-foot baby tiger shark!

July 17, 2009—Long Beach, Calif.— A 5-foot baby tiger shark is now on exhibit for the first time at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California—making it the only tiger shark currently on exhibit on the nation's mainland. Few aquariums have had tiger sharks (*Galeocerdo cuvier*), and today only two other aquariums in the U.S. are home to these awesome predators.

The Aquarium's shark came from Taiwan, where her mother had been caught in a net by fisherman. The baby was born in captivity and was cared for until they found a permanent home for her with the Aquarium. When the Aquarium of the Pacific was contacted, they agreed to provide her a home even though it would be challenging to care for her since little is known about caring for this species in aquariums. The baby tiger shark was transferred into a portable holding system in Taiwan and loaded onto a plane to LAX and finally a truck before arriving to the Aquarium of the Pacific. Tiger sharks are often given a bad rap and labeled as man-eaters. "By having a tiger shark here, we aim to inspire visitors to learn the truth about these animals and to get involved in shark conservation while we further scientific information about their behavior," said Perry Hampton, Aquarium of the Pacific animal husbandry director.

Tiger sharks are often feared as the second-most dangerous shark in the ocean. These sharks can grow up to 14 feet and weigh over 1,400 pounds. A truly serious problem facing tiger sharks is that they have slow repopulation rates, yet they are heavily harvested for their fins, meat, and liver. "It is likely that the Aquarium's baby tiger shark could have been part of the statistic of the 100 million sharks killed each year for human consumption, but instead she is serving as an ambassador to inspire people to protect tiger sharks in the wild," said Hampton.

Everyday ways to help save tiger sharks include avoiding the consumption of shark fins and meat, vitamins containing shark oil and other shark byproducts, and not purchasing lotions, makeup, and topical analgesics containing squalene derived from shark oil. "We need to start viewing them like lions and bears, animals we need to respect but also protect. By bringing people face-to-face with a tiger shark, we hope to instill a sense of wonder, respect, and stewardship for these tigers of the sea that are in need of our help," said Sandy Trautwein, Aquarium of the Pacific curator of fish.

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The Aquarium's female tiger shark made her journey from Asia to California in late February, arriving at the Aquarium of the Pacific. In late June, she was moved into the Aquarium's Shark Lagoon exhibit where she can currently be seen in a pen within the exhibit. Creating an environment where the tiger shark can thrive well has been a challenge for experts since such little is known about caring for these animals in aquariums.

Aquarium experts have kept a close eye on her to keep her as comfortable as possible by reducing stress of all and any kind and have spent countless hours modifying the exhibit to enable her to swim more comfortably in it. After trying different methods, Aquarium biologists developed pen netting that best helps her to avoid exhibit walls, allowing her to navigate better. They've also tried close to 30 different food items to find out what she prefers to eat, which is a variety of fish and shrimp.

In the wild, juvenile tiger sharks eat a variety of fish as well as seabirds. They are one of the most diverse eaters and will eat just about anything, even trash in the ocean, and are nicknamed the "wastebasket of the sea." Unfortunately, it is not uncommon to find undigested trash in the stomach of a tiger shark, including cans and plastic bottles. Recycling and properly disposing of trash to help prevent it from entering the ocean are other ways to help these sharks.

The Aquarium of the Pacific, a nonprofit institution, is dedicated to instilling a sense of wonder, respect, and stewardship for the Pacific Ocean, its inhabitants, and ecosystems. The Aquarium was recently recognized as the first museum and aquarium in the nation to become a *Climate Action Leader*™. The Aquarium is home to over 12,500 animals and offers a variety of engaging classes, lectures, festivals, and other opportunities to learn about ocean conservation. Located at 100 Aquarium Way in Long Beach, CA., the Aquarium is open daily from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. (except Dec. 25 and during the Grand Prix of Long Beach April 17-19, 2009). Admission is \$23.95 adult (12+), \$20.95 senior (62+), \$11.95 child (3-11), and free for children under age 3 and Aquarium members. For more information, the public may visit www.aquariumofpacific.org or call 562-590-3100. A world of discovery awaits.

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