

Johnny Morris'
WONDERS OF WILDLIFE
— NATIONAL —
MUSEUM & AQUARIUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 17, 2020

**It's Official: Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife
Once Again Named #1 Aquarium in North America**

Conservationist's gift to fellow anglers continues to inspire



Springfield, Mo. – Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium has been voted America's Best Aquarium through a national public poll conducted by *USA TODAY* ranking the top 20 prominent institutions across North America. The latest nationwide recognition marks the second time that the conservation-based museum and aquarium has been nominated for and voted as the winner of the significant award.

Wonders of Wildlife is a gift to the sportsmen and women of America from noted conservationist, angler and Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris. Johnny endeavored to create a world-class not-for-profit conservation attraction located in his hometown of Springfield, Missouri, next to Bass Pro Shops' flagship headquarters store – where half the nation's population lives within a day's drive. Unprecedented in scale and scope, Wonders of Wildlife has been acclaimed as the most important natural history museum to open in America in more than a century.

Featuring an immersive design with surprises around every corner and more than 35,000 live fish, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds, the not-for-profit Wonders of Wildlife is unlike any other aquarium on earth. Fans cite the aquarium's over-the-top multisensory habitats, engaging interactive exhibits and strong conservation ethic as defining features that set Wonders of Wildlife apart. Larger than the Smithsonian Museum of Natural

History, the not-for-profit attraction is the world's grandest tribute to the conservation movement.

"We are truly humbled by this distinction and very grateful to every guest, member and fan for their votes and support," said Morris. "Wonders of Wildlife represents the collective efforts of countless individuals and organizations who share a strong passion for conservation. Together we hope the awareness generated by this award encourages even more people to visit and get inspired to enjoy and protect the great outdoors."



The Aquarium was nominated for the contest by a panel of nationally respected travel experts as part of *USA TODAY*'s annual Reader's Choice Awards. Members of the public across the United States and Canada were invited to cast their vote every day during the month of June to determine a winner. Following its grand opening in September 2017, Wonders of Wildlife was also voted, "America's Best New Attraction."

Honoring hunters, anglers and conservationists

The 1.5-million-gallon Aquarium Adventure brings visitors face-to-face with more than 800 species of live animals including sharks, rays, jellies, eagles, otters, octopus, eels and black bear plus giant game fish from around the world that belong on every angler's bucket list. In addition to inspiring guests to get out and discover the outdoors, visitors will gain a better understanding of how anglers and other conservationists are improving marine habitats in local lakes, rivers and streams to the world's oceans and beyond.



One of the defining characteristics that separates Wonders of Wildlife from other aquariums is its emphasis on conservation, including hunters, anglers and other American conservation heroes. To bring this ambitious vision to life, Johnny Morris partnered with over 40 leading conservation organizations including Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation and more. Several conservation partners relocated their museums to establish permanent exhibitions within Wonders of Wildlife, creating a single "must-see" conservation destination experience unlike anywhere else:



The IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame recognizes extraordinary achievements in recreational fishing around the world by anglers, captains, scientists, conservationists, writers, or fishing industry leaders. Featuring some of the sport's most accomplished men and women through interactive exhibits, personal artifacts and masterfully recreated world-record fish mounts from both freshwater and saltwater species the IGFA relocated the collection from its global headquarters in Dania Beach, Florida.



Established in 1999, the **Bass Fishing Hall of Fame** is dedicated to celebrating and promoting the storied sport of bass fishing. The Hall of Fame serves as a shrine to the men, women and companies who have supported and elevated the sport. Relocating to Wonders of Wildlife from Birmingham, Alabama, the attraction is a must-see for anglers and fans around the world.



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About Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium

Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium consists of an all-new 1.5-million-gallon Aquarium Adventure showcasing 35,000 live fish, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds, and immersive Wildlife Galleries that bring visitors eye-to-eye with the greatest collection of record-setting game animals ever assembled. Created by noted conservationist and Bass Pro Shops founder/CEO Johnny Morris, the 350,000-square-foot experience celebrates those who hunt, fish, and act as stewards of the land and water. Located next to Bass Pro Shops National Headquarters in Springfield, Missouri the campus is a centerpiece of America's Conservation Capital in Missouri's Ozark Mountains. Wonders of Wildlife has been voted "Best New Attraction in America" and "America's Best Aquarium" by the readers of *USA TODAY*. For more information, visit www.wondersofwildlife.org.

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