

FAST FACTS

- Approximately 2 million guests visit Shedd Aquarium each year.
- The aquarium houses more than 22,000 animals.
- When it was built, the original aquarium covered 222,000 square feet. Today it covers 422,000 square feet.
- The aquarium was incorporated on Feb. 11, 1924.
- Building of the aquarium began on Nov. 2, 1927. Because of delays in obtaining display materials, when Shedd Aquarium first opened to the public in December 1929, there were no fish on display. Shedd Aquarium's official opening day was May 30, 1930.
- In 1931, the year the final aquarium exhibit room was opened, a record 4.69 million people visited Shedd Aquarium.
- The original aquarium is a 300-foot octagonal building covered with white Georgian marble. In 1930, it cost \$3.25 million to build. Today, construction costs would be at least \$225 million to duplicate the structure.
- The National Park Service has designated Shedd Aquarium as a national historic landmark.
- The aquatic environments in the original aquarium contain more than 1.5 million gallons of water.
- To fill the aquarium's saltwater exhibits, Shedd Aquarium shipped 1 million gallons of ocean water 1,600 miles by rail from the Florida Keys. Between December 1929 and late spring 1930, 160 train cars of seawater were delivered.
- Shedd received its last shipment of ocean water in 1970. From then on, the aquarium made its own seawater with synthetic chemicals. Today, Shedd makes about 3 million gallons of seawater a year to replenish its exhibits.
- From 1930 until 1957, many of the fishes Shedd exhibited arrived on board the *Nautilus*, a custom-built Pullman train car. During this time, the *Nautilus* traveled about 20,000 miles every year. Fully loaded, it carried 4,500 gallons of water. Built at cost by Pullman Car Works in Chicago for about \$30,000 and fitted with tanks, pumps, air compressors, electric refrigeration coils and steam heat for another \$10,000, the manufacturer stated that it was doubtful any railroad car so technical had ever been built.
- Shedd's next railcar, the *Nautilus II*, was retired in 1975 and donated to the Monticello Railway Museum near Champaign, Ill. The car is still on exhibit today.

- Shedd has the oldest aquatic animal in a public aquarium in the world, an Australian lungfish named Granddad. In 1933, a Shedd collecting team received Granddad and his mate from the Sydney aquarium. Traveling by steamer and Shedd's railroad car, the *Nautilus*, the fish arrived at the aquarium for the opening of the Century of Progress World's Fair. Granddad was fully grown when he arrived, so he is at least 75 years old.
- Building of the Oceanarium began on Sept. 17, 1987. The Oceanarium opened to the public on April 27, 1991.
- The Oceanarium cost \$47.2 million to construct. It covers 170,000 square feet and was the first building expansion in Shedd's history.
- The four-level Oceanarium is built on 1.8 acres of lakefill.
- Shedd Aquarium's Oceanarium is the largest indoor marine mammal facility in the world.
- The water system in the Oceanarium cleans the facility's 3 million gallons of water every two hours.
- The Oceanarium features beluga whales, Pacific white-sided dolphins, Alaska sea otters and harbor seals in a re-creation of a Pacific Northwest coastal environment.
- After the Oceanarium's Whale Harbor exhibit was finished, but before it was filled with salt water, 40 Shedd Aquarium staff members and volunteers held hands to span the pool's 190-foot length.
- Building of Wild Reef began on Aug. 8, 2000. The exhibit opened to the public on April 15, 2003.
- Wild Reef cost \$45 million to construct and was built in an underground wing. This wing was the second building expansion in Shedd's history.
- Wild Reef covers 27,000 square feet.
- Wild Reef's 26 interconnected habitats total more than 750,000 gallons of water.
- Guests enjoying the Wild Reef explore a Philippine coral reef, which is the most diverse underwater ecosystem in the world.
- The exhibit houses more than 25 sharks and the largest public display of live corals in the Midwest.
- The 90,000-gallon Caribbean Reef is home to more than 250 Caribbean reef animals including sharks, eels, a sea turtle and a host of colorful fish.
- In 2004, Shedd Aquarium used the liquefied equivalent of 36 acres of soybeans to re-cover its 144,703-square-foot roof to conserve energy, avoid polluting and save money. The decreased demand on Shedd's air-conditioning system should save 95,000 kilowatt hours annually and \$210,000 over the life of the roof. The roof coating is flame-resistant and waterproof. Shedd is the first public institution in Chicago with a soybean roof.