



For Immediate Release

Media Information
November 9, 2004

Living Fossils
at
Underwater World Singapore

Underwater World Singapore (UWS) is pleased to present an exhibition of aquatic creatures, whose ancestors first appeared on our planet millions of years ago. Their ancestors have defied the ravages of time and the environmental upheavals that drove other species to extinction. They have been aptly called "living fossils".

Fossils have captivated mankind through the ages and there are valuable lessons to be drawn from them. This display of living fossils is part of our efforts to promote awareness of the importance of marine life and its conservation. Some of these living fossils on display are:

- **Chambered Nautilus (*Nautilus pompilius*)** lives at great depths in the Indian and Pacific Oceans but can also be found, occasionally on shallow reefs. The nautilus first appeared more than 400 million years ago.
- **Australian and African Lungfishes (*Neoceratodus forsteri* and *Protopterus sp.*)** are rare living representatives of the lobe-finned (fleshy finned) fishes. Lungfishes are believed to be related to the tetrapods like amphibians and reptiles. Ancestors of modern lungfishes appeared about 400 million years ago in the Devonian period.
- **Sponges (*Phylum: Porifera*)** first appeared during the Cambrian period more than 500 million years ago. There are about 5000 known species of sponges around the world.
- **Mangrove and Coastal Horseshoe Crab (*Carcinoscopus rotundicauda*) and (*Tachypleus gigas*)**, are found in Southeast Asia and even in our own backyard at Chek Jawa. The ancestors of horseshoe crabs can be traced back to more than 300 million years ago.
- **Arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*)** is one of the largest freshwater fish in the world. The Arapaima belongs to the Osteoglossidae ("bony tongue") family of fishes. The oldest osteoglossid fossil found is about 140 million years old.
- **Alligator Gar (*Lepisosteus spatula*)** is an ancient looking fish which is found in the Mississippi River Basin and Gulf of Mexico. The oldest gar fossil is from the Cretaceous period, about 140 million years ago.
- **Bichir (*Polypterus sp.*)** can be found at the banks of rivers and lakes in Central Africa and Zaire and is a primitive example of ray-finned fishes. Ray-finned fishes first appeared some 395 million years ago.

- **Flower Ray (*Potamotrygon sp.*)** is a stingray found in South America. Rays first appeared in the Jurassic period, about 200 million years ago.

Detailed information of the “living fossils” can be found in the attached Appendix.

Fun and Stimulating Special Interactive Displays for the Children

Puzzle Challenge – There are two puzzles, showing pictures of a Trilobite and an Ancient Fish fossil. Each square-shaped puzzle, measuring 66cm by 66cm, consists of 8 slabs and one empty slot to allow maneuvering to form a complete picture of the fossil.

Fun Shading Corner – Children can place a sheet of paper over slabs of “fossils” of ancient marine animals and use a pencil to shade over the paper to get the imprint of the animals.

UWS-SMRT Taxi Ambassador Programme

In conjunction with the launch of UWS' latest exhibit – “Living Fossils”, selected SMRT taxi drivers will participate in the UWS Taxi Ambassador Programme. Equipped with knowledge of the oceanarium and the “Living Fossils” exhibit, these SMRT taxi drivers would act as ambassadors to provide interesting information to their passengers along with a contest form. All participating taxi drivers also stand to win attractive cash prizes, when their passengers, who send in their completed entry form with an UWS ticket stub, win prizes. Every completed entry form also earns one point for the taxi driver. Three taxi drivers with the most points at the end of the promotion will win a cash prize of \$300 each. This contest will commence on November 20, 2004 and will end on January 2, 2005.

School Holiday Price Promotion

Good news! From November 20, 2004 to January 2, 2005, admission prices to Underwater World Singapore and the Dolphin Lagoon have been slashed to \$11 for adults and \$10 for children. The special rates are applicable to Singaporeans, permanent residents and holders of employment passes and work permits.

For more information on the above, please contact:

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