



For Immediate Release

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CRABS STEAL THE LIMELIGHT AT UWS' LATEST SHOWCASE

Spider, coconut and frog. What could they all have in common? As some of the most unique crabs on the planet, these feisty crustaceans will most definitely not feature in your next dish of chilli crab. Instead, these tough armoured knights of the sea together with some of their other intriguing cousins, take centre stage at an exclusive exhibition launched by Underwater World Singapore (UWS) today.

In a completely revamped and custom-built section of the well-known aquarium, Singaporeans will get a first hand opportunity to come face-to-face with at least 12 different species of these most unique of aquatic creatures, some having flown in from as far as parts of USA and Japan. During their stay at UWS, these honoured visitors will be housed in specially constructed exhibition tanks that recreate each of their distinctive and original habitats. However, these special marine visitors will only be at UWS for a limited period of time -- till June 2006.

In an unusual move true to the creativity of UWS, the exclusive showcase "CRABS" was unveiled by guests just as unique as the crabs. Eleven-year-old Dawn Tan, Nadia Cheah and Soon Hui Ker, who were the top prizewinners of the Young Marine Biologists Award 2005 organised by UWS, were given the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to launch the new crab exhibit in front of their principal, teachers, classmates and other special guests invited for the occasion. These impressive three girls are Primary 5 students from Maha Bodhi School.

The term "crab" is commonly applied to several different groups of short decapods with thick exoskeletons. Decapods, which means "10-legged", refer to a group of crustaceans that include crabs, lobsters and shrimp. Famed for their sideways struts, there are almost 5,000 species of crabs around the globe. Generally described as scavengers, crabs have diet preferences that allow them to be distinguished as omnivores, herbivores and carnivores. Most are found in sea water, while some varieties do live in freshwater or land.



One of the highlights of the "CRABS" exhibition at UWS is the Giant Spider Crab, which made its debut at UWS eight years ago to an enthusiastic reception, and is now back to thrill audiences once again. Touted as the largest crab in the world, the colossal crustacean features a leg span of up to 3.7 metres and resides on the floors of the North Pacific Ocean.

The exhibition also features the Coconut Crab, the next largest on display. The Coconut Crab is the world's largest land crab and is only found on the islands of the Pacific Ocean. This species can grow up to a whopping leg span of one metre.

Despite their claws and sharp armour, all are not fearsome and ferocious among the latest marine celebrities at UWS. Visitors will also come up close and personal with some of the more mellow varieties of crab like the box crab. This species is known as the shy-faced crab because of its large compressed claws that conceal its face. Unique claws also feature prominently on the male fiddler crab, which has one claw bigger than its entire body. Visitors can also look out for some fiesty tree climbing action, courtesy of the unique vinegar crabs.

Dr Jeffrey Mahon, Curatorial Director of UWS commented on the decision to showcase these unique crustaceans, "At UWS we constantly introduce new and unique exhibits to enhance the experience of every visitor. This time around, we have chosen crabs to create an awareness among the public that these are interesting animals with distinctive habits and lifestyles. They come in numerous shapes and sizes and can survive extreme living conditions. We hope that through this exhibition, people would come to better appreciate the diversity of these aquatic creatures beyond how they taste in their favourite cuisine."

Detailed information on the crabs can be found in the attached Appendix.

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About Underwater World Singapore

Underwater World Singapore is a wholly owned subsidiary of Haw Par Corporation Limited. Situated on Sentosa Island, this leisure and educational attraction showcases the rich variety of marine life to be found around the region, with educational and recreational activities available here.

The Dolphin Lagoon, an attraction of Underwater World Singapore houses the Indo-Pacific Humpbacked Dolphins, commonly known as pink dolphins for its coat of "bubbly" pink in contrast to the usual grey appearance of dolphins. At the "Meet-the-Dolphin" sessions, visitors can enjoy a close encounter with these adorable pink creatures.

At Underwater World Singapore, our mission goes beyond making our guests aware of the fascinating marine life. Our commitment to marine conservation and environmental awareness is demonstrated through our work in public education, breeding, rescue and rehabilitation, and research. Underwater World Singapore reinforces its environmental efforts through educational exhibits and a variety of education programmes to children and other guests. School visits are actively supported, and a number of new educational programmes are planned. Underwater World Singapore has also been very active in providing special programmes and assistance to the physically and mentally disabled.

For more information, please contact any of the following:

Susan Ang
Asst Director (Sales & Marketing)
Underwater World Singapore
Tel: (65) 6275 0030
Email: susanang@uws.hawpar.com / peterchew@uws.hawpar.com

Jezamine Lee
Corporate Communications Manager
Haw Par Corporation Limited
Tel: (65) 6490 0209
Email: jezlee@hawpar.com

Puvanes Balakrishnan
Associate
Huntington Communications
Tel: (65) 6339 2883
Email: puvanes.b@huntington.com.sg