



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Rare Arctic Sea Angels Visit Underwater World

Singapore, 19 May 2005 – Unending miles of ice. Water that hits sub-zero temperatures. Simply put, the unforgiving Arctic. Now how many of us would consider a visit to that end of the earth? Or for that matter, how many of us would reckon that an algid setting like the Arctic would be home to millions of angels?

Singaporeans will get a first hand opportunity to taste the extreme conditions of the Arctic in the form of a specially constructed exhibit at Underwater World Singapore (UWS), which will house the sea angels while they are in Singapore. The exhibit recreates the cold, stark and frozen habitat of the sea angels for Singaporeans to experience. These rare visitors will only be at UWS for a limited period of time -- till December 2005.

The unique sea angels, or *Clione limacina*, as they are scientifically known, were unveiled at UWS by renowned professional adventurer and distinguished motivational speaker, Mr Khoo Swee Chiow. Mr Khoo who is renowned for his courageous expeditions, made history for Singapore when he successfully skied 771 kilometres to the North Pole in the Hitachi Extreme North Expedition in May 2002. Mr Khoo also made headlines when he became the first Southeast Asian to complete the *7 Summits*, which include scaling the challenging mountains of Africa and South America, as well triumphing over Antarctica and the North and South Poles.

Neither a fish nor a jellyfish, the sea angel is actually a jelly-like, shell-less sea snail, called *gymnosome*, which translates as “naked body” in Latin. The sea angel originates from the pristine and icy waters of the Northern Hemisphere – an isolated but rich habitat that offers it the purity to grow and thrive.



Mr Khoo commenting on the official launch of the sea angels, "The North Pole is home to hundreds of unique living creatures and most of us in Singapore will not travel to the North Pole to see them. I certainly hope that this launch of the exquisite sea angels by Underwater World will give the general public an opportunity to learn how these interesting creatures survive in such harsh conditions."

Although, without the power of vision, the sea angel, is no underrated killer. Embedded in its head are six feeding tentacles, called buccal cones, which the sea angel extends out of its mouth to grab its prey. The sea angel feeds exclusively on very small, free-swimming shelled marine snails called *Limacina helicina*. It skillfully utilizes the pair of projections on its head as sensory organs when it's time to hunt. The digestive and reproductive organs are located at the top half of the sea angel's body, which is orange pigmented. The lower half of its body is mainly translucent.

The exquisiteness of this marine creature is further enhanced through its feet, which evolved into wing-like appendages called parapodia. These flap about twice per second allowing the sea angel to swim gracefully and freely in the wonder of its Arctic environment. The rhythmic movements its wings create can enchant and delight even the most experienced observer.

Mr Kwek Meng Tiam, General Manager of Underwater World Singapore commented on this latest addition to its marine family, "At UWS, we constantly introduce new and unique exhibits to enhance the experience of every visitor. The Arctic region is an area very much unexplored and not much is known about it locally. We hope that by bringing the sea angels all the way here, visitors will be able to experience an exotic and interesting aspect of the Arctic."



Being simultaneous hermaphrodites, sea angels engage in reciprocal fertilization, whereby a pair of sea angels unite and mate to fertilize the eggs internally for each other. At the spawning stage, a free floating gelatinous egg mass will be released. Newly hatched sea angels will lose their embryonic shells after a few days and henceforth remain shell-less.

School Holiday Price Promotion

With school holidays just around the corner, Underwater World Singapore is pleased to offer a special price of \$13.60 for adult and \$8.70 for child admission tickets during the period 28 May – 26 June 2005. This rate, which represents a 30% discount off published rates, is valid only for Singapore citizens, permanent residents and holders of employment passes and workers' permits.

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About Underwater World Singapore

Underwater World Singapore is a wholly owned subsidiary of Haw Par Corporation. 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.



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