

Johnny Morris
WONDERS OF WILDLIFE
NATIONAL
MUSEUM & AQUARIUM

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**BREAKING
NEWS!**

Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife Once Again Voted America's BEST Aquarium

**Honoring hunters, anglers and conservationists
Wonders of Wildlife is a gift to the sportsmen and women
of America from avid angler and noted conservationist,
Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris**



Springfield, Mo. – Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium has once again 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 honor marks the fourth time that the conservation-based museum and aquarium has been nominated for and received national recognition from the *USA TODAY* Readers' Choice Awards, having twice been previously honored as "America's Best Aquarium" as well as "America's Best New Attraction" in its grand opening year of 2017.

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 is larger than the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History.

One of the defining characteristics that separates Wonders of Wildlife from other aquariums is its emphasis on conservation by showcasing the positive contributions of hunters and anglers. In doing so, Wonders of Wildlife appeals not only to those who hunt and fish but actively engages everyone who loves the outdoors to get engaged in conservation. This approach is part of the reason Wonders of Wildlife continues to be recognized.



Hunting and fishing have been a central way of life across the continent since before the founding of America. Wonders of Wildlife showcases that the land, habitat and way of life is worth saving at a time when it's more important than ever due to rapidly advancing technology and the resulting disconnect between people and the natural world.

To bring this ambitious vision to life, Johnny 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, including the International Game Fish Association Fishing Hall of Fame, Bass Fishing Hall of Fame, Boone & Crockett Club's National Collection of Heads and Horns, and more.

"Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium is the most important natural history museum to open in more than century," said Adam Putnam, CEO of Ducks Unlimited, the world's leader in wetlands and waterfowl conservation. **"On behalf of conservationists everywhere, I want to tell you just how important this award is to our way of life.** In today's world, hunters, anglers, and conservationists are often misrepresented, and Wonders of Wildlife is the single-handed greatest effort to celebrate the true spirit of conservation."

Inspiring families to connect with nature

As the world becomes increasingly disconnected from the great outdoors, Wonders of Wildlife celebrates the value of wild places to advance conservation by inspiring families and kids to connect with nature through an immersive journey spanning some of our planet's wildest habitats.

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.

"We are truly humbled by this distinction, which will inspire even more people to visit and follow in the footsteps of America's conservation leaders by enjoying and protecting nature," said Johnny Morris.

"Wonders of Wildlife represents the collective efforts of countless individuals and organizations who share a strong passion for conservation. We are very grateful to each of them, along with every guest, member and fan for their votes and ongoing support."

Global Reach

Wonders of Wildlife expanded its global reach and impact throughout 2020 with [Mission Conservation](#), a free interactive digital educational app that attracted an international audience while helping kids learn about nature in their own backyard.

It also became the Midwest's only sea turtle rescue facility, successfully rescuing and releasing 12 endangered loggerhead sea turtles after they became stranded on a beach off the Atlantic Ocean.

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 from April 26 – May 24 to determine a winner.

New kids' activity series

Wonders of Wildlife continues to expand its efforts to engage kids in nature and the outdoors. Launching this week, [Passport to Play](#) is a new activity series that invites kids of all ages to explore, imagine and play as they venture through Wonders of Wildlife. The program promises to make each trip a unique and unforgettable excursion, with eight themed adventures planned through the end of year, all featuring giveaways, animal encounters and speakers.

The first themed adventure is Fin Fest, happening now through June 13. For more details, visit wondersofwildlife.org/play.



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