

Johnny Morris'  
**WONDERS OF WILDLIFE**  
— NATIONAL —  
**MUSEUM & AQUARIUM**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium voted "America's Best Aquarium" for an unprecedented seventh time



*World's most immersive fish and wildlife attraction proudly salutes the contributions of hunters, anglers and conservationists*

**SPRINGFIELD, Mo.** — The national honors and prestigious recognition for Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium (WOW) continue to roll in – it has yet again been voted "America's Best Aquarium" by *USA Today* readers.



Wonders of Wildlife has been awarded this 10Best Readers' Choice Award a record seven times, in addition to earning "America's Best New Attraction" honors in its grand opening year of 2017. No other aquarium has won "America's Best Aquarium" more than three times.

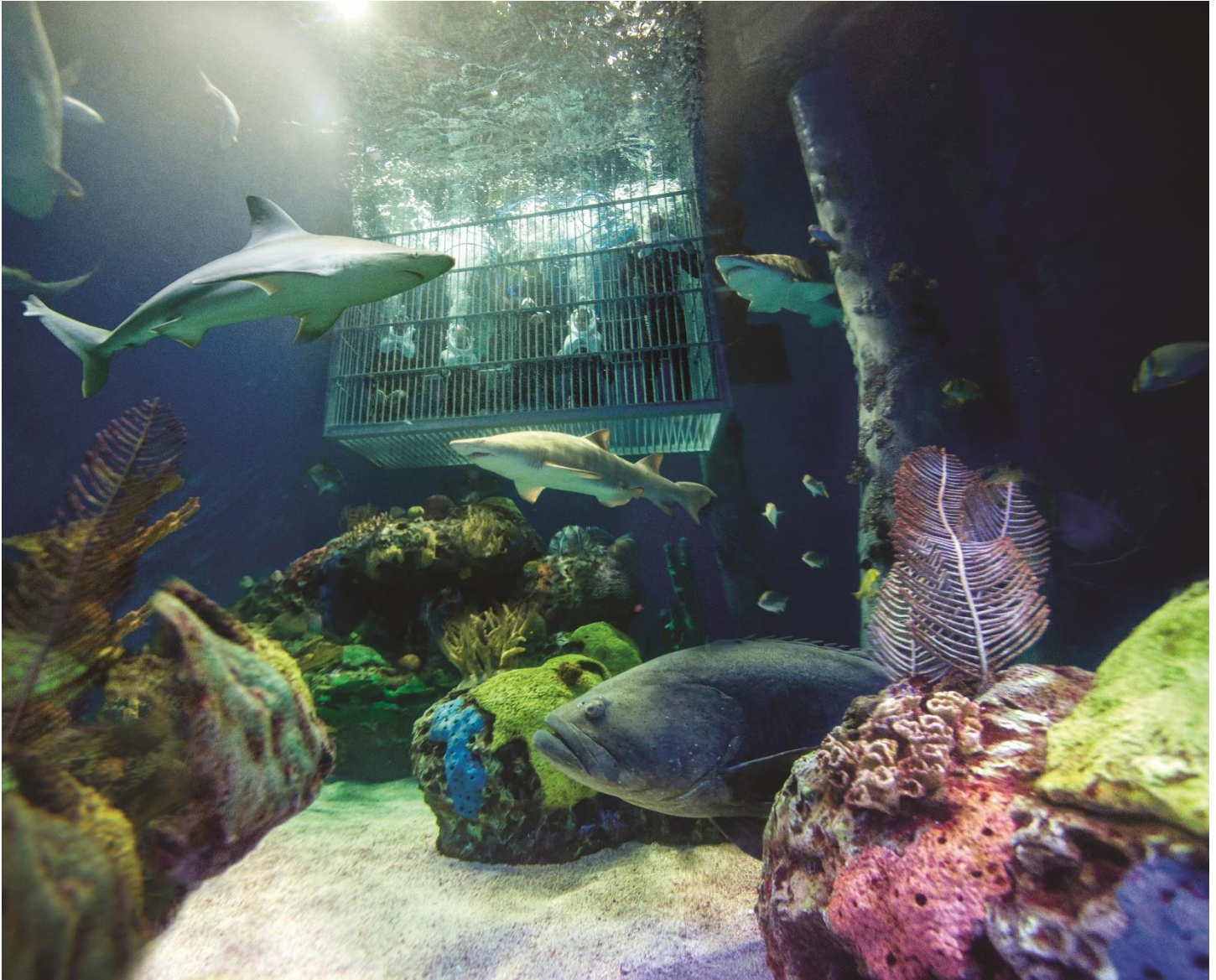
"We are honored to be recognized by all who visit Wonders of Wildlife," said Johnny Morris, noted conservationist and founder of Bass Pro Shops and Wonders of Wildlife. "All of us are very grateful for the contributions of so many people to make the Wonders of Wildlife an unforgettable experience for visitors from around the world and an inspiration for everyone to enjoy, love and conserve the great outdoors."



This competition ranks the top 20 prominent institutions across North America, highlighting the best of the best when it comes to attractions for conservation-minded guests of all ages. WOW was nominated for the award by a panel of nationally respected travel experts as part of USA Today's annual 10Best Readers' Choice Awards. To determine a winner, members of the public across the United States were invited to cast their votes.



The victory is not just one for Wonders of Wildlife – it's a victory for conservation and outdoor enthusiasts throughout North America. WOW is a gift to the sportsmen and women from Johnny Morris, who endeavored to create a world-class, not-for-profit conservation attraction 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.



Spanning more than 350,000 square feet – larger than the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History – with more than 1.5 miles of trails, Wonders of Wildlife features a diverse showcase of 800-plus species of fish, reptiles, amphibians, mammals and birds. Since its opening in 2017, over 8 million visitors have embarked on a journey through WOW's immersive exhibits and galleries that entertain, educate and tell the story of America's most noted conservationists throughout history.



WOW is the largest and most important conservation attraction to open in America in more than 100 years, serving as the leading educational venue serving to pass on the conservation message to visitors of all ages. It has been recognized and celebrated by guests for its over-the-top multisensory habitats, engaging interactive exhibits and strong conservation ethic as defining features that set it apart from other aquariums and attractions.



**From left to right:** Mike Daniel, Director of Animal Care at Wonders of Wildlife; Johnny Morris; Paul Murray (legendary tuna captain); IGFA Trustee Gary Carter; Dr. Walt Golet, Research Scientist at the University of Maine; and legendary marlin captain Terry Robinson.

Jason Schratwieser, President of The International Game Fish Association, was in attendance at WOW for the America's Best Aquarium ceremony, which featured the unveiling of a replica of Ken Fraser's 1,496-pound world-record Atlantic Bluefin Tuna catch from 1979.



Jason Schratwieser,  
President of The  
International Game Fish  
Association

"We are proud of our affiliation with Johnny Morris and Wonders of Wildlife, and are very excited to see the impact this award has on the future of conservation and education throughout North America. WOW is the perfect home for this Ken Fraser Atlantic Bluefin Tuna replica, where millions of guests will be able to marvel at the spectacle and majestic nature of this amazing Atlantic Bluefin Tuna," said Schratwieser.



## Guidance from conservation heroes helps WOW thrive

Wonders of Wildlife is making a transformative difference in the conservation world, thanks to the guidance and leadership from trusted and cherished partners, including Dale Hall, former Director of the United States Fish & Wildlife Service and past CEO of Ducks Unlimited; Collin O'Mara, President and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation – the largest conservation organization by membership anywhere in the world; and Nick Wiley, Chief Operating Officer for Ducks Unlimited. These inspirational individuals have made it their life's work to advance the cause of conservation around the world and Wonders of Wildlife is forever indebted to them for their guidance and unwavering support.

***We are very grateful for our relationships with these legends in conservation and Wonders of Wildlife Board Members***



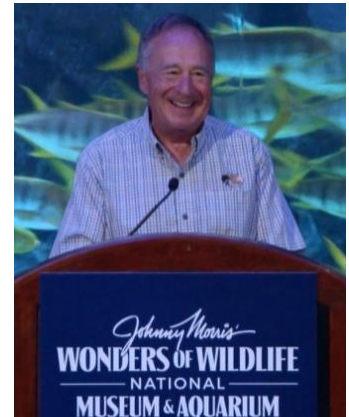
*Collin O'Mara,  
President and CEO of  
National Wildlife  
Federation*



*Dale Hall, former  
Director of the United  
States Fish & Wildlife  
Service and past CEO  
of Ducks Unlimited*



*Nick Wiley, Chief  
Operating Officer for  
Ducks Unlimited*



*Johnny Morris,  
visionary  
conservationist and  
Bass Pro Shops  
founder*



*Sara Parker Pauley,  
Former President of  
Assoc. of Fish and  
Wildlife Agencies &  
Director of Missouri  
Dept. of Conservation*



*Rob Keck, Former  
Chairman of Wonders  
of Wildlife Board &  
National Wild Turkey  
Federation CEO*

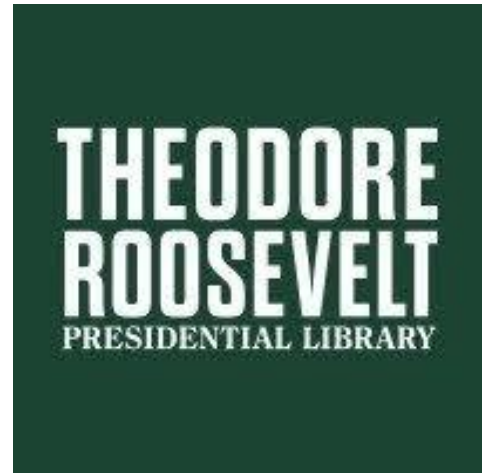


*Megan Morris Stack,  
Bass Pro Shops  
Foundation and  
Philanthropy Leader*



*John Paul Morris,  
Bass Pro Shops  
Chief Customer  
Officer*





*We were honored to be joined by Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library leaders: Executive Director Robbie Lauf (left), and Chief Development Officer Dan Muus (right), who were both on hand to celebrate the award.*

### **Newsweek Readers' Choice Award for Best Aquarium**

Wonders of Wildlife also was recently honored by *Newsweek* as the winner of its 2025 Readers' Choice Award for Best Aquarium.

Wonders of Wildlife was one of 15 aquariums selected as finalists through contributions from *Newsweek's* panel of travel experts, and readers voted for their favorites over a month-long period.





## **Continuing legacies through thoughtful, responsible conservation**

Wonders of Wildlife is proud to partner with several notable museum collections and conservation supporters to help raise awareness and inspire visitors to champion conservation efforts nationwide. Galleries such as the Boone and Crockett Club, National Sporting Arms Museum, National Archery Hall of Fame, American Museum of Fly Fishing, the International Game Fish Association Hall of Fame, Nature's Best Photography, and the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame showcase the role everyone plays as stewards of the land and water.

Wonders of Wildlife also serves as the official home of National Hunting and Fishing Day – a day that recognizes generations of sportsmen and women for their contributions to the conservation of our nation's rich sporting heritage and natural resources. Established in 1972 and celebrated on the fourth Saturday of every September, this federally recognized holiday encourages people everywhere to explore the great outdoors each year.



## **WOLF School**

### **Broadcasting conservation education around the world**

Wonders of Wildlife is home to the Wonders of the Ozarks Learning Facility (WOLF) School, which provides a comprehensive outdoor learning curriculum for students in fifth grade.

This innovative program is proud to educate and inspire future conservationists by providing them with an immersive learning journey throughout the school year, with standard curriculum viewed through the lens of conservation. This program, alongside Wonders of Wildlife, is broadcasting educational content for students across the United States and around the world, including Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and numerous other countries.



### **Providing critical care as a national leader in sea turtle rescue**

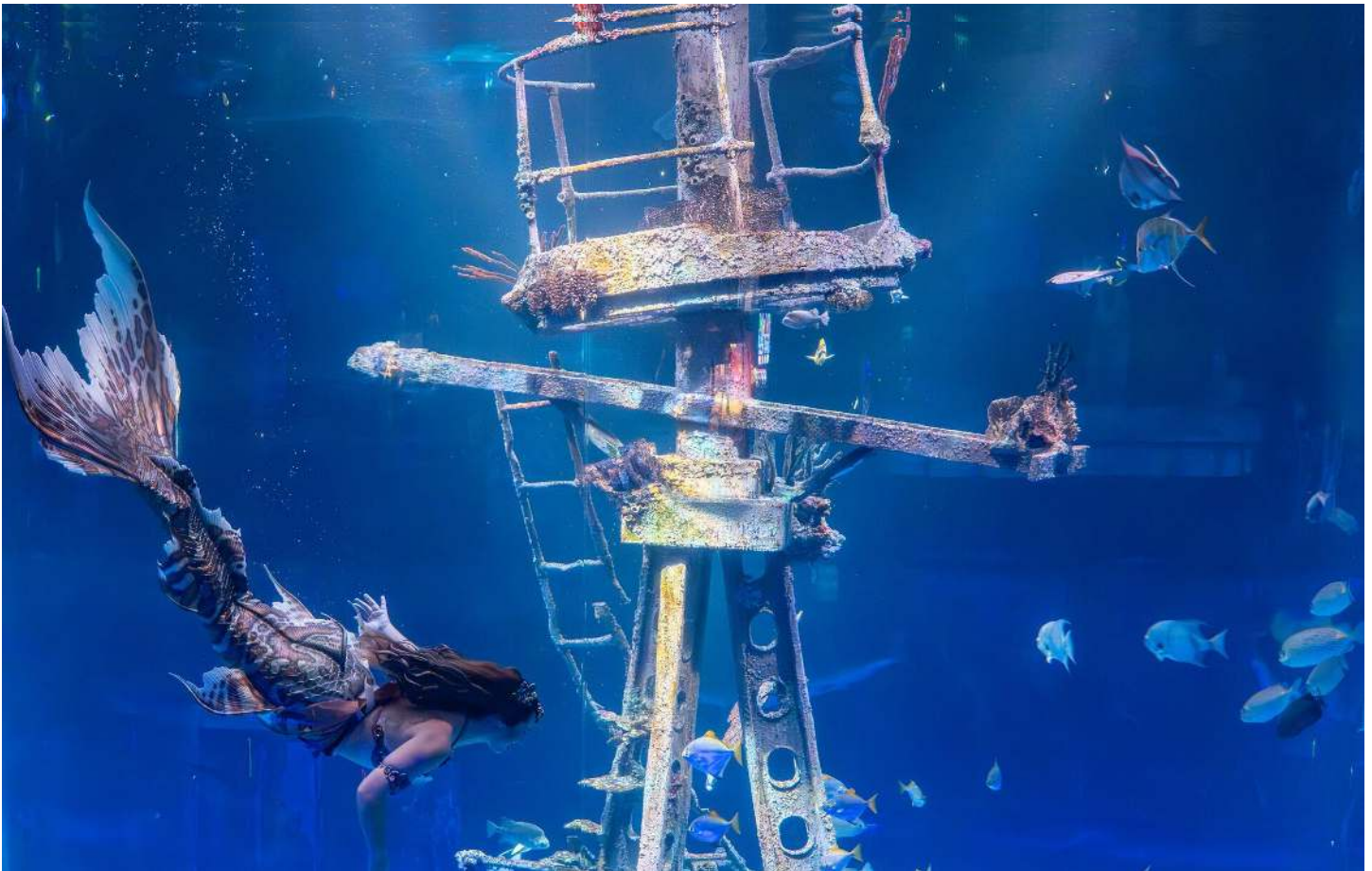
Wonders of Wildlife has partnered with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Turtles Fly Too to provide critical care for cold-stunned sea turtles and releasing them to their natural habitat after fully recovering. This is the fifth



consecutive year that WOW has had the opportunity to make an incredible impact in sea turtle rescue and rehabilitation – made possible by the generous support of customers through the Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund.

Additionally, WOW has had the pleasure of welcoming three different species of sea turtles – loggerheads, green sea turtles and Kemp's ridley sea turtles through these important programs.

Once abundant in the Gulf of Mexico, Kemp's ridley sea turtles are now considered one the most critically endangered sea turtles under NOAA's Endangered Species Act. Another innovative aspect of this valuable rescue program is the implementation of SPOT-375 trackers placed on the released loggerhead turtles. These allows the biologists and researchers from the Wonders of Wildlife team to track the migration routes and whereabouts of the turtles' post-release – data that is critical for understanding future cold-stunning events.



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## **About Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium**

Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium consists of an all-new 1.5-million gallon Aquarium Adventure showcasing 35,000 live fish, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds, and immersive Wildlife Galleries that bring visitors eye-to-eye with the greatest collection of record-setting game animals ever assembled. Created by noted conservationist and Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris, the 350,000-square-foot experience celebrates those who hunt, fish, and act as stewards of the land and water. Located next to Bass Pro Shops National Headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, the campus is a centerpiece of America's Conservation Capital in Missouri's Ozark Mountains. Wonders of Wildlife has been voted "Best New Attraction in America" and "America's Best Aquarium" an unprecedented seven times by the readers of *USA TODAY*, was voted "Best Aquarium" by *Newsweek* readers in 2025, and in 2022 received its AZA accreditation. For more information, visit [www.wondersofwildlife.org](http://www.wondersofwildlife.org).