

Johnny Morris
WONDERS OF WILDLIFE
— NATIONAL —
MUSEUM & AQUARIUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife
VOTED "AMERICA'S BEST AQUARIUM"
FOR A RECORD-BREAKING FOURTH TIME**

*Honoring hunters, anglers and conservationists around the world,
Wonders of Wildlife is a gift to the sportsmen and women of America*



Springfield, Mo. – For the fourth time since opening in 2017, Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium has been voted "America's Best Aquarium" through a national public poll conducted by USA TODAY.

The poll ranks the top 20 prominent institutions across North America, and the fourth win by the conservation-based museum and aquarium is unprecedented in the history of this prestigious national award.

This latest honor marks the fifth USA TODAY Readers' Choice Awards recognition for WOW, having also earned "America's Best New Attraction" in its grand opening year of 2017.

"We are honored by this recognition and so grateful to our guests, members and fans for their votes and support," said noted conservationist, avid angler and Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris. "At Wonders of Wildlife, our talented team is driven by a collective passion for conservation and educating the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts. We are very grateful to all of the countless individuals and organizations who share a strong passion for conservation. Together we hope the awareness generated by this award encourages even more people to visit and are driven to enjoy and protect the great outdoors."



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 during the month of May to determine a winner.

Wonders of Wildlife is a gift to the outdoor enthusiasts of America from Johnny Morris, who 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 spans 350,000 square feet and is larger than the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History.



Wonders of Wildlife features an immersive design, with surprises around every corner and more than 35,000 live fish, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds. It is unlike any other aquarium on earth. Fans cite the aquarium's over-the-top multisensory habitats, engaging interactive exhibits and strong conservation ethic as defining features that set WOW apart and is part of the reason the aquarium continues to be recognized.

Honoring wildlife, anglers, and the natural wonders of the world

To celebrate all things outdoors, Johnny has 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 singular “must-see” conservation destination experience, 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 & Aquarium is an extraordinary immersive experience for families and people of all ages,” said Ducks Unlimited CEO Adam Putnam. “The attention to detail is extraordinary. The animals, sea life and exhibits create an atmosphere that awes and inspires. The passion for conservation that Johnny and his team share comes through in every aspect of the facility, the programming and the visit.”

Becky Humphries, CEO of the National Wild Turkey Federation, added: “Wonders of Wildlife is an incredible treasure for all who love the outdoors, and it celebrates the very spirit of conservation. Through this fantastic facility, individuals can learn about and appreciate the rich aquatic resources of our lakes, rivers and oceans. Our hearty congratulations to Johnny Morris and the entire Bass Pro Shops team for this esteemed honor and for the great work they do to conserve these resources.”

Two new attractions put jaw-dropping scenes on display

Two new attractions have recently opened at Wonders of Wildlife – the American Museum of Fly Fishing moved from its longtime home in Manchester, Vermont, and the internationally acclaimed Nature’s Best Photography Gallery recently relocated from the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.

The American Museum of Fly Fishing is an exhibit space that is a symbol of the friendship and respect between Johnny Morris and his friend and mentor, the late Leigh H. Perkins of Orvis, a founding trustee of the American Museum of Fly Fishing. The new gallery exhibits a chronological history of the sport of fly fishing and includes innovations, profiles of celebrity fly fishers, the best in fly fishing films as well as some of the sport’s most significant rods, reels and flies, as well as vintage photography, original artwork and historical texts that chronicle fly fishing’s earliest days.

A new exhibition hall is home to the Windland Smith Rice International Awards and its annual Nature’s Best Photography exhibition. Established to recognize and display the creative talents and documentary achievements of nature photographers worldwide, the exhibition receives around 30,000 submissions each year and features a rotating gallery of jaw-dropping wildlife photography and videos from around the world as a celebration of both people and nature.

We are both humbled and honored to be named America’s Best Aquarium. Thank you to all who voted, without your support, this wouldn’t have been made possible!

