

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 an unprecedented sixth time



Johnny Morris, WOLF School students and noted conservation leaders celebrate with staff and volunteers at Wonders of Wildlife

The world's largest fish and wildlife attraction proudly salutes the contributions of hunters, anglers and conservationists

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — It's official! Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium (WOW) in Springfield, Missouri, has once again been voted "America's Best Aquarium" by USA Today readers.

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

This poll 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 competition by a panel of nationally respected travel experts as part of USA Today's annual Readers' Choice Awards. To determine a winner, members of the public across the United States were invited to cast their vote.



Guests can plunge to the depths of the ocean floor and admire dozens of reefs and live aquatic animals including diving with sharks

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.

Spanning over 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 6.5 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.

Guests 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 and celebrated.

"We are honored to be recognized as America's Best Aquarium for a record-breaking sixth time since our opening in 2017. We are grateful to our guests, partners, staff, and volunteers for their steadfast support," said Johnny Morris, noted conservationist, legendary angler and Bass Pro Shops founder. "We hope the awareness generated by this recognition encourages even more people to visit Wonders of Wildlife, and to be reminded of the role that American sportsmen and women have played in conservation."

Guidance from conservation heroes helps Wonders of Wildlife thrive

Wonders of Wildlife is making a transformative difference in the conservation world, thanks to the guidance and leadership from our treasured 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 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 dedicated their lives to advancing the cause of conservation around the world, and Wonders of Wildlife is forever indebted to them for their guidance and support.

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



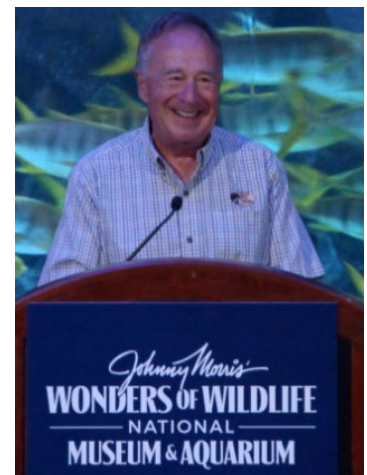
*Collin O'Mara,
President and CEO of
National Wildlife
Federation*



*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*



Continuing legacies through careful 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 new and existing audiences 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, 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 this year that will be released to their natural habitat once fully recovered. This is the fourth consecutive year that WOW has had the opportunity to make an incredible impact in sea turtle rescue and rehabilitation – made possible by 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 – a first in the program’s history.

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 first in the program’s history is the implementation of SPOT-375 trackers being placed on five of this year’s loggerhead turtles. These will allow the WOW team to track the migration routes and whereabouts of the turtles’ post-release – data that is critical for understanding and preventing future cold-stunning.



COMING SOON: New Mystical Underwater Jellyfish Abyss Exhibit !



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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 five times by the readers of *USA TODAY*, and in 2022 received its AZA accreditation. For more information, visit www.wondersofwildlife.org.