

NEW SHARK AT THE DEEP HERALDS SUMMER EVENT

The Deep has welcomed a new shark – a male tasselled wobbegong which headlines its Summer of Sharks event, running throughout the school holiday, July 23 – September 4.

Katy Duke, The Deep's curator explains, "The tasselled wobbegong, *Eucrossorhinus dasypogon*, is a great addition to our collection of sharks. It is a member of a group called the 'carpet sharks'. Its mouth is edged with a magnificent fringe of tassels, which helps to break up the outline of its body and with its brown carpet-patterned markings makes the Tasselled Wobbegong a master of camouflage and ambush.

"Our wobbegong comes from the Australian Barrier Reef, off the coast of Queensland. He was wild-caught under extremely strict guidelines of the Marine Aquarium Council which ensures that animals are collected and transported sustainably and to the highest standards of animal welfare. As is the case with all our new animals, he first entered in our quarantine facility to settle down after his journey and to make sure he fed properly before being introduced into our main tank. He is now thriving in his new home where all his environmental needs are catered for. Weighing in at 12 kilos and measuring just over 1 metre long, he is feeding on whole mackerel, whiting and peeler crab."

The Deep is showcasing sharks, its most popular residents from July 23 to September 4th. Summer of Sharks, is a unique event which aims to raise awareness of these magnificent animals and the threats they face. As well as its newest resident, the tasselled Wobbegong, The Deep is also home to a spotted wobbegong, epaulette sharks, nurse sharks, brown banded bamboo sharks, Europe's only pair of green sawfish, zebra sharks, white tipped reef and grey reef sharks. The summer-long event will also feature a whole host of family activities including an interactive shark trail, shark badge making and displays, including the jaws of one of the greatest predators of the prehistoric world – the 60 ton megalodon shark. Visitors will be invited to show their support for sharks by signing the Shark Trust's anti-finning petition which will be used by the Trust in their efforts to lobby governments to bring an end to this cruel practice.

Note to Editor: Image of The Deep's tasselled wobbegong is available on request.

Background - Tasselled Wobbegong

In the wild the tasselled wobbegong lives throughout the warm waters of the western Pacific region between latitudes 1° North and 23° South, and has been recorded along the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. It has a similar body shape but very different patterning to the spotted wobbegong (The Deep already has one).

It is a solitary species, tending to live on coral reefs at depths of 1 – 20 metres. The reproductive method for wobbegong sharks is ovovivipary– eggs are laid within the uterus and hatch internally, so that live babies are born. It is an ambush predator which strikes out at passing prey.

Sharks are some of most fascinating animals on earth, yet at the same time they are greatly misunderstood. Summer of Sharks is an excellent opportunity for our visitors to find out more about these creatures and why we need to conserve them. We will also be trying to dispel some of the myths surrounding shark attacks - Humans are more likely to be killed by a coconut falling on their head or by a bee! Most incidents are cases of mistaken identity or provocation and are relatively rare. In reality, the

world's shark population is more in danger from humans than the other way round. Shark stocks worldwide have already been depleted by as much as 90% in recent years. We have particular concerns about the use of shark products from unsustainable sources. For example, the rising demand for shark fin soup has resulted in some 100,000,000 sharks being killed each year.

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