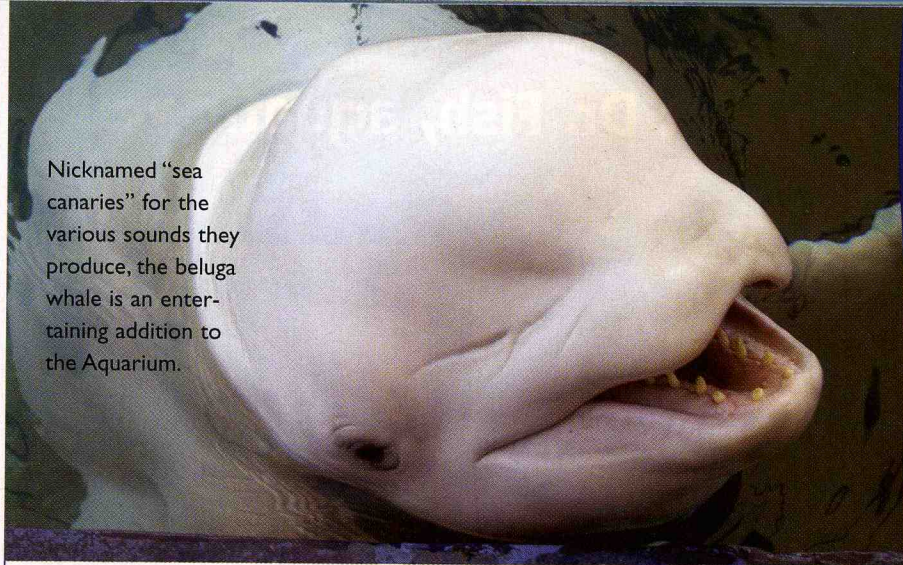


Nicknamed "sea canaries" for the various sounds they produce, the beluga whale is an entertaining addition to the Aquarium.



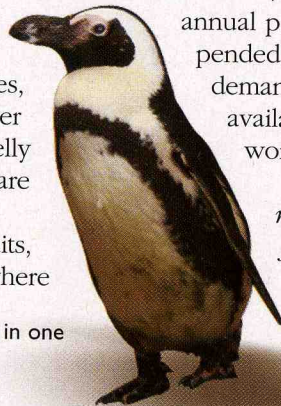
may be ready for something a little chillier. Head back to the sea with Cold Water Quest, a favorite exhibit. Garbaldi, a damsel fish that became the inspiration for Deepo, the Aquarium's fish mascot, will greet you upon arrival. A touch tank of sea urchins and starfish make for fun, and the creepy giant Japanese Spider Crab (you'll be glad this colossal crustacean is behind glass) is more than happy to call you farther in. These creatures are a deep-water species that can grow to a leg span of 12 feet and up to the size of a car.

Also in Cold Water Quest, the California sea lions frolic and play, sea otters perform antics that will keep you laughing, and African penguins surround you as you pop up into the observation hole that sits in the middle of their rocky environment.

The most mesmerizing cold-water animals, the five beluga whales, still await your arrival. Gasper, one of the males, stays close to the transparent glass so he can flirt with the humans, and Maris, one of the females, swims down to the lower observation window, belly up, whenever children are present.

One more stop awaits, the Georgia Explorer, where

Even penguins have a home in one of the 60 different habitats.



you can discover our coastal waters. Did you know that our state has its very own reef? It's also a nesting area for the loggerhead sea turtle and a calving ground for the endangered northern right whale.


These are just some of the things that await you in your final destination. Several touch tanks hold surprises that both children and adults will enjoy. If the kids have leftover energy, they can clown around in the play station here.


Finally, round off your tour of the world's oceans by heading upstairs to the interactive 3-D animation film, "Deepo's Undersea Wonder-show." For an additional charge, it gives you a glimpse of the Aquarium's mission: to "promote the conservation of aquatic biodiversity throughout the world."


Log onto www.georgiaaquarium.org to book your tour of the world's oceans. Reservations are strongly recommended. More than 500,000 people from all over the world came through the Aquarium in the first 49 days it was open, and annual pass sales have been suspended until fall 2006 because of demand, but day passes are still available. The oceans of the world are waiting for you!


Glenda Rogers is a national award-winning freelance writer and photographer from Kennesaw.


Fun facts


 218 pumps move 216,000 gallons per minute—like draining and filling an Olympic swimming pool every two-and-a-half minutes, and yet with the efficiency of the water circulation system, it takes less than 3 gallons of water per day to top off the system.

 The 8 million gallons contained in the Aquarium is the equivalent of 800 typical hotel swimming pools. Six million gallons of that total is in one exhibit, the Open Ocean where Ralph and Norton reside. With this sizable water capacity and 550,000 square feet, it is the world's largest aquarium.

 100,000 cubic yards of concrete make up the Aquarium—as a five-foot-wide sidewalk the concrete would stretch from Atlanta to St. Simons Island, 307 miles long.

 The Aquarium's 434 miles of electrical conduit would stretch from Atlanta to Orlando.

 One quarter of the Aquarium is dedicated to the Learning Loop, the facility's interactive and interdisciplinary educational program, where they expect to have 70,000 students come through the first year.

 More than half a million visitors from all over the world came through the Aquarium in the first 49 days, and 275,000 annual passes have been sold to people from every state in the Union. (Annual pass sales have been temporarily suspended until fall 2006.)

See www.georgiaaquarium.org or call (404) 581-4000 for more information.

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