



# History of the Vancouver Aquarium



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Published by: DementiaBility Enterprises Inc., Burlington, Ontario, CANADA

**ISBN:** [978-1-926511-96-2](https://www.isbn-international.org/product/9781926511962)



The Vancouver Aquarium is a public aquarium located in Stanley Park in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

In addition to being a major tourist attraction for Vancouver, the aquarium is a centre for marine research, ocean literacy education, conservation and marine animal rehabilitation.

The Vancouver Public  
Aquarium Association was  
formed in 1950  
by UBC fisheries and  
oceanography professors  
Murray Newman, Carl Lietze  
and Wilbert Clemens.

The Vancouver Aquarium  
opened on June 15, 1956  
with the ribbon being cut by  
federal Minister of  
Fisheries James Sinclair.

Officially Canada's first public aquarium, the Vancouver Aquarium has become the largest in Canada and one of the five largest in North America.



The Vancouver Aquarium was the first aquarium in the world to capture and display an orca. Other whales and dolphins on display included belugas, narwhals and dolphins.

On July 23, 1995, a beluga whale named Qila was born. She was the first beluga to be both conceived and born in a Canadian aquarium.

For many years, the primary attraction for visitors was the orca show. The aquarium has since moved to emphasize the educational aspects of the displays rather than the public spectacle of the shows.

The Vancouver Aquarium  
has also highlighted their  
research, rescue and  
rehabilitation efforts.

The aquarium has played a significant role in the research of wild orcas in BC.

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John Ford, a respected researcher who focuses on orca vocalizations, worked there for many years and they still fund a lot of the study.

The Wild Killer Whale Adoption Program, which funds research, is also run out of the aquarium.

Vancouver Aquarium has not kept any orcas in captivity since 2001 and has pledged not to capture wild animals, but to instead rely on captive animals for breeding.



The Vancouver Aquarium currently houses around 300 species of fish, almost 30,000 invertebrates, and 56 species of amphibians and reptiles. They also have around 60 mammals and birds.

Have you ever been to the  
Vancouver Aquarium?

What is your favourite animal  
to see at the aquarium?

Have you ever seen an Orca  
in the wild?

Thanks for taking the time to  
read this book.