



imagine AUSTRALIA



*"If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water."
Loren Eiseley, Naturalist*

imagine AUSTRALIA

2003

A N N U A L
R E P O R T

Ask why the National Aquarium in Baltimore is creating an Australia Exhibit, and you'll get an array of answers. The truth is: Australia is unlike any other place on Earth. It is home to an amazing diversity of life — unique species found nowhere else on the planet, primitive creatures that have lived unchanged for millions of years, and, just simply, remarkable animals. Each tells an unbelievable story about survival, adaptation, and the environment. We chose Australia for the lessons it could teach our school-children, the experience it could offer families. Australia enables us to help create a better quality of life for our community. Australia continues the magic.

The Aquarium's Australia Exhibit, the most authentic of its kind in the United States will open in 2005. Many of the extraordinary animals that will live in the exhibit arrived during 2003, and we are delighted to introduce you to some of them, along with other highlights of a truly remarkable year!



DEAR FRIENDS,


While our day-to-day operations faced major weather and construction challenges in 2003, the Board and staff were hard at work making plans for the future.

Short-term, we began organizing for the start-up of the new expansion and Australian habitat on Pier 3. As construction progressed, new animals arrived, exhibit rock work began to take form, and operational planning moved forward.

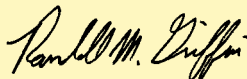
We also formed an alliance with the National Aquarium Society in Washington, D.C. This facility, the original National Aquarium, is housed in the Department of Commerce building. Plans call for the facility to close briefly in the years ahead when the structure undergoes major renovation. We are working with our colleagues in Washington to create a small, but very unique aquarium, complementary with the one in Baltimore.

Long-term, the Board of Governors has committed to a 2020 Vision, which will greatly expand our global reach in aquatic conservation, education, and research. The renovation of the Aquarium in our nation's capital is an important component. We are also moving forward with plans for the Center for Aquatic Life and Conservation which initially will house our husbandry, research, and animal rescue programs.

We are grateful to all the Aquarium supporters who are helping us realize this 2020 Vision. Working together, we will continue to fulfill our mission — to inspire respect for and stewardship of the aquatic world — for this generation and generations to come.



DAVID M. PITTENGER
Executive Director



RANDALL M. GRIFFIN
Chairman of the Board



GREY-HEADED *flying* FOX

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
Pteropus poliocephalus

SIZE:
*Weighs almost three pounds
with a wingspan of about
five feet*

AREA OF ORIGIN:
*Eastern Australia:
Queensland, New South
Wales, Victoria*

CONSERVATION STATUS:
Vulnerable

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES: Hanging upside down, this large fruit bat, the size of a miniature dog, resembles a gray fox with wings! Its large eyes are well adapted for seeing at night and its long canines are ideal for grasping fruit.

DESCRIPTION: The grey-headed flying fox is the second largest bat in the world and is found only in Australia. Active day and night, the flying fox lives in large groups called camps that may include as many as 100,000 bats. A mother gives birth to a single baby. This species may fly up to 30 miles a night in search of food, usually fruit, flowers, nectar, and pollen. In its quest for food, the bat pollinates and disperses the seeds of native trees, making it responsible for the health of forests, micro habitats for other species, and air, soil and water conservation. The flying fox is a keystone species.

LESSON FOR CHILDREN: Seeing grey-headed flying foxes, with their large eyes and long canines, roosting in trees, would dispel the myths that bats are blind, suck blood, sleep all day and only live in the dark.





frilled LIZARD

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
Chlamydosaurus kingii

SIZE:
Up to 31 inches

AREA OF ORIGIN:
Open eucalyptus forest of northern Australia

CONSERVATION STATUS:
Currently secure, but threatened by habitat destruction and predation by feral cats and foxes.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES:
The large, umbrella-like neck frill (dinner-plate size when erected in large adults) makes this lizard one of Australia's most famous and unique animals.

DESCRIPTION: This reptile escapes predators and bush fires by quickly climbing up vertical trunks to the treetops. When running fast on open ground, it rises up on its hind legs and uses bipedal locomotion. If cornered, the lizard opens its mouth wide and erects its folded-down neck frill like an open umbrella, giving it a very large, menacing appearance. It feeds on insects, spiders and small vertebrates. Breeding occurs in the beginning of the rainy season, with the lizard laying up to 23 soft-shelled eggs in a hole dug in the rain-softened soil. Eggs hatch in about four weeks, and the young "frillies" must fend for themselves.

LESSON FOR CHILDREN:
Observing frilled lizards basking in the sun will demonstrate to children how cold-blooded reptiles maintain their preferred warm body temperatures.



australian LUNGFISH

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES: The flattened head and four paddle-shaped fins give this fish a salamander-like appearance.

DESCRIPTION: This primitive fish is truly a living fossil as it has remained unchanged for over 100 million years. Fossil remains found in New South Wales are almost identical to the living species, making *Neoceratodus* one of the oldest living vertebrate genera. During times of severe drought and low oxygen levels, the Australian lungfish gulps air at the water's surface. A lung-like swim bladder supplements its gills in providing oxygen to the bloodstream. This night active species feeds on other fishes, frogs, tadpoles, invertebrates and plant material.

LESSON FOR CHILDREN: By observing the lungfish, visitors will see what fish looked like during the time of the dinosaurs. The first animals to venture on land probably looked much like the Australian lungfish.

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
Neoceratodus forsteri

SIZE:
Up to 5 feet

AREA OF ORIGIN:
Native to the Burnett and Mary rivers of eastern Australia. Introduced to several nearby rivers.

CONSERVATION STATUS:
Threatened due to its small range; this is a protected species.





tawny FROGMOUTH

SCIENTIFIC NAME:

Podargus strigoides

SIZE:

Up to 19 inches

AREA OF ORIGIN:

Forest, scrubland, and open woodlands throughout Australia

CONSERVATION STATUS:

Still widespread and common. Threatened by habitat destruction near human habitations.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES:

Large head, large wide bill (bright yellow inside), large yellow eyes and tiny, weak feet.

DESCRIPTION:

This night-active bird is a master of camouflage. Sitting perfectly still by day, roosting in a stiff angled position, the tawny frogmouth is the perfect mimic of a broken branch. The owl-like bird feeds on insects, mollusks, crustaceans, frogs and small mammals usually captured on the ground. With a wide, bristle-lined mouth, the frogmouth catches night-flying insects on the wing. Mature birds form a permanent bond and make a flimsy stick nest in the spring/summer breeding season (August/September). They lay one to three eggs, which hatch after about 29 days of incubation.

LESSON FOR CHILDREN:

Children looking for the hidden tawny frogmouth will discover how some animals avoid daytime predators by becoming virtually invisible.



freshwater CROCODILE OR “*freshie*”

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
Crocodylus johnstoni

SIZE:
Up to 10 feet

AREA OF ORIGIN:
Rivers, swamps and
billabongs of northern
tropical Australia

CONSERVATION STATUS:
*Currently stable. Populations
were greatly reduced in the
late 1930's and early 1960's
due to excessive hunting for
the skin trade. Now, popula-
tions are fully recovered
due to the species' protected
status.*

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES: The long slender snout and abundant needle-like teeth of the freshwater crocodile are perfect tools for catching prey.

DESCRIPTION: This relatively small, slender-snouted crocodile is found only in Australia. A top water-edge predator of the river gorges, the “freshie” preys on species ranging from insects and spiders to flying foxes and small wallabies. Most of the crocodile’s feeding occurs during the wet season when food is abundant; during the drought, it moves to permanent water as aquatic habitats dry up. Nesting occurs late in the dry season with females digging holes in sand banks and laying up to 21 white, hard-shelled eggs. Incubation temperature determines hatchling sex: eggs incubating at high or low temperatures produce females, while mid range temperatures result in males.

LESSON FOR CHILDREN: A close-up look will reveal how the “freshie” is built for an aquatic lifestyle. With only the top of its nose and eyes above water, the croc can stalk prey undetected. A long flattened tail and webbed feet help propel it through water.



GIANT *prickly* STICK INSECT

SCIENTIFIC NAME:

Extatosoma tiaratum

SIZE:

Up to 6 inches



AREA OF ORIGIN:

Coastal forest of eastern Australia

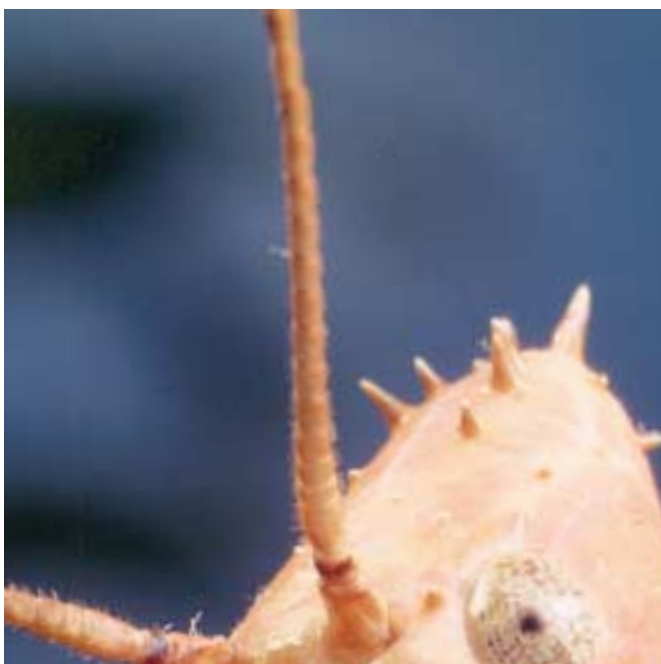

CONSERVATION STATUS:

Stable where habitat still exists

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES:





The head of the giant prickly stick insect is conical with spines on the top resembling a tiara. The legs are very flattened and leaf-like and, along with the body, are adorned with sharp spines.



DESCRIPTION: A master of camouflage, the giant prickly stick insect blends in well among the leaves of a eucalyptus tree. Other defensive behaviors of this insect include using the spiny hind legs as pincers and releasing chemical irritants from glands in the abdomen. A female lays several hundred eggs that are catapulted to the ground and hatch in five to eight months. Hatchlings are black with red heads and move at a frantic pace. They are perfect mimics of Australian stinging ants (*Leptomymex sp.*) at this early vulnerable stage.

LESSON FOR CHILDREN:



Viewing the giant prickly stick insect will reveal how animals use camouflage and defensive spines to avoid being eaten.



NATIONAL AQUARIUM ALLIANCE

As part of Vision 2020, its master plan for the future, the Aquarium formed an alliance with the National Aquarium Society in Washington, D.C. This new agreement expands the ability of both facilities to serve the region's schoolchildren and provides new opportunities for preserving and safeguarding aquatic life.

SURVIVING HURRICANE ISABEL

A record flood had a major impact on the Aquarium, its animal care facility, and its Candler Building offices. Due to tremendous efforts by staff, no animals were lost, the building was opened to visitors in two days, education and other programming continued as usual, and, thanks to the generosity of donors, most repairs were completed by the end of the year.

DEVELOPMENT MILESTONES ACHIEVED

In 2003, the Aquarium's membership program exceeded \$2 million for the first time; the largest bequest to date was received; and the Capital Campaign was awarded a prestigious Challenge Grant from the Kresge Foundation for \$800,000.

MINORITIES FOR CONSERVATION CAREERS

The Aquarium, with help from partners including the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, hosted five summer work-study students in marine mammal conservation and wetland ecology programs, with the goal of increasing minority participation in the conservation field. Two of the five students are already pursuing conservation science careers.

IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL BUSINESS

The Aquarium awarded contracts worth \$5.3 million to minority and women entrepreneurs, giving local business a key role in the Aquarium's everyday operations as well as in the construction of the Pier 3 expansion.

SHARKS COME COMFORTABLY CLOSE

Shark Quest, the first experience of its kind at the Aquarium, helped maintain a high level of attendance and drew unprecedented support from organizations and businesses like Fujifilm, which signed on as presenting partner for this highly interactive event.

A RECORD HIGH FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Aquarium's volunteer program, representing the skills and energy of community residents, set new records for value of contribution, time donated, and number of volunteers: \$1.4 million, 108,350 hours, and a 10% increase in the number of unpaid staff.



INTERNATIONAL VENUE FOR SEAHORSES

The Aquarium received its first international venue for a changing exhibit, when Seahorses: Beyond Imagination traveled to Riccione, Italy, for the 2004 opening of Oltremare. Exhibits and Biological Programs staff organized the design, shipment, and delivery of this blockbuster exhibit, the most popular of its kind in Aquarium history.

LEADERSHIP ROLE FOR RAINFOREST STAFF

With a sixth successful hatching of a white-tailed trogon, the Aquarium maintained its national leadership role in breeding this charismatic species, which is rarely represented in captivity. The Aquarium's unique new Hidden Life exhibit for the Panamanian golden frog, the national frog of Panama, is part of an international breeding program for this endangered species.

VOTES OF SUPPORT

The State of Maryland awarded the Aquarium a \$1.5 million grant through the Governor's Capital Budget that was approved by the Legislature, while grants from Anne Arundel, Harford, Howard, and Baltimore Counties continued to fund the Aquarium's well-received education programs.

INTRODUCING THE ALL-NEW WWW.AQUA.ORG

With the March launch of its new web site, the Aquarium increased on-line ticket sales by more than 100%; introduced a virtual seahorse tour; broadcast interviews with marine mammal staff; sent AquaMail subscribers monthly updates; provided holiday shoppers with unique Internet gift opportunities; and was named an Outstanding Web Site by WebAwards.com

CONGRATS FOR AQUA PARTNERS GRADS

The Aquarium hosted two festive family nights for the first "graduates" of Aqua Partners — the Aquarium's free, Chesapeake Bay discovery program for fourth and fifth graders at 11 "adopted" Baltimore City schools. Fifteen hundred students received congratulations from Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley and City Council President Sheila Dixon.

MILESTONES FOR OCEAN HEALTH

The Aquarium's Marine Animal Rescue Program celebrated its 50th release, a Kemp's ridley sea turtle, since program inception in 1991. Ocean Awareness Days at Ocean City, Maryland, showed a record 3,300 beach-goers how to have fun while still being stewards of ocean health.

A MAJOR GRANT FOR TRACKING

The Institute for Museum and Library Sciences awarded a prestigious \$197,000 grant to the Aquarium for the continued development of TRACKS, the hi-tech information system for managing the animals in our care.

2003 *operating* HIGHLIGHTS

The Aquarium's significant achievements were not accomplished easily or alone. Our plans and good intentions continue to become realities only through cooperation, alliances, and partnerships formed with individuals, groups and institutions that share our commitment to the protection and preservation of the environment. You can become a partner in sharing the Aquarium's vision by making a contribution, planning a legacy gift, or becoming a corporate sponsor. Call 410-576-3876 for more information.

REVENUES	<i>dollars</i>	<i>percent</i>
Admissions	\$ 14,300,535	33.3
Contributions & Grants	8,745,953	20.3
General Memberships	2,128,469	4.9
Gift Shop	3,899,297	9.1
Groups & Education Programs Revenue	2,768,503	6.4
Catered Events	1,340,496	3.1
Corporate & Promotional Revenue	968,541	2.3
Investment Revenue	132,022	0.3
<i>Change in beneficial interest in the assets of the National Aquarium in Baltimore Foundation, Inc.</i>	8,718,253	20.3
	\$ 43,002,069	100.0
EXPENSES		
Plant Operations	\$ 5,205,525	12.1
Depreciation & Amortization	5,172,084	12.0
Biological Programs	5,460,888	12.7
Visitor Operations	2,790,751	6.5
Education	3,151,514	7.3
Catered Events	213,057	0.6
Memberships	712,109	1.7
Cost of Sales & Direct Expenses of Gift Shop	3,052,572	7.1
General & Administrative	3,930,034	9.1
Marketing	3,618,436	8.4
Development	1,045,105	2.4
	\$ 34,352,075	79.9
<i>Change in net assets</i>	8,649,994	20.1
	\$ 43,002,069	100.0
ATTENDANCE		<i>number of visitors</i>
General Admissions		1,042,541
Education		161,813
Group Sales		145,417
Members		164,329
Other		15,979
<i>Total attendance</i>		1,530,079

The above operating highlights cover the calendar year 2003 for the National Aquarium in Baltimore, Inc. and, since the date of affiliation, September 2003, for the National Aquarium Society, Inc., and are based upon information contained in the audited consolidated financial statements of the National Aquarium in Baltimore, Inc. Copies of this report are available for examination by responsible parties at the Aquarium's offices located at 501 E. Pratt Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. Documents filed in accordance with the Maryland Charitable Organizations Solicitations Act may be obtained from the Maryland Secretary of State.

leadership

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