

International Sawfish Day - Connecting Public Aquaria, Research and Field Conservation to Secure a Future for Sawfish.

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1. The Dallas World Aquarium

2. The Deep

3. National Aquarium Baltimore

4. Ripleys Aquarium Myrtle Beach

The first International Sawfish Day, dedicated to increasing awareness of sawfish, was held on October 17, 2017. This annual event was established through collaboration of the Sawfish Studbook and Species Survival Plans of the European and American Associations of Zoos and Aquariums, and through partnership with the Sawfish Conservation Society (SCS). More than 60 participating organizations from around the world including public aquaria, conservation agencies and research facilities held celebrations and events, shared messages and images on social media, and otherwise spread the word about these amazing animals. Social media posts and interactive events at public aquaria and zoos reached hundreds of thousands of people in the days leading up to, including, and following International Sawfish Day. Fundraising efforts by The Deep, SCS and others contributed to sawfish field programs in the Sudan. In addition to the awareness generated for sawfish this program helped to strengthen the collaborative relationships between the public aquarium community and research and field conservation organizations. Plans are in place for the second annual event to be held on October 17, 2018, and the momentum from the first event will be carried forth in future years solidifying efforts to strengthen both *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and research efforts, with the intent that along with increased awareness about sawfish, these actions will generate additional funding in the future for important sawfish conservation and research projects. The role that public aquaria play in sawfish conservation is critical. We serve as conduits for information exchange, and potential sources for funding, but more importantly we have the unique ability to connect people with living sawfish which can make a lasting impression and ultimately help secure a future for sawfish on this water planet.