

## **FASCINATING AND LESSER KNOWN FUN FACTS**

*A visit to the Mani Ocean Center can be an unforgettable and educational experience.*

### *Did you know?*

Hawaii's coral reefs comprise more than 80% of the reefs in the entire United States.

Most corals contain both male and female reproductive organs and are able to reproduce asexually as well.

In old Hawaii, the skeleton of black coral was ground to a fine powder and used medicinally to treat lung problems, as well as sores around the mouths of children.

Coral polyps are actually transparent. The vibrant color of coral comes from the symbiotic algae *zooxanthellae* living within the coral polyp.

Approximately one-fourth of Hawaii's reef fishes and corals are found nowhere else on Earth.

The *humuhumunukunuuapua'a* (the reef triggerfish) is once again the official state fish of Hawaii, after several years of being 'unofficial' after its designation expired.

Triggerfishes are among several types of fishes called *pua'a kai* (sea pig) and are considered acceptable substitutes in Hawaiian religious ceremonies in which a pig would normally be offered.

In the Hawaiian culture, one legend says that the eggs laid by some *nobu* (scorpionfish) hatch into sharks.

The sargassum fish, a type of frogfish, travels the world's oceans disguised as a clump of seaweed.

Tuna are one of the few fishes that are warm-bodied and are capable of maintaining muscle temperatures warmer than the surrounding water.

Pufferfishes contain a potent neuro-toxin which, when ingested, attacks the nervous system and can result in paralysis.

Surgeonfish are named for the sharp spine at the base of their tail, much like a surgeon's scalpel.

Flounder and other flatfish are born with eyes on both sides of their body, but as they mature the eye on the bottom side will actually migrate to the top.

The Hawaiian cleaner wrasse, endemic to Hawaii, provides an important service to other fishes by massaging them and removing any parasites. Fishes congregate and wait for their turn at the wrasse's "cleaning stations".

*Moi* (six-fingered threadfin) were among the most edible fishes stocked and harvested in Hawaiian fishponds, called *loko'ia*. The old Hawaiians believed that when the *moi* appeared in large numbers it was a bad omen foretelling disaster for chiefs, such as death.

Male seahorses carry and give birth to their young, sometimes as many as 200 babies at a time.

Sea jellies have no eyes, no respiratory system, and no brain.

Sea stars have two stomachs; one of them can actually come right out of the body to engulf and digest food externally, while the other stomach continues the digestion process internally.

The *'alo'alo* (giant mantis shrimp) are reported to pair up with a single mate for up to 15 years or longer.

The ancient Hawaiians used the slate-pencil sea urchin as pencils when dried and lipstick when wet, because of its long-lasting red pigment.

Lobster blood is actually a clear fluid.

Octopuses are distant cousins of marine snails.

Octopuses are intelligent animals with excellent eyesight and the ability to change color and texture.

Giant squid can reach lengths of over 40 feet, putting them among the largest invertebrates on the planet.

Marine mammals and many fish sleep with only half of their brain at a time.

All Humpback whales can make social sounds, but only males actually sing and do so primarily during the winter breeding season.

Sharks are the oldest group of jawed fishes alive today, with a fossil record dating back about 450 million years.

The whale shark is the largest fish in the sea, reaching a length of 40 feet or more. Their appearance in Hawaiian waters is sporadic.

The ancient Hawaiians believed that *mano* (sharks) were *na 'aumakua* (deified ancestors or personal gods) and that this guardian would protect them while at sea.

The *mano lalakea* (whitetip shark) is one of the few sharks that can sit still and take oxygen from the water without constantly swimming around like other sharks.

Sharks have special electroreceptor organs called *Ampullae of Lorenzini* which help them detect electric fields produced by living animals and find their prey more efficiently.

Green sea turtles are named for the green color of their flesh, not their outwardly appearance.

*Discover these facts and more at Maui Ocean Center, The Hawaiian Aquarium.*

The mission of Maui Ocean Center is to foster understanding, wonder and respect for Hawaii's marine life. Maui Ocean Center was named "Top 25 Best Aquariums in the U.S." and inducted into "Certificate of Excellence Hall of Fame 2015" by TripAdvisor, "Top-Rated Attraction in Hawaii" by Zagat Survey US Family Travel Guide, "Leader In Responsible Tourism" on the Top 100 Blue List by Islands Magazine, and "Best Land Activity" in 2008, 2009, 2011 by the readers of The Maui News. Open daily from 9 to 5, and from 9 to 6 in July and August. For more information please contact the Maui Ocean Center: 192 Ma'alaea Road; Ma'alaea, HI 96793; telephone (808) 270-7000, facsimile (808) 270-7070, e-mail: [info@mauiocenter.com](mailto:info@mauiocenter.com) or visit [www.mauiocenter.com](http://www.mauiocenter.com).

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