

ARIZONA-SONORA
**DESERT
MUSEUM**



MEDIA RELEASE

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An Aquarium in the Desert?
Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Announces its New Warden Aquarium
Presenting “*Rivers to the Sea*”

Tucson, AZ (July 23, 2012) – Any interpretation of the Sonoran Desert region would be incomplete without recognizing the importance of the fresh water rivers that flow through it and the Sonoran Sea, more commonly known as the Sea of Cortez or Gulf of California. The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is creating a dramatic, new permanent aquarium dedicated to revealing the remarkable story of this miraculous region in December 2012.

“Without this sea and the summer monsoon that brings moisture from it, the lush Sonoran Desert known today would be an entirely different place,” state Craig Ivanyi, Executive Director of the Museum. “This body of water truly represents a full half of the Sonoran Desert Region – literally 100,000 square miles of desert-ocean and an astounding 900 islands!”

(more)

This exhibition, “*Rivers to the Sea*”, in the new Warden Aquarium, will highlight the roles of the region’s rivers, including the mighty Colorado, and the Gulf of California. Two galleries are planned: one highlighting the region’s freshwater rivers and aquatic life and the other featuring the Sea of Cortez and representative sea life. Primary funding for the new exhibition was generously provided by the Bert W. Martin Foundation.

The galleries will encompass over 1,100 square feet and include 14 tanks displaying a variety of fresh- and salt-water sea life. Some of the Museum’s numerous aquatic conservation projects impacting many aquatic species will be highlighted in the galleries.

The exhibition area will also include a touch tank with marine invertebrates, like sea stars and hermit crabs, for a hands-on encounter for visitors. A visit to the new Warden Aquarium will be included with the purchase of a general admission ticket.

The Sea of Cortez is extremely diverse containing one of the world’s smallest and most endangered marine mammals, the vaquita, a rare type of porpoise, migratory whales that no longer migrate, over 800 types of fish, five species of sea turtles, and the little-known American crocodile. In addition to the varied species of wildlife, the Sea of Cortez provides much of the moisture for the region’s summer rains which have tremendously influenced vegetation on the terrestrial part of the Sonoran Desert Region.

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is one of the nation’s leading outdoor, living museums, featuring more than 230 animals and 1,200 varieties of desert plants. Its mission is to inspire people to live in harmony with the natural world by fostering love, appreciation, and understanding of the dual-nation, Sonoran Desert. The museum is located at 2021 N. Kinney Road, in Tucson Mountain Park adjacent to Saguaro National Park (West). It is open daily year round with operating hours varying by season. Call (520) 883-2702 or visit www.desertmuseum.org for more information.

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