



A NATIONAL FILM BOARD

Release

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AQUARIUM HUNT .
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THE VANCOUVER PUBLIC AQUARIUM'S BOAT "AQUARIUS" GOES HUNTING
FOR MARINE LIFE OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST
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Vancouver, B.C., 1961

The Vancouver Public Aquarium in Stanley Park, Vancouver, is visited by over a quarter million people each year. The 70 glass tanks range from 12 to 12,000 gals. with varied live displays of fish from all over the world. But the basic purpose of the aquarium is to enable visitors to gaze in fascinated awe at the marine life of the coastal waters of the Pacific Northwest.

The aquarium was built in 1956 -- the first public aquarium in Canada, jointly financed by the Federal, Provincial and City Governments. It is operated by the Vancouver Public Aquarium Association -- a non-profit organization.

At first, the aquarium was dependent on commercial fishermen for many of the exhibits. Recently, the Association purchased a 30' cod boat equipped with live tank walls amidships, drag nets and trolling lines. Being a water carrier, the boat is well-named AQUARIUS. Dr. Murray Newman, the Curator, and his staff are now able to go hunting for their own displays and are able to gather specimen from all depths of water. Most are caught within a few miles of Vancouver in the Strait of Georgia, English Bay and Vancouver Harbour itself. The set lines are 600' long with 100 hooks on each line. The barbs are bent over in order not to damage the fish. With an anchor and float at each end, the long set lines are put adrift in the water and picked up two or three hours later. On these lines, they catch dog fish sharks, rat fish, red snappers, rock fish, lingcod and skate.

Most of the colorful specimens such as star fish, sea anemones and octopus cannot be caught on lines. Co-operative skin diving enthusiasts assist Dr. Newman on his trips. The most popular exhibit in the aquarium is the octopus, which is also one of the most difficult fish to catch. Divers Ken O'Neil and Gil Saunier have developed a technique of gathering octopi unharmed. On previous diving sessions they located an octopus den under wharf pilings at Horseshoe Bay, about twelve miles from Vancouver. Likely dens are spotted by empty crab shells -- the crab being the favourite food of octopi. The octopus cannot be dragged from its home because of the tremendous holding power of its tentacles. Spearing, of course, is out when live specimens are wanted. Ken and Gil have a chemical which they inject into the octopus -- this acts as a tranquilizer,

making the octopus manageable long enough to be brought to the surface. The Pacific octopus is the largest in the world in coastal waters. The one shown in our story is a youngster -- it weighs about 20 pounds and is about five feet wide. The divers have captured ones up to 70 pounds and over eight feet wide. Once on deck, the 20 pound octopus is put into a large tub rather than the boat well as it will be easier to get it out of the tub and to place it in the aquarium.

The divers bring up brightly colored -- purple and orange -- star fish, sea anemones, and a sea cucumber. The giant star fish are slow moving but are some of the most colorful in the aquarium. There are 92 varieties of star fish in vivid reds, oranges and purples. The largest in the world are found in the Pacific northwest. The sunflower star fish can have up to 25 arms and be two and one-half feet across -- one of these is shown in our story.

The Vancouver Aquarium has a collection of fish from many corners of the world, but the Aquarius brings to the thousands of visitors a visual knowledge of Vancouver's own watery back yard.

1. MS men preparing and carrying equipment to boat
2. MS equipment being loaded into boat
3. MCS diving equipment being loaded
4. CS name of boat - AQUARIUS
5. MS pan right to left with boat leaving dock
6. CU crew member in parka
7. MS crew member dressed in souwester
8. CS pulling in nets
9. MS same as above
10. CS nets being pulled aboard
11. CS curator in souwester
12. CS nets being emptied of fish, into container aboard boat
13. CU five-armed pink starfish being taken out of container
14. MCS crew sorting out contents of container
15. CU specimen being placed in bucket
16. MS pan right to left with bow of Aquarius
17. MC crew members and divers - diver preparing to go overboard
18. CS diver putting on goggles
19. MCS diver over side
20. MCS second diver as above
21. MC diver bringing up five-armed starfish and handing to crew
22. MS curator and crew member examining five-armed pink starfish and placing it into boat tank
23. MS two divers on surface
24. MCS diver on surface with octopus
25. MCS two divers in water, one with octopus
26. CS diver on surface with octopus
27. MS diver placing octopus into net and crew placing it into bucket on board boat
28. CS curator
29. MS curator and divers examining octopus in bucket
30. CU octopus being handled in bucket
31. CU outside shot of the Vancouver Public Aquarium in Stanley Park with tourist

32. MLS tourists entering squarium
33. CU sign "New Pacific Octopus"
34. MCS sign "Giant Lingcod from the Strait of Georgia" with reflections of tourists in glass
35. MS interior of aquarium with staff member placing fish in tank
36. CS sunflower starfish being placed into tank, and others
37. MCS staff member lifting net with octopus and placing it into tank
38. MCS as seen through glass of tank, octopus being lowered from net and crab taking off in haste
39. CU sunflower starfish as seen through glass of tank
40. CU heads of two giant lingcod in tank
41. MCS tank with various sharks in it
42. LS same as above with tourists looking through glass, and with long-nosed skate faintly seen in background