

Ratfish Ring In Lunar New Year of the Rat at Underwater World Singapore

Singapore, 29 January 2008 – Yet another creative treat awaits visitors to Underwater World Singapore (UWS) this Lunar New Year! The oceanarium takes festive revelry to new heights with the launch of the Spotted Ratfish that will be enclosed within the world's largest Zodiac Wheel of Fortune Tank. This latest interactive exhibit, in the shape of an ancient gold coin spans 3 metres in diameter.

While the 12 zodiac signs of the Chinese calendar embellish the outer edge of the gold coin, its inner rim carries 12 auspicious words such as prosperity, success, happiness and peace. In the spirit of the New Year, visitors at UWS during this bustling celebratory period can take a chance to find out what's in store for them in the coming year. By simply inserting a \$1 coin into the specially made machine, it would activate a running light that would stop at one of the auspicious words. Monies collected would be donated in full to Rainbow Centre Balestier Special School which serves children with multiple disabilities and disabilities associated with neurological conditions.

Measuring up to a metre in length, the Spotted Ratfish (*Hydrolagus colliei*) is a type of chimaera, considered as the missing link between cartilaginous (sharks and rays) and bony fish. Found in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans, the Spotted Ratfish's natural habitat is at the ocean floor up to 3,000 feet deep. Its diet includes crabs, clams, shrimps, worms, small fishes and sea stars. The Spotted Ratfish is identified by its distinct, pointed rat-like tail and rodent-like teeth, with speckled white dots on its body. A venomous spine is located at the front of its dorsal fin. Males have a special "clasper" on their head to facilitate mating.

Dr Jeffrey Mahon, Curatorial Director of UWS commenting on the rationale behind their latest exhibit, "In celebration of The 'Year of the Rat', we have acquired a rare animal - the Spotted Ratfish, found in cold deep waters and we will display them in an unusual setting. We are confident that visitors will enjoy this unique combination."

Mr Kwek Meng Tiam, General Manager of Underwater World Singapore, commented on the unique displays, "At UWS we constantly seek to present fresh and unique exhibits to enhance the experience of every visitor. To welcome the Lunar New Year of the Rat, we are displaying the Ratfish in this specially designed Wheel of Fortune Tank in the shape of a gold coin which symbolizes wealth and good fortune, with auspicious wishes for happiness, longevity, good health and prosperity for the year ahead!"



About Underwater World Singapore

Underwater World Singapore is a wholly owned subsidiary of Haw Par Corporation. Situated on Sentosa Island, this leisure and educational attraction showcases the rich variety of marine life to be found around the region, with educational and recreational activities available here.

The Dolphin Lagoon, an attraction of Underwater World Singapore houses the Indo-Pacific Humpbacked Dolphins, commonly known as pink dolphins for its coat of "bubbly" pink in contrast to the usual grey appearance of dolphins. At the "Meet-the-Dolphin" sessions, visitors can enjoy a close encounter with these adorable pink creatures.

At Underwater World Singapore, our mission goes beyond making our guests aware of the fascinating marine life. Our commitment to marine conservation and environmental awareness is demonstrated through our work in public education, breeding, rescue and rehabilitation, and research. Underwater World Singapore reinforces its environmental efforts through educational exhibits and a variety of education programmes to children and other guests. School visits are actively supported, and a number of new educational programmes are planned. Underwater World Singapore has also been very active in providing special programmes and assistance to the physically and mentally disabled.

About Rainbow Centre

Established in 1992, Rainbow Centre, is one of Singapore's most established non-profit organizations registered with the Registry of Societies under the Charity Act to provide quality early intervention centres and special education schools for children with special needs. Rainbow Centre's programmes serve children with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, autistic spectrum disorder, multiple disabilities and disabilities associated with neurological conditions. It also serves their parents with the foundation, skills and support to meet their needs and to optimize their child's development and ability to participate in family and community life.

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