



## Miami's Seaquarium

The Miami Seaquarium is a 38-acre oceanarium located on the island of Virginia Key in Biscayne Bay, Miami-Dade County, Florida, United States and is located near downtown Miami. Founded in 1955, it is one of the oldest oceanariums in the United States. In addition to marine mammals, the Miami Seaquarium houses fish, sharks, sea turtles, birds, reptiles, and manatees. The park offers daily presentations and hosts overnight camps, events for boy scouts, and group programs. Over 500,000 people visit the facility annually. The park has around 225 employees, and its lease payments and taxes make it the third-largest contributor to Miami-Dade County's revenue.

The park was founded by Fred D. Coppock and Captain W.B. Gray and was the second marine-life attraction in Florida. When it opened in 1955, it was the largest marine-life attraction in the world.

The park's first orca was Hugo, named after Hugo Vihlen. Hugo was captured in February, 1968 in Vaughn Bay. Shortly after his capture, Hugo was flown to the Miami Seaquarium where he was held in a small pool for two years. Over the course of 10 years, judging by his behavior, it was clear that Hugo didn't adjust to his life in captivity. Hugo would regularly bang his head against the walls of the tank. On March 4, 1980, Hugo died of a brain aneurysm.

From 1963 through 1967, eighty-eight episodes of the 1960s TV show *Flipper* and two movies starring Flipper were filmed at the Miami Seaquarium. From 1963 to 1991, the Seaquarium also had the Miami Seaquarium Spacerrail, which was the first hanging monorail in the United States.

In 2014 Miami Seaquarium was bought by Palace Entertainment.

One of the Miami Seaquarium's attractions is Lolita, the world's oldest captive orca. She is currently the park's only orca. Lolita arrived at the Miami Seaquarium in 1970, where she joined the park's first orca, Hugo. Hugo died in 1980, and animal rights activists have long argued that the tank doesn't meet federal minimum requirements under the Animal Welfare Act, and the USDA has recently made statements in support of the activists' argument.

On January 24, 2014 the National Marine Fisheries Service proposed amending the Endangered Species Act to remove the exception that did not include Lolita as part of the ESA-listed Southern Resident population of orcas that live in Washington and British Columbia waters. Activists were hopeful that this might lead to a healthy retirement in a sea pen and possibly an eventual release and reuniting with her pod which is believed by some to include her mother. [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miami\\_Seaquarium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miami_Seaquarium)]

