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May 9, 2025

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THE SHARKS ARE COMING: The Grand Rapids Public Museum Splashes Into Summer with Blockbuster *Sharks* Exhibit

GRAND RAPIDS, MI - *Sharks*, a new blockbuster exhibition from the Australian Museum, is set to take center stage at the Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM) for a three-month appearance starting June 7, 2025. Highlighting the latest science, and with deep cultural overlays, *Sharks* invites visitors to explore the diversity of these ancient fishes.

Sharks invites families, students, and enthusiasts into a world dominated by members of the shark family to explore their genetic diversity, territories, interactions, and significance to ocean ecosystems.

Visitors will encounter nine life-sized, scientifically accurate models, including the now extinct 270-million-year-old *Helicoprion* (also known as the Buzzsaw Shark); the Bull Shark, which lives in freshwater for extended periods of time; and the Great White Shark, one of the most famous (and feared) species of shark. Other sharks on display include the Tiger Shark, Grey Nurse Shark, and Hammerhead Shark.

Visitors will learn about sharks through artifacts and tactile displays, which include touchables such as a megalodon jaw, shark skin recreations, and a Great White tooth. Immersive and interactive displays allow guests to navigate through a shark's body via a 3-D interactive scan, adapt a shark to evolve and survive in different environments, and see the world in a 360-degree view, through the eyes of a Hammerhead Shark. Large projections and a specially designed 'oceanarium' showcasing the majesty and power of sharks swimming through the ocean create a dramatic immersive experience.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a quarter of the world's sharks are threatened with extinction. The exhibition presents the very latest information on conservation, sharks' impact on oceans, and efforts to protect sharks. Shark safety is also highlighted, enabling visitors to make informed choices.

"People love sharks and we can't wait to welcome community members of all ages to explore and learn about this diverse and resilient species," said Matt Witkowski, the GRPM's VP of Marketing and Public Relations. "The exhibit is equal parts fun and educational, immersing visitors in rich visuals, compelling storytelling, and expertly crafted models that offer fresh perspectives on this often misunderstood species."

On June 6, 2025, starting at 5 p.m., the night before *Sharks* opens to the public, GRPM members will have exclusive access to explore the exhibit's 100 specimens, 9 life-sized shark models, hands-on displays, and more. Members can enjoy shark-themed activities, a cash bar that will include a sharky mocktail for kids, and access to all 3 floors of the Museum. There is still time to become a member and attend this special preview.

In anticipation of this exhibit's arrival at the GRPM, Shark has landed at Gerald R. Ford International Airport and will be touring around the city as a special promotion for the exhibit. The GRPM is asking community members where Shark should go next. Shark is excited to check out The Blue Bridge, Calder Plaza, Art Prize murals, and more!

This exhibit will be on display at the GRPM through August 31, 2025. To learn more about this exhibit, visit grpm.org/sharks

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Grand Rapids Public Museum

The Grand Rapids Public Museum is a 170-year-old, publicly-owned institution home to more than 250,000 unique artifacts that tell the history of Kent County and beyond. Funded in part by Kent County taxpayers through a 10-year millage (2016), the Grand Rapids Public Museum offers three floors of exhibits, the region's only planetarium, extensive educational offerings, and protection of The Mounds, a National Historic Landmark. The Grand Rapids Public Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, with its primary location in downtown Grand Rapids, MI at 272 Pearl Street, NW. For additional information including hours of operation, admission fees including Kent County discounts, and exhibit/event listings, visit grpm.org.

Australian Museum

The Australian Museum (AM) was founded in 1827 and is Australia's first museum. It is internationally recognized as a natural science and culture institution focused on Australia and the Pacific. The AM's mission is to ignite wonder, inspire debate and drive change. The AM's vision is to be a leading voice for the richness of life, the Earth and culture in Australia and the Pacific. The AM commits to transforming the conversation around climate change, the environment and wildlife conservation; to being a strong advocate for First Nations cultures; and to continuing to develop world-leading science, collections, exhibitions and education programs. With 22 million objects and specimens and the Australian Museum Research Institute (AMRI), the AM is not only a dynamic source of reliable scientific information on some of the most pressing environmental and social challenges facing our region, but also an important site of cultural exchange and learning.