



FAMILY DAY | Shark Day: Beyond Jaws!

Saturday July 27, 2024

1-5pm

Gant Science Complex Light Court, UConn Storrs, CT

Join the CSMNH and friends to experience the remarkable diversity of sharks and their relatives at **Shark Day: Beyond Jaws!**

The Museum is celebrating Shark Week with our very own exploration of sharks and rays, members of the group of cartilaginous fish known as elasmobranchs.

- Learn about the world's biggest shark, the world's smallest shark, and some of the world's weirdest sharks
- Touch real shark skin
- View real preserved shark and ray jaws
- Learn how sharks hunt for prey using special grasping, crushing, and tearing teeth
- Be a shark detective to uncover little known facts and win a fossil shark tooth

We aim for you to come away from the day with an appreciation of the wild diversity of sharks and rays!

Family Days are free and open to the public!

Visit csmnh.uconn.edu/programs for more details and parking information.

If you require any accommodations to participate in this event, please contact the CSMNH at 860-486- 4460 or CSMNHinfo@uconn.edu by **Monday July 15, 2024**.

The Connecticut State Museum of Natural History is part of the Institute of the Environment at the University of Connecticut

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fascinated by the Great White Shark? You haven't seen anything yet!

Storrs, CT – When most people think of sharks they might think of “Jaws,” “Baby Shark,” or even “Sharknado.” What they may not realize is the Great White that inspired these pop culture shark stories is only one of the over 1,300 species of sharks and stingrays found around the world.

The Connecticut State Museum of Natural History is celebrating Shark Week with a deep dive exploration of sharks and rays. Sharks and rays are members of the group of cartilaginous fish known as elasmobranchs. At “Shark Day: Beyond Jaws!”, discover the wild variety of sharks and their relatives, including species that are new to science. Learn about the world’s biggest and smallest sharks, and some of the world’s weirdest sharks. Original photographs of rarely seen sharks and rays from some of the most remote places on the planet will be on display.

A highlight of the afternoon will be an exhibition of real shark and ray jaws. See how the jaws of sharks and their relatives differ based on the types of prey they consume. There will be opportunities to touch real shark skin, compare large and small jaws, and learn how sharks hunt for prey using special grasping, crushing, and tearing teeth.

The CSMNH will also unveil the most complete evolutionary tree showing the relationships among all living elasmobranchs. This work is based on molecular data for hundreds of species of sharks and their relatives. It is the result of a decades-long research project exploring the diversity of sharks and stingrays around the globe. Visitors will learn what this research tells us about these ancient predators.

After a very successful collaboration at the “What Makes a Treehopper Family Day,” the [Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry](#) in UConn’s School of Fine Arts is back to help resurrect a *Megalodon* jaw through a hands-on puppet-making activity. Workshop leaders from the Ballard

will be on hand to help puppeteers of all ages construct a *Megalodon* “tooth.” Participants are challenged to inscribe their tooth with a shark fact from the exhibits and add it to our life size *Megalodon* jaw to win a fossil shark tooth of their own. For those wishing to enjoy a full day in Storrs, the Ballard is hosting a free performance of *Judy Saves the Day* by Sarah Nolen at 11am at their location in Downtown Storrs. Visit their website bimp.uconn.edu for more information!

Family Days are free and open to the public! “Shark Day: Beyond Jaws!” will be held on **Saturday, July 27 from 1-5pm at UConn Storrs** in the [Gant Science Complex Light Court on N. Eagleville Rd.](#) Parking is available in the North Parking Garage, next to the venue. There is also limited on-street parking on N. Eagleville Rd. Visit csmnh.uconn.edu/programs for additional information.

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Family Days are interactive learning experiences for visitors of all ages. Natural history and biology are explored through hands-on activities assisted by researchers, students, and experts from different disciplines. The Museum would like to thank all of those who helped make this Family Day possible. In particular, the Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (EEB) and the research groups associated with Museum Director Dr. Janine Caira and UConn alum Dr. Kirsten Jensen '01 Ph.D. at the University of Kansas. A special thank you to the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry for developing the *Megalodon* Jaw activity and to our media sponsor Connecticut Public for their invaluable support.

The Connecticut State Museum of Natural History is a unit of the Institute of the Environment at the University of Connecticut.

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