

The Amazon

The Amazon – an area in South America, which has been fascinating to scholars of nature for decades. It is a land as beautiful and mysterious as it is wild and dangerous. Years of research by scientists from various fields of science allow us to look at this area of the world as the greatest treasure of nature, one that Mother Nature endowed the earth.

The explosion of life that has happened here is reflected even in the smallest slice of the rainforest. ‘Green lungs of the planet’ – how the Amazon forest is also called – is a home to thousands of species of plants and animals living in terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

We invite you to observe up close the underwater world of the Amazon, in which we meet ‘eye to eye’ with the largest freshwater fish, the Arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*), or with one of the most voracious piranhas (*Pygocentrus nattereri*). We can also observe the behavior of the river stingrays – a freshwater fish as if taken straight from the ocean depths. We can also get a glimpse on life of a fish from the cichlid fish family (*Cichla ocellaris*).

The diversity and richness of this environment is a blessing and a curse. The area of tropical Amazon rainforest is systematically shrinking due to overexploitation of natural resources and deforestation. In order to prevent the complete degradation of the ‘Green lungs of the planet’, one should be aware of the destructive power of man while admiring the beauty of the Amazon’s environment.

Tanganyika

The Tanganyika– it is the longest lake in the world and second only to Lake Baikal in terms of depth. It is one of the African Great Lakes region formed millions of years ago as a result of Earth’s tectonic movements. The lake stretches between the territory of Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Tanzania.

The isolation of the Tanganyika lake water reservoir with an area of 34.4 thousand square kilometers (13,282 square miles) caused the inhabiting fauna to be very specific, with the majority of more than several hundred species of fish to be endemic. A particular developmental success was achieved by fish of the *Cichlidae* Family. (Cichlids – containing more than 200 species, including the genus of *Tropheus*, *Petrochromis*, *Cyphotilapia*, *Cyprichromis*). These fish evolved to have the ability to care for their offsprings from the time of spawning until the fry reaches the point of total self-reliance. Although the number of laid eggs is small, the survival rate is close to 100%, since the cichlids offsprings incubate in adult mouths along with the larvae. Fish from catfish genus (*Synodontis multipunctatus*) are able to use this ability to take care of cichlid fish, but they lack the same capability when it comes to their own young, therefore they toss their roe to the other fish (cichlids) which unwittingly provide security for catfish offsprings. This situation resembles that of the cuckoo and therefore the catfish are called ‘cuckoos of Lake Tanganyika.’

There are many other interesting behaviors that can be observed in Tanganyika’s fish. A special opportunity to learn about fauna specifics of the largest African lake, is given by the exposure

representing the coastal section of Lake Tanganyika. The spectacle of life that takes place in this water reservoir is a unique phenomenon, and now you can observe it too.

Polish River

Polish rivers are a habitat of many species of fauna and flora. Despite the fact that we have them at our arm's length, there are very few who notice the richness of life of the surrounding nature. The river is most often associated with summer vacation that we deserve after year's work, but less with a home to many species of fish and plants.

Typically, one may know basic names of fish species from Polish waters, but are we also able to describe their appearance and behavior in natural environment?

Standing in front of the aquarium presenting Polish river environment, a thought rises, that the diversity of the underwater world is not solely a feature of the Earth's tropical regions. Variety of shapes, colors and diversity of behaviors impresses even experienced aquarists. In the tank, besides predators such as perch or trout, we can also observe the herbivorous fish. Encounter with Polish nature represented by the slice of 'underwater life of the river' will probably result in an equally 'exotic' sensation as when visiting the rest of the 'aquarium pavilion'. The aim of this exposition is to change the view on the surrounding nature and to raise the level of care for the environment in which our native fish species live.

Southeast Asia Rivers

Southeast Asia is associated with green and damp land including Indochina and the Malay Archipelago along with the Philippines. The aquatic environment in this part of the world is very diverse. Most aquatic plants grown in home aquariums come from Asia. In the aquarist world, there is a separate discipline dealing solely with the arrangement of planted aquariums. One type of such container is called the 'Dutch aquarium'. This distinctive kind of aquatic presentation, aquarists named after the Dutch people, who first presented the decorative aquarium designed primarily for plant propagation. It is characterized by a small selection or even the lack of fish with carefully selected plant composition.

Looking at the aquarium presenting South-East Asia environment, you will not miss the pleasure of observation of lush vegetation, which surprises with color and shape of individual species. Also fauna is represented by numerous species of fish. In particular, characteristically for this environment, they are representatives of the minnow family (*Puntius denisoni*, *Puntius tetrazona*) and *Botiidae* subfamily. These fish, being residents of smaller rivers and streams, do not reach very large sizes. There are also much bigger fish (*Pangasius sutchi*) that are a 'safe' company for smaller species.

This exhibition's character complements the visitors' experience of Tanganyika's severity, Amazon's power or the Vistula's coldness.