

# Holy water: Jerusalem aquarium set to open

Jerusalem is a good distance from the sea, but residents and visitors will soon be able to view specimens of Israel's marine life in a mass aquarium to open in the Holy City.



Photo: Fun in Jerusalem

The new compound, part of the city's Biblical Zoo, contains 30 tanks comprising a 7,000 square-metre aquarium with fish and sea creatures living in half a million gallons of seawater.

The aquarium's inception was nearly 10 years ago, a combination of the zoo receiving additional grounds and a national plan to increase awareness of marine life.

With all the growing awareness to biodiversity, "we are ignoring the sea as a habitat," Shai Doron, CEO of the zoo, told reporters on Wednesday.

Israel is located between the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the Red Sea to the south, and also has two other bodies of water nearby in the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

Varieties of fish, sea turtles, manta rays and seahorses are among the creatures found in the aquarium's vast tanks, with sharks expected to join soon.

The indoor complex, decorated in hues of blue and wavey lines, is expected to be a boon to the zoo and local tourism.

The zoo is already Israel's most visited paid tourism site, with over 750,000 people entering its gates each year.

Doron said the aquarium was the first of its kind in the Middle East and would open in a number of weeks.

Decorating the walls by the tanks are displays on themes such as jellyfish, corals, the dangers of plastic bags, and Jewish laws regarding eating seafood.

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