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AQUATICA'S ANIMALS *At a Glance*

Aquatica is home to an assortment of intriguing animals, from Commerson's dolphins and giant anteaters to brilliant birds and exotic fish. The first-of-its-kind waterpark showcases these amazing animals in a most playful and extraordinary setting. Animal highlights include:

COMMERSON'S DOLPHINS: Aquatica's most distinctive inhabitants, Commerson's dolphins are agile swimmers that average about 5 feet in length and weigh about 100 pounds. These diminutive dolphins are indigenous to South America, the Straits of Magellan, the Falkland Islands and the Kerguelen Islands in the southern Indian Ocean. Aquatica is home to the only Commerson's dolphins in the Southeastern United States.

Commerson's dolphins have distinctive black-and-white coloration, similar to a familiar relative of theirs - the killer whale. These small, swift dolphins often swim upside down - and can even feed in this position. Quick and playful, these animals bring Aquatica's fun, carefree personality to life.

There are several threats to this lovable dolphin species, including accidental entanglement in fishing nets and occasional hunting. Because of this, all species of dolphins and whales are protected by international law.

MACAWS: Macaws are large, brilliantly-colored parrots native to the rainforests of Central and South America. These social birds nest in tree hollows or on the sides of cliffs. Monogamous by nature, macaw pairs often fly side-by-side within a large flock.

Out of 14 macaw species, four are listed as critically endangered and four are extinct. Aquatica is home to three different species of macaw: blue-and-gold, military and green-winged.

AFRICAN CICHLIDS: Cichlids are an extremely diverse family of colorful fish, boasting more than 500 different species in just three African lakes alone. Most cichlids are found in freshwater lakes and rivers in tropical Africa, Central and South America, Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

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New species of cichlids are found every year. The most common cichlid species, the blue tilapia, is raised on fish farms around the world -- including the United States.

WALK-AROUND ANIMAL AMBASSADORS:

Aquatica's fun, carefree nature invites guests to play with the sea, but throughout their day, they'll encounter many animals that make their home on land. Guests will delight at special moments when they meet an anteater, or hear a kookaburra "laugh" out loud.

GIANT ANTEATER: The giant anteater is true to its name, feasting heartily on ants, termites and beetles. Occasionally, these 80- to 100-pound mammals eat fruit as well. The most distinguishing characteristic of the giant anteater is its tongue, which can reach up to two feet in length. Because anteaters don't have teeth, they use their long, narrow tongues to gather food. Anteaters have an extremely acute sense of smell -- about 40 times the range of a human being's.

Giant anteaters are indigenous to Southern Mexico, Central America and South America.

LAUGHING KOOKABURRA: Best known for making the jungle sounds in the old Tarzan movies, laughing kookaburras live in the forests of Eastern Australia and Tasmania -- nowhere near Tarzan's jungle home in Africa.

The largest of the kingfisher family, laughing kookaburras eat insects, amphibians, small reptiles and crabs. Their boisterous, lyrical calls bring smiles to the faces of children and adults alike.

SULCATA TORTOISE: One of the largest species of tortoise, the sulcata tortoise can weigh anywhere from 100 to 200 pounds and reach 2 ½ feet in length.

Often referred to as the African Spurred Tortoise, these weighty reptiles inhabit the southern edge of the Sahara desert in Northern Africa. They spend the hottest time of day burrowing into the ground.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL: The pink color of the roseate spoonbill comes from the food they eat, much like another long-legged wading bird, the flamingo.

Found in the Southern United States and Central and South America, spoonbills get their name from their long, flat, spoon-shaped bill.