

'Iconic' And 'Loveable': Remembering An Elderly Lungfish Named 'Granddad'

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The elderly lungfish had been in Chicago since the 1933 World's Fair. **Brenna Hernandez/Shedd Aquarium** **hide caption**

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Brenna Hernandez/Shedd Aquarium

For more than eight decades, an Australian lungfish named Granddad resided at Chicago's Shedd Aquarium. The beloved fish made the journey from Australia by steamboat and train to dazzle attendees of the legendary 1933 World's Fair.

Since then, the aquarium estimates some 104 million guests have seen the famous lungfish.

Granddad's long life has come to an end, after he was euthanized "due to a rapid decline in quality

of life associated with old age," [according to the aquarium](#).

Granddad was the "longest-lived of any fish in a zoological setting in the world," according to the aquarium. A spokesman for the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Rob Vernon, [tells The Associated Press](#) that "the nonprofit group is unaware of any older fish kept by a zoo or aquarium that it accredits in the U.S. or eight other countries."



Australian lungfish, "Granddad," circa 1933-1934 **Shedd Aquarium** **hide caption**

toggle caption

Shedd Aquarium

But Grandad is being fondly remembered for far more than simply his impressive age, which the aquarium [estimates at close to 100 years](#).

"For a fish who spent much of his time imitating a fallen log, he sparked curiosity, excitement and wonder among guests of all ages who would hear his story," the aquarium's president Bridget Coughlin tells the wire service.

"Granddad was an iconic resident and made dark brown, slow moving fish extremely loveable," said the [aquarium's Vice President of Public Relations](#) Andrea Rogers.

The aquarium released an obituary of more than 1,000 words for the four-foot-long fish, in which they describe the experience of visiting Granddad:

"Granddad delighted guests when several times an hour he would slowly rise from

his apparent torpor at the bottom of the habitat, slowly flap his large pectoral and pelvic fins, and slurp air at the surface. Behind the scenes, aquarists in the vicinity were occasionally startled by the long, loud snorts the fish made as he breathed."

The storied fish was also recognized for his diplomatic accomplishments. At a party marking his 80th anniversary at the museum, the Australian consul general presented the aquarium with a certificate that states, "Granddad exemplifies the tremendous relationship between the John G. Shedd Aquarium and the Government of Australia."

It was at that same party that the aquarium reckons Granddad had his fanciest-ever meal: a layered cake "filled with smelt, shrimp, yellow squash, carrots, potatoes, and green peas, decorated with seaweed, esca-role and silversides."

One Facebook user wrote a remembrance of Granddad, describing a role that the fish had in his wedding. "Granddad meant a lot to me," Nathan de Rover commented [on the aquarium's Facebook page](#). "In fact, in 2015, my wife and I got married at the aquarium right in front of his tank so he could be our witness."

The loss is most personal for those who cared for him daily. "Granddad outlived several generations of caregivers, and some current staff members never imagined that they'd see him gone during their careers," the aquarium wrote. "He seemed as permanent a fixture at Shedd as the terra cotta fishes that decorate the building inside and out."

Pathologists have carried out a necropsy and "confirmed the fish's age-related deterioration," according to the aquarium. They expect to be able to pinpoint Granddad's age because bones in lungfish ears add layers over the years — much like trees.