

Animal Fun Facts

- Are you a vegetarian? So are our Pacu fish from South America! They don't eat meat (it's probably not an ethical decision on their part), so we feed them on lettuce, tomatoes, zucchini and cucumbers.
- You may believe that garlic keeps vampires away, but it's a scientific fact that feeding garlic to our fish helps to keep parasites away. We're not sure if they appreciate the taste, but we certainly haven't received any complaints.
- Cleaning the inside of a big aquarium window with a squeegee when you are floating in the tank isn't easy as you might think, because applying the necessary pressure to the squeegee just pushes you away from window. That's why our divers use suction cups to hold themselves in place – a bit like Spiderman!
- If you think cleaning your carpets once a week with a light, ergonomically designed vacuum cleaner is a chore, spare a thought for our divers who have to vacuum the sandy bottom of our tanks every day with a big, awkward vacuum tube.
- Jellyfish feed on microscopic creatures called plankton. We can't buy plankton for them – who sells plankton after all? – so to keep all our 10 species of jellies happy we have to cultivate the plankton ourselves.
- How long is it since you had your last health check? Our dolphins and fur seals get a health check every day. And they don't have to pay for it!
- An important part of staying healthy is to avoid putting on too much weight. It's true for dolphins and fur seals too, so we check and record their weight every month, and adjust their diet if necessary. There's no obesity here!
- Good dental hygiene is important for the health of our animals, so all our dolphins and fur seals have their teeth brushed daily – each with their own personalised toothbrush no less.
- Being out of the water in bright sunlight for too long can damage the eyes of aquatic animals, so we put UV-protection drops into the eyes of our dolphins and fur seals before they take part in a programme. We did offer them sunglasses but the dolphins couldn't agree on the style.
- We monitor dolphin calves and seal pups very closely for the first few months of their lives to make sure they are nursing properly, and just as with human babies, you can tell a lot about their health from their poo!

- At Dolphin Bay you can swim or dive with our resident Indo-Pacific Bottlenose dolphins, named so because they have short stubby beaks. It's a great experience, and doesn't take much bottle!
- Most people take vitamin supplements nowadays, and so do our dolphins, because the thawed fish diet we feed them on lacks certain vitamins that dolphins in the wild would get naturally. We mix the vitamins in with their food, because that's a lot easier than persuading them to take tablets.
- Dolphins are highly intelligent and, just like us, need intellectual stimulation, so we've developed a programme of mental enrichment activities for them. They'd love an X-Box but there isn't a waterproof version yet!).
- Our fur seals are so smart they've learned to test themselves with a tonometer, which is a device for measuring eye pressure. They'll be asking for electro cardiographs next...
- We always tell our kids to chew their food, but dolphins don't. They only use their teeth to catch their prey, before swallowing it whole...it's a wonder they don't get indigestion.
- The funny squeaks and whistles that dolphins make come from their blowholes, not their mouths. You might know the odd human or two that can do this!
- Fur Seals aren't fussy eaters, and they'll eat just about any fish that come their way. But they do have a particular fondness for smelt and squid, and they absolutely adore herring – raw, not pickled that is!
- Dolphins have a three chambered stomach, the first stores food, the second breaks down food, and the third dissolves it. This makes it very important for us to feed our resident dolphins a good diet, because what must three bloated stomachs be like!