

Takeshima Aquarium

Innovative and interactive displays at the Takeshima Aquarium provide insight into the rich sea life of Mikawa Bay as well as the deep waters farther out in the Pacific Ocean. In a departure from standard explanatory panels, the hand-written information boards in the aquarium present details about the fish and crustaceans on display in the format of elementary school grade cards and profiles. Other boards include imagined “comments” from the sea creatures themselves, making the creatures more relatable, especially for children.

The design of habitats for the aquarium’s sea life is equally creative. One display is composed of colorful cinder blocks arranged to look like an apartment building, complete with names and addresses. The deep-sea fish inhabiting this tank are comfortable in the confined spaces of the blocks, which resemble conditions near the ocean floor.

Many of the deep-sea creatures on display are rare, and many were caught inadvertently in the nets of local fishermen working on the four

deep-sea fishing vessels that operate out of Gamagori. There are around 140 different species of deep-sea wildlife in the Takeshima Aquarium, including sharks, sea bream, and lobsters.

Another important theme at the aquarium is a focus on local seafood. Stickers on some of the tanks denote sea life that is good to eat, while photographs and videos are used to demonstrate culinary preparations of specific fish.

One corner of the aquarium has shallow open tanks where gently petting the sea life is allowed. In addition to fish and crustaceans, the aquarium is home to otters, capybaras, and turtles. There is also a sea lion performance three times a day.