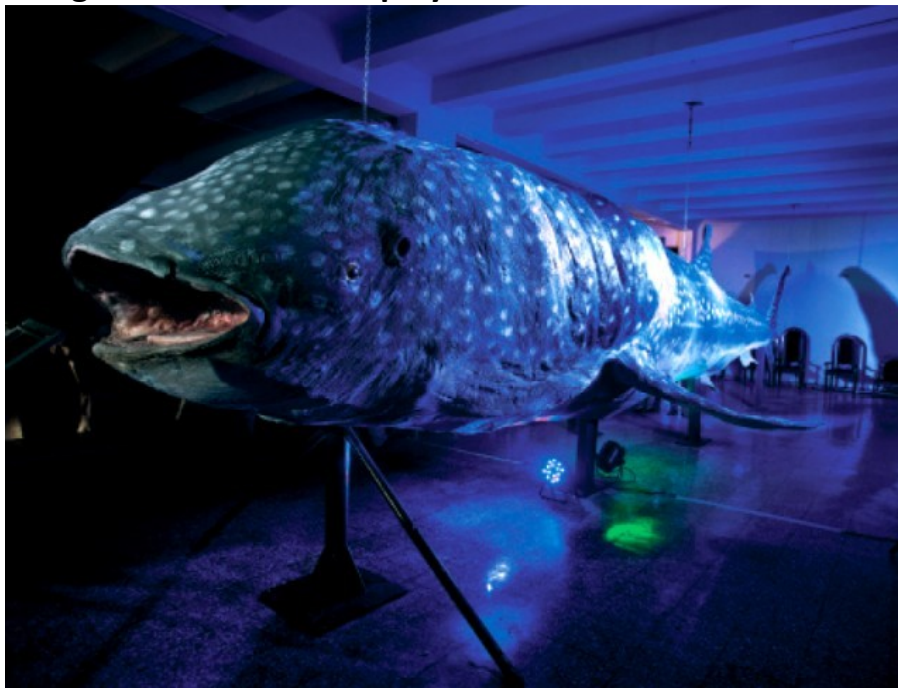


## It won't bite: Big fish hooked on display



The whale shark exhibit is open at the Pakistan Museum of Natural History, but the overall environment still leaves something to be desired.

### ISLAMABAD:

**A stuffed whale shark — the largest species of fish in the world — has landed at the top floor of the Pakistan Museum of Natural History (PMNH). The enormous fish — found dead off the Karachi coast last year— has been preserved for education and public viewing.**

After climbing a fleet of congested stairs to the top floor, a dingy hall welcomes visitors to the shark display. The 40-foot long grey fish with white spots is parked with its mouth wide open, as the museum's latest attempt to attract more visitors to the museum.

The whale shark is listed as a vulnerable species by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Found in tropical waters, it usually lives in the open sea and can be seen along the coast in many countries close to the equator, going as far south as South Africa, Australia and Argentina, and as far north as the US, China and North Africa.

Although typically seen offshore, it has been found closer to land, entering lagoons or coral islands and near the mouths of estuaries and rivers.

When discovered by the local fishermen on February 6, 2012, near Baba Island in the Arabian Sea, the fish was estimated to be around 50 years old and weighed 16 tonnes.

Experts explained that the migratory fish is capable of diving to depths of at least 1,286 meters. Whale sharks are filter feeders which mostly eat plankton, krill, fish eggs and crabs. For this reason, despite its size, the whale shark does not pose significant danger to humans, though it is still best to avoid getting too close to a live one.