

# BIRCH AQUARIUM

## NEW COMMITMENT TO OUR PLANET

In 2018, Birch Aquarium adopted a new mission—***we connect understanding to protecting our ocean planet***—that values science to inform action. The aquarium explores and innovates at the interface of science and a variety of public and student activations. Taking inspiration from the new mission, the aquarium launched a new Climate Science/Climate Action initiative that will influence everything from exhibits to programming, and impacts the way it teaches the more than 50,000 K-12 students who visit each year.

The remarkable climate science research at Scripps Oceanography and UC San Diego provides a deeper understanding of climate challenges. Birch Aquarium is taking Climate Science/Climate Action to the next level, through collaborations with groups like San Diego Zoo Global, the Scripps Center for Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation (CCCIA), and the California Science Teachers Association. By working closely with stakeholders and incorporating learnings into classrooms, exhibits, and programs, Birch Aquarium will inspire everyone to take steps—big and small—to protect our ocean planet.





## THE OCEAN'S GREATEST ODDITIES

Just in time for Comic-Con International 2018, Birch Aquarium opened *Oddities: Hidden Heroes of the Scripps Collections*, a comic book-inspired exhibition that highlights the astonishing adaptations (aka super powers) of ocean species. The exhibition was created in partnership with teams from all four Scripps Oceanographic Collections, where millions of preserved specimens allow scientists to better understand how the planet works.

From super vision and invisibility to protective armor and the ability to create electricity to zap prey, real marine creatures do amazing things every day that stretch even the wildest imagination. The interactive exhibition includes examples of some of the most unique creatures and samples from all depths and highlights how they have inspired everything from cinema and pop culture to medicine and engineering.



### BY THE NUMBERS

**471,421**

guests  
welcomed\*

**11,200**

member  
households

**50,828**

pre-K-12 students  
served

**23,483**

students received  
financial support

**267**

teachers attended  
professional  
development

**26,968**

guests  
participated in  
public programs

**131,037**

guests engaged  
with aquarium  
interpreters

**32,465**

hours donated by  
**489** volunteers  
(equal to  
\$896,000 in  
labor costs!)

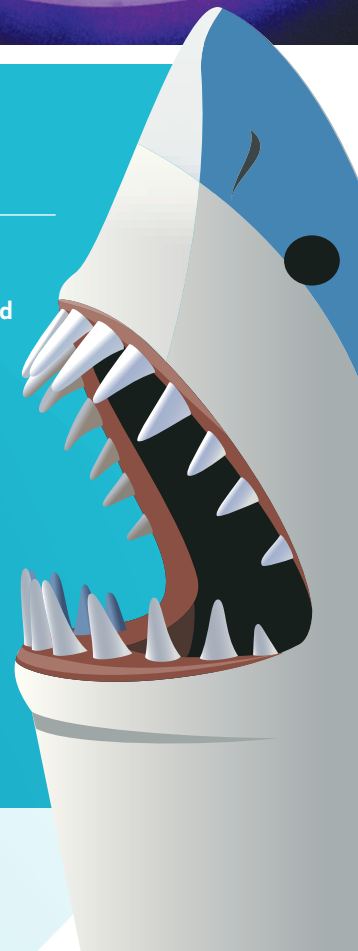
**5,689**

fish and  
invertebrates

**1**

reptile, a  
Loggerhead Sea  
Turtle

\* second highest attendance in the history of the aquarium







## SAVING SEADRAGONS

In May Birch Aquarium will launch a new permanent exhibition that brings seadragon conservation to the forefront. The exhibition will be home to Weedy and Leafy Seadragons, as well as several species of seahorses and pipefish.

The centerpiece will be one of the most expansive seadragon habitats in the world. The 18-foot-wide, 9-foot-tall exhibit will hold 5,375 gallons of water. More than being a stunning display, the habitat has been designed to create the ideal environment to breed Leafy Seadragons, something that has never been done in captivity. Since collecting sea dragons in the wild and climate change pose large potential threats to the species, the aquarium husbandry work represents an important conservation initiative.

This will be the fourth major exhibition Birch Aquarium has opened in three years and the largest indoor aquarium addition since the grand opening in 1992. Read more at [aquarium.ucsd.edu/seadragonexhibition](http://aquarium.ucsd.edu/seadragonexhibition).