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**\*Photos are available.**

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## **Birch Aquarium Aligns All Classes to National Next Generation Science Standards**

**All of Birch Aquarium’s Discovery Lab programs for Kindergarten through grade 12 are now aligned with the national standards.**

**La Jolla, Calif. (Sept. 26, 2019)**—Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego has aligned all classes for Kindergarten through grade 12 students with national Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The revised 14 Discovery Lab, Beach Teach and Beach Science Programs meet NGSS and utilize the “5E” instructional model, which is a research-based method for developing science lessons with a learning sequence approach, making the classes even more exploratory and student-centered.

Birch Aquarium’s classes are taught to more than 50,000 students annually in San Diego County and beyond. Students travel from as far as Phoenix, Los Angeles, and Mexico to participate. Discovery Labs take place in Birch Aquarium’s classrooms, at schools, or in the field at Scripps Beach in the shadow of Scripps Oceanography. The ground-breaking research done at Scripps Oceanography is incorporated into many of Birch Aquarium’s classes.

“We believe the best way to understand science is to do science,” said Emily Arnold, school programs manager at Birch Aquarium. “The Next Generation Science Standards, with their focus on Science and Engineering Practices in addition to content, really get at the heart of what scientists do every day. We know that teachers look to our programs to supplement what they are doing in the classroom and we are proud to continue to support them as they work with these new standards.”

Birch Aquarium’s classes give students opportunities that are often not available in the average classroom setting. Discovery Labs often include a unique experience with live animals or provide all of the equipment and materials for dissections. By incorporating NGSS in aquarium classrooms, the information provided integrates seamlessly into what teachers are instructing in their own classrooms.

Birch Aquarium works closely with schools to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn about the ocean world. Of the 50,000 annual students, nearly half partake in our programs with the help of financial aid.

“Access to high-quality STEM education is of utmost importance for all learners, and we aim to reduce barriers to experiential learning through our Financial Aid program,” said Arnold. “Our Education donors make it possible for us to provide our programs to the greater San Diego community.”

Discovery Labs with Birch Aquarium kick-off September 30, and student aquarium admission for aquarium-based classes and Beach Teaches is included with booking. Classes can be scheduled via phone at (858) 534-7336, via [email](#), or in person at Birch Aquarium’s Visitor Services office.

Classes must be booked at least 4 weeks in advance and pre-registration is required. Descriptions are available in the [2019/2020 School Programs Brochure](#) and at [aquarium.ucsd.edu/teachers](http://aquarium.ucsd.edu/teachers).

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### **About Birch Aquarium at Scripps**

Birch Aquarium at Scripps is the public exploration center for the world-renowned Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. Perched on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the aquarium features more than 60 habitats of fishes and invertebrates from the cold waters of the Pacific Northwest to the tropical waters of Mexico and the western Pacific. An interactive museum showcases research discoveries by Scripps scientists on climate, earth and ocean science, and features interactive elements. Accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Birch Aquarium has an annual attendance of more than 470,000, including 50,000 school children.

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