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***Photos and video are available.**

Media Contact:

Caitlin Scully
cscully@ucsd.edu
(o)858.534.5037

“Shell-ebrate” Five Years with Birch Aquarium’s Sea Turtle

Celebration commemorates Loggerhead’s inspirational story of survival.

La Jolla, Calif. (Dec. 30, 2019)— Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego is celebrating the fifth anniversary of their rescued Loggerhead Sea Turtle’s arrival with the first-ever Turtleversary on January 11 and 12 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The family-friendly “shell-ebration” will be a fun-filled weekend of sea turtle-themed activities, crafts, and marine reptile science. Guests are encouraged to get hands-on with sea turtle biofacts, learn about local sea turtle research, and get an insider’s look at how the aquarium’s sea turtle is target trained and cared for.

The Loggerhead’s story of perseverance, and the technological advances made to ensure her continued survival, have inspired people from around the world.

“Our collaborations with our colleagues have inspired students and researchers alike,” said Jennifer Nero Moffatt, the aquarium’s senior director of animal care, science and conservation. “Sea turtles hold a special place in our hearts and need our protection; all 7 species in danger from numerous environmental impacts. Our guests are able to get close to our Loggerhead Sea Turtle and feel a sense of wonder for our ocean planet.”

Birch Aquarium’s female Loggerhead Sea Turtle was found injured and sick in a power plant outflow canal in New Jersey. After rescue, she was nursed back to health at South Carolina Aquarium and was deemed non-releasable as the medical teams believed she would not survive on her own. Birch Aquarium took in the sea turtle November, 2014, and was revealed to the public in January, 2015. Since then she has grown significantly and now weighs 215 pounds.

Birch Aquarium’s turtle made international news in 2018 for the [3D-printed prosthetic that fits like a puzzle piece into her shell](#). This groundbreaking brace was the first of its kind for a sea turtle shell, and has now successfully mitigated the abnormal shell growth.

All [Turtleversary](#) activities are included in admission, which is \$19.50 for adults, \$15 for children ages 3 to 17. Children 2 and under are free. Annual memberships are also available. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit aquarium.ucsd.edu or call 858-534-FISH.

About Birch Aquarium at Scripps

Birch Aquarium at Scripps is the public exploration center for Scripps Oceanography. Perched on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Birch Aquarium is home to nearly 6,000 animals — including unusual Leafy Seadragons, local Leopard Sharks, and a rescued Loggerhead Sea Turtle — and features the groundbreaking work of Scripps scientists, as well as conservation breeding programs and interactive exhibits. Birch Aquarium's mission is to connect understanding to protecting our ocean planet, which the aquarium achieves by providing engaging, hands-on learning opportunities for nearly 500,000 guests as well as more than 50,000 pre-K-12 students each year.

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