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Birch Aquarium Closes to Public Beginning March 12

The temporary closure is an effort to help stop the communal spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

La Jolla, Calif. (March 12, 2020)—Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego today announced that it will temporarily be closed to the public beginning Thursday, March 12 at 5 p.m. until further notice to slow and prevent the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The decision comes following the statewide recommendations from the Governor’s office to prohibit gatherings larger than 250 as well as [UC San Diego’s recommendation](#) to cancel or postpone large meetings and non-essential visits to campus by groups.

“It’s our responsibility to consider the health and wellbeing of our guests, staff, and volunteers, and the broader community. By temporarily closing our doors, we are doing our part to proactively take steps to limit the spread of the coronavirus,” said Executive Director Harry Helling. “We believe that we must do all that we can to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our community, which at this time, calls for us to minimize gatherings.”

In addition to closing to the public, Birch Aquarium is also cancelling all special events, school visits, and outreach activities. Staff will continue working to ensure the behind-the-scenes research and operations of the aquarium, especially the care of the more than 6,000 animals that call the aquarium home.

Aquarium leadership will continue to follow guidance from the university and will look to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the California Department of Public Health and San Diego County Public Health for continued guidance.

The aquarium has created a [coronavirus information page](#), which will be kept up to date with the latest news relating to aquarium operations. All UC San Diego campus-wide updates can be found at [coronavirus.ucsd.edu](#). The leadership team will continue to monitor the situation and hopes to open the aquarium back up to the public as soon as possible.

About Birch Aquarium at Scripps

At Birch Aquarium, we connect understanding to protecting our ocean planet. We achieve this mission through hands-on learning opportunities for nearly 500,000 guests as well as more than 50,000 pre-K-12 students each year. Birch Aquarium at Scripps is the public exploration center for Scripps Oceanography. Perched on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Birch Aquarium features the groundbreaking work of Scripps Oceanography and UC San Diego scientists as well as conservation breeding programs, and interactive exhibits.

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