

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Birch Aquarium is Reopening!

Public opening is July 4, with member preview days July 1-3

La Jolla, CA (June 24, 2020)—Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego is reopening to the public on July 4, 2020, with special preview days on July 1-3 for aquarium members and donors.

The aquarium will open with new pathways and new procedures to keep guests — as well as staff and volunteers — safe and healthy. Guest capacity will be limited during this initial phase, so advanced reservations will now be required for all guests, including members. [Timed tickets are available online here](#) for members, and will be available to the general public on June 27.

“Our dedicated team has put a lot of effort into making the aquarium a safe place to visit and we look forward to reopening Birch Aquarium and welcoming back our members and guests,” said Executive Director Harry Helling.

Birch Aquarium is implementing a one-way pathway throughout the aquarium to encourage social distancing; increasing the number of handwashing and sanitizing stations throughout the aquarium; and requiring face coverings for guests ages 2 and above. As an added safety measure, Birch Aquarium staff will also be completing daily symptom screenings and temperature checks, as well as frequent COVID-19 testing.

During this initial opening phase, activities where large numbers of people typically gather, such as dive shows and feedings, will be cancelled. High-touch exhibit elements such as the water tables, playground and touch screens have also been removed, though many exhibits have newly-integrated QR codes to allow guests to engage in new ways from the safety of their cell phones.

In addition to heightened health and safety measures, returning guests will also notice some exciting additions to the aquarium including a new eatery and a new mobile exhibit in the Galleria.

Shark Café is located on the south side of the aquarium and boasts an authentic French-inspired menu, along with stunning ocean views. Operated by The French Gourmet, Shark Café’s exclusive menu features decadent pastries, scrumptious salads and sandwiches, and delicious desserts. Seating is limited and meals must be ordered online in advance. [Full menu and reservation information can be found here.](#)

In the Galleria, guests will see the big impacts of small creatures in a new exhibit featuring the work of Scripps Oceanography's Ron Burton. Copepods, or tiny crustaceans, provide a unique perspective on how life of all sizes can adapt to a changing climate.

More details on Birch Aquarium's reopening, including important details for guests planning their next visit, can be found on the [Know Before You Visit page](#). To help support the aquarium on its mission to connect understanding to protecting our ocean planet, [visit the Giving page](#).

Timed tickets for both members and the general public [can be reserved here](#). Admission is \$19.50 for adults, \$15 for children (3-17). [Annual memberships are also available](#).

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 features the groundbreaking work of Scripps Oceanography and UC San Diego 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 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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