

Birch Aquarium Adds Outdoor Activities, Will Remain Open

Guests are invited to explore and get hands-on in new outdoor activities and exhibits for a discounted ticket price.

La Jolla, CA (Nov. 10, 2020)—Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego today announced that it will be operating outdoors-only beginning Saturday, November 14 in accordance with state and county COVID-19 regulations. The outdoor spaces at the aquarium have been enhanced with new animals and activities, and are open to guests with discounted ticket prices.

Indoor areas including the Hall of Fishes, will be closed until restrictions are lifted.

“Our Birch Aquarium team has done a wonderful job pivoting to a safe outdoor-only experience for our guests,” said Executive Director Harry Helling. “New outdoor exhibits that provide more animal encounters, along with the amazing ocean views during the Gray Whale migration, make Birch Aquarium a great place to visit during the more restrictive Purple Tier.”

The outdoor Smargon Courtyard and Tide Pool Plaza are both open with new activities added for guests to explore and enjoy. On Tide Pool Plaza, guests can see and touch some of their favorite creatures in the life-like tide pool displays as well as in the new touch experience that allows guests to come nose-to-nose with local species.

Tide Pool Plaza is also home to the aquarium’s temporary artist in residence, [Brian Gibson](#), whose work represents the confluence of science, art, and conservation. While Gibson works, guests will have the opportunity to see sculptures of a Great Blue Heron and two Black Oystercatchers come to life, while he answers questions and engages with guests from a safe distance. The completed sculptures will be bronzed and installed at Birch Aquarium in 2021.

Smargon Courtyard, on the south side of Birch Aquarium, features panoramic views of La Jolla Shores Beach and La Jolla Village. The space is now tented in preparation for winter weather, so guests can enjoy local and tropical species outdoors. Adult 4-to-6-foot-long Leopard Sharks, rays, and more can be viewed in the *Shark Shores* exhibit, which highlights some of the large animals spotted along the La Jolla coastline.

Two recently-added touch exhibits feature unique and charismatic invertebrates and juvenile sharks, allowing guests to get hands-on and experience animals that are not usually seen at Birch Aquarium.

Other outdoor activities explore more about winter changes in Southern California's waters. Guests will learn what whales are migrating, and may even spot one from the aquarium's high vantage point, and get the inside scoop on changes to local habitats and which animals are pupping and nesting along the coast. Exhibits will continue to be added outdoors over the next month.

Discounted Outdoor Admission tickets will be available online beginning Friday, November 13 at 4 p.m. Advanced reservations for a specific time and date are required to visit Birch Aquarium and all outdoor activities are included in the discounted admission price, which is \$16.50 for adults, \$12 for children. [Timed tickets are available online only.](#) Annual [Memberships](#) are also available. More information, including important details for guests planning their next visit, can be found on the [Know Before You Visit page](#). The aquarium Gift Shop will also be open for unique ocean-themed holiday gifts.

On November 28, Birch Aquarium's annual holiday celebration, Seas 'n' Greetings, kicks off with SEAsonal music and decor the whole family will love. All Seas 'n Greetings activities are included with admission. [More details can be found online.](#)

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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