



UC San Diego
SCRIPPS INSTITUTION OF OCEANOGRAPHY

Press Release

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A Pacific Footballfish Touches Down at Birch Aquarium!

This deep-sea specimen will be on display at the aquarium from Mar. 25 to Apr. 24, 2022.

La Jolla, CA (March 15, 2022)—For a limited time, guests can see a Pacific Footballfish — a rare deep-sea specimen — on display in *Oddities: Hidden Heroes of the Scripps Collections* at Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego.

This deep-sea fish [washed up near Encinitas last December](#) and is one of only 31 known specimens collected worldwide. The preserved fish will be on display at Birch Aquarium from March 25 to April 24, 2022.

“This is a very exciting discovery as scientists, let alone the public, rarely get a chance to interact with this species! Being the 31st ever collected, this is a rare find and not something you will likely see in an aquarium. Each specimen can teach us something new about footballfish and life in the deep-sea in general!”, said Ben Frible, collection manager of marine vertebrates at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

Pacific Footballfish are one of the largest species of anglerfish — this specimen is female and about 15.5 inches long and weighs 5.5 pounds. It would have lived at depths of 650 to 2,600 feet — a zone where sunlight barely penetrates and food is scarce.

To survive the challenges that come with living in the deep-sea, this fish uses a fairly illuminating method to catch a meal. Female anglerfish possess a glowing lure that dangles over rows of sharp teeth and guides potential prey straight to their mouth. The presence of the lure — along with its large size — is how Scripps scientists identified this fish as female.

Birch Aquarium and the Scripps Marine Vertebrate Collection are working together to create a safe environment to display this deep-sea specimen. Since the footballfish is sensitive to light, it will only be on display for a limited time.

The [Marine Vertebrate Collection](#) is one of four collections that make up the [Oceanographic Collections](#) at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, one of the largest university-based oceanographic collections in the world. The [Benthic Invertebrate Collection](#), [Pelagic Invertebrate Collection](#), and [Geological Collection](#), round out the collections housed at Scripps, all of which are available to the scientific community for ongoing research, education, and outreach.

The footballfish display is included with the cost of Birch Aquarium admission, which is \$24.95 for adults and \$19.95 for children ages 3-17. [Annual memberships are also available](#). The aquarium is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily and advanced reservations are required for all guests, including members. [Visit aquarium.ucsd.edu](http://visit.aquarium.ucsd.edu) for more information or to make a reservation. Face coverings are still required for all guests 2 years and older indoors and outdoors regardless of vaccination status.

About Birch Aquarium at Scripps

Birch Aquarium at Scripps is the public exploration center for Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. 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. Birch Aquarium also offers a variety of [virtual events and activities](#). Visit aquarium.ucsd.edu for more information.

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