



UC San Diego
SCRIPPS INSTITUTION OF OCEANOGRAPHY

Press Release

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Vote Now to Help Birch Aquarium Name a Penguin

Birch Aquarium opens the polls for the public to vote on the final name for one of its Little Blue Penguins.



La Jolla, CA (May 16, 2022) — Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego is one step closer to naming one of its Little Blue Penguins.

Aquarium fans submitted nearly 2,000 names during the naming campaign that was launched on World Penguin Day (April 25). The aquarium's team faced the exciting task of narrowing those entries down to just five for the public to vote on.

The final choices are:

- **Diego** — for his new home in San Diego, the only place in Western U.S. where you can find Little Blue Penguins
- **Flip** — a nod to penguin flippers and FLIP, the FLoating Instrument Platform that was operated by Scripps Institution of Oceanography for over 50 years
- **Triton** — for this small but mighty (penguin) ruler of the sea that highlights Birch Aquarium's connection to the UC San Diego community
- **Azulito** — just as the ocean is interconnected, Azulito means little blue in Spanish and highlights the unique interconnectedness of our binational region
- **Torrey** — highlights the conservation of unique species, like the endangered Torrey Pines found only in San Diego and the Channel Islands

The public is invited to vote for their favorite name at aquarium.ucsd.edu between now and the end of the month. Voting closes on May 29 at 5 p.m. PT. The final name will be announced on June 2, 2022.

When *Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins* opens this summer, it will be the first time people will be able to observe the world's smallest penguins on the West Coast. Little Blue Penguins get their name from the blue sheen of their coats, and their tiny size. They are native to southern Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand. Blue Penguins are less than a foot tall and weigh just 2 to 3 pounds.

The new habitat follows these pint-sized penguins on their journey from hatchlings to adults, highlighting the challenges they face in a changing climate while celebrating the features that make them so unique (and adorable). The exhibit is named in honor of a \$1 million gift from the Beyster family, who are long-time supporters of Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Birch Aquarium.

"We can't wait to introduce our guests to these amazing little birds. Our goal is to give these penguins a comfortable and enriching life. We spent a lot of time developing an exhibit that feels and looks like a little slice of the Australian coastline," said Kayla Strate, lead penguin aquarist. "We want to make sure they have a healthy social structure, a diverse diet and plenty of room for exercise, swimming and nesting."

This is the first time in the history of Birch Aquarium the team is naming any of its animals. This newly-named penguin will be joining Magic, Nero, Persimmon, Reka, Cornelius and Katie, who have all been named through philanthropic gifts.

Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins will boast a 2,900-square-foot habitat with a rocky and sandy shore, an 18,000-gallon penguin lagoon, a small amphitheater as well as a discovery cave for children to observe Little Blue Penguins on land and inside nesting burrows. This new exhibit is the biggest addition to Birch Aquarium in 30 years. Once open, it will be included in the cost of admission, which is \$24.95 for adults and \$19.95 for children ages 3-17. [Annual memberships are also available](#). Advanced reservations are required for all guests, including members. Visit aquarium.ucsd.edu for more information or to make a reservation.

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. Visit aquarium.ucsd.edu for more information.

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