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Meet Azulito! Birch Aquarium Announces Winning Little Blue Penguin Name!



La Jolla, CA (June 3, 2022) — This morning Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego officially named one of its Little Blue Penguins. After receiving nearly 2,500 votes, this charismatic penguin will be named Azulito, which translates to “little blue” in Spanish. The name reveal took place Friday morning in the aquarium’s *Giant Kelp Forest*. Divers unfurled a banner underwater with the winning name surrounded by Leopard Sharks, Moray Eels and swaying kelp fronds while some of the Little Blues looked on.

“This is the first time we have invited the public to help name one of our animals. So, it was a special moment for aquarium fans as well as our staff. We hope this is the beginning of a long tradition of naming our penguins,” said Kayla Strate, lead penguin aquarist. “We want to thank everyone who submitted a name online. Azulito is the perfect fit for this tiny penguin and we love that it’s a nod to our binational region.”

Voters were asked to choose between five names — each option with unique ties to San Diego, Scripps Oceanography and UC San Diego — during a naming campaign that launched on World Penguin Day (April 25). Azulito won by a landslide with 924 votes. Diego trailed behind with 588 votes and Flip came in third with 438, followed by Triton and Torrey with 234 and 281 votes, respectively.

Later this month, Azulito — along with Magic, Nero, Persimmon, Reka, Cornelius and Katie — will move into their new home. Guests can meet Azulito and the rest of the colony starting July 12 when *Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins* opens.

The 2,900 square foot exhibit follows the world’s smallest penguins on their journey from hatchlings to adults, highlighting the challenges they face in a changing climate while celebrating the features that make Little Blues so unique (and adorable).

Penguin lovers will now be able to spend more time with the aquarium’s newest residents when the aquarium’s summer hours kick off on July 1. The aquarium will stay open until 7 p.m. daily, from July 1 to September 5, 2022.

Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins is included in the cost of general admission to Birch Aquarium which is \$24.95 for adults and \$19.95 for children ages 3-17. Tickets for July are now available online. 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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