

Press Release

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Three New Ways to Celebrate Little Blue Penguins at Birch Aquarium



La Jolla, CA (August 3, 2022) — Following on the heels of the July 12 opening of [Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins](#), Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego is launching three

exciting new ways for guests to celebrate Little Blue Penguins: a Behind-the-Scenes Penguin Tour, a Live Penguin Cam, and a renovated Gift Shop with exclusive Little Blue Penguins merchandise.

Birch Aquarium guests won't want to miss the new Behind-the-Scenes Penguin Tour, a one-of-a-kind experience bringing guests closer to the world's smallest penguins and the team that cares for them. During the 60-minute tour, guests will explore the ins and outs of *Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins* alongside an educator and a penguin care specialist to learn first-hand how this species lives in their native habitat, what they eat, and the vital role conservation plays in protecting their home.

"We are excited to share our new exhibit with our guests," said Cari Paulenich, program manager of public engagement. "This program gives us the opportunity to highlight our newest aquarium residents and the daily animal care that often goes unseen during a regular aquarium visit in a fun and personal way."

Each guided tour will be unique. During the first half of the tour, guests will make their way into the *Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins* exhibit for an informal meet-and-greet with an educator where they will observe Little Blues as they socialize, preen, swim and nest in their new home.

Next, tour participants will venture behind the scenes to the Penguin Care and Conservation Center for an exclusive chat with a penguin care specialist who will share interesting facts about penguins. For example, how Little Blues eat 20 percent of their body weight, how their mouths are perfectly adapted to swallow slippery fish or how their waterproof feathers keep them warm.

While behind the scenes, guests will also come face-to-face with some of the Little Blue Penguins from behind an acrylic divider. Throughout the entire experience, guests are encouraged to snap photos and selfies to complement this one-of-a-kind adventure.

Behind-the-Scenes: Penguin Tours are offered daily at 1:30 p.m. Advanced registration is recommended. The tour costs \$100 for aquarium members and \$115 for nonmembers. Admission to the aquarium is included with the purchase of the tour. Each tour is limited to six guests allowing for a more personalized experience. Registration opens to all on August 4 and tours begin on August 9. More information about age restrictions, mobility, clothing requirements and reservations can be found on the [tour FAQ page](#). The penguin tour is a new addition to Birch Aquarium's lineup, which also includes [Behind-the-Scenes: Seahorse Tours](#) showcasing the aquarium's groundbreaking work breeding and caring for seahorses.

In addition to the behind-the-scenes tours, anyone with a smartphone or computer can explore *Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins* through the new [live Penguin Cam](#). Watch them waddle, dive and play throughout their day from the comfort of your home.

Those looking for the perfect souvenir after their visit may be excited to hear that the aquarium's [newly renovated Gift Shop](#) is reopening on August 5 after weeks of work to create a more visitor-friendly space.

The Gift Shop renovation comes at a time when the aquarium is strengthening its sustainability efforts and the reduction of single-use plastics.

“The design for the new gift shop enhances the shopping experience for our guests along with an exciting new approach to merchandising,” said Michelle Dulaney, gift shop director. “Every purchase helps further our mission to connect understanding to protecting our ocean planet and allows us to expand our education programs to inspire the next generation of ocean leaders, provide the best care to our animals and create new exhibits that bring the magic of the ocean to you.”

Birch Aquarium features a selection of sustainable products including reusable water bottles, plush toys made from 100% recyclable materials, and Birch Aquarium and Scripps Institution of Oceanography branded apparel made from transitional cotton which supports farmers in their transition to certified organic. Guests may also purchase reusable shopping bags at the checkout counter that can be washed for continued use. Each reusable shopping bag can help replace 500 single-use plastic bags disposed of annually.

The Gift Shop is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Some of the most popular items from the Gift Shop are also [available online](#) including an exclusive collection of Little Blue Penguin-themed products.

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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