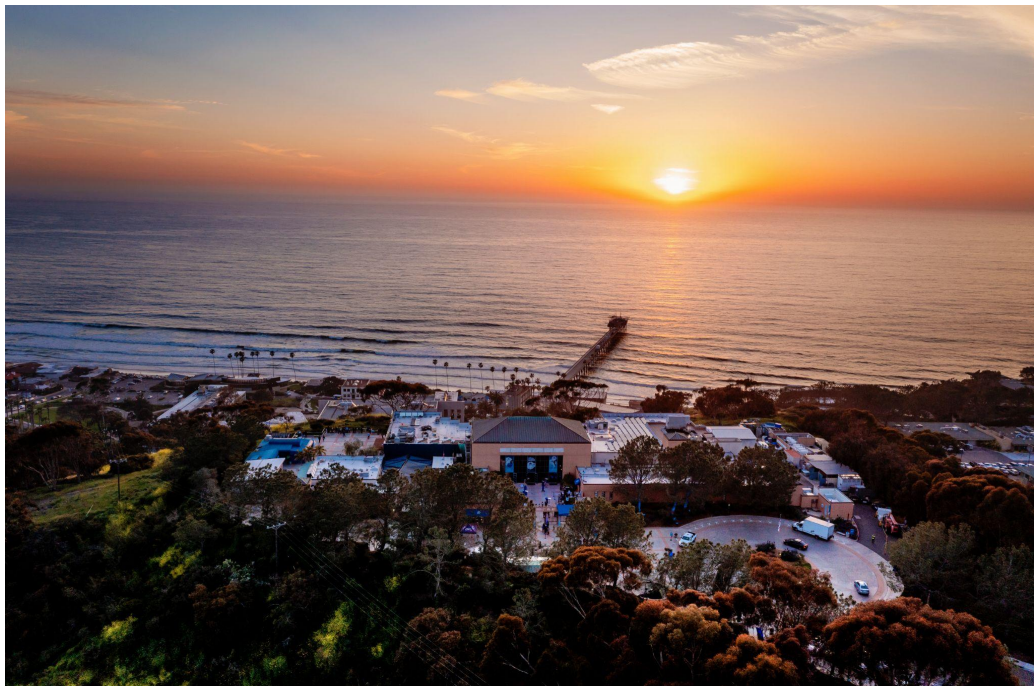**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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Media Contact: Leslie Luna
lluna@ucsd.edu|858.717.2499

Birch Aquarium Is Making a Splash with New Seasonal Offerings this Summer

The aquarium will be open until 7 p.m. from May 28 through Labor Day

La Jolla, CA (May 16, 2023) — Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego is kicking off summer with an amazing lineup of offerings including seasonal hours, animal feedings and Octopus Behind-the-Scenes Tours.

Guests will have two extra hours to enjoy the aquarium during a time when it's typically less crowded and when some animals may be more active. From May 28 to September 4, the aquarium will be open most days from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. On days when private events have been booked, the aquarium will close at 5 p.m.

"Many families are gearing up for a summer of exploration as warmer weather finally makes its way to San Diego," said Harry Helling, Executive Director at Birch Aquarium. "By bringing back interactive feedings and introducing new offerings, the aquarium hopes to advance its mission of connecting understanding to protecting our ocean planet with new, fun and engaging activities for our guests to enjoy."

During seasonal hours, all exhibits and hands-on activities — including *Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins,* where guests come face-to-face with the world's smallest penguins as they waddle, swim and dive — will remain open. On *Tide Pool Plaza*, guests will take in stunning ocean views while getting hands-on with local animals including a juvenile shark.

As part of its summer offerings, the aquarium is bringing back fan-favorite animal feedings. In addition to the Little Blue Penguin feedings that take place at 10 a.m. daily, these new sessions highlight how the aquarium's Husbandry Team feeds rays, Leopard sharks, Weedy Seadragons and a rescued Loggerhead Sea Turtle while demonstrating the important role each plays in our ocean ecosystems. These sessions will be offered on select days and times starting May 27.

For guests looking for an unforgettable animal experience, the aquarium is offering an exclusive behind-the-scenes encounter with a Giant Pacific Octopus. During the 60-minute tour, guests will get up close and learn about this amazing cephalopod, its complex personality, camouflage abilities and super strength. A member of the aquarium's Husbandry Team will lead an enrichment-focused activity where the octopus uses its arms and intelligence to interact with an enrichment object and potentially the guests themselves!

Octopus Behind-the-Scenes Tours will be offered Thursdays and Saturdays at noon beginning June 17. The tour costs $110 for aquarium members and $125 for nonmembers. Admission to the aquarium is included with the purchase of the tour. Each tour is limited to four guests allowing for a more intimate experience. More information about age restrictions, mobility, clothing requirements and reservations will be posted to the aquarium's website later this month.

General Admission tickets are $24.95 for adults and $19.95 for children ages 3-17. Advanced reservations are required. [Annual memberships are also available](). Both [Splash! Café]() and the [Gift Shop]() will also remain open late. Visit [aquarium.ucsd.edu]() for more information, including the daily schedule, and to purchase tickets.

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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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