



MARINE CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

PRESERVING OUR OCEAN PLANET

Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography serves as the public outreach center for the world-renowned Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. Thanks to the support of the community, Birch Aquarium is able to catalyze exemplary nationally-recognized ocean science programs that advance our bold mission: *connecting understanding to protecting our ocean planet.*

Through its unique connection with Scripps Oceanography, Birch Aquarium is uniquely positioned to succeed in conservation efforts such as:

- » **Seahorse and Seadragon Propagation:** Rearing and transferring seahorse species to other aquarium institutions, Birch Aquarium and members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature ensure that future community members can experience these aquatic marvels.
- » **Coral Science and Propagation:** Birch Aquarium has successfully been propagating corals for over 20 years, helping species persevere in the face of ocean acidification, compromised habitats, and destructive fishing.
- » **Illegal Wildlife Trade Rehoming:** In partnership with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, border patrol and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Birch Aquarium serves as a sanctuary for safely caring for clams, corals and other aquatic invertebrates and fishes moving illegally through borders.
- » **Sunflower Sea Star Recovery Project:** Birch Aquarium successfully spawned three Sunflower Sea Stars, a monumental milestone in their recovery efforts as they are considered functionally extinct in California.

At Birch Aquarium, we believe that embracing climate science education, encouraging play and integrating research-focused exhibits brings our visitors to the precipice of discovery. As the public exploration center for Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego, we are empowered by generosity to inspire curiosity, collaboration, understanding and action to protect our ocean planet.

1,000

Scripps Institution of Oceanography scientists are currently working to advance ocean education, climate communication, conservation and public engagement

BOTH PUBLIC AND K-12

audiences can experience the frontier where new knowledge is being generated by visiting the Birch Aquarium.

ON EVERY CONTINENT, AND IN ALL OCEANS

research studies are being actively conducted on ocean, Earth and atmospheric science.





REARING SEAHORSES: ENSURING SURVIVAL

Many seahorse species are at risk as a result of climate change, unsustainable fishing practices, and illegal collection of wild populations. For over 20 years, **this initiative has transferred more than 5,000 seahorses** to other institutions. Leading global conservation efforts, Birch Aquarium works with research universities participating in Lined and Potbelly Seahorse Species Survival Plans that involve breeding, research and conservation actions to understand, protect and ensure the long-term survival of these animals in the wild.

CONSERVING CORAL REEFS

Coral reefs are extremely important to our planet. They're **home to about 25% of all marine life**, protect shorelines and coastal communities during storms, and help provide a source of food to millions of humans worldwide. Committed to their conservation, our aquarists mimic the natural process of fragmentation and properly care for propagations, sharing generations of coral with researchers, and reducing pressure on wild populations.

CARING FOR CONFISCATED CLAMS AND INVERTEBRATES

More than 45 Giant Clams were safely rehomed to Birch Aquarium in December 2023. This relocation was made possible by a first-of-its-kind program that connects law enforcement agencies to aquarium organizations so confiscated wildlife like clams, corals, seahorses and crabs can receive immediate care. Birch Aquarium provides sanctuary, holding and care for rare wild animals seized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

SAVING THE SUNFLOWER SEA STAR

For nearly a decade, a mysterious sea star wasting disease has swept across the West Coast, causing a mass die-off of sea stars particularly in warming waters. It hit Sunflower Sea Stars the hardest, nearly driving them to extinction. These pizza-sized stars **play an essential role in safeguarding kelp forests** from the adverse effects of overgrazing by sea urchins. With the largest amount of captive sea stars, Birch Aquarium is leading the effort to bring them back from the brink of extinction.

A global leader in ocean education, climate communication and public engagement, Birch Aquarium's **conservation programs convert research insights into inspiration for change**. Our programs are made possible through generous philanthropy and a collaborative community.

With your partnership, we can continue influencing future generations and stewarding our ocean planet's most valuable resources.

[Learn more at aquarium.ucsd.edu.](https://aquarium.ucsd.edu)

For more information on supporting Birch Aquarium, please contact:

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