

# Aquarium of the Pacific – Audio Tour. 1.20.25

## Welcome to the Aquarium of the Pacific

Welcome to the Aquarium of the Pacific and this audio described orientation tour. This tour takes approximately one hour and follows a set path that will acquaint you with the main exhibits and their elements. You can skip ahead at any time. The tour will combine the audio description with material from the Aquarium of the Pacific's visitor guide, which is available in Braille at the Welcome Center desk located across from the member services desk, or via an accessible app in both Android and Apple formats. You can download our visitor guide app from iTunes and Google Play. The app also lists the show times, locations, animal IDs, and more. Also available at the member services desk are Kulture City sensory bags and haptic sensory devices, portable screens with captioning, and assisted listening devices for the Honda Pacific Visions Theater.

## Background of the Aquarium

The Aquarium of the Pacific is nestled in Shoreline Park, where the Los Angeles River flows south into the Pacific Ocean. As the only aquarium to focus solely on the world's largest ocean, the Aquarium of the Pacific's mission is to instill a sense of wonder, respect, and stewardship for the Pacific Ocean, its inhabitants, and ecosystems.

The Pacific Ocean occupies one third of the world's surface, extending 9,600 miles from the Bering Sea in the Arctic to the edges of Antarctica's Ross Sea in the south. Its greatest width stretches 12,300 miles from Indonesia to the coast of Colombia. The lowest known point on Earth, in the Mariana Trench, lies within the Pacific. The Aquarium of Pacific is home to 12,000 ocean animals, representing nearly five-hundred species. Here you will discover the Pacific Ocean's variety through indoor and outdoor exhibits that cover Southern California/Baja, the Northern Pacific, and the Tropical Pacific.

## Design of the Aquarium

The Aquarium was designed by the architectural firm EHDD. There are no 90-degree angles in the building—only rounded curves. With its sweeping and curving architecture, the Aquarium of the Pacific is designed to emulate the ocean.

## Aquarium Entrance

Enter the Aquarium through two sets of glass double doors. The left side is for the general public, and the right side is the member entrance. This brings you into the Great Hall, which will be described later on in the tour.

The Member Services Desk is located just inside the entrance on the right. Alternative language maps, Visitor Guides in Braille and informational materials are located at the Welcome Center desk across from Member Services. The staff here and around the Aquarium are identifiable by their navy-blue shirts with the Aquarium's logo on the left breast: three undulating lines over a pair of downward arcing lines whose tips meet. The three lines represent the three major galleries and the arcing lines of the animals that inhabit them.

## Indoor Exhibits First Level

### Pacific Visions (First Floor)

The Pacific Visions entrance is just inside the Aquarium's main doors just beyond the Member Services Desk. Here you are able to access the Art Gallery and Orientation Gallery. This is where guests will enter the Honda Pacific Visions Theater.

#### Art Gallery

The first space in the wing is the art gallery, which is designed to immerse visitors in an underwater world. The inaugural installation was created by Convivial Studio, a European art and design practice based in Germany.

Multidirectional audio plays real underwater sounds captured by scientists and subtle music to create a soundscape. Projected video sequences of coral reefs and tiny organisms called plankton cover the long wall on the right. Each sequence, Coral World and Plankton World, lasts just a few minutes.

In the middle of the gallery is an activity called Paint a Fish. Several tablets are positioned facing the left wall. At these kiosks, guests are able to choose between several types of fish and paint them with varying colors and patterns. These fish are then projected on the left wall where they are seen swimming in a virtual environment.

As you move further back into the gallery, on the far-left wall visitors can look into five round exhibit windows at varying heights. These "Infinity Coral" exhibits use mirrors to create the illusion of coral reef habitats stretching as far as the eye can see. The installations demonstrate the appearance of a healthy, thriving reef contrasted with an unhealthy, bleached reef environment, plus views of a reef at night, and a reef where only climate resilient corals have survived a bleaching event.

Beyond the Infinity Coral sculptures, a hallway to the left leads to restrooms, drinking fountains, and a quiet room for sensory isolation.

In the center of the gallery, glass sculptures inspired by plankton hang from the ceiling. Ranging in size from 27 inches to just 3 inches wide, these plankton sculptures were created by artists

Masami Hirohata, Peter Kuchinke, and Susan Liebold using lampworking and hand-blowing techniques.

On the rear wall, visitors can touch sculptures of corals on five floor-to-ceiling panels. The relief wall is modelled after existing coral reefs in Hawaii. Appropriate colors, textures, and details for the specific coral species are projected onto each sculpture. Each panel is made from materials imitating the array of different textures and surfaces found in a coral reef.

## Orientation Gallery

At the rear of the gallery is the entrance to the next room, the orientation gallery.

The floor gently slopes downward. On the right side of the orientation gallery, a projected virtual waterfall flows down the wall onto the floor. The floor projection is interactive, creating splashes and ripples in the water, with small fish that scatter with every step.

On the left a large 26-foot-wide by 9-foot-tall LED screen plays pre-show films that introduce viewers to the Pacific Visions theater experience. Stunning imagery of wildlife, nature, and people show the beauty of our planet. Captioning for the film is shown on two monitors on columns on either side of the LED screen. At the end of the film, the theater doors on either side of the screen open automatically leading into the Honda Pacific Visions Theater. Elevators are to the left for wheelchair access.

## Honda Pacific Visions Theater

The Honda Pacific Visions Theater is currently showing two films in rotation, one on the care of our seals and sea lions and another on coral reefs. Visitors can enter the theater through either door and proceed along a curving path into the stage and first row of the seating area. The Honda Pacific Visions Theater has more than three-hundred stadium-style seats facing a 32-foot-tall, 130-foot-wide screen that is curved in a 180-degree arc to capture viewers' entire range of vision. The stage includes a 36-foot-wide, oval-shaped disc that tilts up to display images projected onto the floor. The theater has four stairways, one on either side of the seating area with a handrail, and two up the middle. Wheelchair seating is available in the middle of the first row and top rows. The top row is accessible via the second-floor entrance.

The Aquarium of the Pacific worked with leading 'virtual touch' design firm Ultrahaptics to develop a way for visitors who are deaf or blind to experience the theater film. Visitors who are deaf or blind will be able to use Ultrahaptics' mid-air touch devices that utilize ultrasonic speakers to project shapes, textures, and effects directly onto the user's hands to help convey the Pacific Visions film. While the projections cannot be seen, the visitors using the device will experience sensations of bubbles popping, the rush of the ocean, and more.

Assisted listening technology via headset or Telecoil is available in the theater. Visitors with limited hearing can check out an RF receiving headset or Telecoil neck-loop. Viewers who are deaf or have limited hearing can also check out portable screens to view captioning for the theater film.

During the shows, viewers will be inspired by dramatic images of nature and learn about conservation. The some films are enhanced with smell, fog, wind, strobe light effects, and rumbling seats.

After the films end, visitors exit the theater through the second floor to enter the final space in Pacific Visions, the culmination gallery. Exit through the doors on the far left.

### Culmination Gallery (Pacific Visions Second Floor)

The Pacific Visions culmination gallery features several changing exhibit areas, including part two of our FROGS exhibit and our Babies! exhibit.

As you exit the Pacific Visions theater, the wall outside the theater doors features FROGS: Facing a Changing World, highlighting Our Neighbors. The other section of our FROGS exhibits is in the Tropical Pacific Gallery. After exiting the theater, the farthest habitat on the right highlights the Mexican salamander or axolotl, replicating its home in the lakes and canals of southern Mexico City. This unique salamander looks like a tadpole with legs and has a feather-like fringe around its face. Next is the tiger salamander, which has a smooth, long lizard-like body with brown and beige stripes. On the right is the California newt, a local amphibian that has a long body covered in tiny bumps with a brown top and orange belly. Next is the western green toad that has a lumpy mottled coloration with green and dark specks. On the right is the Pacific tree frog in a forest habitat that has a muted green smooth body.

Turning around to face the opposite wall, to your far left is the beginning of a long wall of habitats.

#### *Mountain Yellow Legged Frogs*

The first exhibits on the right have two habitats featuring different life stages of the mountain yellow-legged frog. A larger habitat features adult frogs, while the smaller habitat features tadpoles and froglets in a river environment. The Aquarium participates in rearing these local endangered species and works with other agencies to release these frogs into the wild.

As you move on along the wall to your left, there is a tower in the center of the area that displays information on the world's population.

#### *Babies*

Following this wall to your left is the beginning of the habitats featuring Babies. There are six smaller exhibits with rotating residents, depending on the babies at the Aquarium. They often feature baby sea horses, different types of fish, and invertebrates like cuttlefish. Following the curve of the wall, you will come across an 8 foot long rectangular habitat that houses colorful baby bony fish and baby sharks alongside shark eggs. These eggs look like greenish-brown kelp pockets holding a yellow yolk.

Moving to your left, the habitat mimics a mangrove habitat where juvenile fish grow up. Many of these baby fish can be seen in their adult form in the Tropical Pacific Gallery. There is a large model of a tangled mass of mangrove roots above a rocky structure that looks like volcanic rock. Farther to the left of the mangrove habitat is a sea jelly lab. A staff member is usually located here to answer questions and share information. This lab features cultivated sea jellies in various life stages in an open wet lab. Behind is a monitor showing microscopic animals.

There are a series of exhibits along the opposite wall. Along the wall to the right, there are three jigsaw puzzle kiosks where you can solve a puzzle and get a fun fact.

### *Paint a Frog*

The next on the left is an interactive opportunity called Paint a Frog. Several tablets are positioned facing the wall. At these kiosks, guests are able to choose an amphibian like a frog or an axolotl and digitally paint them with varying colors and patterns. Once completed they are then projected onto the wall where they are seen in a virtual environment mimicking a river system.

Next on the left is a 50-foot-long media wall displaying underwater ocean scenes and a stream of bubbles with icons floating from left to right. This projection wall is interactive, so visitors can touch the bubbles to display an ocean fact or sustainable innovation.

In the middle of the room are two interactive tables about the size of a pool table where guests can see how sustainable their practices are related to food consumption and energy use. These tables ask the questions in English or Spanish and are wheelchair accessible.

To continue, turn around and exit the Pacific Visions Culmination Gallery.

The Pacific Visions culmination gallery exits on the second-floor landing outside the Aquarium's Tropical Pacific Gallery. Continue the tour in the Great Hall by continuing down the stairs on the left or by using the elevator on the right past the Tropical Gallery entrance and restrooms. Upon reaching the first floor go to the left towards the entrance to begin your journey through the Great Hall.

## The Great Hall

The Great Hall of the Pacific is the largest space in the building. It extends to the Honda Blue Cavern exhibit at the far end. Every gallery starts and ends in the Great Hall. The floor is blue green in color, with sections of square and rectangular marble broken up by rays of blue-gray matte finished concrete. The two finishes combine with the sunlight to break up and vary the color, like sunlight reflecting on the ocean's surface. Adding to this effect are scattered square brass tiles, each etched with an image of a Pacific Ocean fish.

The wall colors in the building vary from a pale yellow green to a sandy beige to gray – the color of wet sand. The ceiling follows the wavy motion of the roof, rising to 50 feet at the Honda Blue Cavern exhibit.

Hanging above the entrance is a kinetic sculpture: a grid of copper squares that undulates slowly. To your left is the Pacific Collections Gift Store, where you can purchase T-shirts, toys, and sustainable products reminiscent of your visit to the Aquarium. The store has glass back walls with images of pale gold kelp in a sunlit, light blue sea.

## Tropical Pacific Preview

Just past the entrance to Pacific Visions on your right is an exhibit featuring coral and tropical fish. This is a preview of the Tropical Pacific Gallery on the second floor. There is often a sofa positioned in front of the exhibit

## Ocean Theater

On the left side of the Great Hall is the Ocean Theater. A screen above the doors has information about the films and showtimes.

Ahead on the right is the first of two wide sets of staircases to the second level. Past the first staircase on the right are the restrooms, baby care room elevators, and drinking fountains. Beyond is a coffee and snack bar with tables and chairs.

## The Blue Whale

Suspended from the ceiling and filling half of the Hall's length is a replica of the largest of Earth's animals, an adult female blue whale and her calf. Mounted on the side of the staircase is an illustration with circles highlighting areas of the blue whale.

A mottled deep blue color, the whale's body features small eyes on either side of the wide head above a long curving mouth. Bumps at the front of the head follow a center crest that continues to the blow-hole located on top of the head and aligned above the eyes. The triangular shaped flippers are located behind the eyes on the lower third of the body. The 20-foot-wide flukes have a curving edge. The 22-foot calf floats by the mother's left flipper. On the brass floor tiles under the whales are various fish including Flounder, Rockfish, Anchovy, Sculpin, Pacific Spiny Lumpsucker and Surf Perch.

Next to the Blue Whale sign is an Adopt an Animal display. Make a meaningful contribution toward the toys, treats, veterinary care and 300 pounds of food needed every day for all the animals. There are slots here where you can drop in your donation.

## Northern Pacific Preview

To the left of the coffee bar, is the Northern Pacific Preview. Inside the 6-foot-tall exhibit are chunks of gray rocks with black mussels attached to them and covered with fluffy red algae. The water level is 3 feet from the bottom with periodic wave action with live bull kelp swaying in the current. We are part of a program to preserve bull kelp for future conservation efforts. The fish in

the exhibit range in size from 10 inches to several feet long. Pale pink-, orange- and coral-colored anemones adhere to the rocks and to the smooth, brown stone bottom. Orange sea stars cling to the rocks and the exhibit window.

On the wall to the left of the exhibit is a display on sustainable seafood.

## Amazing Pictures and Ocean Science Center

Continuing down the Great Hall, on the left side, is “Amazing Pictures,” where you can have a souvenir photo taken of yourself in ocean and underwater scenes. A set of motion-activated glass double doors is just beyond and leads to the Ocean Science Center. Inside the center are benches around a 6-foot spherical display with images on the surface. A variety of films play on the sphere throughout the day. Or explore earth with an Educator. The monitor next to the door displays the title of the next film.

On the left beyond the Ocean Science Center is a staircase to Café Scuba, the Aquarium’s restaurant. Further ahead on the right is an elevator and past it is a hallway to several classrooms. The hallway exits to the outdoors. For the tour, please remain in the Great Hall.

## The Honda Blue Cavern

At the end of the Great Hall is the Honda Blue Cavern. Three stories high, the 142,000-gallon exhibit is modeled after Blue Cavern Point, an underwater kelp forest. The three acrylic panels, 21 feet tall and nine inches thick, each weighing seven tons, create this curving exhibit. The animals inside represent those found off the coast of Catalina Island. Swimming among the swaying brown kelp above the gray gravel bed are a variety of fish, including California sheephead, the females coral pink in color, the males black and red with sloping foreheads, brown, snake-shaped California Moray eels, bat rays, leopard sharks, kelp bass, and giant sea bass, which are splotchy gray and white with black spots.

Adult giant sea bass often gather to breed around the Channel Islands during the summer months. They have a “protected status” because of severe overfishing. The Aquarium of the Pacific has a breeding pair of these fish and has had success in rearing a juvenile.

Formal presentations take place here throughout the day. Showtimes are listed on a sign next to the exhibit and on the visitor app. Scattered among the floor tiles in front of the Honda Blue Cavern exhibit are more brass tiles: Scorpionfish, Skate, Moray eel, Trigger fish, Shark, Sea Bass, and Stingray.

## Southern California Gallery

This exhibit highlights the marine environments of Southern California, including kelp forests, reefs, seagrass meadows, and open ocean.

## Casino Point

First on the left is the Casino Point exhibit named after the location on Catalina Island. Giant kelp is anchored to the rocky reef's floor with gnarled, root-like holdfasts. Between the holdfasts, tufted red algae, encrusted pink coralline algae and other seaweeds compete for space in the dimly lit forest floor. Swimming amid the gold kelp are striped zebra perch, silvery Pacific mackerel, mottled brown and beige California scorpionfish, black surfperch and bright orange garibaldi.

## White Abalone

Continuing into the gallery next to Casino Point is a small rectangular habitat featuring white abalone and sarcastic fringehead fish. Below the habitat window is a white abalone shell so visitors can touch the shell and feel the smooth inside and the bumpy outside. Above the habitat is a graphic featuring the life cycle of the white abalone from larvae to adult marine snail.

The habitat itself has dark rocks forming a wall along the back. These rocks have a similar texture to the outside of the abalone shell making it a great place to camouflage. Abalone can be found clinging to these rocks or occasionally moving through the sandy bottom that comes up to the glass. Small silvery fish fill out the water column, and they are constantly swimming providing a constant source of dynamic movement.

## Night Crawlers

After visiting the abalone, turn right and walk straight across to the opposite wall towards the Night Crawlers habitat featuring the California spiny lobster. This habitat is unique as visitors can walk around it since the habitat itself protrudes out from the wall. There are large boulders that provide many nooks and crannies for animals to hide in like the California spiny lobster and the California moray eels. Towards the back, amber colored giant kelp strands create a backdrop for the habitat.

## Southern California Spotlight

On the left side of Night Crawlers, there are three small habitats that are collectively called the Southern California Spotlight. These habitats have smaller animals like the small red Catalina goby, two-spot octopus, and the circular sand dollar. Having their own habitats allows visitors to view them more easily.

## Artificial Reefs

Following the wall after the third habitat from the Southern California Spotlight, the next habitat is a large habitat called Artificial Reefs. Displaying a re-creation of the pylon of an oil rig, this habitat is very dark with limited lighting to mimic the lack of light at the depth this ecosystem is found. Sea anemones, sponges, and algae cover the oil rig structure. Surrounding the structure, schools of fish dart in and out of the lights and often hide in the shadows.



## Beauty in the Deep

The next exhibit is on the right side of the gallery and is a dimly lit habitat called Beauty in the Deep. With a deep blue background, there are many rocks forming a rocky reef providing home to California's unique purple hydrocorals. They extend out in many directions like underwater tree branches. There are also gorgonians and colonial cup corals. Swimming around, various rockfish species add movement to this habitat.

## Marine Meadows

As the gallery bends to the left away from Beauty in the Deep, a thirty-foot-long habitat featuring seagrass called Marine Meadows greets visitors. Seagrass grows in a sandy bottom mimicking the important sea grass beds that can be found as close as Newport Bay. Surfperch fill the water column swimming back and forth. In the sand, visitors can find the burrowing armoured sea star in the sand. Sea grass grows in the sand creating a curtain-like appearance.

## Sea Jellies

This round habitat features a sea jelly from the Southern Californian region and often rotates. The round habitat allows for the water to circulate, and it keeps the sea jellies drifting as they do in ocean currents. There is a blue background to mimic their open ocean habitat.

## Marine Meadows (display)

Related to the seagrass habitat across the walkway, this interactive exhibit provides information about the benefits seagrass beds provide including carbon sequestration and animal nurseries. Along the bottom of the display, there are buttons that reveal the outline and photo of a very well camouflaged animal in the sea grass bed.

## Seal and Sea Lions

Continue ahead on the right to a round window with a preview of the Seal and Sea lions Habitat. Ahead is the Seals and Sea Lion underwater acrylic viewing tunnel. This 211,000-gallon exhibit features above and below water views of these animals as they swim above and on either side. Sea lions have small external ear flaps, like a dog, while seals have tiny ear holes and no visible flaps. Sea lions have long wing-shaped front flippers that they use for propulsion. Seals have short, blunt front flippers used for steering and webbed rear flippers that are used to push them through the water. Sea lions can also turn their hind flippers forward to help with movement on land, unlike seals that must lie on their bellies and inch forward. The sea lions are dark brown to black while the harbor seals are gray with black splotches.

## Outdoor Exhibits First Level

The tunnel leads outdoors through automatic sliding doors to Harbor Terrace, Lorikeet Forest, Shark Lagoon, Our Water Future, Southern California Steelhead Story, the Marine Life Theater, and Molina Animal Care Center.

### Lower Shorebirds Exhibit

To the far right of the doors is a small aviary built against the wall with various shorebirds.

### Harbor Terrace

Continuing all the way to the left, you reach Harbor Terrace, an outdoor picnic area with several small picnic tables shaded by umbrellas. From these tables there is a view of Rainbow Harbor, a small commercial harbor with several boats.

### Mudskippers

As you enter Harbor Terrace, on your left is the mudskipper exhibit. Mangrove trees with exposed roots sit in a mixture of mud and water. Mudskippers, small amphibious fish, crawl across the mud. They survive out of the water by absorbing oxygen through the lining of their mouths as well as their skin. They skip across the mud on their modified fins. To the left of the exhibit, a map shows mudskipper distribution in tropical and subtropical regions of Africa, Asia, and Australia.

### Archerfish

Just beyond the mudskipper exhibit is an archerfish exhibit. This fish grows to about 4 inches in length and has a silver body with four or five black vertical stripes. Archerfish have the ability to spit a jet of water above the surface as a method of hunting insects and other prey. They can target their prey on the water's surface or even in low-hanging branches. They typically are found in mangroves and estuaries from India to the Philippines, Australia, and Polynesia.

### Moon Jelly Touch Lab

Continue onto Harbor Terrace. On the right, under a large blue umbrella-like structure is a sea jelly touch pool. The large round pool comes to waist level. Guests may reach in to touch the translucent moon jellies with a gentle two-finger touch. Staff members are here to assist you. Sea jellies are found throughout the world from surface waters to the deep sea. Moon jellies occur seasonally here in Long Beach's Spinnaker Cove. The jellies are translucent with a round bell and short tentacles. Moon jellies typically have four "U"-shaped stomachs on the top of the bell.

### Souvenir Shop

Returning to the Seal and Sea Lion exit and immediately across from the doors, there is a souvenir shop with a fan shaped .

## Marine Life Theatre

Behind is the Marine Life Theatre, an amphitheater where educational programs and animal demonstrations take place.

## Bar Fresh and Bamboo Bistro

Behind the Theater is the Bar Fresh stand and further behind another snack shop with an adjacent patio containing chairs and round tables.

## Lorikeets

Across and to the left of the doors exiting the Seal and Seal Lion tunnel is the Lorikeet Forest, an aviary entered through the plastic drape over the double doors. Inside, a winding path takes you through an exhibit that is home to a large flock of the ten-inch Australian birds called rainbow lorikeets. You may purchase nectar before you enter. Once inside, the birds may perch on your arm, shoulders and even your head, to feed. Lorikeets will bite. Allow birds to land on you but do not try to hold or pet them. Another set of double doors exits the aviary. Please keep one set of doors closed at all times. Outside the Lorikeet enclosure are sinks for hand washing.

## Southern California Steelhead Story

To the left and opposite the exit from the lorikeets is the Southern California Steelhead Story exhibit. The sign is carved in rock on the right with a tactile map of the Southern California rivers and streams that flow to the Pacific Ocean.

The entrance to the exhibit is past the sign on the right, along a sandy walkway. Steelhead is the name given to ocean-going rainbow trout. Steelhead hatch and start life as rainbow trout and remain in freshwater for 1 to 3 years as juveniles. Some juvenile rainbow trout undergo a process called smoltification to become steelhead. They then migrate to the ocean and stay for 1 to 4 years. When rivers are typically swollen in winter, adults migrate to freshwater to spawn, usually to the stream where they hatched. Steelhead belong to a family that includes salmon, trout and char. Unlike salmon, which spawn once, adult steelhead often return to the ocean and repeat the spawning migration the next year.

The first two sections of the exhibit contain rainbow trout, which are golden brown with small spots covering their bodies. They are about 10 inches long. The last exhibit contains slightly larger fish, at about 12 to 18 inches. Some young fish will stay in freshwater for life and remain rainbow trout. Others will migrate to the ocean and become steelhead.

The final section is an estuary where most young fish grow and develop. In their journey to the ocean, they become steelhead and they return to the estuary later on their way upstream to spawn. This last section can be viewed from two sides. Around the exhibit are benches and beach umbrellas against a mural of the green and gold grasses of an estuary.

## Our Water Future

As you leave the steelhead exhibit, turn right to: Our Water Future. This exhibit gives visitors the opportunity to learn more about where our water comes from, major water uses, and ways to conserve water in our daily lives. You enter Our Water Future, there is a map with lighted pathways showing where California's water comes from and how it is allocated. On the back side of that panel, a flatscreen displays real-time data.

The central feature of the exhibit is the watershed table. A watershed is an area of land where all the surface water drains to the same lower destination. This water can come from high in the mountains or from rain that falls on the streets. Watersheds come in all shapes and sizes. They cross county, state and national boundaries. No matter where you are, you are in a watershed. And what you do in your watershed impacts the ocean and the animals that call it home. From green mountains in one corner, four rivers, three creeks and a channel, water converges and empties into San Pedro Bay. The routes they travel are cut into the map that includes parts of Los Angeles and Orange counties. Buttons are located around the map that trigger rainfall, which ultimately ends in the bay. Signs here warn that you will get wet if you are too close to the table. Signs around the map detail groundwater storage, regional rainfall, and flooding. Moving counterclockwise, there are exhibit features demonstrating how to transform lawns into California-friendly and native landscapes and how water gets to our tap at home. Next, visitors can learn about indoor water use through an interactive station that demonstrates the amount of water used by devices and appliances in a home. Finally, visitors can learn about our future water supply via digital video screen and the impact of plastic pollution at the exhibit stop near the classroom.

The Our Water Future exhibit area also features an enhanced surrounding garden area and upgrades to the Premier Watershed Classroom. The Premier Watershed classroom is a single-story building with a flat sloping roof. Every aspect, from landscaping and energy systems to furnishings of the building, is designed to maximize sustainability and minimize environmental impacts. The section of the garden designated as the Butterfly Garden includes plants the butterflies rely on for food and signage explaining their life cycle. At the back wall, milkweed is planted to provide food and habitat for monarch butterflies. These orange and black butterflies are visible in the garden almost year-round, and chrysalises can be found under the benches and in the vines on the fence.

Exit Our Water Future from the same way you entered. On your left will be Shark Lagoon.

## Shark Lagoon

Further along on the left is Shark Lagoon, with various species of sharks and rays. Under a blue shade cloth supported by bamboo poles, the lagoon contains three exhibits, two of them touch pools of varying heights. To touch the animals, use two fingers and a gentle touch – guests are asked not to scratch or grab the animals. Staff members provide information over a microphone in this area and are available to assist and to answer questions.

## Horseshoe-shaped Touch Pool

The horseshoe shaped touch pool on the left has tan cownose rays and blue-spotted rays.

## Bamboo Sharks Touch Pool

A smaller oval touch pool to the far right contains 3-foot long, adult bamboo sharks. The edge of the pool is about two feet high.

## Larger Sharks

In the large oval tank at the back, which is not a touch tank, are the larger sharks: blacktip reef sharks, white tipped reef sharks, a zebra shark, a southern stingray, sea turtle, and an orange and brown reticulate whiptail ray. This view looks down into this exhibit. This exhibit also has an underwater viewing area on the far-left side down a ramp.

## Play Area

In front of the Lagoon is a play area with a spongy blue surface where a shark and a pale blue squid statue reside. The squid has buttons on its side, which spray water on the shark and sometimes passing visitors. Also here are a yellow boat, a cream-colored conch shell, a green spitting archerfish and a hermit crab, in his reddish brown shell by a mangrove forest. While climbing on the mangrove is not allowed, children may crawl though the dark brown roots. Resting on a high arching root is another resident, reddish-brown ant.

## Molina Animal Care Center

Past the play area is the Molina Animal Care Center which includes a veterinary hospital and animal holding tanks. The hospital is visible through a glass wall and has exam tables, an x-ray machine, and adjustable overhead lights. There are benches here for viewing the hospital and watching scheduled exams or procedures. To the left of the hospital between metal fences there is a large window into a holding tank, 40 feet in diameter, for large animals. To the right is an exhibit discussing our sea otter surrogacy program that pairs our female otters with rescued baby sea otters to help them learn the skills needed to survive in the wild. Turning around, ahead on the right is a coral exhibit. Beyond the coral display is an exhibit with a rope barrier on the left that features many types of coral that you can view from above. Beyond the exhibit is a sign with a map of the Molina Animal Care Center. Ahead on the right are restroomrooms and hand washing stations.

## Outdoor Exhibits Second Level

Returning toward the main building there are elevators, and drinking fountains, and beyond these are stairs to the the Seals and Sea lion above water viewing, the June Keyes Penguin Habitat, Shorebird Sanctuary, and a touch exhibit under development.

### Seal and Sea Lions Habitat

On the second level, to the right, is the above water viewing area for the Seal and Sea Lions Habitat. To the right of the viewing area is a separate space with a pool and beach space in case animals need to be separated for a variety of reasons. Staff members use positive reinforcement to train the seals and sea lions in animal husbandry behaviors. Opposite this viewing area is amphitheater-style seating facing the exhibit. Shows on the seals and sea lions take place here throughout the day. Times are available in the app.

### June Keyes Penguin Habitat

Reach the third level by elevator or up a flight of steps, which will take you to the June Keyes Penguin Habitat. On the left in a long tank with water about shoulder height are Magellanic penguins native to South America. These penguins live 20 to 30-plus years. Some of the penguins in the exhibit came from other zoos and aquariums, while others were rescued. Nearly 75 percent of the world's penguin species are listed as vulnerable or near threatened. The threats they face depend on where they live: warming temperatures, pollution, overfishing and human encroachment have led to declining penguin populations. The habitat has a rocky shoreline where the birds sun themselves, especially important when they are molting, and their feathers are not yet watertight. At the far-right end of the tank is crawl space about 3 and a half feet high where children can slip under the the exhibit and get a closer underwater view of the swimming penguins.

Opposite the exhibit across a walkway are touch screens about penguins and tactile models of three species of penguins: The smallest, the little blue penguin is about 1.5 feet tall and has a blue back. In the middle is the Magellanic penguin which has a pale pink circle around its eyes and is about 2.5 feet tall. The largest, at 4 feet tall, the emperor penguin.

### Shorebird Sanctuary

On the far left is the Shorebird Sanctuary, which is currently closed behind a construction wall and undergoing renovation.

A large, curved window onto the Seals and Sea Lions Habitat faces the Shorebird Sanctuary..

Follow the wall into the building through the right hand set of double doors to the second level of Southern California/Baja: the Gulf of California exhibit.

# Indoor Exhibits Second Level

## Gulf of California Exhibits

The finger shaped Gulf of California was formed when part of Mexico separated from the mainland due to seismic activity along the San Andreas Fault. Out of the eight-hundred fish species that live in the Gulf, 17 percent are found nowhere else in the world. Ahead, a map on the wall displays the Colorado River system. Next to it is a tactile cutout of a gray vaquita, a critically endangered porpoise. Inset in it is a television monitor with audio. Next to it is a map indicating the four dams along the Colorado River. To the right of the map is a tactile cutout of a totoaba. The totoaba is found only in the northern Gulf of California, and this once-thriving commercial fishery closed in 1975.

## Garden of Eels

Further along on the left side in a curved exhibit is “Garden of Eels” where a colony of twenty-five to thirty small worm shaped eels poke out of the sand. There are two species. One that's yellow and white striped and the other is light yellow (almost white) with many tiny black spots and two large ones on each side of their bodies.

## Gulf of California

Turn right and ahead is a rectangular exhibit where residents of the reef swim over a gravel bottom. Amid colorful coral are a wide variety of fishes typically found in the warm waters of the Gulf of California including gray and yellow-tailed surgeonfish, lookdown fish, orange and white-striped king angelfish and the porcupine puffer.

On the right is a wall mounted satellite image map of the lower Gulf labeled Rocky Reefs and the Southern Gulf.

## Great Hall (second floor)

The exit from the Gulf of California exhibit leads back to the Great Hall on the second level. A bridge to the right spans the Hall and looks down on the Honda Blue Cavern. The bridge leads to Café Scuba, elevators, and restrooms on the right and The Veranda which has outdoor seating on the left.

Continue to your left. Along the wall is an exhibit on California's changing water supply, and on the right to the interactive exhibit kiosk Whales: Voices of the Sea. Hear the sounds of various species, and learn about their differences.

## Northern Pacific Gallery

Opposite the Whales kioaks is a brushed steel sign: “Northern Pacific” along with cutouts of angular fish and a killer whale. The Northern Pacific gallery represents the northern-most region of the Pacific Ocean, specifically the habitats in and around the Bering Sea. The movement through this gallery is clockwise.

### Surge Channel

On both sides inside the gallery entrance is the Surge Channel exhibit. Tactile dark textured rocky walls frame the exhibit. The surge of the waves rolls along in these tanks to break up against the dark rocks. A foggy mist rolls above the surface and escapes over the tops of the tanks. Bitter cold sea and air temperatures and violent, wind-driven waves are characteristic of the North Pacific Ocean. When these waves are forced through narrow channels, a powerful and noisy surge rises and falls. Sea life has adapted to stay put in the crashing surge by clinging tightly to a rocky surface; others sway with the wave action, or fit into protective rocky cervices. Still others, when exposed to the air, close their shells tightly. Inside are pale green anemones and copper colored Rockfish. There are photos on the base of the exhibit on the left. Beyond the tank on the right is a tactile rock with barnacles and mussels on it. Inset in the rock is a sign “The Rocky Coast”: The Northern Pacific headlands were created about two-hundred million years ago when the North American continent, which was moving southwest, collided with the Pacific Oceanic plate, which was moving north. This impact created jagged, mountainous shorelines as the heavy sea floor sank slowly into Earth’s interior.

### Bringing Up Baby

Further ahead on the right is Bringing up Baby with an interactive displaying two different types of eggs—one is oval shaped. The other is from a diving bird called a murre and has a pointed end opposite a bulbous one. Turn the knob. One egg rolls while the other does not. Murres do not build nests but lay a single egg on bare rock and the egg’s shape keeps it from rolling away.

### Diving Birds

Further right are the North Pacific Diving birds: tufted and horned puffins, crested auklets and pigeon guillemots. The chunky gray rocks inside the tank are duplicated outside, providing a place to sit. These birds live on remote islands of the Northern Pacific coast and build their nests in rocky cavities and crevices. The birds seem to “fly” underwater. They also have the ability to dive, reaching depths of over 500 feet. A rocky, cliff looking area at the back of the exhibit allows the birds to rest and nest. The front part of the exhibit is water where they swim in front of a glass viewing window. Above the exhibit is a video with audio that talks about how we care for our diving birds at the Aquarium.



## Sea Jellies

Opposite the Diving Birds on the left is Sea Jellies. Sea jellies have no heart, eyes, or brain; yet they have survived in the ocean for more than 650 million years. Sea jellies are invertebrates and range in size from as small as a pencil eraser to as long as a basketball court. They have three main parts: a round umbrella-like body or bell, dangling string-like tentacles that sting and immobilize prey, and oral arms to eat prey. The Aquarium of the Pacific has successfully cultured several species of sea jellies, which has allowed us to share these animals with aquariums around the world. There are four exhibits along the wall featuring different species that rotate throughout the year.

On the right of the exhibits is a graphic that shows the life stages of sea jellies.

## Ocean Today Interactive

Ahead on the far left is a touch screen television with audio, which displays the “Ocean Today” interactive. More than 50 percent of the population in the US and the world live within 50 miles of a coast. The Aquarium is part of a group of educational centers that inform visitors about the issues facing the ocean.

## Giant Pacific Octopus

The Giant Pacific Octopus exhibit features the largest octopus species in the world with an arm span that can reach 13 feet. The elusive animal is displayed on a large monitor and in an exhibit. Living on the continental shelf of the Northern Pacific, they range from Southern California, up the coast to the Pacific Northwest, across the Aleutian Islands to southern Japan. Each of their eight arms has up to 280 suckers or discs and gives the animal an acute sense of touch. They can change color and texture.

## Coastal Corner

Continue inside the barrier to Coastal Corner touch lab that is about six feet long with a waist high area that is rocky with various animals inside. Here you may touch anemones, sea stars, urchins, and sea cucumbers using a gentle two finger touch. Staff members are available to assist you explore these cold water creatures.

## Sea Otters

Beyond the touch lab on the right is the 36-foot wide exhibit of the Sea Otters. On the left are rocks and benches and murals of the sea. On one large rock is a carved map of otter’s historical range. Sea otters live in coastal habitats such as kelp forests. They hunt, mate, groom, give birth, play, rest and sleep almost entirely at sea. The exhibit allows above and underwater viewing of the otters with a ramp down to the underwater level. These animals are 4 feet long with a 12-inch tail and can weigh 60 pounds. Their fur is black and brown with a paler-colored head. Juveniles are usually darker in color. Shows take place daily here. Times are available on the app.

Past the benches on the left is a map of California labeled A Keystone Species. When seas otters are plentiful they keep the sea urchin population in check. However, when otters are scarce the urchins become abundant and they overgraze the kelp and algae reducing the kelp canopy and food for other species. Southern Sea Otters are found between Half Moon Bay in the north to Santa Barbara in the south.

On the left is a video above and three touch screens below with an interactive game about otters.

## Deepwater

This cylindrical habitat located in the middle of the space has stones forming a central piece where spot prawns, vermilion sea stars, and spiny king crab can climb up and down. Strands of algae are placed in a couple of spots in the habitat. You can walk around this habitat completely.

## Rocky Reef

Behind Deepwater on the left is Rocky Reef. Plants and animals in north Pacific rocky reefs live in constantly changing habitats as the tides rise and fall. The inhabitants are divided by zones. In the tank are filter feeders: white plumrose anemones, bright red strawberry anemones, and orange puffball sponges.

## Bays and Sounds

To the right of Rocky Reef is Bays and Sounds. Bays and Sounds are semi-enclosed bodies of water. Sea life abounds in these shallow water ecosystems, which provide habitats for the different stages of life cycles of many marine animals. In the exhibit is a large pole wrapped with thick rope. Swimming about are tubesnouts, sticklebacks, and bay pipefish.

## Sandy Bottom

Continuing to the right along the wall is a low tank with a sandy bottom containing sea stars, flatfish and spot prawns.

## Deep Waters and Northern Jewels

Surviving in the extreme environments often requires adaptations. Some animals blend into their surroundings. These exhibits feature basket stars, Pacific spiny lumpsuckers, and sculpin.

Last on the left are the Giant Japanese spider crabs. The largest crab species known, these deep water crabs measure claw to claw as much as 13 feet. Crabs have an exoskeleton which they must shed to grow. It takes several weeks to separate its legs, eyestalks, antennae, mouthparts and gills from the old shell. It takes several weeks more for the new soft shell to harden, during which the crab is vulnerable even from its own species. There is a model of a whale fall mimicking an important food source for many animals that call the deep waters home.

Leaving the Northern Pacific Gallery you are back in the Great Hall. Ahead on the left are elevators, restrooms, and drinking fountains. Continue past them to the entrance to the Tropical Pacific gallery on the left. Also along these walls, the Aquarium displays rotating exhibits of artwork, including paintings and drawings, photography, and other installations.

## Tropical Pacific Gallery

This gallery focuses on colorful coral reefs and represents the warm waters of the Tropical Pacific. The movement through this gallery is clockwise.

### The Coral Lagoon

Inside on the left is the coral nursery exhibit with above and below water views. The 12-foot long exhibit has tropical vegetation growing from gray rock. Lagoons are calm bodies of water used by marine animals as nurseries. They provide protected shallow areas with limited waves or predators. Some species spend their entire lives in the shelter of the lagoon. On the lower ledge of the exhibit are photos of some of the colorful inhabitants.

### Tropical Reef Habitat - First View

On your right is your first view of the Tropical Reef Habitat, the Aquarium's largest exhibit, holding 350,000 gallons of water and nearly six-hundred fish. It fills the center of this gallery and is visible from four views. Photos of animals in the exhibit are on its slanted lip on the bottom.

### Live Corals

Further ahead to the right is an exhibit with vibrant purple, orange and green corals. The Aquarium cultures and shares coral with other institutions. Coral reefs are some of the most biologically diverse habitats on earth.

A wall display across from Live Corals is entitled, "What are Corals?". It shows how corals are made of many small animals that live in a calcium carbonate structure.

### Vivid Colors

Next is an exhibit that showcases a variety of vivid corals in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors, including pinks, yellows, and oranges.

## Frogs: Facing a Changing World (The Tropics)

As you enter the Frogs: Facing a Changing World, The Tropics exhibit, you'll pass under a large sign with three layered leaves featuring a larger-than-life red-backed poison dart frog. This exhibit explores the habitats of frogs from around the world, including a look at a behind-the-scenes nursery featuring three different young species.

### Prehensile-Tailed Skink

On your left is a large display window featuring the prehensile-tailed skink, a tree-dwelling reptile with a long tail and claws. There are branches of various sizes placed inside the display, along with rocks going up the back of the wall.

### Mossy Frogs and Kaiser's Mountain Newts

Further inside the FROGS exhibit, you'll hear the calls of various frogs as you approach the mossy tree frog exhibit and Kaiser's mountain newt exhibit on the right. Both amphibians live in cool mountain streams in different parts of the world: mossy tree frogs are native to rainforests of Vietnam, while the Kaiser's mountain newt can be found in an Iranian mountain range.

Next the exhibit is currently closed for maintenance

### FROG Nursery

Moving along to your right is the frog nursery where staff can be seen caring for the animals. A small, raised step is in front of the left third of the viewing area.. These exhibits rotate with different animals

### Mangrove Tree

In the center of the Frogs exhibit walkway is a sculpted mangrove tree, where several more frogs are displayed in built-in habitats. At the foot of the tree is a projection of red-backed poison frogs hopping around a mossy ground. Golden mantellas are housed in the right cylindrical exhibit, whose habitat resembles their native Madagascar forests. In the built-in habitat on the left side of the tree is the green and black poison dart frog.

### Give Them a Hand

Around the back of the sculpted mangrove tree is a large orange board, with a screen on the upper third that reads "Give them a hand." It's an interactive game where guests can identify which frog has a hand or foot like a grippy glove, suction cup, rake, or flipper.

## Smoky Jungle Frog

On the opposite wall is a large viewing window for the smoky jungle frogs. These large frogs, about the size of a fist, live in a habitat at the Aquarium that is full of greenery, vines, and lots of hiding spots under cliffs and caves.

To the right are a few more small exhibits, housing the magnificent tree frogs, Panamanian golden frogs, the blue poison dart frog, and Anthony's poison dart frog.

## Soft Coral Tunnel

As you enter the Soft Coral Tunnel, take a moment to feel the walls and some of the coral that are found in the exhibit where the fish swim above and on both sides of you. The fish range in size from several inches to the 8-foot zebra shark. Also sharing the exhibit are the endangered olive ridley and green sea turtles.

## Coral Predators

As you exit the tunnel, straight ahead is a colorful exhibit featuring coral and species of fish that eat coral, including parrotfish, named for their beak-like mouth that they use to chew off pieces of coral. The fish excrete the coral as "sand" in their feces.

## Jewels of the Tropical Pacific

Back in the gallery on the left is a wall with seven small, round and square tanks, the Jewels of the Tropical Pacific. These exhibits feature a changing array of marine life.

## Tropical Pacific View

On the opposite wall is a small narrow viewing alcove that looks into the Tropical Reef.

## Jellies

Next to the Jewels exhibit is a cylindrical exhibit displaying jellies, which have thick oral arms to capture prey. This species is found in shallow waters of the South Pacific.

## Glowing Reef

Next is an exhibit that features coral and other ocean species that glow in the dark when illuminated with ultraviolet light.

## Deep Reefs

This small cylindrical habitat on your left features coral and other marine life that can be found on deeper reefs in the tropical Pacific Ocean where sunlight is considerably less.

## The Futures of Reefs

A large cylindrical exhibit with rocky outcroppings provide a common octopus a space to hide and feel at home. The back wall is a deep blue mimicking the vast ocean when looking beyond a coral reef.

## Tropical Reef Habitat - Fourth View

On the opposite wall is the fourth and largest viewing area for the Tropical Reef from two levels. This view of the exhibit represents a popular dive site called “Blue Corner” in Palau. In this habitat you see a wide range of colorful reef fish, the massive Queensland grouper, unicorn fish, and a sea turtle. On the opposite wall is a map of the ocean.

## Coral Restoration

As you begin to leave the gallery, one last cylindrical habitat showcases some of the techniques of coral restoration used to help coral reefs. There are colorful corals placed on rocks in the center of the habitat. A string hangs from the top with corals growing on it.

To the left of the Coral Restoration exhibit, is a video wall that features a rotating series of videos and images on the ocean.

You have now finished the tour. Continue straight as you exit the gallery. Ahead on the left is a staircase leading down to the Great Hall or on the right is an elevator. Exiting the stairs or the elevator, turn left to exit on the Aquarium through glass doors on the far right.

We hope you enjoyed the Aquarium and this tour. If you have further questions, feedback or comments about this tour, please visit the Member Services Desk on your left before exiting.