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MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM®

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**NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For information contact:

Angela Hains: (831) 647-6804; [ahains@mbayaq.org](mailto:ahains@mbayaq.org)

Karen Jeffries: (831) 644-7548; [kjeffries@mbayaq.org](mailto:kjeffries@mbayaq.org)

Ken Peterson: (831) 648-4922; [kpeterson@mbayaq.org](mailto:kpeterson@mbayaq.org)

**SECRETS AWAIT YOU AT THE  
MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM IN 2009**

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*During its silver anniversary year the aquarium unveils “The Secret Lives of Seahorses”*

During its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year the nation’s No. 1 family aquarium continues to fascinate visitors with innovative new exhibits and animals with the opening of its newest special exhibition, “The Secret Lives of Seahorses.”

Seahorses have been celebrated in art, literature and mythology for centuries, so you’d think we know a lot about them. On April 6 in “The Secret Lives of Seahorses” you’ll discover that nothing could be further from the truth.

It’s one of many surprises in 2009 that await visitors at the world-renowned aquarium.

The aquarium’s grand opening on October 20, 1984 launched a new era in ocean conservation awareness and aquarium design – sparking the “Age of Aquariums” in more than two dozen cities across the United States.

It’s been a trendsetter among aquariums for a quarter century. It was the first to successfully exhibit great white sharks, create the world’s largest living deep-sea exhibits and living kelp forest exhibit, design galleries especially for kids and families, and pioneer mesmerizing jellyfish exhibits on a grand scale. Its Seafood Watch program is transforming the global seafood market by helping consumers and businesses choose sustainable seafood. Through ongoing conservation outreach, research programs and engaging exhibits the aquarium will continue to inspire ocean conservation throughout 2009.

The newest and biggest inspiration will come in a variety of shapes and sizes when the new special exhibition, “The Secret Lives of Seahorses,” opens on April 6.

With a head like a horse, a snout like an aardvark, a belly pouch like a kangaroo, a prehensile tail like a monkey and the ability to change colors like a chameleon, seahorses are anything but ordinary.

Nine species of seahorses, plus enchanting seahorse relatives including sea dragons, ribboned pipehorses, dragon pipefish and shrimpfish beckon visitors into the elusive water world of these charismatic creatures. Each exhibit highlights the varied habitats in which seahorses and their relatives

## ***New in 2009– Monterey Bay Aquarium – Page 2***

live, and shares important stories about the threats they face in the wild.

“Seahorses are wonderful ambassadors for ocean conservation because they live in the most endangered habitats in the world – coral reefs, sea grass beds and mangrove forests,” said Ava Ferguson, senior exhibit developer for “The Secret Lives of Seahorses.” “When you save a seahorse, you also save some of Earth’s most precious marine habitats.”

As they explore the exhibit, visitors will meet the entire seahorse family: fishes that have fused jaws and bony plates in place of the scales normally associated with fish. Although seahorses and their kin come in many shapes and body forms, all are masters of disguise. Their ability to camouflage and blend with their environment helps them avoid detection by predators.

Sadly, the mystique and elusiveness that draws people to seahorses is also the reason they’re in jeopardy in the wild.

“So little is known about seahorses that we are at risk of losing these animals before we even know them,” said Ferguson. “Until recently, we had no idea that seahorses were being caught and collected at a rate that threatens their survival.”

Of the 34 known seahorse species, eight are listed as threatened to some degree on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN) “Red List.” They’re declining worldwide because of destruction of the reefs and shallow waters where they live, invasive fishing practices in which they’re accidentally killed as bycatch, and because of the excessive collection of seahorses for the curio trade, home aquariums and for use in traditional medicines.

The multimedia galleries in “The Secret Lives of Seahorses” will connect visitors with conservation stations that provide the tools they need to help save these fascinating animals.

In one gallery, visitors learn why seahorses and their relatives are the ocean’s kings of camouflage. One live exhibit features stick-like shrimpfish, which usually keep their heads pointed downward between sea urchin spines and colorful corals to blend with the surrounding habitat. A newborn seahorse clutch in another live exhibit helps demonstrate how seahorse babies are insanely tiny yet totally self-sufficient. Visitors can test their own camouflage skills at an interactive exhibit by designing a custom seahorse. Be advised: The seahorse that’s least well-hidden will be eaten by a passing predator.

Elsewhere, the award-winning “Splash Zone” family exhibit continues to enchant visitors and to build magical and lasting connections with the ocean for children of all ages.

The expanded Enchanted Kelp Forest, Coral Reef Kingdom and Rugged Rocky Shore galleries that opened in 2008 are home to visitor favorites like a colony of blackfooted penguins, a den of moray eels and water play areas. With double the space for families, visitors can now journey through an

### ***New in 2009– Monterey Bay Aquarium – Page 3***

enchanting underwater forest, stroll beneath a sunlit kelp canopy, delight in the wonders of pot-bellied seahorses and pharaoh cuttlefish, pop up next to penguins and much more.

New behind-the-scenes tours also continue in 2009, giving visitors the opportunity to learn other secrets about the aquarium. Visitors ages six and up can participate in a guided 50- minute tour and find out what it takes to care for animals and exhibits at the aquarium. These dynamic tours will be offered several times a day for \$12 per person for the general public and \$10 per person for members. An expert guide, state-of-the-art headset technology and explorations that take you to where the day's action is most intriguing, make this a must-see addition for repeat as well as first-time aquarium visitors. Space is limited and – while drop-in slots are usually available – advance purchase online is recommended.

General admission tickets, as well as behind-the-scenes tickets, are now available online at [www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org). There's no service charge to print tickets at home or pick them up upon arrival, and just a small fee to receive tickets by mail. Either way, advance tickets are a great way to avoid ticket lines on busy days.

The aquarium's first-ever freshwater special exhibition, "Wild About Otters," continues to captivate visitors with feisty freshwater otters and over 30 species of tropical freshwater fishes and reptiles. Visitors can also explore the deep sea in the aquarium's "Mission to the Deep" exhibit. Through large, multi-screen presentations and interactive displays, "Mission to the Deep" invites visitors to join researchers from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute as they photograph deep-sea animals, map vast undersea mountains and monitor animals that colonize a sunken whale carcass.

In addition to special exhibitions, the aquarium's acclaimed permanent exhibits include playful sea otters; a towering three-story kelp forest; touch pools and other hands-on exhibits; and a million-gallon Outer Bay exhibit, home to sharks, tuna, ocean sunfish and other open-ocean animals.

There are daily feeding shows in the Kelp Forest and sea otter exhibits, as well as daily auditorium programs featuring high-definition video clips that take visitors into the deep sea and waters around the world to learn about sharks, jellies and otters.

A full lineup of "Aquarium Adventures" programs will kick off the summer of 2009, including sailing excursions, behind-the-scenes tours and children's SCUBA diving in the Great Tide Pool.

Also in summer and back by popular demand are extended weekend hours during "Evenings by the Bay." Each Saturday and Sunday visitors will have two additional hours – until 8 p.m. – to enjoy "The Secret Lives of Seahorses" and everything else the aquarium has to offer. The evenings also include live music and an opportunity to have dinner in the ocean-view Portola Restaurant.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium, acclaimed as one of the world's finest, has attracted more than 44 million visitors and has won national awards for its permanent and special exhibitions, its architecture,

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and its cultural, educational and economic impact.

All exhibits and programs (except “Aquarium Adventures”) are included with 2009 aquarium admission of \$29.95 adult; \$27.95 senior (65+) and student (full-time college, with I.D.); and \$17.95 children 3-12 and the disabled. **(2009 prices)** Children under 3 are admitted free of charge. Discounted tickets for members of the military and their families can be purchased in advance at many California and Nevada installations.

Located on historic Cannery Row in Monterey, the aquarium is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and in summer and major holiday periods from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. (closed Christmas Day); with extended weekend hours on Saturdays and Sundays, from 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. during the summer.

For more information visit [www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org) or call (831) 648-4888.

The mission of the Monterey Bay Aquarium is to inspire conservation of the oceans.

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**Editors: Contact Public Relations for images from “The Secret Lives of Seahorses” and other exhibits. Visit [www.montereybayaquarium.org/aa/pressroom](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/aa/pressroom) for a preview.**

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## NEWS RELEASE

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Karen Jeffries (831) 644-7548; [kjeffries@mbayaq.org](mailto:kjeffries@mbayaq.org)

Angela Hains, (831) 647-6804; [ahains@mbayaq.org](mailto:ahains@mbayaq.org)

# DISCOVER THE WONDERS OF THE OCEAN AT THE MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM

On October 20, 1984, the fish came back to Monterey's historic Cannery Row.

They came back in style, too, as the stars of the world-acclaimed Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Today, more than 35,000 creatures representing over 550 species fill 34 major galleries. With nearly 200 exhibits in all, the aquarium is a showcase for the habitats and sea life of one of the world's richest marine regions.

Since its opening, in surveys of peers and public alike, the aquarium has consistently been ranked No. 1 in the United States for its innovative exhibits and unsurpassed visitor experience. The aquarium was named the number one family-friendly aquarium by *Parents Magazine*, and the best aquarium and the third overall family attraction in the country, according to the Zagat Survey® U.S. Family Travel Guide. It has also grown to become one of the leading ocean conservation organizations in the world.

Over its first twenty-five years, the non-profit Monterey Bay Aquarium has been lauded for creating an expertly designed "undersea tour" of Monterey Bay's hidden world. From coastal wetlands to the open sea, from kelp forests to a mile-deep submarine canyon, the bay shelters an amazing range of habitats and sea life. The bay is also at the heart of the largest marine sanctuary along the shores of the continental United States.

Visitors can discover the plants and animals of Monterey Bay in a series of remarkable exhibits that have changed the face of aquarium design. With the debut of its award-winning "Outer Bay" galleries, Monterey Bay Aquarium became the first in the world to create open ocean exhibits on a grand scale.

The million-gallon Outer Bay exhibit houses a diverse community of open-ocean animals, including tunas, sharks, pelagic stingrays, mahi mahi, ocean sunfish and – four times in the past five years – a young white shark. The aquarium's White Shark Conservation Research Project

Marine life closer to shore is the highlight of the aquarium's redesigned "Ocean's Edge" galleries that reopened in 2005 – here visitors can explore habitats including coastal wetlands, the rocky

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## ***DISCOVER THE AQUARIUM - Monterey Bay Aquarium - Page 2***

shore, a living kelp forest and the undersea waters of Monterey Bay.

In Ocean's Edge, visitors enter the realm of the giant octopus, explore an expanded shorebird aviary and coastal wetland exhibit, and venture beneath crashing waves. They also can step into a wharf-side "café" and learn how to order a seafood meal that pleases the palate and protects ocean wildlife.

Sevengill sharks, salmon and other fishes roam the 90-foot-long, 326,000-gallon Monterey Bay Habitats exhibit, which recreates a cross-section of the bay's major habitats: sandy seafloor, shale reefs, deep reefs and wharf pilings. Sea otters frolic inches away from visitors in a two-story exhibit where they're on view both at the surface and underwater. A towering 28-foot-high Kelp Forest exhibit offers a diver's-eye view of a living kelp forest community.

The aquarium not only puts people eye-to-eye with a host of creatures, it puts them in touch with sea life, too. Kids and adults alike can touch bat rays in the Bat Ray Pool and sea stars, gumboot chitons and abalone in the Ocean's Edge Touch Pool. They can stroll through an open-air shorebird aviary, walk under a kelp canopy, and pass beneath life-size models of orcas, gray whales, porpoises and dolphins.

Microscopes, magnifiers, telescopes and even a viewer-guided underwater macro-video camera bring visitors closer to the mysterious world beyond the aquarium's decks. A hands-on learning gallery lets younger children and their families explore the adaptations that allow marine mammals to survive in the ocean.

More than 1.8 million people visit the 322,000-square-foot aquarium annually. There's always something new to see and do – even for those who return often – such as new animal arrivals, days with special programming about sharks, birds and otters, and other family events.

Among the aquarium's unique programs are kelp forest feeding shows where a diver talks with the audience through a two-way communications mask, and daily video broadcasts of deep sea marine life, sent to the aquarium from a scientific research submarine operating as much as 12,000 feet below the surface of Monterey Bay. Hands-on "discovery stations" and an interactive science center in the Outer Bay galleries help make each aquarium visit a memorable experience.

Elsewhere in the aquarium, visitors can explore the fun and fascinating world of otters – from sea otters to their freshwater cousins. In the special exhibition "Wild About Otters," visitors meet 11 freshwater otters and embark on a multi-sensory adventure into the lush world of remarkable tropical fishes, reptiles and plants, with live exhibits and interactive displays. "Wild About Otters" features African spotted-necked otters and Asian small-clawed otters in exhibits that represent the native lake and river habitats of these lively animals. The last day to see this special exhibition is Sunday, September 13.

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In 2009, “Aquarium Adventures” programs will again let visitors enhance their experience with behind-the-scenes tours and activities. Offerings include daily behind-the-scenes tours, surface SCUBA diving for children ages 8 to 13 in the Great Tide Pool, sailboat excursions on the bay, pre-opening feeding tours, Cannery Row history tours and other adventures.

Other permanent exhibits at the aquarium include “Vanishing Wildlife: Saving Tunas, Turtles and Sharks,” that focuses on why these magnificent animals need our protection and what individuals can do to help.

The newly renovated “Splash Zone: Ocean Homes” galleries features interactive exhibits and living species designed to engage the imaginations of young visitors and inspire a lifelong connection with the wonders of the oceans. The expanded exhibit doubles the space where families with children can play and learn together, exploring three ocean habitats – the Enchanted Kelp Forest, Coral Reef Kingdom and Rugged Rocky Shore.

The expanded galleries feature over 45 new and improved bilingual interactive exhibits, many fascinating animals including penguins, cuttlefish and leafy sea dragons, as well as new exhibits featuring the kelp forest habitat and a larger more immersive touch pool.

The aquarium’s waterfront decks offer telescopes and sweeping views of Monterey Bay. Inside, visitors will find gift and bookstores, and the Portola Cafe, with its self-serve cafeteria, ocean-view restaurant and full-service oyster bar.

The aquarium is located on historic Cannery Row, just two and a half hours south of San Francisco and only 15 minutes from Carmel and Pebble Beach, at 886 Cannery Row in Monterey. The aquarium is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and in summer and major holiday periods from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. (closed Christmas Day); with extended weekend hours on Saturdays and Sundays, from 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. from July 5 through September 6.

Travelers can find more information about the aquarium’s exhibits and the local marine environment – plus live web cams, a special events calendar, special discounts, online games and more – at [www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org). All programs and special exhibitions (except for “Aquarium Adventures”) are included with aquarium admission of \$29.95 adult (18 and over); \$27.95 senior (65+) and student (13-17 or with college I.D.); and \$17.95 children (3-12) and the disabled. (2009 rates) Children under 3 are admitted free. Discounted tickets for members of the military and their families can be purchased in advance at many California and Nevada installations.



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Advance tickets can be purchased online at [www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org); or by phone from the aquarium at 1-800-756-3737. To register for “Aquarium Adventures” programs, call toll free (833) 963-9645, or (831) 647-6886. Guests at Monterey Peninsula hotels can buy tickets at hotel front desks. Visitors can book rooms and learn about special lodging packages with one phone call to 1-888-221-1010; or visit [www.montereyinfo.org](http://www.montereyinfo.org) for more information.

Onsite parking for visitors with disabilities is available by arrangement. Parking for general visitors is located three blocks away, in the Cannery Row parking garage. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, the free MST Trolley links the aquarium and Cannery Row with downtown Monterey and major waterfront destinations including Fisherman’s Wharf.

For more information, call (831) 648-4888 or visit [www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org).

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**Editors: Digital images and video b-roll is available on request through the Public Relations department. Get a preview at [www.montereybayaquarium.org/aa/pressroom](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/aa/pressroom)**

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# Monterey Bay Aquarium

## Overview – 2009

|                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MISSION:</b>                                 | To inspire conservation of the oceans                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>GRAND OPENING:</b>                           | October 20, 1984; 25 <sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2009                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>LOCATION:</b>                                | 886 Cannery Row, Monterey, California                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>HOURS:</b>                                   | 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily except Christmas<br>9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. holidays and summer months, May 25-September 4, 2009<br>9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays July 5-September 6, 2009                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>ADMISSION RATES:</b>                         | \$29.95 Adult (18 and over)<br>\$27.95 Senior (65 and over)<br>\$27.95 Student (13-17, or with college I.D.)<br>\$17.95 Child (3-12)<br>\$17.95 Disabled<br>Group rates available for 20 or more (by reservation; 1-866-963-9645)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>INFORMATION:</b>                             | (831) 648-4888; <a href="http://www.montereybayaquarium.org">www.montereybayaquarium.org</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>ADVANCE TICKETS/<br/>RESERVATION CENTER:</b> | 1-866-963-9645 (toll free) or online at <a href="http://www.montereybayaquarium.org">www.montereybayaquarium.org</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>OPERATING BASIS:</b>                         | Private non-profit, self-supporting; no public funding; annual budget \$50 million                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>CAPITAL COST:</b>                            | Nearshore galleries: \$55 million (opened October 1984)<br>Outer Bay galleries: \$57 million (opened March 1996)<br>New entry, ticket lobby and skywalk: \$10 million (opened May 2004)<br>Ocean's Edge galleries (updated Nearshore galleries): \$11 million (opened May 2005)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>CURRENT SPECIAL<br/>EXHIBITIONS:</b>         | <p>“Wild About Otters” – Explores the fun and fascinating world of otters – from sea otters to their freshwater cousins – and a multi-sensory adventure into the lush world of remarkable tropical freshwater fishes, reptiles and plants. Features two species of freshwater otters and over 30 other species in five different galleries; interactive displays, family craft room and more.</p> <p>“The Secret Lives of Seahorses” (<b>Opens April 6, 2009</b>) – Showcases many beautiful species of seahorse and their kin. Galleries focus on the seahorse family, camouflage techniques, mating rituals and unique male pregnancy. Visitors will uncover some of the “secrets” of seahorses, and also learn how to help protect these amazing animals and their habitats in the wild.</p> |
| <b>GALLERIES AND<br/>MAJOR EXHIBITS:</b>        | Nearly 200 galleries and exhibits devoted to the diverse habitats of Monterey Bay.<br>The four largest exhibits are the Outer Bay (1 million gallons); the Kelp Forest (335,000 gallons); Monterey Bay Habitats (326,000 gallons); and Sea Otters along the Rocky Coast (55,000 gallons). One of the world's largest jellyfish galleries.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>LIVE EXHIBITS:</b>                           | More than 35,000 animals and plants representing over 550 species of fishes, invertebrates, mammals, reptiles, birds and plants found in Monterey Bay and other marine habitats worldwide.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

**FEEDING SHOWS:** Sea Otters at 10:30, 1:30 and 3:30 daily  
Blackfooted Penguins at 10:30 and 3:00 daily  
Kelp Forest dive show at 11:30 and 4:00 daily  
Outer Bay at 11:00 (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday)

**DIMENSIONS:** Site: 3.3 acres  
Exhibits and other public areas: 175,064 sq. ft. (excludes decks)  
Ocean-view decks: 25,500 sq. ft.  
Behind-the-scenes: 125,300 sq. ft.  
Total aquarium square footage: 322,000 sq. ft.

**ATTENDANCE:** Grand opening year: 2.37 million  
Outer Bay grand opening year (1996): 2.41 million  
Total in 2008: 1.9 million  
Annual average: 1.8 million  
Total through 2008: 44,208,204

**STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION:** Approximately 425 full and part-time staff; over 1,000 volunteers.

**DISABLED ACCESS:** All exhibits and aquarium facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. Assisted listening devices are available for the deaf and hard of hearing; most exhibit videos are captioned; wheelchairs are available free for use during a visit. Ask for details at the Information Desk.

**INTERNATIONAL VISITORS:** Visitor maps in English and Spanish and visitor map inserts in Chinese, French, German, Italian and Japanese are available free at the Information Desk.

**ON THE WEB:** Information about all permanent and special exhibits, events and promotions, as well as an online pressroom with full press kits and photo & video libraries can be found online at [www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org).

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## INSPIRING OCEAN CONSERVATION

The mission of the Monterey Bay Aquarium is to inspire conservation of the oceans. Approximately 425 full and part-time staff members and over 1,000 volunteers at the non-profit aquarium work toward these goals. The \$50 million annual budget of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Foundation is supported by earned revenue (admission, gift and bookstore sales) and contributed income (memberships and donations). Major endeavors include:

### **Exhibits**

Aquarium exhibits are a living extension of Monterey Bay, which lies at the heart of the nation's largest marine sanctuary. Exhibits feature more than 35,000 creatures and over 550 species of plants and animals from the waters off California's central coast – and beyond. Seawater from the bay is piped into the aquarium at a rate of up to 2,000 gallons per minute (1 billion gallons a year) to sustain a three-story living kelp forest, a Monterey Bay Habitats exhibit with large sharks and schooling fishes, a two-story sea otter exhibit, a walk-through aviary and nearly 200 smaller exhibits and galleries devoted to the varied habitats around the bay, from rocky shores to coastal estuaries and the sandy seafloor.

The Outer Bay galleries tell the story of marine life found in open ocean waters of the temperate Eastern Pacific. Exhibits include a million-gallon indoor ocean and large jellyfish galleries. Vanishing Wildlife focuses on why magnificent animals like sea turtles, sharks and tunas need our protection, and what we can do to help. Special exhibitions feature sea life stories and conservation topics from around the world.

### **Education & Outreach**

Each year, school programs serve over 80,000 visiting schoolchildren. Students take part in guided and self-guided tours and classroom programs taught by staff educators. The Splash Zone family gallery becomes an extended classroom for Head Start students and families around Monterey Bay. All education programs are offered free of charge. Other conservation and science initiatives for young people include a Student Oceanography Club; Young Women in Science, a week-long summer program for teens; *Mar Y Campo* (Sea & Field) and WATCH (Watsonville Area Teens Conserving Habitats), which support a local high school with environmental education programs; and a Student Guide program in which young people learn to interpret Monterey Bay marine life for aquarium visitors.

Annual teacher workshops and teacher institutes help educators become more effective at teaching science and sharing their skills with colleagues. Materials for teachers and students are available online.

More than 500 volunteer guides (out of 1,000-plus volunteers in all) receive ongoing marine science training from aquarium staff. They add depth to a visit by answering visitors' questions and leading tours.

### **Conservation Research**

The Tuna Research and Conservation Center (TRCC), a joint project with Stanford University, is the world's leading center to study these ecologically and commercially important fishes. TRCC scientists are answering basic questions about tunas' marathon migrations by tagging individual fish in the wild with electronic data tags, many of which pop free and beam their stored information via satellite to scientists in the lab. They are also documenting genetic diversity and distribution of tuna populations across ocean basins through DNA analysis, and studying basic tuna physiology by studying captive populations of warm-blooded tuna and their cold-blooded relatives. In October 2008, researchers from the Tag-a-Giant (TAG) team placed the 1,000<sup>th</sup> tracking tag on an Atlantic bluefin tuna since they began studying this important tuna species in 1996. TRCC findings should lead to better management of tuna fisheries worldwide at a time when increased fishing pressures threaten their commercial survival.

Biologists with the Monterey Bay Aquarium Sea Otter Research and Conservation program are assessing the long-term health of California's sea otter population and play key roles in recovery efforts for this threatened population. The research-oriented approach supports the priorities of the federal sea otter recovery plan released in April 2003 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify the possible causes that have slowed the growth of the southern sea otter population, including increased rates of infectious disease and parasites within the wild otter population.

The aquarium's program is the only one of its kind in the world to care for stranded otter pups and return to the wild those animals that can contribute to the recovery of the wild population. Staff and volunteers constantly refine their techniques for the care of injured and orphaned sea otters. Protocols developed at the aquarium will be applied in the event of a major oil spill in the sea otters' California range.

Staff and research colleagues with our White Shark Conservation Research Project tag and track adult and juvenile white sharks in the eastern Pacific, and collect DNA samples in an effort to map the migrations and genetic diversity of these top ocean predators. Project staff also brings young white sharks to the aquarium for exhibit; since 2004 four animals have been kept at the aquarium for periods up to six months before they were tagged and successfully returned to the wild.

Aquarium researchers conduct long-term field studies of sea otter behavior; and study the basic physiology and husbandry of open ocean and deep sea animals, including sharks, jellies and schooling fishes. Our internship program brings college students to the aquarium for original research projects.

The independent Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI; [www.mbari.org](http://www.mbari.org)) uses Monterey Bay as a living laboratory to study complex deep sea and open ocean systems. Engineers at the institute design new tools for scientists to use in their research. Aquarium visitors can see researchers at work during daily auditorium programs featuring live video from deep-sea research submersibles. And a permanent exhibit, Mission to the Deep, highlights MBARI's tools and technologies with interactive displays, high-definition footage and animation to transport visitors into the deep sea.

Shorebirds, corals and many marine animals breed in our exhibits or are reared behind the scenes. Birds are returned to the wild, and share animals with public aquariums to reduce collecting from the wild.

### **Resource Conservation**

The aquarium is a leader in conservation business practices, from our seafood buying policies and conservation requirements for vendors who deal with our gift and bookstores; to programs that reduce our carbon footprint, conserve water, encourage alternative transportation and promote recycling.

Staff use vanpools, receive free bus passes, pay reduced parking fees for carpooling, and enjoy incentives for riding a bike or walking to work. The aquarium helps subsidize a community shuttle bus serving waterfront destinations and hotels during summer months. Voluntary staff contributions to a Conservation Action Fund support habitat restoration projects in the Monterey Bay region.

The growing impacts of carbon pollution on the health of the oceans means that programs to address climate change – in our business practices, our exhibits and programs, and our conservation advocacy initiatives – will be a priority in the years to come.

Aquarium publications are printed on recycled paper or published online, and most waste generated by aquarium offices, shops and gift and bookstores is recycled. Cleaning materials and other chemicals used here have largely been replaced with nontoxic products. The aquarium's Seafood Watch program is a leader in transforming the seafood market to support sustainable fishing and fish-farming. We publish Seafood Watch guides for consumers and partner with restaurants and food service companies to help them shift to sustainable seafood purchasing. Details are available at [www.seafoodwatch.org](http://www.seafoodwatch.org).

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# **SEAFOOD WATCH PROGRAM**

## **Fact Sheet**

The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program empowers seafood consumers and businesses to make choices for healthy oceans. The program works to transform seafood markets in ways that create incentives for sustainable fishing and fish-farming practices. Key elements of the program include public education efforts to raise consumer awareness about sustainable seafood issues, primarily through distribution of Seafood Watch pocket guides; and outreach efforts with retailers, restaurateurs and other seafood purveyors to encourage them to make the switch to sustainable seafood.

### **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

In 1997, the Monterey Bay Aquarium opened its "Fishing for Solutions" special exhibition to inform visitors about conservation issues surrounding fishing and aquaculture practices. In the course of developing the exhibit about the environmental threats from non-sustainable practices, the aquarium evaluated the seafood it was serving through its own restaurant and catering services, and to its exhibit animals. The aquarium made a commitment to serve only seafood from environmentally responsible sources. Low-key publicizing of the change prompted visitors to ask for copies of the aquarium's approved seafood list. From this modest beginning, the Seafood Watch program was born. In 1999, with the launch of a new and expanded aquarium website [www.seafoodwatch.org](http://www.seafoodwatch.org), this information metamorphosed into the first Seafood Watch consumer pocket guide.

The Seafood Watch pocket guide lists ocean-friendly seafood choices for consumers in a green "Best Choices" column, and non-sustainable choices in a red "Avoid" column. Those in the "Avoid" column come from sources that are overfished, or are caught or farmed in ways that harm the environment. There is also a yellow "Good Alternatives" list; these seafood items are an acceptable option, but there is concern with how they're caught or farmed. Pocket guides are updated every six months to incorporate the latest available research, which is included in a downloadable report on the website. The Seafood Watch website attracts thousands of visitors each year, to download pocket guides and use the online resources to make ocean-friendly choices. Our new iPhone application brings the latest Seafood Watch recommendations directly to your iPhone or iPod touch. Mobile pocket guides are also available for cell phones or other mobile devices with Internet connection by logging on to [mobile.seafoodwatch.org](http://mobile.seafoodwatch.org)

In 2001, Seafood Watch was awarded a grant of more than \$2 million from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to significantly expand the program. Subsequent grants from the Packard and Annenberg foundations have supported the evolving Sustainable Seafood Initiative as it works to shift the buying habits of consumers and businesses to support sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

To date, Seafood Watch and its partners (53 full-partner and 32 associate-partner organizations) have distributed more than 28 million pocket guides. There are six regional guides (West Coast, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Central U.S. and Hawaii), plus three Spanish-language guides. Nine million pocket guides were distributed in the 2007 DVD release of the Academy Award-winning animated film, *Happy Feet*.

## **PURVEYOR OUTREACH**

Increasingly, the Seafood Watch program focuses on efforts to change the buying habits of seafood purveyors: restaurants, food services providers and wholesalers. These businesses are the “gatekeepers” to the seafood supply in the United States. Restaurants alone account for approximately 70 percent (by dollar value) of all seafood sold nationwide.

Online, the Seafood Watch website ([www.seafoodwatch.org](http://www.seafoodwatch.org)) offers resources that purveyors can use to understand sustainable seafood issues and train their staff to discuss the complexities of sustainable seafood with their customers. Seafood Watch offers fact sheets and downloadable research reports. In addition it has developed a training package to aid purveyors as they move to incorporate sustainable seafood onto their menus and at their seafood counters. The Seafood Watch Training Program is available as a two-disc DVD set, with portions available online.

Since 2002, the aquarium and Seafood Watch have hosted an annual Cooking for Solutions event, which brings together celebrity chefs from across the United States and beyond to prepare gourmet dishes using sustainable seafood and organic ingredients, paired with organic and sustainable wines. These events—which reach several thousand consumers annually as well as top food journalists and food industry leaders—strengthen the connection between the foods people eat and the health of the oceans and the land. Notable chef participants have included Alice Waters, Jacques Pépin, Diana Kennedy, Martin Yan, Rick Bayless, Nora Pouillon, Rick Moonen, Barton Seaver, and more than three dozen other renowned chefs.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium works with food service providers like Bon Appétit Management Company, Compass Group North America and ARAMARK as they shift their menus and buying toward sustainable seafood and establish themselves as leaders in the transformation of the food service industry. Bon Appétit, the Aquarium’s own in-house food service provider delivers 80 million meals per year in over 400 cafés in 29 states.

Seafood Watch partners with local restaurants in the Monterey Bay region to promote ocean-friendly seafood menus, and provides tools to train wait staff to understand the issues and communicate sustainable seafood messages with restaurant patrons. Through the aquarium’s membership in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Seafood Watch brings the sustainable seafood message to tens of millions of zoo and aquarium visitors nationwide.

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# 2009 Events Calendar

## February

### 🌀 Shark Days (February 21 & 22)

*Awe...fear...wonder...respect. Sharks and rays have always evoked strong feelings. Learn more about these amazing animals from the Aquarium's experts.*

## April

### 🌀 "The Secret Lives of Seahorses" Special Exhibition Opens (April 6)

*Explore the unusual lives of these fascinating fishes when the Aquarium's newest special exhibition opens with over a dozen different seahorse species and their relatives. Learn why their habitats are in danger and what you can do to help.*

### 🌀 Día del Niño (April 26)

*Celebrate children and families with a craft room, live music, prize drawings and Latin American musical performances throughout the Aquarium. Children 12 and under are admitted free all day.*

## May

### 🌀 Cooking for Solutions (May 14 - 16)

*Thomas Keller, Alton Brown, and celebrity chefs from around the country gather for a celebration of sustainable seafood. Events include the signature gala, food and wine adventures, cooking demonstrations and more. On Saturday, all Aquarium visitors enjoy the Sustainable Seafood Information Fair featuring special food events and book signings.*

## June

### 🌀 World Ocean Day Celebration (June 6 & 7)

*About 70% of our planet is covered by oceans. The Aquarium invites visitors to participate in an international ocean awareness day. Come celebrate this amazing ecosystem and discover your role in assuring we have healthy oceans in the future.*

## July-August

### 🌀 Evenings by the Bay – Saturdays & Sundays (July 5 through September 6)

*Spend summer evenings on the bay with extended Aquarium hours until 8pm on Saturdays and Sundays in the summer. Get a few more hours to commune with our animals, and enjoy special programs, live music and special events.*

## September

### 🌀 Otter Days (September 12 & 13)

*Learn about Monterey Bay's most charismatic creatures from Aquarium experts who care for them and researchers who study them in the wild. Special family activities and programs feature adorable otters. This is the last weekend visitors can see the special exhibition "Wild About Otters" with freshwater otters from Asia and Africa, before it closes.*

## October

### 🌀 Fiesta del Mar (October 4)

*An annual Latin American cultural festival celebrating ocean conservation. Bi-lingual feeding shows, musical performances and other entertainment, plus the "Heroe del Medio Ambiente" award are part of this celebration. Children 12 and under are admitted free all day.*

### 🌀 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration (October 17 & 18)

*Celebrate 25 years ocean conservation at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, which opened on October 20, 1984.*

## November

### 🌀 Feathered Friends (November 21 & 22)

*The Aquarium is home to a variety of birds – penguins, shorebirds and even an albatross. Find out how our aviculturists train and care for our feathered friends, and get an up close and personal look at some of them.*

## December

### 🌀 Community Day (December 6, Open House December 5 - 13)

*The Aquarium invites local conservation and environmental organizations to share their contributions with residents and provide them with opportunities to get involved. During Community Open House, the Aquarium is free to residents of Monterey County.*



# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For information contact:

Angela Hains: (831) 647-6804; [ahains@mbayaq.org](mailto:ahains@mbayaq.org)

Karen Jeffries: (831) 644-7548; [kjeffries@mbayaq.org](mailto:kjeffries@mbayaq.org)

Ken Peterson: (831) 648-4922; [kpeterson@mbayaq.org](mailto:kpeterson@mbayaq.org)

## DURING ITS SILVER ANNIVERSARY YEAR, AQUARIUM UNVEILS “THE SECRET LIVES OF SEAHORSES”



*New special exhibition offers an intimate look at these fascinating, fragile fishes*

Seahorses have been celebrated in art, literature and mythology for centuries, so you’d think we know a lot about them. In “The Secret Lives of Seahorses,” the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s new special exhibition, you’ll discover that nothing could be further from the truth.

Beginning April 6, more than 15 species of seahorses, sea dragons, pipehorses and pipefish will beckon visitors into the elusive world of these charismatic creatures. “The Secret Lives of Seahorses” highlights the varied habitats in which seahorses and their relatives live, and shares important stories about the threats they face in the wild.

“Seahorses are wonderful ambassadors for ocean conservation because they live in the most endangered habitats in the world – coral reefs, sea grass beds and mangrove forests,” said Ava Ferguson, senior exhibit developer for “The Secret Lives of Seahorses.” “When you save a seahorse, you also save some of Earth’s most precious marine habitats.”

Through wrought-iron gates, visitors will enter the first gallery, “Seahorses and Kin,” and meet the seahorse family: fishes that have fused jaws and bony plates in place of the scales normally associated with fish. Although seahorses and their kin come in many shapes and sizes, all are masters of disguise. Their ability to camouflage and blend with their environment helps them avoid detection by predators.

At first glance, it’s easy to see why seahorses are a source of fascination. With a head like a horse, a snout like an aardvark, a belly pouch like a kangaroo, a prehensile tail like a monkey and the ability to change colors like a chameleon, seahorses are anything but ordinary.

Sadly, the mystique that draws people to seahorses is also the reason they’re in jeopardy in the wild.

“So little is known about seahorses that we are at risk of losing these animals before we even know them,” said Ferguson. “Until recently, we had no idea that seahorses were being caught and

## ***The Secret Lives of Seahorses*– Monterey Bay Aquarium – Page 2**

collected at a rate that threatens their survival.”

Of the 34 known seahorse species, eight are listed as threatened to some degree on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN) “Red List.” Several factors are contributing to the decline of seahorse populations worldwide: loss of coral reefs and coastal habitats where they live, harmful fishing practices in which seahorses are accidentally killed as bycatch, and the excessive collecting of seahorses for the curio trade and for use in traditional medicines.

The multimedia galleries in “The Secret Lives of Seahorses” will connect visitors with conservation stations that provide the tools they need to help save these fascinating animals.

In the second gallery, “Growing Up,” visitors learn why seahorses and their relatives are the ocean’s kings of camouflage. One live exhibit features sticklike shrimpfish, which usually keep their heads pointed downward between sea urchin spines and colorful corals to blend with the surrounding habitat. Seahorse fry in another live exhibit helps demonstrate how seahorse babies are insanely tiny yet totally self-sufficient.

An interactive display at a Seafood Watch conservation station in “The Secret Lives of Seahorses” prompts visitors to learn more about how their seafood choices affect seahorses. For more information on the aquarium’s Seafood Watch program visit [www.seafoodwatch.org](http://www.seafoodwatch.org).

In the “Getting Together” gallery, visitors learn that birds are not the only animals that woo mates with fancy dancing. Seahorses, sea dragons, pipehorses and pipefish engage in elaborate courtship rituals before they mate – sometimes lasting for three days.

Each morning during the breeding season a seahorse pair greets and signals interest in each other by displaying bright colors, intertwining tails, twirling around and promenading side by side. If the pair finally decides to mate, they’ll join together and rise in the water column as the female deposits her eggs into the male’s brood pouch where they are fertilized. The “Getting Together” gallery also features an animated film of this courtship ritual.

Competition is fierce among one seahorse species found in this gallery; male potbelly seahorses are known to fight over mates. The third smallest seahorse species, the dwarf seahorse, along with California’s only seahorse species, the Pacific seahorse, and the vibrantly colored banded pipefish are other animals featured in the “Getting Together” gallery.

In this gallery, visitors can send an electronic postcard to California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to support the creation of marine protected areas in southern California waters, which are home to the Pacific seahorse, as well as five pipefish species.

Perhaps what most distinguishes seahorses from the rest of the animal kingdom is their unique life history – the males become pregnant and give birth. Tiled murals in the “Giving Birth” gallery

### ***The Secret Lives of Seahorses*– Monterey Bay Aquarium – Page 3**

highlight three different parenting strategies used by seahorses and their relatives. While male sea dragons and pipefish carry their young on a specialized brood patch on the abdomen or the tail, only seahorses have a fully enclosed brood pouch. In this gallery, visitors can find the longsnout and shortsnout seahorse species, along with a mangrove community that's home to yellow seahorses and alligator pipefish.

Toward the end of the exhibition, visitors can pick up an educational card that details the problems with the curio trade and presents alternatives to buying dried seahorses in souvenir shops. And to commemorate their visit, they can take a photo alongside a five-foot tall sculpture of a pregnant male longsnout seahorse.

To “walk the talk” about seahorse conservation, Monterey Bay Aquarium is either breeding seahorses for the exhibit onsite, or acquiring animals from accredited institutions or licensed dealers who adhere to best conservation practices.

Spanish-speaking visitors will find bilingual signage and video captions throughout “The Secret Lives of Seahorses.”

“The Secret Lives of Seahorses” is included with regular aquarium admission of \$29.95 adult; \$27.95 senior (65+) and student (full-time college, with I.D.); and \$17.95 children 3-12 and the disabled. **(2009 prices)** Children under 3 are admitted free of charge. Discounted tickets for members of the military and their families can be purchased in advance at many California and Nevada installations.

The aquarium is located on historic Cannery Row in Monterey. It is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and in summer and major holiday periods from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. (closed Christmas Day). Summer hours include extended weekend hours, from 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

More information about “The Secret Lives of Seahorses” and the aquarium in general is available online at [www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org) or by calling (831) 648-4888. Advance tickets can be purchased online or by phone from the aquarium at 1-800-756-3737. Seasonal specials, details about special events and programs, family activities and live web cams can all be found online at [www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org).

The mission of the Monterey Bay Aquarium is to inspire conservation of the oceans.

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**Editors: Please contact Public Relations for images of animals featured in “The Secret Lives of Seahorses.”**

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# What they're saying about the Monterey Bay Aquarium

## Awards & Honors (partial list)

- 2008 – *Travel + Leisure Family* named the aquarium one of the Top 10 Places to See Before You're 10
- 2008 – *Bon Appétit Magazine* named the aquarium Tastemaker of the Year for our Seafood Watch program.
- 2007 - *Parents Magazine* rated us the No. 1 kid-friendly aquarium on its list of “The 10 Best Aquariums for Kids”
- 2007 - **TripAdvisor®** users rated us No. 8 on the Top 10 list of best U.S. travel attractions of all kinds
- 2007 - The international **Themed Entertainment Association** gave its 2007 “Thea” Award to the Real Cost Café for outstanding achievement in experience design (sustainable seafood exhibit).
- 2005 - **American Zoo and Aquarium Association** Exhibit Award for “Sharks: Myth and Mystery” special exhibition
- 2004 - **Zagat Survey® 2004 U.S. Family Travel Guide** No. 1 aquarium in the United States; No. 3 top-rated family attraction in the United States
- 2003 - **National Association for Museum Exhibition** Curators’ Award (American Association of Museums’ highest exhibit award) for “Jellies: Living Art” special exhibition
- 1998 - *Coastal Living Magazine’s* Award for Cultural and Environmental Education
- 1998 - **Coastal America** recognition as a Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center
- 1997 & 2000 - **American Zoo and Aquarium Association** Exhibit Awards
- 1995 - **Urban Land Institute** Award for Excellence
- 1988 - **American Institute of Architects** Honor Award

## Quotes (highlights)

“One of the most enchanting aquariums in the world.” -- *Forbes Traveler*

“Not only is it one of the premier organizations fighting to save our oceans from overfishing and pollution, it is also a haven for marine life lovers eager to gaze at playful otters, undulating jellyfish, waddling penguins, respect-inducing sharks – and faithful re-creations of local underwater habitats.” -- *Los Angeles Times*

“For my money, the best aquarium in America.”

-- *Keith Bellows, editor, National Geographic Traveler*

“My apologies to Baltimore, which has a really great aquarium, but Monterey is very likely the world’s best.” -- *Washington Post*

“...arguably the greatest aquarium in the world.” -- *The Guardian (United Kingdom)*

“Coolest aquarium in the world.” -- *Bill Nye, “The Science Guy”*

“Monterey Bay Aquarium is the most technically sophisticated – and perhaps the most esthetically successful – public aquarium yet built.” -- *Newsweek*

“...set a new bar in the art of showing off sea creatures to the public.” -- *USA Today*

“As soon as you enter the aquarium, the cathedral aura of the Kelp Forest, with sunlight streaming down from above, turns your head and pulls you over, bidding you to slow down and meditate on the majesty that lies hidden just offshore.” -- *National Geographic*

“As a habitual aquarium-goer, I’ve seen my share of these institutions...The Monterey Bay Aquarium is, for me, the clear winner...Like all great aquariums [it] offers not just an assemblage of fish but a passionate argument that the ocean is far more intricate and alive than you ever imagined it to be.” -- *Travel/Holiday*

“In my mind, the Monterey Bay Aquarium is the most beautiful and most effective aquarium in the world.” -- *Dr. Carl Safina, executive director, Blue Ocean Institute*

“Stunning seems too meager an adjective for the facility....” -- *Dallas Morning News*

“...knock-your-socks-off marine exhibits.” -- *Boston Globe*

“A quantum leap was made with Monterey; nobody will be able to do it again.”  
-- *John McCosker, California Academy of Science*

“A superstar....a perfect balance between education and entertainment.” -- *Copley News Service*

“It’s hard to find enough superlatives to describe what’s going on at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.”  
-- *Reno Air Approach*

“This aquarium routinely makes history.” -- *National Geographic Traveler*

“One of the world’s most impressive aquariums.” -- *Financial Times of London*

“Making the ordinary extraordinary is business as usual at the (Monterey Bay) aquarium.”  
-- *Chicago Sun-Times*

“Remarkable.... As I watched the schools of fish slowly circling...I began to slip into the rhythm, the silence, of life under the surface of Monterey Bay, a deep and boundless home.”  
-- *New York Times*

“It won’t get you wet, but it will make your head swim.” -- *Sacramento (Calif.) Bee*

“Standing before the showpiece of the Outer Bay wing – the world’s largest window, opening onto a seemingly infinite water world swirling with tuna, barracuda, bonitos and sharks – I realize I’m confronting the newest Wonder of the World.” -- *American Airlines’ American Way*

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