

NEWS RELEASE

717 General Booth Blvd. Virginia Beach, VA 23451



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center Fact Sheet

Italicized facts are effective with the opening of Restless Planet, TBA, 2009

- MISSION:** To increase the public's knowledge and appreciation of Virginia's marine environment and inspire commitment to preserve its existence
- HISTORY:** Opened June 14, 1986
Phase II opened June 1996, a \$35 million expansion that tripled its size
TBA, 2009, \$25 million renovation of original galleries and other spaces
- LOCATION:** One mile south of the Virginia Beach resort area at 717 General Booth Blvd.
- INFORMATION:** (757) 385-FISH (3474); Guest Services (757) 385-0300;
www.VirginiaAquarium.com
- HOURS:** Regular hours 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily, closed Thanksgiving and Christmas
Summer hours (Memorial Day – Labor Day) 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- ADMISSION RATES:** \$17 adult (12 and over); \$12 child (3 – 11); \$15 seniors & active duty military
IMAX® \$ 8 adult; \$7 child; \$7.50 seniors & active duty military
Combo Aquarium and IMAX admission available
Group rates 15 or more with advance reservations: (757) 385-0300
- FACILITY:** The 89 acre campus includes: a one-third-mile long nature trail; Virginia native gardens; an aviary with over 30 species; *two buildings comprised of 129,000 square feet; a 300-seat 3D IMAX® Theater; 800,000 gallons of aquariums; 360 interactive exhibits; live animal habitats and two touch pools. The animal collection of approximately 12,000 represents over 700 species.*
- EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS:** The Virginia Aquarium takes guests on a journey of water through various habitats. The Marsh Pavilion and nature trail focus on the plants and animals of the Owls Creek Salt Marsh. In the Bay & Ocean Pavilion, the journey begins with the **Upland River** gallery which depicts the plant and animal life of Virginia's piedmont. The journey continues to the state's **Fall Zone and Coastal River** gallery, with aquariums representing these areas. The journey of water eventually flows to the **Chesapeake Bay** gallery with its interactives, exhibits and a new touch pool. The footprint then merges into the **Bay and Ocean Pavilion** which focuses on marine life off the Atlantic Coast.
The new adventure begins with Restless Planet. This experience explores modern habitats that illustrate what Virginia was like in its geologic past. The new exhibit provides 12,000 sq. ft. of immersive habitats, two science "shacks," a conservation station, and a closing reflections gallery.

- VISITATION:** Around 622,000 annually;
Average 600 educational outreach programs a year;
Nearly 2,000 Dolphin Watching, Whale Watching, Cruise the Creek, Ocean Collections and Sailing with Santa boat trips carrying 57,000 passengers
- FOOD SERVICE:** Nationally known Sodexo operates the Restless Planet Café, IMAX Snack Stop and Otter Snack Bar. They also cater everything from school lunches to special event functions such as wedding receptions and business meetings.
- FACILITY RENTAL:** Rooms or the entire facility is available: (757) 385-0306
- STORES:** Each of the two buildings has a store whose merchandise reflects the exhibits' theme. Admission is not required to shop in the stores.
- DISABLED ACCESS:** All exhibits and aquarium facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. Wheelchairs are available on a first-come first serve basis. The IMAX Theater offers assistive listening devices and rear window captioning system for the hearing-impaired.
- MEMBERSHIP:** Individual and corporate memberships are available and offer varying benefits at each level: (757) 385-0251.
- VOLUNTEERS** Over 800 volunteers give more than 88,288 hours of work.
- STAFF:** 76 full-time; 45 part-time with an additional summer swell of 25
- OPERATING BASIS:** A public-private partnership between the City of Virginia Beach and the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center Foundation.
- STRANDING RESPONSE PROGRAM:** The Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response Program, assisted by its team of about 80 volunteers, responds each year to more than 300 marine mammal and sea turtle strandings along the coast of Virginia and upper North Carolina. Funded primarily by donations and grants, the program conducts on-going research projects about loggerhead sea turtles, bottlenose dolphins and humpback whales. Research results have been published in professional journals and presented at numerous professional meeting.
- ACCREDITATION:** The Aquarium is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the Alliance of Marine, Mammal, Parks and Aquariums.



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