

New Exhibit at Birch Aquarium to Bring Work Aboard Research Vessel to Life

Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego is taking its mission to interpret Scripps research to new depths with the launch of *Expedition at Sea: R/V Sally Ride*, a dynamic new exhibit where visitors will experience the sights and sounds of life and work aboard a research vessel.

Expedition at Sea opens at Birch Aquarium on Oct. 28. It is a precursor to a major new exhibit opening next summer: *The Expedition*, which showcases Scripps expeditions from our own backyard to the farthest reaches of the planet.



Photos by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications

Combining science, art, and technology—along with hands-on learning for young aquarium guests—*Expedition at Sea* will provide a new lens through which visitors of all ages can connect with the global research activities of Scripps Oceanography scientists.

R/V Sally Ride and the Scripps oceanographic research fleet are some of the largest and most powerful research tools in UC San Diego’s arsenal to help better understand the planet. *Expedition at Sea* highlights the unique and important niche that these essential tools fill to answer big questions in a range of research topics. The exhibit also brings the human side of conducting science to the foreground by emphasizing the teamwork, endurance, and camaraderie needed to make these expeditions successful.

“The goal is to reframe science so that our guests experience it for the adventure that it is,” said Debbie Zmarzly, the director of programming for Birch Aquarium and curator of the exhibit. “By creating an environment where people can imagine themselves on board a ship—deploying instruments, facing a 20-foot wave, analyzing samples—we hope to create an understanding and appreciation for these dedicated professionals who are willing to go wherever the science is to get the answers that we need about the planet.”



Expedition at Sea will allow guests of all ages to take a virtual tour of R/V *Sally Ride* and explore seafloor mapping through an augmented reality sand box, which displays colored contours highlighting trenches and seamounts as they build them in sand. Visitors will also immerse themselves in the experience of being at sea on R/V *Sally Ride* through imagery projected on a 33-foot-wide screen and discover unique specimens retrieved from the depths of the ocean—such as the Yeti Crab, Viperfish and giant deep-sea isopod—during Scripps Oceanography’s 100-

plus years of exploration.

Young learners will have opportunities to dress like ocean-going scientists, touch deep-ocean artifacts, sort plankton like the scientists onboard R/V *Sally Ride*, listen to stories from the ship’s crew and gain an understanding of diverse and exciting oceanographic careers.

“We have created a new type of exhibit gallery that invites visitors to be part of Scripps expeditions seeking to better understand and protect the planet,” said Harry Helling, executive director of Birch Aquarium at Scripps. “By immersing our visitors into Scripps’ solutions-based science and exploration, we hope to inspire them to also be part of the solution.”

Over time the exhibit will change to include data from other Scripps expeditions, allowing the public to experience real-time science happening all over the world.

“Science is an extremely important way of knowing about our world,” said Zmarzly. “Driven by insatiable curiosity, scientists go to incredible lengths to advance understanding of our planet. It is my hope that this understanding inspires our guests to be better stewards of the natural world.”

As the public outreach arm of Scripps Institution of Oceanography and member of the UC San Diego community, Birch Aquarium offers discounted admission to students, faculty and staff of UC San Diego. [Discounted annual memberships](#) are also available. For more information or to purchase tickets, call 858-534-7336 or visit aquarium.ucsd.edu. Proceeds support exhibits and educational programming at Birch Aquarium at Scripps.

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