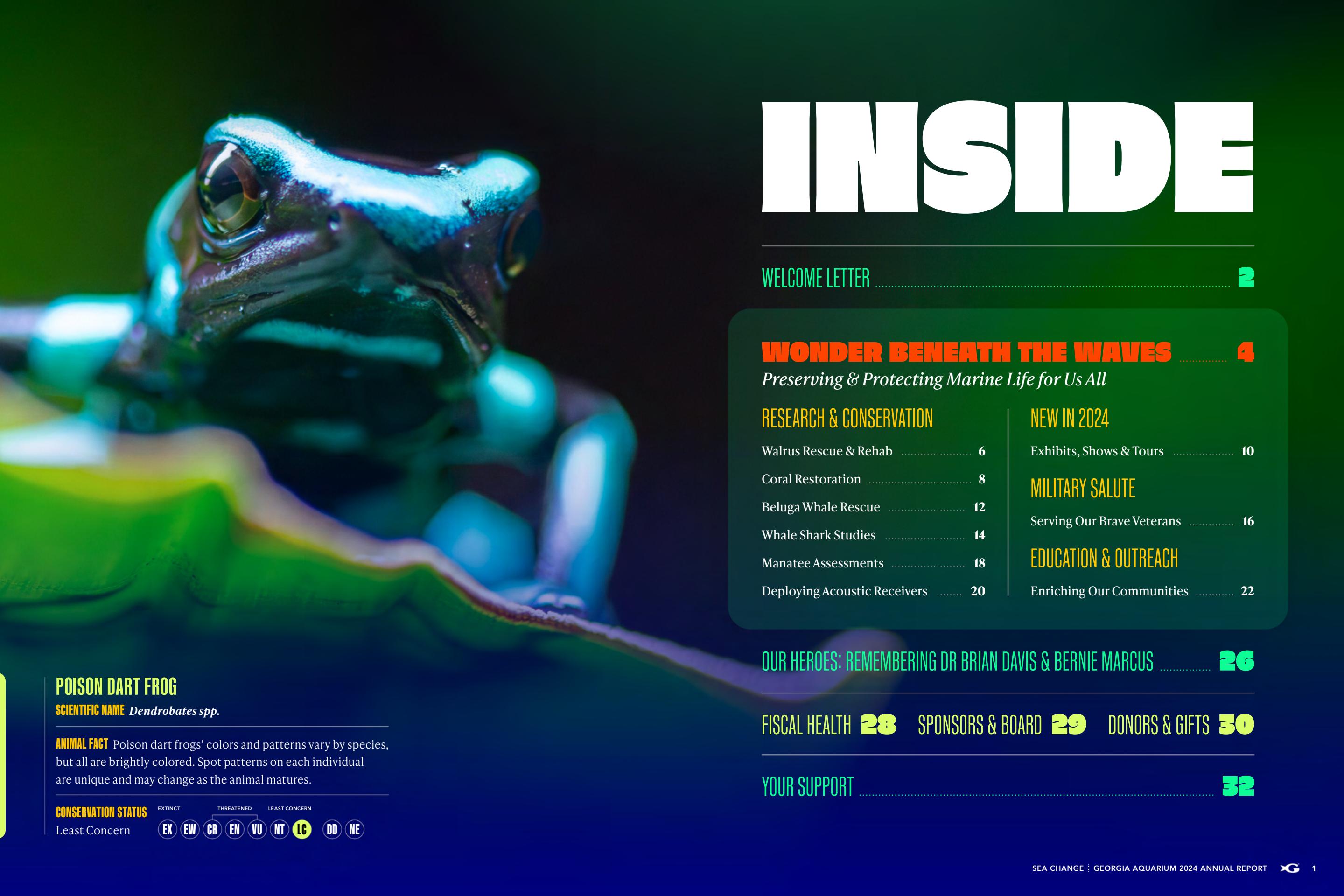


# SEA Change

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



GEORGIA  
AQUARIUM



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*Preserving & Protecting Marine Life for Us All*

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26

## POISON DART FROG

SCIENTIFIC NAME *Dendrobates spp.*

**ANIMAL FACT** Poison dart frogs' colors and patterns vary by species, but all are brightly colored. Spot patterns on each individual are unique and may change as the animal matures.

### CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern



## FISCAL HEALTH

28

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29

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30

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32

# FRIENDS

As I reflect on my time with **Georgia Aquarium**, I am grateful for the **incredible team** I have joined, the **inspiring mission** we serve, and for our **amazing community** of donors and supporters like you.

2024 was a year of unexpected change and meaningful accomplishments. With your generous support, we achieved critical operational successes, including passing both our USDA and AZA inspections—affirming once again our commitment to the highest standards of animal care and industry excellence. We were honored to be voted a Top Workplace by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, a reflection of the passion and dedication that fuels our team daily.

Your support makes all of this possible. Over the last year, we are especially proud of our efforts in rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing manatees and cold-stunned sea turtles, expanding our seasonal programs, work with education and military outreach and deepening our conservation impact. It is your support and generosity that helps us inspire wonder, protect aquatic life, and connect people to the natural world.

As we look ahead, I am energized by the opportunities before us. We are excited to continue to grow, innovate, and deliver on the promise of this incredible institution as we go into our 20th year—for our community and for our planet.

Thank you for being part of our story.



Respectfully,

Travis Burke  
President & CEO



## TUFTED PUFFIN

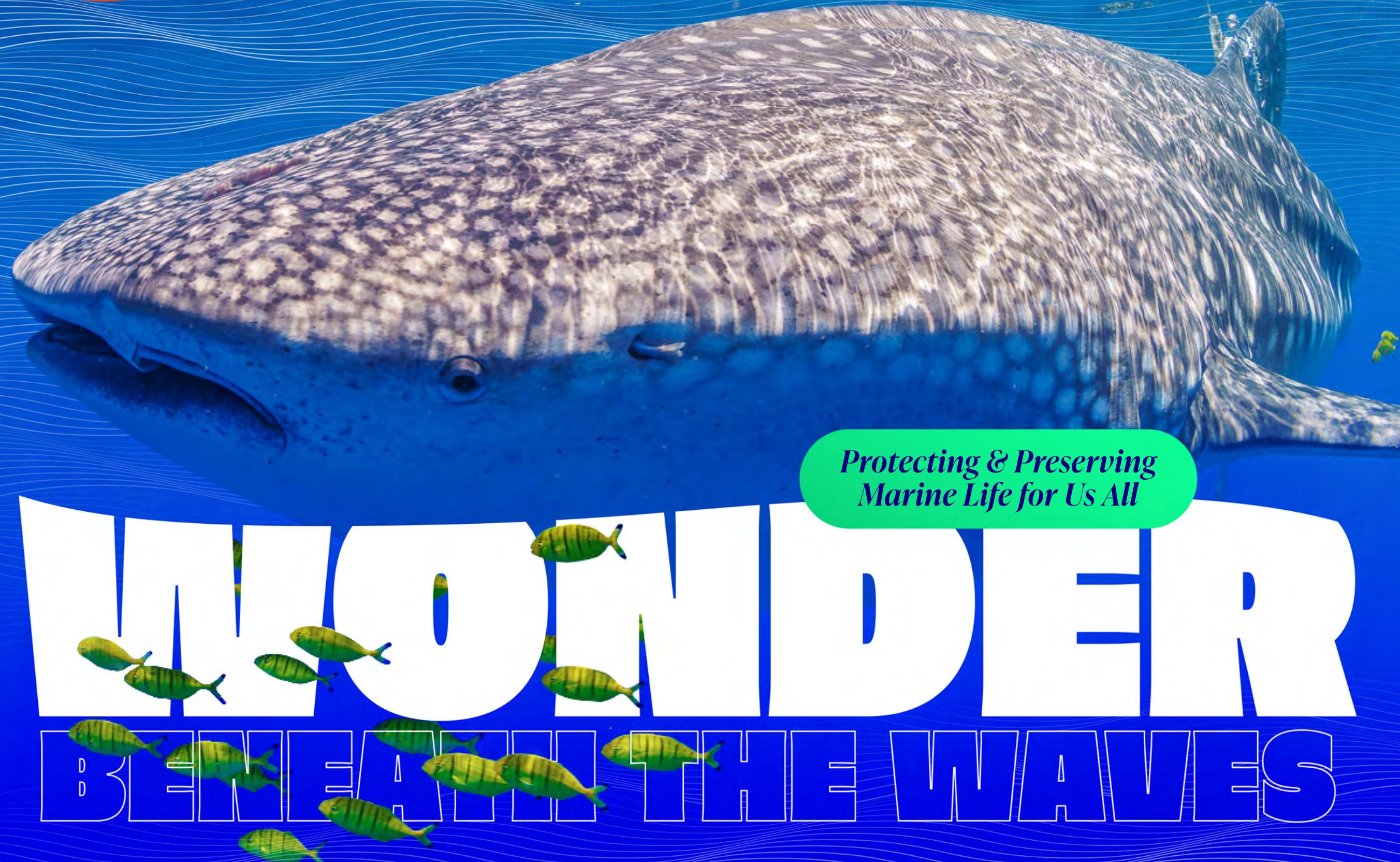
SCIENTIFIC NAME *Fratercula cirrhata*

**ANIMAL FACT** May capture and hold multiple small fish crosswise in the bill to bring to chicks—often carrying 5 to 20 fish at a time but may carry up to 60 fish at once.

### CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern





*Protecting & Preserving  
Marine Life for Us All*

WONDERS  
BEING AWARE THE WAVES

ALASKA SEALIFE CENTER / GULF OF ALASKA, NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN



# COLLECTIVE CARE

## WALRUS REHAB COLLABORATION IN THE GULF OF ALASKA

In summer 2024 **Georgia Aquarium** partnered with the **Alaska SeaLife Center (ASLC)** to help care for an abandoned walrus calf that needed immediate, specialized attention.

The calf, estimated to be just a few weeks old, was dehydrated and underweight, requiring round-the-clock attention from the team. Pacific walruses are a highly social species and calves who typically remain with their mothers for up to five years, are particularly vulnerable when orphaned.

# 2 yrs

*the time a walrus calf will spend with its mother before it can survive on its own*

# 11th

*Pacific walrus calf to be rehabbed through Alaska SeaLife Center Wildlife Response Program*

Several members of our animal care staff made the trip from Georgia to Alaska and helped to create and follow a personalized care plan, which included bottle feedings of a formula mimicking walrus milk, enrichment activities to stimulate her development and regular health check-ups. Georgia Aquarium provided resources and expertise, ensuring the calf received the best care possible.

The rehabilitation team must offer 24/7 companionship and contact while also providing intensive health support. This kind of care and need for close contact with humans means that any orphaned walrus calf admitted to rehabilitation will not be a candidate for release. However, Uki, Uki for short, will continue to receive incredible care and serve as an important ambassador for her species, raising awareness about the challenges faced by Pacific walruses and the ecosystems they live in.

Uki has now found her permanent home at SeaWorld Orlando, with a diverse social group of walruses, including an adult female who has experience with walrus calves and could be a potential surrogate mother.

The efforts surrounding Uki underscore the importance of partnerships between marine conservation organizations. With each successful rescue and rehabilitation, institutions like ours move one step closer to securing a better future for marine wildlife.



USFWS LOA-PER0051451



USFWS LOA-PER0051451



## PACIFIC WALRUS

SCIENTIFIC NAME *Odobenus rosmarus ssp. divergens*

**ANIMAL FACT** Walruses have hundreds of short, strong, highly sensitive whiskers that they use to search the seafloor for food.

**CONSERVATION STATUS** Under Federal Consideration for Protection

# REEF REVIVAL

## CORAL RESTORATION IN THE GULF OF MEXICO



Members of Georgia Aquarium's **Dive Team** participated in propagation experiments to promote reef restoration in the **Gulf of Mexico** in 2024.



GULF OF MEXICO / NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

PHOTO © JONATHAN LANGHAM

This area was ravaged by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010, the largest oil spill in US history. Over 770 square miles of deep-sea habitat and 1,300 miles of coastline were impacted, and researchers are still determining the full scope of the damage. Mesophotic coral ecosystems exist in low light depths ranging from around 100 feet to over 490 feet below the ocean's surface. This range coincides with the diving limit for conventional SCUBA diving but isn't cost-effective enough for deep-diving technology, so little is known about these ecosystems.

Georgia Aquarium was invited to help with coral propagation as part of the Mesophotic and Deep Benthic Communities (MDBC) initiative created by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Goals of the MDBC are to improve understanding of these communities, restore invertebrate and fish populations and actively manage these areas to protect against multiple threats, providing a framework for monitoring, education and outreach.

### Coral Bank



Georgia Aquarium began construction of a **Florida coral rescue and spawning lab** to further our research and conservation of corals. This onsite lab will allow for the safe keeping of genetically valuable colonies and also seasonally induced spawning, culminating in an increase in coral population size as well as improved genetic health of these rare corals.

We also continue to house 74 Florida stony coral colonies which are highly susceptible to stony coral tissue loss disease. Outside of these living conditions, the corals would likely perish on the natural coral reef.



**2,300**

gallons holding capacity,  
increased from 500 gallons

## Coral Resilience



Georgia Aquarium team members rescued corals from **Florida Aquarium's Coral Conservation and Research Center** ahead of Hurricane Milton in November 2024. These corals represent irreplaceable genetic individuals and were cared for in Atlanta during the devastating storm. After the hurricane passed, we safely transported the coral evacuees back to Apollo Beach, FL.



**30**

Florida coral colonies successfully transported to Georgia Aquarium

On June 1, 2024, our team set out from Pensacola, FL on a 100 ft commercial diving vessel for seven days to study healthy reef areas, assess how we can help promote coral growth in damaged areas and place substrates at the ocean floor. Due to diving at these depths, the team had to be incredibly efficient with their time below the surface. After a six-minute descent, only 17 minutes were allowed for transplanting healthy corals and setting the substrates before they would need to begin their 75-minute ascent so the body can acclimate safely. The boat was home to a hyperbaric chamber donated by NOAA, but, thankfully, it was not needed.

In 2025, the team will revisit the substrates to evaluate the coral growth in these areas and hopefully refurbish the damaged ecosystem.

# FRESH DROP

## NEW EXHIBITS, SHOWS & TOURS



2024 brought an exciting new exhibit to Georgia Aquarium, *Explorers Cove*.

Housed in the former Café Aquaria space, Explorers Cove transports our guests through three vibrant coastal biomes—the estuary, salt marsh, and coastal ocean. Each biome has its own unique color scheme and educational content, creating a journey that's as visually stunning as it is informative.

Including two larger-than-life touch pools with the ancient sturgeon fish and graceful cownose rays, this exhibit offers hands-on experiences that bring the guest face-to-fin with these captivating creatures.

New technology is also present in this exhibit including motion-responsive projection of animals in the salt marsh and innovative 'paint-a-fish' virtual reef projection in the coastal ocean, where guests' artistic creations come to life on a digital reef. Showcasing the beauty and diversity of ocean life in a truly unique way.



### NEW SHOWS

Created and opened two new Dolphin Presentations, **Destination: Dolphin** and **Crossbones Key**.

We now have four different Dolphin Shows and three Sea Lion Shows throughout the year!



2m+  
total guests



3,122  
total shows



### NEW TOUR

Launched a more in-depth, **Dive Deeper Behind the Seas Tour** as an accompaniment to our **Explore the Surface** option. This new tour takes guests to additional areas to learn more about Georgia Aquarium's impressive past, our ever-changing present, and how we strive to lead the aquarium industry into the future.



### NEW CAFÉ

Georgia Aquarium elevated our visitor experience with the opening of our two-story café. The new **Coastline Café** includes spacious seating areas with large windows overlooking downtown Atlanta.



### NEW PARTNERS

Added a new partner in **Fahlo** to raise funds and awareness for our research and conservation through bracelets that track whale sharks!



### NEW FISH

The final stages of our **River Scout** renovation debuted a new Aquarium species, African tigerfish. Equipped with their large, razor-sharp teeth, these freshwater fish are sure to grab your attention!

KHARKIV / UKRAINE, EASTERN EUROPE



# MAMMOTH MISSION

## BELUGA WHALE RESCUE, FROM UKRAINE TO SPAIN

### BELUGA WHALE

SCIENTIFIC NAME *Delphinapterus leucas*

**ANIMAL FACT** Beluga whales can swim backward. This adaptation is helpful in an environment where sea ice can change rapidly.

#### CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern\*



\*For the species as a whole, there are certain subpopulations that are Critically Endangered, Endangered, and Threatened.



**Georgia Aquarium** participated in a monumental rescue of two beluga whales from the war-ravaged region of **Kharkiv, Ukraine** in June 2024.

Along with Oceanogràfic de Valencia and SeaWorld, we collaborated with Ukraine's NEMO Dolphinarium on a heroic evacuation from Kharkiv to Valencia, Spain.

Since the war began in 2022, the dolphinarium has been bravely evacuating animals, including seals, sea lions and dolphins, as quickly as possible. However, moving belugas is an extremely complex logistical operation due to their size and specific needs. The high-risk, complex rescue operation presented numerous challenges and required multi-national collaboration.



**22-24°**

Celsius, the water temperature required for transport

The belugas, a 15-year-old male named Plombir and a 14-year-old female named Miranda, arrived in Valencia on the evening of June 18, 2024, following a grueling journey across the war zone. The evacuation included a dangerous 12-hour drive from Kharkiv to Odesa where Ukrainian caregivers met the international team from Oceanogràfic,



**56**  
hours in transit

**1,900+**  
miles traveled

Georgia Aquarium and SeaWorld. Health checks were conducted, and the team continued to the border toward Moldova. Once in Chisinau, Moldova, the rescue team took a six-seater chartered plane to Valencia, Spain, where the belugas made the final leg of their journey to their new home at Oceanogràfic Valencia.

"The complexities of this evacuation were immense, and we have been working for weeks to prepare for it. I'm humbled to have been trusted to provide the belugas care and protection during their long journey to their new home. My heart is with the Ukrainian caregivers and the people of Kharkiv who had to say goodbye to Miranda and Plombir. It's not an easy thing to do, but it was best for them. I'm proud to have played a role in helping them," said Dennis Christen, Senior Director of Animal Wellbeing & Behavior at Georgia Aquarium.

Oceanogràfic Valencia is the largest aquarium in Europe and is the closest marine conservation center to Ukraine. The facility is accredited by the most rigorous international organizations in animal welfare. The belugas are provided with a specialized team of medical, nutritional and behavioral experts at Oceanogràfic to assist in recovery from their long journey.

# ENIGMA UNCOVERED

## WHALE SHARK DISCOVERIES



In the remote northern reaches of the **Great Barrier Reef** lies a previously unknown whale shark aggregation in an area called **Wreck Bay**.

Dr. Cameron Perry, a research scientist from Georgia Aquarium's conservation team, embarked on a 10-day expedition to this secluded region in November 2024 to deepen our understanding of whale sharks and their elusive behaviors.

Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia has long been a hub for whale shark research, but the lack of whale shark sightings along the Eastern Coast represented a large data gap for populations in the Southwest Pacific. Using environmental modeling, Biopixel Ocean Foundation, Georgia Aquarium's partner on this project, suspected suitable whale shark habitats existed along the Eastern Coast of Australia.

"This trip was incredibly successful," said Dr. Perry. "Not only did we identify new individuals, but we also deployed 15 cutting-edge tags to track their vertical and horizontal movements, as well as environmental data."

This creates the potential to document the deepest whale shark dive to date, surpassing the current record of 1,928 meters.

Georgia Aquarium's work in Wreck Bay is just the beginning. The next steps include analyzing data from the tags, expanding habitat suitability models, and engaging with local communities to deepen understanding of whale shark movements. Plans are already underway to explore new regions further south. By bridging gaps in knowledge and fostering collaborations, these efforts help protect not only whale sharks but the ecosystems they call home.

## International Partnership



In April 2024, Georgia Aquarium formalized our conservation partnerships with two of Japan's preeminent aquariums. The three aquariums share a unique distinction: care for endangered whale sharks and manta rays. It's a unique privilege and responsibility that few zoological organizations in the world share.

Georgia Aquarium is partnering with Okinawa Churashima Foundation Research Institute, including its Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium and Osaka Aquarium Kaiyukan, to collaborate on marine conservation strategies, share learnings and exchange expertise. The partnership between the organizations will focus on endangered species, including whale sharks, manta rays and coral reefs.

The agreement fosters long-term cooperation in research, conservation, animal care and staff development. It includes commitments for joint research programs, data sharing, staff exchanges and public education initiatives. With an initial term of 10 years and options for renewal, the partnership is intended to make a lasting impact on the health and well-being of marine environments.



### WHALE SHARK

SCIENTIFIC NAME *Rhincodon typus*

**ANIMAL FACT** Each whale shark has its own individual spot pattern; like human fingerprints, no two are exactly alike.

#### CONSERVATION STATUS

Endangered

EXTINCT THREATENED LEAST CONCERN

EX EW CR EN VU NT LC DD NE

# HONORING HEROES

SERVING OUR BRAVE VETERANS & THEIR FAMILIES



Georgia Aquarium and *The Home Depot Foundation*, our **Military Salute** program's founding partner, are proud supporters of our armed forces and are committed to serving the brave men and women, active and retired, who have served us.

2024 brought many new opportunities for our programming, including a **Veteran Family "Back to School" Sleepover** event for over 100 participants, as well as offering a **Veteran Professional Development Cohort** in collaboration with our **Education and Training Departments**. We provided free or discounted admission for 5,844 veterans and active-duty military personnel on our **Military Mondays** in the months of November and December.

**Georgia State Department of Mathematics and Statistics** assisted in creating a survey for our **Veterans Immersion Program (VIP) participants** to gather metrics for program efficiency, areas of improvement and needed data to increase philanthropic support.

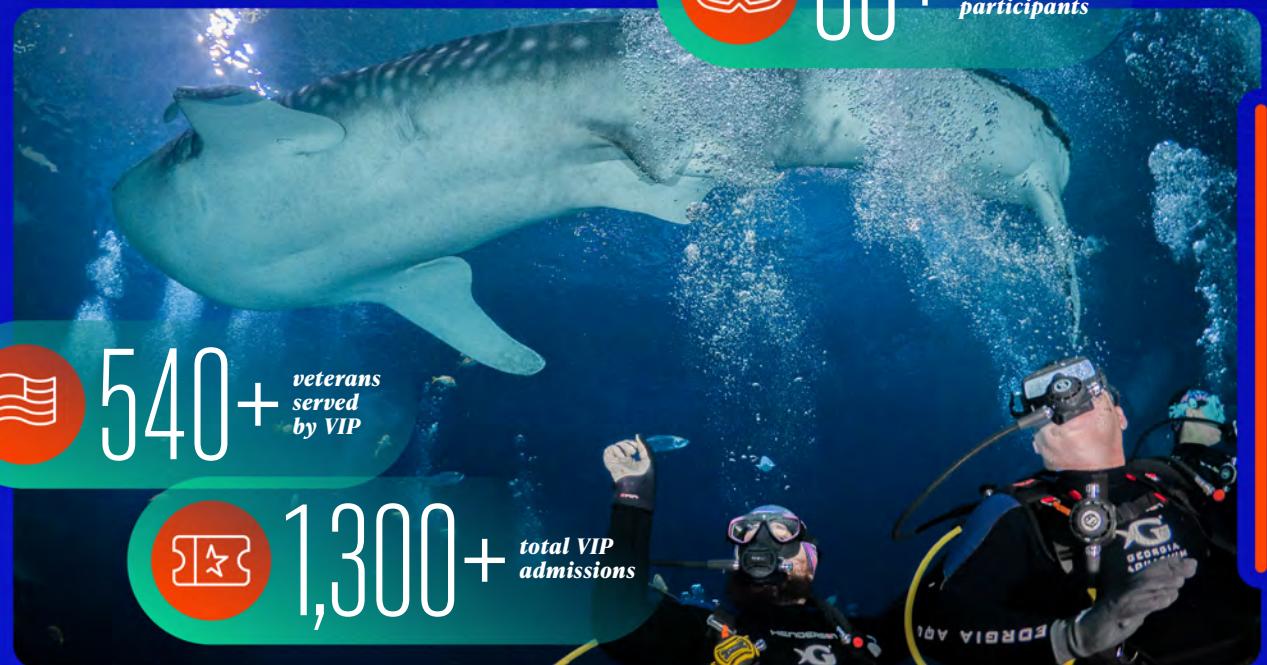
**Lockheed Martin** is another proud patron of our Military Salute Program, supporting both the Veterans Immersion Program (VIP) and Gold Star Family Days.



## VETERANS IMMERSION PROGRAM (VIP)

Georgia Aquarium was honored to serve over 540 veterans in our **swim or dive programs** and more than 1,300 total admissions for veterans and their families. With the help of our **Husbandry, Dive Operations, and Dive Immersion teams**, the **Navy Experimental Dive Unit** performed in-water military re-enlistments, promotions and retirements for more than 20 active-duty service members for these special occasions.

Once a month, **Military Salute** serves non-military organizations as well. More than 80 individuals with **Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Shepherd Center** and **Tommy Nobis Center** were able to participate in our **Swim with Gentle Giants** program.



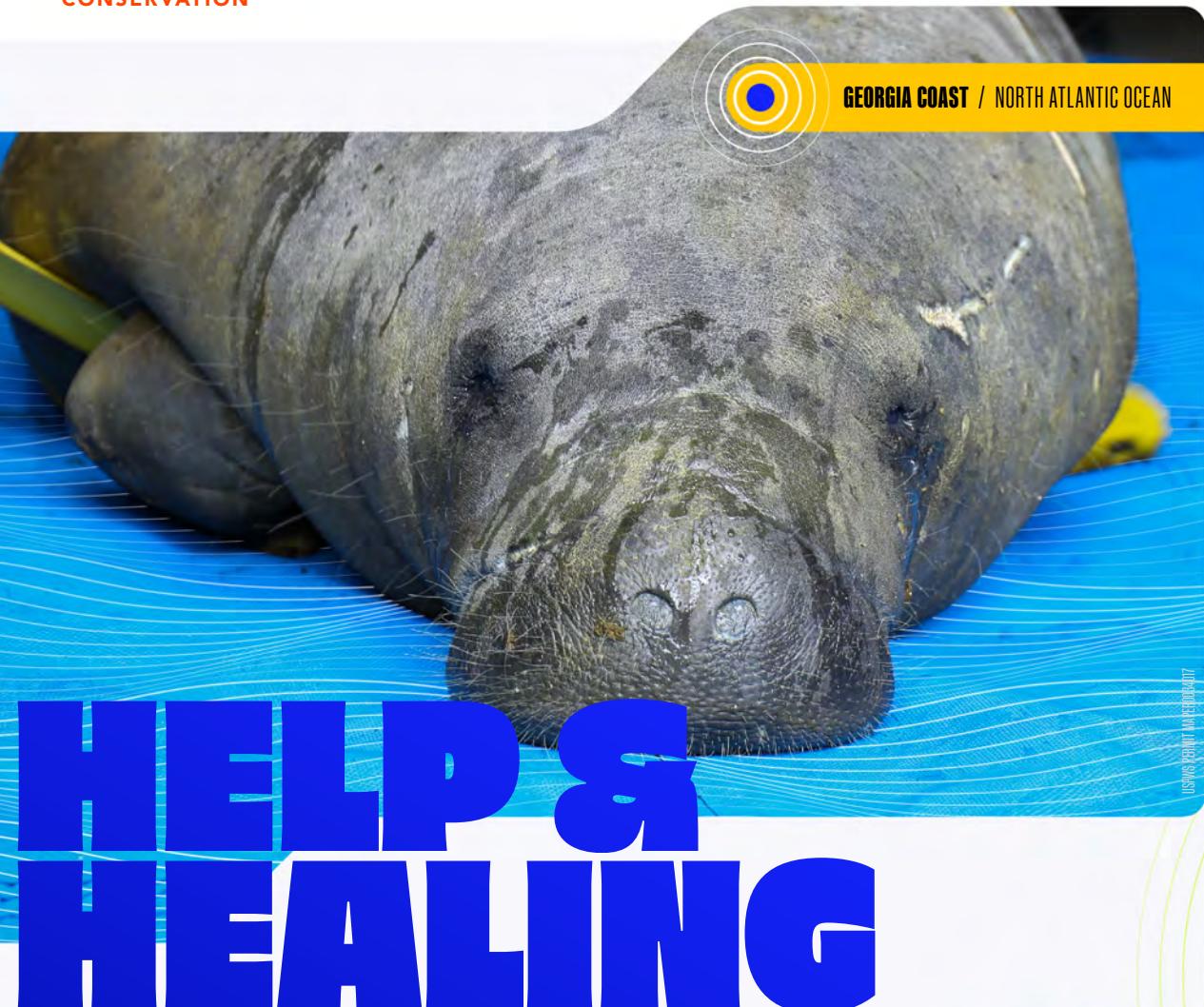
## GOLD STAR FAMILY DAYS

In 2024, the **Gold Star Family Program** was revamped, bringing a new experience that lasted an entire weekend. Over 175 Gold Star Family members participated in two days of fun, including Aquarium admission, swim or dive programs in our Ocean Voyager Built by The Home Depot gallery, meals and a sleepover program.

## MILITARY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Georgia Aquarium gives unique opportunities to our **Military Volunteers** selected specifically to work with **Dive Immersion** and **Military Salute** to provide the best possible experience for our veterans and their guests. Volunteer opportunities included:

- ★ Veterans Immersion Program (VIP) every Wednesday
- ★ Life Waters Weekends
- ★ Gold Star Family Days
- ★ Veterans Day Parade Expo



# HELP & HEALING

## MANATEE CARE ON THE GEORGIA COAST

### Annual Health Assessments

Manatees are gentle giants of the water, but they face serious health stressors such as boat strikes and cold stress. To ensure their survival and better understand their needs, Georgia Aquarium and other Manatee Rescue & Rehabilitation partners participate in annual research trips, assessing the health and habitat usage of manatee populations off the coast of Georgia. These health assessments

involve thorough physical examinations as well as biological sample collection and tagging. Our teams can gather valuable data on their movements and health status by examining animals tagged on previous trips. Tracking these movements helps us compare the health of manatees in different regions and environmental conditions, providing a comprehensive picture of their well-being.

10

animals examined  
during most recent  
health assessments

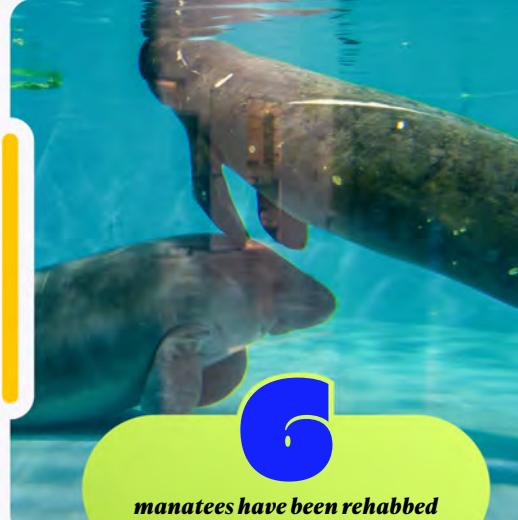


### Rescue and Rehab

In addition to our research efforts, Georgia Aquarium plays a vital role in the Manatee Rescue & Rehabilitation Partnership (MRP) as a holding facility for injured or abandoned manatees. This partnership is crucial for rehabilitating and eventually releasing manatees back into the ocean.

In 2024, Georgia Aquarium welcomed two new manatee calves, TayTay and Cider, to our offsite facility. Both animals were found abandoned and suffering from cold stress. TayTay also

needed treatment for a boat strike injury. Georgia Aquarium's primary contribution to the MRP involves providing holding space for manatees that need time to gain weight, allowing other facilities to focus on more critical cases. We also support the partnership by providing staff to assist with transports, rescues and releases. This collaborative effort ensures that manatees receive the best possible care and have the highest chance of successful rehabilitation and reintegration into their natural habitat. TayTay and Cider are both on track to be released back into Florida waters in 2025.



6

manatees have been rehabbed  
at our Animal Care Facility

TINKTINK

CLANK

VAMO

BURRGER

CIDER

TAYTAY

### FLORIDA MANATEE

SCIENTIFIC NAME *Trichechus manatus latirostris*

**ANIMAL FACT** Adult manatees typically weigh around 1,000 pounds but some can weigh as much as 3,500 pounds.

CONSERVATION STATUS  
Endangered

EX

EW

CR

EN

VU

NT

LC

DD

NE



Georgia Aquarium was awarded the Prescott Grant in 2024 and is using it towards a customized manatee transport truck that we hope to have in action by summer 2025 to aid in our rescue and rehabilitation efforts

# AQUATIC ANALYTICS

## UNDERWATER GPS IN GRAY'S REEF

### Georgia Aquarium's Dive Team

participated in multiple projects to aid our research and conservation efforts and tracking data along the *Georgia coast*.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) maintains a hydrophone and acoustic receiver array in Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary. Acoustic receivers are water bottle-sized devices that are suspended vertically under the ocean with an anchor, line, and float. They capture "pings" from tagged animals, and in conjunction with diver-based surveys like transects, provide researchers with population and migration data. These paint a vital picture of species' movements during winter when diving operations are limited.



In 2024, Georgia Aquarium Dive Operations helped NOAA divers service receivers and a hydrophone. Every six to nine months, each receiver must be retrieved, cleaned, serviced, the data copied and then returned to its station on the reef. The data received is then shared with fellow scientists.

Recreational fishing and diving are allowed in part of Gray's Reef, although about one-third of the sanctuary is dedicated to research-only operations. NOAA hopes to compare species data across parts of the sanctuary that experience different levels of human impact.

Georgia Aquarium also maintains a receiver array along Georgia Department of Natural Resources' artificial reefs (outside of Gray's Reef). In 2024, we deployed acoustic receivers that will detect fish that have been acoustically tagged, with the hope that some of our tagged sand tiger sharks will be detected in Georgia as well. The team plans on downloading receivers in the spring of 2025 to see what will be revealed! This work is a collaboration between Georgia Aquarium's Research and Conservation and Dive Operations teams.



### Building a Sustainable Future

Georgia Aquarium is taking strides to implement sustainability initiatives around our facility, contributing to shaping a greener tomorrow:

**AQUACULTURE**—We are working to create a sustainable and thriving living collection through culture of marine reef fish, invertebrates such as jellies, and selected foods such as zooplankton. Our goal is to achieve a living collection in five years of which 50% is comprised through managed breeding, aquaculture, and sourcing of surplus specimens through other accredited institutions.

**REDUCING TEXTILE WASTE**—promoting wetsuit recycling and reusing old costumes no longer in show condition to create gifts and giveaways.

**HYDROPONICS**—the Commissary team has established a container garden and hydroponic system to grow organic produce onsite, mitigating vegetable purchases and produce waste. Our goal is to implement a larger scale set up with dedicated green house space for year-round produce needs in the future.

**RECYCLING**—our Sustainability and Conservation Culture Task Force installed a staff recycling center with options to recycle used markers, batteries, and apparel as well as harder to recycle materials such as nitrile gloves.

# A BETTER TOMORROW

ENRICHING OUR COMMUNITIES THROUGH LEARNING AND SERVICE



135

school districts in Georgia reached



51,635

students visited through our Sponsored Education Admission (SEA) program

2024 brought new opportunities for ***education and outreach*** as well as ***continuing partnerships*** within the community.

## EDUCATION

Georgia Aquarium's **Education team** aims to provide learning opportunities that are standards-based and student-centered, with an emphasis on conservation and connecting students and teachers to nature.

In 2024, our education outreach partnerships continued with **City of Refuge**, our **Teacher Professional Development** workshop, **Rivers to Reefs** and our first **Spring Break** camp, **Camp H2O**. Our participation also continued with the **Teacher of the Year** program along with support from **Chick-fil-A**, culminating in an awards ceremony and celebration at Great Wolf Lodge for nominated teachers.

## EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

Georgia Aquarium established a new partnership in 2024 with the **DeKalb County school district**. In addition to our ongoing partnership with **Clayton County**, these collaborations include instructor-led programming, classroom outreach, virtual outreach and camps. As part of the Dekalb partnership, we also provided a **Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) camp** during the summer for 5th-grade students. Both partnerships focus on Title I schools and bring STEM opportunities to students underrepresented in those fields, aiming to nurture relationships with local educational institutions and empower students to be stewards in their communities.

65

Clayton County Schools

106

DeKalb County Schools





### TOP FIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS SERVED BY OUR PROGRAMMING



### SEAKEEPERS

In partnership with **The International SeaKeepers Society**, Georgia Aquarium co-hosts a yearly **professional development** opportunity in Miami, Florida for middle and high school educators in Georgia. The two-and-a-half-day, three-night workshop includes hands-on field experiences and research to explore human impacts on different coastal ecosystems.

### BREAKING STEREOTYPES

Made possible through support from **Dave and Carolyn Gould**, Georgia Aquarium hosted another **Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) Camp** during Spring Break 2024 for girls at Sweetwater Middle, a Title I school. This program encourages the girls to become more involved in STEM activities by providing exposure, hands-on experience and transferrable skills all culminating with testing their ROVs in our Pier 225 habitat at the end of their week.



### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Georgia Aquarium provides staff with **paid volunteer hours** to participate in **community outreach programs** in our local area. This is a great opportunity to meet different team members and make a difference in our community together.



### NOAA OCEAN GUARDIAN SCHOOL PROGRAM

In September 2024, **McCleskey Middle School** in Marietta and **Oglethorpe Charter School** in Savannah, with ongoing support from **Georgia-Pacific**, became the first schools in Georgia to earn the **NOAA Ocean Guardian School** designation. For the 2024-2025 school year, we have expanded the program to include nine additional schools, eight in Metro Atlanta and one more in Savannah, bringing the total to 11 participating schools.

To promote equity within the program and in local communities, Title I schools were given priority for selection. We are excited to continue expanding the number of participating schools, fostering ocean literacy, and promoting conservation through impactful projects such as these.



Georgia Aquarium hosted 53 children and adults with critical illnesses through various organizations in 2024, providing these individuals and their families with personalized visits to make cherished memories.

### GEORGIA AQUARIUM VOLUNTEERS



32 paid interns across 11 departments, representing 27 colleges and universities



who donated over **8,600 hours** and assisted with Community Projects like Sweep the Hooch, Park Pride, and Books for Africa!



## HONORING THEIR MEMORY

# DR BRIAN DAVIS

**DR. BRIAN L. DAVIS** dedicated his life to education, environmental stewardship, and advancing the role of aquariums in conservation and community impact. As President and CEO of Georgia Aquarium, Brian was a visionary leader who challenged boundaries, inspired progress, and fostered inclusivity in marine science. A trailblazer in every sense, he was the first Black CEO of an aquarium and the first Black chairman of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums board—positions he used to open doors for future generations.

A lifelong educator, Brian's passion for learning and advocacy for public education shaped the lives of countless students, whether in classrooms, aquariums, or scientific institutions. Under his leadership, Georgia Aquarium became the first aquarium to be a Cognia Certified STEM Provider as well as the first aquarium designated as a Certified Autism Center, ensuring accessibility for all visitors. His visionary leadership in cultivating a positive and empowering workplace culture not only earned the Aquarium recognition as a Top Workplace, but also influenced best practices across the industry.

Beyond his accomplishments, Brian was a compassionate, forward-thinking leader whose warmth and wisdom uplifted those around him. His memory continues to inspire, guiding Georgia Aquarium and the broader conservation community toward a more inclusive and impactful future. We honor Brian with gratitude and ongoing commitment to the vision he so passionately championed.



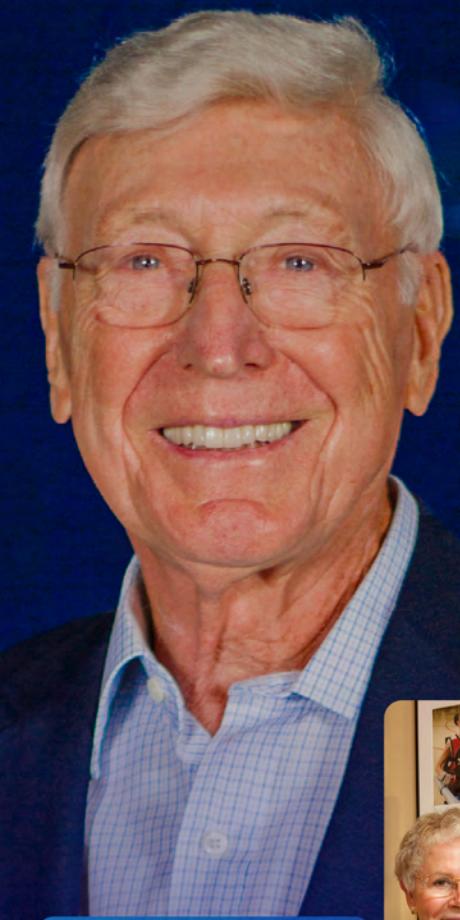
## CELEBRATING THEIR IMPACT

# BERNIE MARCUS

**BERNIE MARCUS** is the reason Georgia Aquarium exists today. As the Aquarium's founding benefactor, his passion for education, conservation, and community engagement transformed a bold dream into one of the world's most renowned aquariums and a landmark of Atlanta.

Through his imagination and tenacity, he conceptualized and created Georgia Aquarium. His commitment to excellence drew together world-class experts in animal care, research, and aquarium design, creating a place where guests from around the world could experience the wonders of the ocean firsthand. Bernie envisioned Georgia Aquarium as a place for all, a space where everyone could experience the magic of the ocean, regardless of background. He especially valued access for young minds, creating opportunities for school children to visit, learn, and be inspired.

His legacy lives on not only in the walls of the Aquarium but in the millions of guests who visit, learn, and carry forward his dedication to discovery and stewardship. We honor his memory with deep gratitude and remain steadfast in our mission, driven by the generosity and vision he so passionately championed. Bernie's commitment to inspiring wonder and protecting our ocean lives on in every exhibit, research initiative, and educational program that connects people to the magic of marine life.



# 2024 INCOME STATEMENT

## REVENUE

Admissions	\$132,136,171
Commissions & Events	\$20,745,147
Fundraising & Membership	\$10,260,969
In-Kind Contributions	\$463,850
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$163,606,137</b>

## EXPENSES

Program Services	\$62,352,285
Support Services	\$29,629,357
Fundraising & Advertising	\$7,999,865
Other Expenses	\$19,298,807
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$119,280,314</b>

<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$44,325,823</b>
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# 2024 BALANCE SHEET

## ASSETS

Cash & Investments	\$186,421,583
Prepays & Other	\$3,545,788
Receivables	\$10,285,058
Property, Plant & Equipment, Net	\$434,347,616
Operating Lease Right of Use Assets, Net	\$871,780
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$635,471,825</b>

## LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$22,188,586
Deferred Revenue	\$14,719,608
Debt	\$48,064,634
Other, Operating Lease Liabilities	\$894,458
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$85,867,286</b>

## NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	\$524,717,674
With Donor Restrictions	\$24,886,865
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$549,604,539</b>

<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$635,471,825</b>
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Our Presenting Sponsors represent Georgia Aquarium's highest level of sponsorship. These companies help support our mission to inspire awareness and preservation of our ocean and aquatic animals worldwide.



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Our Board of Directors is made up of a group of dedicated individuals who have brought their impressive combined experience into one group. Together, they are committed to steering Georgia Aquarium into the future.

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As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, we rely on the support of our community to ensure that we can continue our groundbreaking research initiatives, conservation efforts, educational programs, and community partnerships. By supporting Georgia Aquarium, these generous donors allow us to make a positive impact on the health and welfare of aquatic life from around the globe and remain at the forefront of aquatic science.

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Andretti Indoor Karting & Games  
ASW Distillery  
Atlanta Ballet  
Atlanta Falcons  
Atlanta History Center  
Atlanta Symphony Orch  
Atlanta United FC  
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Benihana

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Jo-Elle Mogerman  
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Atlanta Ballet	Chattanooga Zoo	Steve Koonin—Atlanta Hawks & State Farm Arena	Photovation Elite	Varuni Napoli
Atlanta Falcons	Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl	Lion Country Safari	Reynolds Lake Oconee	White Oak
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Atlanta Symphony Orchestra	Creative Discovery Museum	LPS of America, Inc.	Shake Shack	Xocolatl Small Batch Chocolate
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Barking Hound Village	Dancing Goats by Kaldi's Coffee	Max Lager's	South Carolina Aquarium	Your 3rd Spot
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These donations were received between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024. We have done our best to ensure correct listing; however, if your name is incorrect or omitted, please contact the Development department so we may correct our records.

You can reach us at **404.581.4136** or **DEVELOPMENT@GEORGIAAQUARIUM.ORG**.

YOU CAN HELP US CREATE A

# SEA CHANGE

As a leader in marine research, **Georgia Aquarium** contributes to the advancement of knowledge of our blue planet by studying animals here at the Aquarium and in their natural environments.

Our goal is to better understand our aquatic world so that we may conserve it for generations to come.

Your support is invaluable to Georgia Aquarium's commitment to helping present and future generations gain a greater understanding of the connection between human, marine and ocean health.

## PLEASE SUPPORT GEORGIA AQUARIUM

For more information on all the ways you can help, please contact our Development department at **404.581.4136** or [Development@GeorgiaAquarium.org](mailto:Development@GeorgiaAquarium.org), or visit [GeorgiaAquarium.org/Support](http://GeorgiaAquarium.org/Support).



### WEEDY SEA DRAGON

SCIENTIFIC NAME *Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*

**ANIMAL FACT** The weedy sea dragon's color and shape of appendages are based on the sea dragon's food supply and environment, and also vary with other factors such as depth and geography.

#### CONSERVATION STATUS

Vulnerable





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