



PRESS RELEASE – January 16, 2024

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Sea Center on Stearns Wharf Offers Free Admission for Underwater Parks Day Festival

- January 20, 2024 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
- Marine education and fun for all
- Online details at sbnature.org/calendar
- No reservations required

SANTA BARBARA, CA—The [Sea Center on Stearns Wharf](#) is offering free admission to its [Underwater Parks Day Festival](#) on Saturday, January 20, 2024 with activities from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM thanks to support from [the Moeller Lab at UC Santa Barbara](#).

In addition to interacting with the Sea Center’s dynamic exhibits—including the improved Wet Deck—guests can enjoy activities and learning opportunities for all ages. Festival partners showcasing conservation efforts and science in the Santa Barbara Channel and beyond include [Santa Barbara Channelkeeper](#), [Channel Islands Naturalist Corps](#), [National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science Channel Islands Restoration](#), [Santa Barbara Coastal Long Term Ecological Research](#) and the aforementioned Moeller Lab.

The first 100 guests will receive a limited-edition sticker commemorating the festival. Kids can enjoy ocean-themed crafts and two storytime sessions at 10:30 AM and 1:30 PM. An interactive dive demonstration in partnership with Blue Ocean Productions and Kirby Morgan Dive Systems Inc. will occur at 11:00 AM.

“At the Sea Center, we’re excited to celebrate marine protected areas, which safeguard the treasures of the deep blue,” says Sea Center Naturalist and Volunteer Program Manager Tessa Cafritz. “It’s our mission to foster appreciation and joy in the ocean’s biodiversity and resilience. We hope the enthusiasm we convey to our guests creates a ripple effect to their friends and family, spreading the love of the ocean far and wide.”

The Underwater Parks Day Festival celebrates Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), or “underwater parks,” that preserve the biodiversity and abundance of ocean life in our coastal waters. Some of the most nutrient-rich waters on the planet are located in the Santa Barbara Channel and Channel Islands region. These waters support abundant marine life found in kelp forests, tide pools, and rocky intertidal reef habitats. MPAs restrict fishing and the overharvesting of these incredibly diverse marine ecosystems to promote stable species populations and recreational use for future generations of visitors. Underwater Parks Day is celebrated in unison with many aquariums and science centers in Southern California.

No reservations are required to attend the festival. For information about this and other upcoming events, visit sbnature.org/calendar.

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About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Sea Center

Located on historic Stearns Wharf, this highly interactive regional aquarium and marine education facility offers guests close encounters with marine animals, and exploration of the Santa Barbara Channel on the Wet Deck. In addition to permanent exhibits, the Sea Center hosts unique events and special educational programming, including Underwater Parks Day and World Oceans Day.



The Sea Center on Stearns Wharf.



Young guests enjoying the Sea Center during the 2023 festival.



A young guest makes a special connection while touching a small shark at the Sea Center.