A GLOBAL VOICE FOR THE OCEAN
“Our commitment to tackling the big ocean challenges – from climate change, to ocean plastic pollution, to protecting the health of ocean wildlife and ecosystems – is unwavering. And our strategies are demonstrating success.”
- Julie Packard
2018 Highlights

You helped us achieve these milestones. Thank you!

- We welcomed nearly 2 million visitors with inspiring exhibits and programs.
- Our new Bechtel Family Center for Ocean Education and Leadership represents new hope for the future of the ocean.
- We brought ocean issues to the Global Climate Action Summit, and committed to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2025.
- Partnering with Red Lobster and advising top international seafood producers, we advanced global seafood sustainability.
- Our new Juli Plant Grainger Animal Care Center let us expand on nearly 35 years of exceptional animal care.
- New research began to unravel long-standing mysteries about the White Shark Café.
- We tackled ocean plastic pollution head on through groundbreaking research and new policy victories.
- Our Underwater Explorers scuba program for children celebrated 40,000 participants and 17 years of inspiration.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S LETTER

Change was all around us in 2018, from social unrest to climate disruption. And the ocean was no exception. The clock is ticking to make the right decisions to protect and restore the ocean. While the needs remain urgent, I’m filled with hope for the future. Millions of people draw inspiration from the Aquarium — and, increasingly, look to us to advocate for ocean wildlife. In 2018, we stepped up our role as a global player taking on the biggest threats to ocean health: unsustainable fisheries and aquaculture, plastic pollution and climate change. Together, we’re growing our influence, and making a difference.

I’m especially proud of the ways we help young people find their voices as ocean advocates. Thanks to your generosity, we’ll unleash more of their talents when our new Bechtel Family Center for Ocean Education and Leadership opens this summer. In 2018, working with California leaders, we put the ocean on the agenda at the Global Climate Action Summit. We drove progress to advance sustainable seafood through new partnerships with some of the world’s largest seafood businesses. And we took action to tackle plastic pollution through legislation, public outreach and new research initiatives.

We expanded our facilities to better meet the growing needs of animals in our living exhibits and at the same time support recovery of threatened ocean wildlife. I’m pleased to say the new Juli Plant Grainger Animal Care Center is now in full swing. We’re demonstrating solutions that work and making tangible progress during these challenging times. I’m so grateful to you for making ours the best aquarium in the world — and a recognized leader in ocean conservation, education and policy. I hope you feel proud of all you’re helping us accomplish to assure a healthy ocean for future generations. I’m deeply grateful.

Thank you!

JULIE PACKARD
Executive Director

CHAIRMAN’S LETTER

Education has always been a top priority for the Aquarium. We were founded by individuals who shared a passion for science and for teaching. We’ve always recognized that we can — through our programs for visiting school groups, teens and teachers — help prepare new generations of science-literate citizens our society so urgently needs.

That was the motivation behind our new Bechtel Family Center for Ocean Education and Leadership. This ambitious project came to fruition because of your support and generosity. With construction now complete, we can begin to deliver on our vision for education programs in our state. Our dedicated and talented team of educators is preparing to deliver desperately needed programs in ecosystem-based science. California leads the nation in science and technology, but ranks near the bottom in public school spending and student performance in science. And only a limited number of California schools offer an environmental curriculum.

When the Aquarium opened 35 years ago, David Packard and the founding Board of Trustees decided it was important to provide free admission to children and teachers coming here with their schools — a promise that remains true today, thanks to your generous support.

On behalf of our board, thank you.

STEPHEN C. NEAL
Chairman

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

As of March 2019

Back row, left to right: Tegan Acton, Caroline Getty, Gideon Yu, Samantha Campbell, Michael Mantell, Connie Martinez, Mark Wan, Meg Caldwell, MRC Greenwood and Chris Scholin. Front row, left to right: Pietro Parravano, Stephen Neal, Julie Packard, Susan Orr, William Landreth. Not pictured: Susan Bell, Peter Bing and Joan Lane.
Dr. Mike Murray, our Jane Dunaway Director of Veterinary Services, says he’s “just a science geek” at heart. “I love medicine, biology and wildlife,” he says. “I like to know what makes things tick.”

Fortunately for our animals, he’s the most caring geek you’ll ever meet. Dr. Mike, as he’s fondly called, is the primary caregiver for more than 550 wet, weird and wonderful species at the Aquarium, and others we rescue from the wild.

“I don’t worry about the exact number, though, because the most important patient is the one that’s right in front of me,” he says.

After more than 30 years at the Aquarium, the self-proclaimed “country fish doctor” now operates out of a new space. The expanded Juli Plant Grainger Animal Care Center, completed in November, is three times as large as the former facility.

“Harmonious with the design, this new center allows us to:

- Address the specific needs of rescue wildlife, including sea otters, sea turtles and other animals that are more likely to strand in our region as the ocean continues to warm.
- Effectively quarantine sick birds and other air-breathing animals to prevent the spread of disease.
- Create a learning environment where our aquarists can expand their knowledge of animal health issues.
- Contribute to the field of conservation medicine by providing formal training opportunities for veterinary students and graduates, especially those from communities underrepresented in the profession today.
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The center allows us to:

- Efficiently employ new diagnostic equipment to examine and treat animals.
- Address the specific needs of rescue wildlife, including sea otters, sea turtles and other animals that are more likely to strand in our region as the ocean continues to warm.
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‘It’s so important for students to have real-world experience,” he says. “It helped me decide what I wanted to do, and I want to provide the same opportunity to others. We’re already talking to local students who may be thinking about vet school.”

Dr. Mike humbly acknowledges that we couldn’t have built the new center without the support from local communities and donors large and small. “They stepped up and made the whole thing possible,” he says. “I’m especially grateful to our longtime donor, Jane Dunaway. With her compassion for animals, she permanently endowed the Aquarium’s director of veterinary services position,” Dr. Mike adds. “Her generosity will ensure that this critical role is secure for generations to come.”
INSPIRING OUR VISITORS

Amazing New Animals

We welcomed several new animals — some with fins and a few with feathers — to the Aquarium in 2018, thanks to the work of our skilled animal care staff. These new faces help us inspire our members and visitors to protect ocean wildlife.

Penguin playground

African penguins Monty, Poppy and Bixby all hatched in the Aquarium’s penguin colony in 2018 — Monty and Poppy in January, Bixby in July. Visitors could see the chicks on exhibit for about a month before we moved them behind the scenes to gain weight and learn swimming skills before rejoining the flock in our Splash Zone.

Two other hatchlings remain in our penguin colony: Rey (June 2014) and Amigo (August 2016). Two male hatchlings, Pebble and Tola, were transferred to the colony at Dallas World Aquarium, and a female, Maq, is now at the National Aviary in Pittsburgh.

All of our birds are part of a species survival plan for threatened African penguins. The program, managed by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), maintains the genetic health of more than 800 African penguins housed at 50 AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums.

African penguin
Spheniscus demersus

SOS for African penguins

Curator of Aviculture Aimee Greenebaum worked with our African penguins for more than a decade before seeing one in the wild. In the fall, she traveled to South Africa to help rehabilitate sick and injured penguins and feed rescued, undernourished chicks. Aimee, like others on her team before her, spent several weeks with the South African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds, the leading conservation organization working to recover this endangered species. Duties included feeding and cleaning up after dozens of penguins each day. The reward for this messy and difficult work is the opportunity to release healthy birds back into the wild.

The wild African penguin population has fallen by more than 97 percent in the past century. One factor is overfishing, which has left Africa’s only penguin species with less food. Climate change may also be warming local waters, forcing penguins to swim miles farther to find fish in colder water. The effort exhausts many penguins — some fatally. They are vulnerable to other threats, too, such as oil spills and plastic pollution.

Aimee is pleased that she and her team could travel to South Africa to help with rescue and recovery efforts for the birds’ wild kin, and gain valuable experience in treating sick birds.

The Aquarium also took part in a 2017 “Invest in the Nest” fundraising campaign with our AZA colleagues. The project aims to solve another major challenge to the penguins’ recovery: a lack of appropriate, safe nesting areas where they can lay their eggs and rear their chicks. The campaign raised enough money to place 2,000 nest boxes, which the wild penguins are beginning to use, on beaches in South Africa and Namibia.

Aviculturists must sometimes carefully assist in the hatching of penguin chicks.

Breakthroughs in culturing comb jellies

Thanks to the imagination and perseverance of our jelly team, we’re able to consistently exhibit several stunning comb jelly species, including the spotted comb jelly, Leucothea pulchra — one of the most beautiful and fragile of its kind. Also mesmerizing visitors in our Drifters gallery are a steady supply of sea gooseberries, Pleurobrachia bachei and Hormiphora californensis, the common Northern comb jelly, Bolinopsis infundibulum and warty comb jelly, Mnemiopsis leidyi. Comb jellies captivate because they languidly move through liquid space while refracting light to dazzling effect, generating flashing patterns of rainbow light. Our team can reliably produce generations of healthy comb jellies, thanks to improved and streamlined methods to culture these challenging ctenophores.
INSPIRING OUR VISITORS

New seabirds, new stories

We welcomed two new seabirds into our rescued flock: Alika, a young Laysan albatross, and Sula, a red-footed booby.

The two birds join 11-year-old Makana, a Layasrn albatross who has become a superstar ambassador for seabirds and other marine life facing grave threats from ocean plastic pollution. Her daily program at the Kelp Forest exhibit helps us share with visitors what’s at stake from this growing crisis.

Alika, just over a year old, joined Makana as only the second Laysan albatross at an accredited zoo or aquarium in the United States. Alika’s name means “protector” or “guardian” in Hawaiian. Like Makana, she was injured as a chick, unable to survive in the wild and in need of a permanent home. Alika is a companion for Makana, and visitors will often see both on behind-the-scenes tours.

Sula, whose age is unknown, was injured by a fishing hook and unable to survive on her own. Her name comes from the scientific name for the red-footed booby, *Sula sula*. Staff at SeaWorld San Diego rescued her and nursed her back to health. But after several release attempts, it was determined that Sula couldn’t be returned to the wild. We offered her a permanent home. Her story is an example of how another ocean pollution problem, forgotten fishing gear, can harm seabirds and other ocean animals.

Our team is now training Sula to become more comfortable around people, and she may eventually take part in public programs and interact with guests.

Going Global with Social Media

Social media lets us expand our mission beyond our walls, engage millions of people and bring the ocean into homes around the world. It’s a powerful and effective way to help people know more, care more and do more on behalf of the ocean.

Engaging younger audiences

Instagram is popular among users 18-34 years old, and they’re a very engaged audience. We’re using the platform’s new “Stories” feature to share in-depth background about our work, peeks behind the scenes and stories about conservation, policy and biology.

Connecting through streaming video

Live streams on Facebook, Periscope, Instagram and YouTube continue to be one of the most engaging ways to bring our mission into the digital space. Live streams of animals and staff at the Aquarium—as well as our “wild” streams featuring tidepools, king tides, red crabs and other occurrences in Monterey Bay—attract thousands of viewers from around the world.

Inspiring action for the ocean

Thousands of our social media followers responded to invitations to take conservation action in a number of ways: opposing a federal effort to expand offshore oil and gas drilling, supporting a California ballot measure to protect natural resources, and urging passage of California’s first-in-the-nation “Straws On Request” bill.

Success with Twitter Memes

In 2018, we began interpreting popular meme formats on Twitter and Tumblr and used the subsequent discussion to share marine science information. An “American Chopper” meme became our most liked/shared tweet of all time, earning 123,000 likes (120 times our usual) and almost 10,000 new Twitter followers. By joking about the challenge of a conservation-focused organization creating content for a platform light on substance, we introduced the Aquarium and our mission to new audiences.

Another tweet playfully pointed out that Apple’s squid emoji is biologically inaccurate. It delivered marine science content to a wide digital audience—something we’re uniquely positioned to do.
Wonder in the Water

What are the best days of the year for the Aquarium’s dive team? For 17 years it’s been our Days of Discovery—a program that lets young people with disabilities experience the freedom and wonder of the ocean during a surface scuba experience in our Great Tide Pool. The first Days of Discovery took place in 2003. More than 1,200 children have participated so far, and the event now takes place over three days each summer. The program began as a special part of our Underwater Explorers summer program, which in 2018 welcomed its 40,000th participant.

One of those kids stood out. In 2003, Zach Bunnell was too young to take part in Underwater Explorers but vowed to return the following summer. During the intervening year, he was blinded by a brain tumor. But he came back, and enjoyed an epic dive experience—and gave us a lesson in living life to the fullest. Tragically, Zach died a few months later. To honor his courageous spirit, we named the days set aside for children with special needs the Zach Bunnell Days of Discovery for Kids with Exceptional Challenges.

Since 2011, we’ve partnered with the Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System through its Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals Program to offer Days of Discovery free of charge to young people with special needs. Thanks to the support of the entire Aquarium community, both of these inspiring and often life-changing programs continue to touch hearts and minds.

Tyler Phelps has always loved the ocean. His family took many trips to the Aquarium, but the one that stands out is his first “scuba dive” as part of our Underwater Explorers program. He was eight years old, and that adventure nurtured his dream to become a marine biologist. “It got me hooked on diving,” Tyler says. “Although I didn’t get scuba certified until later, I never forgot my inspirational experience.”

Fast forward 18 years, and Tyler is now working on his master of science degree from San Francisco State University while serving as its assistant diving safety officer. He’s also a graduate researcher in the department of ichthyology at the California Academy of Sciences, working with colleagues to study the ecology and evolution of fishes living in deeper regions of coral reefs known as the “twilight zone”—and discovering new species along the way.
action to protect our ocean planet comes in many forms. We’re now purchasing electricity from solar and wind sources. We’re changing other business practices to leave a lighter footprint, and inspiring our guests to do the same. We championed the effort that led Monterey County to become the third independently certified “Green Destination” in the United States.

At our private evening events, we’ve eliminated most single-use products and created menus featuring sustainable local ingredients and plant-based dishes. By hosting events at the Aquarium, our corporate and conference clients can advance their own sustainability commitments.

We’re fortunate to have a retail and culinary partner, SSA, that embraces our values and spreads them to its clients nationwide. SSA has influenced national vendors to remove single-use plastic packaging from items sold here and at other partner institutions.

Our culinary team is inspiring local businesses and other zoos and aquariums to shift from single-use plastic water bottles to aluminum containers.

Our produce and seafood vendors switched to reusable plastic totes rather than hard-to-recycle waxed cardboard boxes, eliminating more than 100,000 pounds of waste. For evening events, the vendor who supplies our table linens bundles them in reusable totes instead of wrapping them individually in plastic.

To encourage low-carbon commutes, we subsidize vanpools and bike loans, and we provide staff with free bus passes, carpooling incentives, and other transportation supports. We’ve combined these efforts with active education campaigns, like those encouraging carpools and ridesharing.

In 2018, nearly 40 percent of our staff encouraged carpools and ridesharing. Our vital volunteers have connected visitors from around the world to the ocean life of Monterey Bay and beyond. They’ve also helped in countless ways behind the scenes. Everything they do is for a single purpose: to advance our mission to inspire conservation of the ocean.

Our 2018 volunteers completed 2,665 dives, contributing 12,592 hours of service. By hosting events at the Aquarium, our corporate and conference clients can advance their own sustainability commitments.

For Claudia Pineda Tibbs, environmental advocacy starts with putting one foot in front of the other. But that’s just the beginning. Claudia walks her two-mile commute to work as the Aquarium’s conservation and science planning and operations manager – one way to reduce her carbon footprint. She’s also committed to reducing or eliminating plastic in her daily life and promotes sustainability on her social media accounts.

“I live and breathe sustainability as much as I can, every day,” she says.

Claudia’s small steps are translating into big strides for the Aquarium. She encourages our restaurant operations to use more plant-rich ingredients. And for more than a decade, in her former role as an education specialist, Claudia engaged Spanish speakers in conversations about sustainable practices. (Her parents grew up in El Salvador.)

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Building for the Future

Our Bechtel Family Center for Ocean Education and Leadership will help us deliver the most robust suite of ecosystem-based education and youth development programs of any aquarium in the nation. We hope to nurture a rising generation of stewards who will ensure a healthy future for the ocean — and us all.

Introducing Our Bechtel Education Center

With tremendous gratitude to all of our dedicated supporters, we just opened our Bechtel Family Center for Ocean Education and Leadership. The center greatly deepens our commitment to preparing new generations of ocean conservation leaders. The center expands our fundamental promise to provide California students, teens and teachers with free educational opportunities that foster a greater understanding of our ocean planet and a commitment to protect it. It also enables us to reach more schools in underserved communities and invite their students and teachers to the Aquarium so they can experience participatory science education.

Each year since opening our doors in 1984, we have hosted 80,000 schoolchildren from across California for free school field trips. About 300 teens a year develop their knowledge and leadership skills as they engage in environmental research, service learning and conservation action. More than 1,500 teachers develop their skills in ecosystem-based approaches to science education as they engage in our professional development programs.

The new $42 million center makes it possible to expand these programs, sharing the wonders of the ocean with schoolchildren and teachers in new and exciting ways. By 2023, we expect that 90 percent of visiting students will take part in hands-on, inquiry-based classes led by our educators. The center will enable us to host twice as many teens in leadership programs and twice as many teachers in professional development programs — all provided free of charge.

We are especially grateful to the Bechtel family and the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation for their leadership gift to make the new center possible. We also thank Gordon and Betty Moore for their major support of this transformative project.

PROJECT PROFILE

A Look Inside Our New Center

• Located just a few blocks from the Aquarium on Cannery Row
• 26,000 square feet and four stories
• Four learning labs with live animal displays
• Collaborative learning spaces for teens and teachers
• Multipurpose room for large gatherings and student lunches
• Rooftop garden and meeting space
• Public exhibit space
• Designed to meet U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED gold standards for sustainability, including solar panels and passive solar energy, a living roof and water conservation features

A native plant rooftop garden is one of many features that make the building itself part of the learning experience.
Empowering the Next Ocean Leaders

Every day, our team of educators strives to have a transformative impact on the young people who take part in our teen programs. It’s central to our commitment to shape new generations of ocean conservation leaders, and it’s the vision behind our new Bechtel Family Center for Ocean Education and Leadership.

This is especially true of our four in-depth programs for teens. We design supportive and challenging learning experiences to build their environmental identities and their confidence. That’s why our Teen Conservation Leaders program includes opportunities for public speaking, social media sharing and community organizing.

And we’re very proud that they’re already making a difference in the world as conservation leaders, educators and ocean advocates.

Roberto Flores began his relationship with the Aquarium as a Teen Conservation Leader and participated in Watsonville Area Teens Conserving Habitats. He’s now a full-time teen program coordinator. “I was a shy kid—always the last one to hit the dance floor,” he says. “But after the Aquarium’s program, I became the de facto person to speak in front of other people.”

Felicia Davidson participated in our Teen Conservation Leaders, Young Women in Science and Watsonville Area Teens Conserving Habitats programs. These experiences made her a valued summer employee at the Aquarium. She says our youth development opportunities were life changing.

“For me it’s about making a connection with people, even for five minutes,” she says. “That’s what I remember most about my work at the Aquarium. And that’s what keeps pulling me back.”

Yazmin Ochoa found her calling—connecting with international visitors as an Aquarium volunteer—after taking part in Teen Conservation Leaders, Young Women in Science and other programs. In addition to coaching other teens as a summer staff mentor she’s pursuing geography and environmental science degrees at Dartmouth.

“I wasn’t really considering this path before, but working at the Aquarium made me realize it was what I really wanted to do,” she says. “I like the global aspect of things and want to focus on the environment and geography as it affects environmental health.”

There are so many more stories like theirs. We’re excited to be able to have a similar impact on twice as many teens in the years to come.

Curiosity, Inspired

Ochre star

Pisaster ochraceus

Our teen programs offer supportive and challenging learning experiences so young people can build their environmental identities and their confidence.
Supporting Teachers – Our Most Valued Partners

At the heart of our education strategy is a focus on teachers, who can help define children’s attitudes about science and influence a generation of students over the course of their careers.

We’ve designed professional development programs so teachers grow more comfortable and competent with science content, processes and teaching strategies – especially as they relate to the ocean, conservation and ecosystem-based learning.

With the opening of our Bechtel Family Center for Ocean Education and Leadership, we’ll take this work to a new level. Over the next five years, we expect to reach 6,000 teachers and educators. We’ll help them increase their understanding of ocean science and conservation, STEM education and culturally-responsive practices to reach California’s increasingly diverse student population.

One example from 2018 is our ongoing partnership with Pajaro Valley Unified School District to support its environmental literacy campaign. We’ve created a summer teacher institute to help the district train elementary school teachers to lead the way in implementing science learning at their schools. These educators are developing ways to use their local environment as the context for science learning, in collaboration with environmental education field trip providers in the region. In its first year, we helped the district prepare 28 teachers on 16 campuses for this leadership role – and we’re looking at creating similar partnerships with other school districts.

Our teacher institutes are also creating a network of educators who can collaborate and share the approaches that work well in their classrooms. Two elementary school teachers who met through the institute, Rebecca Cihak from Rocklin in the Sacramento Valley and Karen Levy from Pacific Grove on the Monterey Peninsula, have partnered on a multi-year field project, in which their students collect and compare water quality data from their two school sites. By investigating the links between their watersheds, the students are learning how inland communities are connected to coastal ones.

We look forward to seeing more collaborations like this flourish among teacher institute participants in the future.

A Deeper Dive for Visiting Students

We've welcomed another 80,000 schoolchildren for free programs at the Aquarium in 2018 and extended programs for homeschooled students to once a week throughout the school year.

We have expanded the programs we’ll offer when our Bechtel Family Center for Ocean Education and Leadership opens and welcomes its first students in 2019. Our new offerings will reach audiences in new ways – meeting the evolving needs of 21st century students and teachers.

A program called Feathered Families for preschool and kindergarten students combines our Soaring with Seabirds exhibit with interactive experiences in our learning labs.

We developed Design for the Ocean, a new program for middle-school students that evolved out of the maker movement. Starting in the summer of 2019, students with an interest in engineering will have access to technology and an Ocean Innovation Lab program so they can design and build physical objects that solve ocean-related problems.

In the coming year, we will also pilot Teen Researchers, an exciting new program that will help high school students develop research skills through hands-on scientific explorations.

Programs will take advantage of a video lab and sophisticated software in the Bechtel Education Center, allowing educators to interact with students using iPads in real time. The 200-gallon live animal aquarium tanks in our new classrooms will incorporate interactive technology that emphasizes collaboration, critical thinking and problem-based learning. Students will also be able to experience life from the perspective of marine wildlife using VR headsets and 360-degree video, and analyze data from a new rooftop weather station.

Our programs provide young people with challenges and opportunities to help them learn who they are and what careers they may want to pursue. They’ll build their conservation identities, allowing them to see themselves both as individuals and as members of a broader community that cares for and acts on behalf of the environment.

We’ll provide students with experiences to help them develop the skills to succeed in a knowledge-driven, innovative world, and contribute to the improvement of their communities.
From the air we breathe to the seafood we eat, our survival depends on a healthy ocean. Through scientific research, policy advocacy and market strategies, the Aquarium inspires people, from the public to politicians, to take action on some of the biggest threats to ocean health.

Ocean plastic pollution is an enormous problem, almost impossible to visualize. To raise awareness, we built an 82-foot-long blue whale made entirely out of plastic waste. The colorful creature represents the fact that every nine minutes, plastic trash weighing as much as Earth’s largest animal (about 300,000 pounds) makes its way to the ocean.

The plastic blue whale was created by San Francisco Bay Area artists Joel Dean Stockdill and Yustina Salnikova, plus a crew and dozens of volunteers. The artists developed a custom recycling process, manually fabricating panels out of discarded plastic bottles. We installed the life-sized whale on San Francisco’s Crissy Field, within sight of the Golden Gate Bridge. During its five months there, thousands of people took selfies with it, and our social media followers let us know that they loved our creative approach to explaining this planetary problem.

Meow Wolf, a public benefit arts and entertainment group, eventually purchased the whale and installed it on the campus of Santa Fe Community College to continue raising awareness about ocean plastic pollution.

Tackling a Whale of an Issue

Our Whale in Detail

- The plastic panels that compose most of the whale’s exterior are made from hand-recycled type #2 (HDPE) plastic.
- Local recycling centers donated more than 4,000 pounds of plastic trash.
- The crew sorted the plastic by color, washed it, then cut it into small pieces and melted it in molds that formed individual panels for the body of the whale.
- Each panel is four cookie trays of melted plastic; each took about 30 minutes to bake.
- Each panel weighs about five pounds, which equals about 37 empty milk jugs or 21 empty laundry detergent bottles.
- The artists used 750 panels and 65 recycled plastic barrels to build the whale’s exterior.
Changing the Way We Think About Plastic

L
et’s face it: plastic is everywhere. We eat and drink from it, make clothes from it and buy products wrapped in it. Scientists estimate that around 9 million tons of plastic makes its way from land to sea every year. That’s like dumping a garbage truck full of plastic into the ocean every minute. Even when we dispose of plastic properly, it can blow out of garbage and recycling cans or off hauling trucks to become pollution. Wind, storm drains and rivers can then carry it to the ocean, even from areas hundreds of miles inland. As that plastic pollution builds up— and breaks up—it’s harming marine wildlife from turtles to seabirds. If we don’t make changes, the rate of ocean plastic pollution could double in just six years.

Manufacturers are ramping up plastic production around the world, but our ability to recycle isn’t keeping up. In fact, less than 10 percent of all plastic ever made has been recovered and turned into new products. Better waste management is an important part of the solution, but it’s a bit like mopping a flooding bathroom while the faucet is still on full blast. We have to turn down the tap while we clean up the mess.

That’s why the Aquarium is encouraging people to use less plastic in the first place. We’re championing practices and policies to reduce plastic waste across the United States, California and in our own backyard, collaborating with diverse partners and working from a foundation of science.

Reduction in the Aquarium’s hometown

The city of Monterey, among others across California, is leading the way to cut back on unnecessary disposable plastic. Over the past decade it has limited the use of polystyrene foam, plastic shopping bags and most recently—with the Aquarium’s support—disposable plastic utensils, coffee cup lids and takeaway containers. This new law, which took effect on Earth Day 2019, is cutting waste and helping protect Monterey Bay from plastic pollution.

Monterey’s policy also eliminates plastic straws, with an important exemption for those who need them. For some people, a straw is assistive technology they depend on to eat and drink. That’s why we reached out to advocates of people with disabilities, and worked together to shape an inclusive straw policy.

The Aquarium’s beverage case is virtually plastic free, instead featuring drinks and snacks in reusable or recyclable, non-plastic containers.

California cuts back on unnecessary straws

In September, Gov. Jerry Brown approved the state’s “Straws On Request” bill into law, requiring dine-in restaurants to provide straws only when customers ask for them. This reduces plastic waste throughout California while still ensuring access for those who need it.

We helped get the bill over the finish line, endorsing it in Sacramento and inviting our supporters to speak up. Nearly 2,000 Aquarium visitors, members and social media followers urged their state legislators to support the bill.

When Gov. Brown approved Straws On Request, he issued a rare signing message focused on the growing global production of plastic and its impacts on ocean health.

“One thing is clear,” he stated. “We must find ways to reduce and eventually eliminate single-use plastic products.”

With momentum on our side, the Aquarium is now working with partners across the country to turn back the tide of plastic pollution.

U.S. aquariums slow the flow of plastic

In 2016, we co-founded the Aquarium Conservation Partnership, an alliance of 20 leading aquariums across the United States, to raise a collective voice for ocean and freshwater conservation.

First, partner aquariums eliminated single-use plastic straws and shopping bags from their operations, and committed to significantly reduce plastic beverage bottles, too. Collectively, we have removed 6.5 million plastic straws from the waste stream, and are working with our vendors to find sustainable alternatives to plastic packaging.

Our aquarium partners are now using their leverage with consumers, businesses and decision-makers to reduce common sources of plastic pollution where they live. Through the Aquarium Conservation Partnership’s “First Step” campaign, more than 160,000 consumers have pledged to reduce their plastic use, starting with straws, and over 600 local businesses have joined aquariums in changing their practices. By raising our voices for ocean and freshwater conservation, aquariums are building nationwide momentum for change.

The ocean made an appearance in this letter from California Gov. Jerry Brown, as he signed California’s Straws On Request bill into law.

The solution to plastic pollution is in our hands.
Taking Climate Action for the Ocean

Climate change and ocean acidification are profoundly affecting ocean health and wildlife — and our own survival. Rising sea levels and intensifying storm events put coastal communities at increasing risk. Warmer, more acidic waters disrupt animal life cycles and the broader marine food web. Fortunately, the ocean is resilient and can recover if we take immediate action. The Aquarium is a part of an ambitious global climate movement. While the United Nations climate negotiations were taking place in December, Executive Director Julie Packard called on Americans to take action. “Major scientific reports all confirm that extreme weather events are getting worse as a result of man-made carbon pollution,” Julie said in a video posted to social media. “But acting together with courage, we can protect our beautiful, blue living planet.”

Putting the ocean on the global climate change agenda

We helped put the ocean front and center during an international climate gathering here in California. The Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco, co-hosted by Gov. Jerry Brown, brought together investors, citizens, businesses and civic leaders from around the world to double down on their commitment to the Paris Agreement, the 2015 international climate change treaty. At first, the ocean-climate connection wasn’t on the summit agenda — a glaring omission, given that the ocean is the heart of Earth’s climate system.

Thanks to a push by the Aquarium team, along with our state and nonprofit partners, summit leaders added ocean health as a major theme. We also helped lead the development of a new “Ocean Climate Action Agenda” unveiled at the summit, a roadmap for ocean-centered climate action.

Julie delivered opening remarks at the summit’s ocean plenary. Followed by former Secretary of State John Kerry, who praised the Aquarium’s leadership on ocean conservation. In a separate event during the summit, Julie and Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff urged high-profile business and civic leaders to lead the way toward a clean-energy future.

Cultivating ocean-climate leaders

We work to inspire and cultivate climate leaders in California and beyond. In 2018, we organized high-profile events to honor today’s climate champions and encourage others to step up.

At our annual reception at Ocean Day California in Sacramento, we presented our 2018 California Ocean Champion Awards to Assemblymembers Eduardo Garcia (D-Coachella) and Mark Stone (D-Monterey). Garcia authored successful legislation to extend the state’s cap-and-trade program, keeping California on track to meet its ambitious 2030 climate goals. We honored Stone for his sustained commitment to protect Monterey Bay and act for ocean conservation throughout the state.

Powering up for clean energy

The most important way to combat climate change, and reduce its harmful effects on the ocean, is to reduce the emission of carbon dioxide. That’s why we’re working to cut carbon, starting right here at home.

In 2017, we supported the creation of Monterey Bay Community Power (MBCP) to bring renewable energy to our region at a faster pace. Through the state’s Community Choice Energy model, MBCP provides locally controlled, carbon-free electricity to residents and businesses in Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties, and to the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay.

Last March, the Aquarium’s electricity went carbon-free when MBCP began powering businesses in the region. Then we aimed even higher and championed creation of a new premium service: MB Prime, which sources electricity exclusively from wind and solar sources — avoiding the environmental impacts of hydroelectric energy. We became the first commercial customer to enroll. In September, we made a public commitment to achieve net-zero carbon emissions and transition 100 percent of our vehicle fleet to renewable power by 2025.

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Defending Critical Ocean Protections

We are working to preserve and protect marine animals and their ocean homes. Through our scientific expertise and policy influence, we’re taking action to protect the ocean from offshore oil drilling, and holding strong for the recovery of Pacific bluefin tuna.

Mobilizing to defend our coasts

A healthy ocean is the lifeblood of coastal communities — supporting tourism, fisheries and recreation while providing a home for extraordinary marine wildlife and ecosystems.

Offshore oil drilling puts coastal economies, jobs and ocean animals like sea otters at unnecessary risk. That’s why we’re speaking out against the federal administration’s efforts to open new ocean areas to oil and gas development — including here in California.

In early 2018, we helped organize 35 other U.S. aquariums and zoos in opposing the administration’s proposal, and reached out to federal legislators to protect our coastlines. We urged our visitors, email subscribers and social media followers to speak out against this plan — and thousands took action. Aquarium supporters were among the 1.6 million people who submitted public comments against new offshore drilling.

We also supported the passage of a California law banning new infrastructure associated with oil drilling off the state’s coast.

Together with our partners and allies, we’re raising our voice to protect ocean ecosystems from threats like offshore oil drilling.

Working toward recovery of Pacific bluefin tuna

We have long been a leading voice for the recovery of Pacific bluefin tuna. The population of this remarkable ocean predator — which our researchers have been studying for nearly two decades — has plummeted by about 97 percent since the onset of industrial fishing. In 2017, the Aquarium helped achieve a breakthrough agreement among Pacific nations to recover the Pacific bluefin tuna population to a sustainable level.

In 2018, our team collaborated with international scientists, worked with a cross-section of stakeholders and advised U.S. officials to keep this species on the path to recovery. When international negotiators proposed to weaken Pacific bluefin protections, the U.S. and several other countries held a firm line to maintain agreed-upon conservation measures. Ultimately, Pacific nations rejected the proposed changes — reaffirming their commitment to protect this imperiled, iconic species.
Pushing the Boundaries of Sea Otter Recovery

How do wildlife management and sea otter ecology come together to support a healthy coast? After growing from a low of about 50 animals in the early 1900s to around 3,000 today, the population of southern sea otters has plateaued. To fully recover, otters must return to more of their historical range along the California coast. In a new study, our researchers identified some of the biggest obstacles. The study, which analyzes data from 725 stranded otters over 30 years, reveals a critical relationship between healthy kelp canopy coverage, sea otter mortality and population recovery. It finds that loss of kelp raises the risk of white shark bites, especially at the two ends of sea otters’ range along the Central Coast. These bites can be fatal to otters, and may prevent the population from fully recovering. The paper provides scientific insight to guide the next phase of our work: helping otters repopulate the broader California coastline their ancestors inhabited before the fur trade.

The past year brought other milestones. In 2018, we received special permission from the U.S. Geological Survey Alaska Science Center, our researchers gain a deeper understanding of their more vulnerable California cousins. Over the decades, our team has become integral to the recovery of California’s threatened sea otters. Aquarium experts continue to advance scientific knowledge, influence state and federal management, and educate the public about sea otters’ essential role in maintaining the health of coastal ecosystems.

Our researchers have contributed to landmark studies on sea otters as a keystone species, critical to the health of local estuaries and kelp forests. Thirty-five years after our first rescues, thirty-five years of pioneering research, and our Sea Otter Program is laying the groundwork for the future. The diet and care protocols developed by our veterinarians and staff have given stranded sea otters a strong chance to survive once they’re released back into the wild. Still, southern sea otters need our help to rebuild their population along the California coast.

Today, our animal care specialists no longer don wetsuits to hand-rear otter pups. Instead, they wear body- and face-concealing uniforms to prevent otters from becoming comfortable with humans. Our resident female adult otters serve as foster moms to teach pups critical survival skills. Thirty-five years after our first rescues, our Sea Otter Program is laying the groundwork for the future. The diet and care protocols developed by our veterinarians and staff have given stranded sea otters a strong chance to survive once they’re released back into the wild. Still, southern sea otters need our help to rebuild their population along the California coast.

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Innovating and Inspiring to Protect the Ocean

The dramatic impacts of human activity on our global ocean, including climate change, are accelerating. And while much of the deep ocean remains unknown, this much is increasingly clear: it is not an alien seascape untouched by humanity. It is a vital place on our blue planet, vulnerable to human impacts — and supporting remarkable living creatures we’re only beginning to understand.

Finding plastic in the marine food web

Plastic doesn’t break down; it only breaks up into smaller and smaller pieces. Pollution by microplastic — bits smaller than 5 millimeters across — is a growing problem in the marine environment worldwide. In a pioneering study, Aquarium and MBARI researchers documented microplastic pollution in the Monterey Bay water column and traced its movement through marine food webs.

The research team deployed remotely operated vehicles to collect water samples from the surface down to 1,000 meters. Those surveys revealed that white microplastic is everywhere, plastic concentrations peak in deeper waters, at a level nearly four times the concentration at the surface. Surprisingly, the amount of plastic was even higher in the deepest areas of Monterey Bay than at the surface of the East Pacific subtropical gyre, known as the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch."

The team also studied how two species near the base of the food web — pelagic red crabs and larvaceans — ingest plastic. Levels of plastic inside their bodies matched the levels in the surrounding water. That suggests as they eat tiny particles of food, they’re also consuming microplastic and transporting it to other animals, both at the surface and in the deep.

Taken together, the findings reveal that microplastic is both ubiquitous throughout the Monterey Bay water column and pervasive in the marine food web.

At the same time, in our new Ocean Memory Laboratory, our science team aims to develop a historical baseline documenting microplastic pollution in Monterey Bay. We’re developing an open-access library of degraded ocean plastic samples, for use by researchers anywhere, which will facilitate future studies of ocean plastic pollution. As government agencies begin to take action, these data can inform science-based tools and policies to reduce ocean plastic pollution.

A Pacific Ocean oasis for white sharks

In spring 2018, our work with MBARI afforded an epic opportunity to explore a remote seascape in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. A diverse team of international researchers — including Aquarium and MBARI scientists — aboard the Schmidt Ocean Institute R/V Falkor and headed to the White Shark Café, an area of the open sea halfway between California and Hawaii.

Decades of data from tracking tags told our researchers that white sharks migrate each year from the West Coast to this vast area in the Pacific. Initial findings from the expedition, led by marine biologist Barbara Block of Stanford University, reveal the White Shark Café is an abundant oasis for white sharks — a far cry from the oceanic desert it was once thought to be.

MBARI’s remotely operated vehicles helped identify more than 100 species in the Café. These organisms, such as squid, shrimp and lightfish, participate in the largest vertical migration on Earth, chasing food between the midwater and the surface. By analyzing tagging data from white sharks, our researchers discovered the sharks are moving up and down the water column in synchrony with this mass migration.

Since we made history in 2004 as the first aquarium to successfully exhibit a white shark, our research has evolved to consider the greater importance of apex predators in marine ecosystems. We are now asking new and better questions about the poorly understood ocean habitats that support a dazzling array of marine life.

White sharks tagged off the coast of California led the way to the middle of the Pacific Ocean, where researchers discovered abundant marine life beneath the surface.
Our Seafood Watch program has grown to become the science-based global standard underpinning sustainability initiatives by seafood buyers, suppliers and producers.

Transforming the Global Seafood Industry

Fisheries and aquaculture play a significant role in sustaining global society. They’re a primary source of protein for 3 billion people around the world and support the livelihoods of at least 300 million households. But the ocean’s resources aren’t infinite, and the way we harvest fish threatens the sustainability of the global seafood supply. In the wild, 90 percent of fisheries are either overfished or very close to overfished, and one in five fish caught is done so by illegal, unreported or unregulated means. Unsustainable fish farming can harm native species and destroy critical habitats that buffer communities from the impacts of climate change.

Seafood sustainability isn’t just about the environmental impacts of wild fisheries and aquaculture. It’s also about ensuring fair, safe working conditions for the people who produce our seafood. Labor abuses in the seafood industry are taking a devastating toll. Experts estimate that millions of adults, and millions more children are harmed by hazardous child labor in their supply chains. Businesses can use the tool to identify seafood sourced from fisheries where these issues may exist, and work with suppliers to address them.

Empowering businesses to choose socially responsible seafood

In collaboration with Conservation International, we brought together non-governmental organizations to establish a definition of social responsibility for the seafood industry. Working with Liberty Shared and the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, we launched SeafoodSlaveryRisk.org, a tool to help businesses identify risks of forced labor, human trafficking and hazardous child labor in their supply chains.

Businesses can use the tool to identify seafood sourced from fisheries where these issues may exist, and work with suppliers to address them.

Maintaining the global standard for seafood sustainability

Our Seafood Watch team helps U.S. consumers and businesses make seafood choices for a healthy ocean. To do so, we depend on robust, transparent and timely data from fishing and aquaculture operations around the world. That’s why we’ve grown our global network of analysts and partner organizations in Latin America, Europe, China, Japan and Southeast Asia.

Our seafood assessments, originally designed to drive demand for sustainable seafood in North America, now underpin the sustainable seafood movement around the globe. Producers use Seafood Watch assessments to improve their practices, and governments use them to inform their management of seafood resources.

Driving the market for sustainable seafood

From its origins as a consumer-facing pocket guide, our Seafood Watch program has grown to become the leading science-based global seafood sustainability standard. Business commitments that affect international supply chains, coupled with public demand for sustainable seafood, are moving fisheries and aquaculture toward more sustainable practices worldwide. We are driving both business engagement and public demand.

Over the past 20 years, we have transformed how businesses purchase seafood. In 2018, we developed and deployed new tools to meet regional needs and support development of the conditions for sustainability in key seafood-producing nations.

We’re acting to address supply chain barriers, improve social conditions and advance governance reform that will help producers meet growing demand for sustainable seafood. We are now focused on taking this work to scale in Southeast Asia, one of the largest suppliers of shrimp consumed in the United States.

Commitments made by multinational seafood buyers are driving change by producers. Our priority now is to get tools into the hands of small-scale producers across the region so they know how to make their farms more sustainable. We’re providing them with a platform, based on Seafood Watch standards, to independently verify their progress.

Our work in Southeast Asia, one of the top seafood-producing regions in the world, can serve as a model to transform the industry around the globe.

2018 Seafood Watch by the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business and restaurant partners</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation partners</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Million consumer guides distributed</td>
<td>60+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Million downloads of the mobile app</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Ribbon Task Force chefs</td>
<td>60+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media followers</td>
<td>96K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations representing 384+ seafood species caught and farmed in different ways and locations</td>
<td>2K+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advising the world’s biggest seafood producers

Ninety percent of the seafood consumed in the United States is imported. That means the Aquarium’s seafood sustainability goals are global—and have a global impact. With your support, over the last 20 years Seafood Watch has set the bar for seafood sustainability and is now advising some of the biggest companies in the global seafood industry.

We recently partnered with former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to launch the Southeast Asia Fisheries and Aquaculture Initiative. The initiative is working to overcome obstacles to sustainable seafood production—both environmental and societal—in Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam, and the Philippines, in collaboration with regional governments and seafood producers.

We’re already seeing results. At the 2018 Our Ocean Conference in Bali, Executive Director Julie Packard and Secretary Kerry announced two major commitments to advance comprehensive solutions and improve government policies to support sustainable seafood development in Southeast Asia.

Together with major seafood producer Minh Phu Seafood Corporation, the Asian Seafood Improvement Collaborative, and global certification body SGS, we’ll help bring 20,000 small-scale shrimp farms in Vietnam’s Mekong Delta to a level equivalent to Seafood Watch’s Best Choice—the highest rating for environmental sustainability—by 2025.

This commitment is a collaboration between the private sector and non-governmental organizations, all working together to address challenges for the small-scale farming families who make up most of the region’s shrimp production. The collaborators will also work with the Carnegie Endowment to encourage policies that make it easier for farmers to ramp up the sustainability of their operations.

We also joined with Thai Union Group PCL, one of the world’s largest seafood producers, and its Chicken of the Sea brand to launch SeaChange IGNITE—an initiative to advance and improve sustainability throughout Thai Union’s supply chain. Thai Union’s commitment pledges $73 million through 2025 to focus on improvements in Southeast Asia and other key seafood-producing regions. Like Minh Phu Seafood Corporation, SeaChange IGNITE will work with the Southeast Asian Fisheries and Aquaculture Initiative to engage governments, industry and other stakeholders to advance comprehensive approaches for sustainable seafood development.

“This commitment is an important first step in accelerating sustainability in fisheries and aquaculture.”

-Julie Packard
Speaking Up for Science-Based Fishery Management in the U.S.

Chef Sammy Monsour – chef and co-owner of renowned Preux & Proper and South City Fried Chicken in Los Angeles – takes his support for sustainable seafood beyond the kitchen. A passionate advocate for better food systems, he believes not only in leading by example, but also in speaking up.

“Chefs have a voice,” Sammy says, “and many compelling opportunities to speak and act.”

Sammy is a member of our Blue-Ribbon Task Force, a group of high-profile chefs and culinary leaders raising their voices for more environmentally responsible food systems. Now, we’re activating Task Force members – and their peers around the country – to defend our nation’s strong, science-based fishery management law, the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act.

The United States has some of the world’s most sustainable fisheries, thanks in large part to this law. The Magnuson-Stevens Act is also influencing the sustainability of fisheries around the globe. In recent years, government officials from Japan have engaged with Chief Conservation Officer Margaret Spring, a lead architect of the U.S. law, to help inform their own national fisheries management policies. By keeping the Magnuson-Stevens Act strong here at home, we will continue to help guide progress abroad.

But in 2018, Congress introduced bills to weaken the act. We engaged chefs like Sammy – all longtime champions of sustainable U.S. seafood – to tell their federal legislators that science-based fisheries management is important to their businesses.

“Congress needs to know how strong we stand,” he says. “The Magnuson-Stevens Act is imperative to the health of our oceans, coastal communities and native sea species. It’s also why America is a global leader when it comes to responsible fisheries management. That’s pretty dope, right? So let’s keep it that way!”

More than 60 restaurants, across the country, including Preux & Proper, participated in our #ChefsForFish event in June 2018, featuring sustainable U.S. seafood dishes on their menus and calling on customers to help defend the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The event was covered by local and national news outlets, reached over 5 million people on social media, and caught the attention of elected officials in Washington, D.C.

On the same day, our chef partners sent a joint letter to Congress opposing the harmful bills. The letter emphasized that strong fisheries management isn’t just a fisherman’s issue, or a coastal issue – it’s a food issue.

The culinary community from land-locked states knows this better than most. “Fisheries management may seem like a weird topic for inland chefs to get involved in,” says Danielle Leoni, chef and co-owner of The Breadfruit & Rum Bar in Phoenix, Arizona. “But we all love fish. And as a businessperson, I want access to a consistent supply of sustainable seafood – even though my restaurant is hundreds of miles from the nearest coast.”

Sheila Lucero, executive chef of Jax Fish House, agrees. “We may be surrounded by mountains in my home state of Colorado,” she wrote in an op-ed for online culinary magazine Culinary Epicenter, “but we still have a major stake in the health of our oceans and in sustainable seafood.”

In addition to authoring op-eds in major newspapers, many of our chef partners have signed on to the Portland Pact for Sustainable Seafood – a declaration of support for the Magnuson-Stevens Act and sustainable U.S. fisheries. Leading seafood suppliers joined our effort as well, issuing a public statement opposing legislation that would undermine the Magnuson-Stevens Act. We also activated U.S. aquarium and zoo partners – along with our members, visitors and social media followers – to defend this landmark law. Together, we were successful in defeating the threats to U.S. fisheries management. We will continue to work with Congress to maintain the sustainability of America’s fisheries.

Restaurants across the country urged their customers to speak up for sustainable U.S. fisheries during a nationwide advocacy event in support of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

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FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For the year ending December 31, 2018

SUPPORT AND REVENUES
Admissions.................................................................$47,775,716
Contributions and Grants.........................................44,485,262
Memberships.........................................................13,833,441
Endowment Distribution..............................................6,990,000
Merchandising and Food Services..............................4,655,907
Fee-Based Programs...............................................1,247,116
Other Revenue.......................................................8,465,943
Total Support and Revenue.......................................$127,453,385

EXPENSES — PROGRAM SERVICE
Animal Care and Aquarium Experience.......................$51,256,141
Education and Outreach...........................................22,827,931
Conservation and Science.........................................12,930,735

EXPENSES — SUPPORT SERVICES
Management and General..........................................$10,295,632
Fundraising.............................................................3,688,461
Membership Services..............................................1,969,170
Total Expenses.....................................................$102,968,070

Capital expenditures of approximately $27.5 million in 2018 included continuing construction of the Bechtel Family Center for Ocean Education and Leadership, completion of the Juli Plant Grainger Animal Care Center, work on new and revitalized exhibits, and other Aquarium infrastructure projects.

* Due to the adoption of Accounting Standards Update 2016-14 for Not-for-Profit entities in 2018 and the associated changes in Financial Statement presentation, comparative financial information is not included in the 2018 Annual Review. Copies of the 2018 audited financial statements will be available online in August 2019.

AQUARIUM ATTENDANCE
General Admission..................................................1,012,301
Member Visits.........................................................472,686
Community Days / Free Visits...................................237,008
Free School Visits....................................................106,864
Group Visits............................................................107,508
Private Events.........................................................32,653
Total Attendance.....................................................1,971,020

2018 SUPPORT AND REVENUE

2018 EXPENSES

2018 ATTENDANCE
Protect the Ocean for Future Generations

Over the past 34 years, thanks to the generosity of our dedicated members and donors, we’ve been able to expand our education and conservation programs, and influence new generations of ocean leaders. Unfortunately, growing threats from climate change, overfishing and plastic pollution continue to threaten ocean ecosystems — our planet’s life support system. We must respond, and we will.

We’re making a difference, but there is still so much work ahead of us. That’s why we’ve made it a top priority to build our endowment, to provide permanent ongoing support and ensure our programs continue far into the future.

In 2018, we launched our new Endowment Society for donors who share our passion for protecting the ocean and who want to help secure our programs through an endowment in their name, or to honor a family member or friend.

Personal endowments can be established with a gift of $100,000 or more, and may be pledged over a number of years.

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Both donor-designated gifts and our Board Designated Fund, is managed for the long term. Even with the significant downturn in the stock market at the end of 2018, the average annual return was 8.2 percent over the last 10 years — a remarkable achievement given the recession in 2008-2009.

Each year, 4 percent of the three-year rolling average market value of the endowment is released to help support our programs. In 2018, our endowment distribution provided $6.9 million in critical support toward the $40.8 million needed to fund our ocean conservation mission and programs.

As the need for our ocean conservation work grows more urgent by the day, our donors can provide meaningful and lasting support that will build our endowment and help us protect the ocean — forever.

Our first endowed position

Jane Dunaway has supported the Aquarium since we opened our doors 35 years ago. Her loyal commitment and generosity have helped us expand our exhibits and programs to inspire people to protect the ocean and ocean wildlife.

Last year, with her extraordinary gift, she created the Aquarium’s first-ever endowed position: the Jane Dunaway Director of Veterinary Services. Caring for the animals at the Aquarium, as well as those we rescue and return to the wild, requires a highly skilled and dedicated veterinary and animal care staff. We are very fortunate to have Dr. Mike Murray, a prominent veterinary scientist, leading this program as our inaugural Jane Dunaway Director of Veterinary Services. We are deeply grateful for Jane’s long-standing support and her endowment gift, which guarantees we can continue this vital work to ensure the highest standard of care for more than 35,000 creatures under our care, representing over 550 species, for generations to come.

The Endowment Society

In 2018, we established our Endowment Society to recognize our most dedicated donors. Their commitment to the Aquarium and to the future of the ocean is demonstrated through their generous support to permanently secure our conservation programs — now and for the future.

We are deeply grateful and honored to recognize the following supporters as founding members of our Endowment Society:

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Alain Williams

We also wish to express our gratitude to the SBA donors in our Ocean Legacy Circle for all they do to inspire conservation of the ocean.

If you have included the Monterey Bay Aquarium as the recipient of a gift from your estate plan, please contact Mary Mullen at mmullen@mbayaq.org or 831.648.4913.

We would like to thank you and welcome you into our Ocean Legacy Circle.

ENDOWMENT PROFILE

For the Future of the Ocean

JULIE LOVINS AND GREG FOWLER, longtime Leadership Council donors, were passionate about protecting the natural environment. Their dedication and support helped us provide education programs and expand our global conservation initiatives. In 2000, they let us know that the Aquarium was included as the primary beneficiary of their newly created Pinniped Charitable Remainder Unitrust. Sadly, Greg and Julie passed away recently. We miss them, and we will always be grateful for their enduring support for over 20 years and for their generous estate gift toward our Endowment Fund for the Future of the Ocean.

The Julie Lovins and Greg Fowler Endowment is their legacy to inspire conservation of the ocean for generations to come. We honor their vision by permanently recognizing them on our Benefactors’ Plaque in the Aquarium.
We are honored to recognize the following donors for their gifts received in 2018.

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IN OCTOBER, we honored visionary Microsoft co-founder and philanthropic innovator Bill Gates with the third David Packard Award at an event attended by some of Silicon Valley’s most iconic technology company leaders, along with global ocean conservationists and philanthropists.

“Bill has done so much to improve the human condition by harnessing technology to advance social good, and by launching bold philanthropic initiatives to make lives better around the world and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy, productive life,” said Executive Director Julie Packard.

The highlight of the evening was an engaging fireside chat with Bill and dinner chair Meg Whitman. They covered topics from the role technology can play in environmental conservation, to new approaches philanthropy can bring to pressing global challenges and the importance of optimism.

“We’re deeply grateful for the support of the many donors who came together to honor Bill, and who are helping us take bold action to achieve our vision for a vibrant blue planet.”
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In memory of Wendy Hayward

WITH GREAT SADNESS we acknowledge the passing of Wendy Hayward, daughter of the late Homer (founding trustee) and Nancy Hayward. Since our very beginning, the Hayward Family’s generosity has been instrumental in advancing the Aquarium’s work on behalf of the ocean. Wendy was a passionate supporter of education and the environment, and we are especially grateful for her generous and unwavering support of our education and conservation initiatives over many years. We extend our deepest sympathies to her family and friends.

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IN RECOGNITION of a major leadership gift, our new Animal Care Center was named in memory of the late Juli Plant Grainger (1926–2014). Born in Chicago, Juli graduated from University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1948. She was married for 64 years to college sweetheart David W. Grainger and was an important partner with David in his career as chairman of the industrial supply company W.W. Grainger, a family business founded in 1927. She was an active community volunteer and philanthropist, serving as trustee of many organizations including The Field Museum, The Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Colonial Williamsburg among others. Juli and David visited the Monterey area often and were longtime supporters of the Aquarium.

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PACKARDS’ CIRCLE, continued

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