

## Aquarium at a Glance

### Mission

The South Carolina Aquarium inspires conservation of the natural world by exhibiting and caring for animals, by excelling in education and research, and by providing an exceptional visitor experience.

### Opening Date

May of 2000

### Operating Basis

Private not-for-profit, self-supporting institution

### Location

100 Aquarium Wharf, Charleston, South Carolina

- Easily accessible from major thoroughfares into the City of Charleston
- Located at the edge of the historic Charleston Harbor
- Two-thirds of the building projects over the water, and generous decks provide extraordinary views of the dolphins, ships and landscape of the Cooper River and Charleston Harbor
- Located at Aquarium Wharf, a one-stop entertainment district complete with Fountain Walk retail stores, Ft. Sumter Visitor Education Center at Liberty Square, and sunset harbor and eco-cruises.

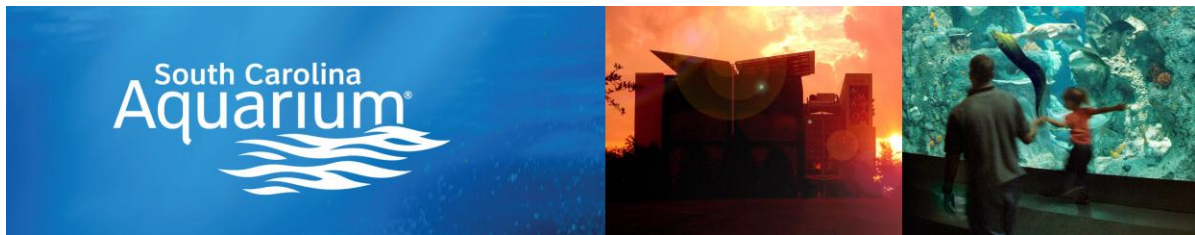
### Hours of Operation

- Open daily, with the exception of Christmas Day, Thanksgiving Day
- Hours of operation:
  - March – August  
Open Daily 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Building closes at 6 p.m.
  - September – February  
Open Daily 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Building closes at 5 p.m.

### Admission Fares

Aquarium General Admission

- Child (0-1) free
- Child (2-11) \$12.95
- Adult (12-61) \$19.95
- Senior (62+) \$18.95

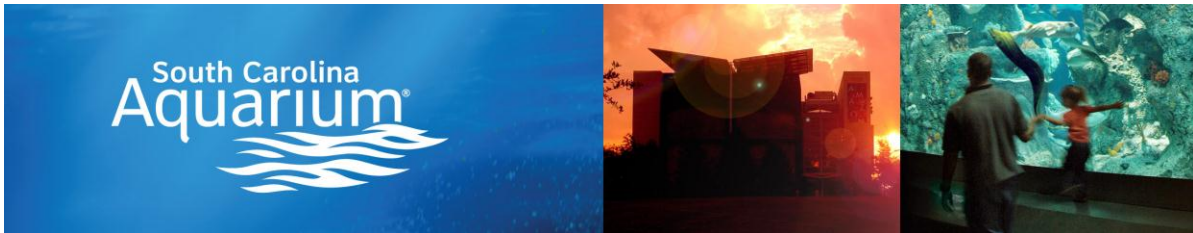


## Attendance

- Since opening, more than 4.8 million people have visited the South Carolina Aquarium
- In 2010 443,812 people visited the Aquarium, with 35,133 visiting from schools
- In 2009 437,331 people visited the Aquarium, with 51,370 visiting from schools
- In 2008 393,201 people visited the Aquarium, with 56,475 visiting from schools
- In 2007, 427,101 people visited the Aquarium, with 57,000 visiting from schools
- In 2006, 437,519 people visited the Aquarium, with 52,000 visiting from schools
  
- In 2010, 58 percent of visitors were Charleston-area residents, 5% were from the Charlotte, NC area, 4.5% were from Greenville, SC and 4.5% were from the Columbia area.
- In 2009, 38 percent of visitors were Charleston-area residents, 4.6% were from the Charlotte, NC area, 3.2% from the Greenville, SC area, and 3.8% were from the Columbia, SC area.
- In 2008, 31.8 percent of visitors were Charleston-area residents, 5% were from the Charlotte, NC area, 4.3% from the Greenville, SC area, and 3.9% were from the Columbia, SC area.
- In 2007, 36 percent of visitors were Charleston-area residents, 6.6 % were from the Charlotte, NC area, 6.2% from the Greenville, SC area, and 4.9% were from the Columbia, SC area.
- In 2006, 48.5 percent of visitors were Charleston-area residents, 6.1 % were from the Charlotte, NC area, 5.2% from the Greenville, SC area, and 5.1% were from the Columbia, SC area.
  
- In 2010, 50.6 percent of the visitors were local, 18.4% were in-state residents and 31% were out of state visitors.
- In 2009, 55 percent of the visitors were from South Carolina, 11.7 percent from North Carolina and 4.3 percent from Georgia (other states represent other percentages)
- In 2008, 53 percent of the visitors were from South Carolina, 11.8 percent from North Carolina and 4.6 percent from Georgia (other states represent other percentages)
- In 2007, 49.8 percent of the visitors were from South Carolina, 12.1 percent from North Carolina and 4.7 percent from Georgia (other states represent other percentages)
- In 2006, 61.3 percent of the visitors were from South Carolina, 11.1 percent from North Carolina and 4.9 percent from Georgia (other states represent other percentages)
  
- Guests have come from all 50 states, plus Canada, England, Germany, Mexico, Taiwan, France, Japan, Australia, Korea and Italy.

## Ownership and Administration

- Developed by the City of Charleston, under the leadership of Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
- While the City owns the Aquarium building, the facility is leased and operated by the South Carolina Aquarium Board of Directors as a not-for-profit corporation
- Ken Seeger is Chairman of the Board of Directors
- Staff includes specialists in the fields of conservation, education, animal husbandry, marketing, visitor relations, finance and management



## Aquarium Funding

- The \$69 million cost of building and opening the South Carolina Aquarium was committed from the City of Charleston, Charleston County, the State of South Carolina, the Economic Development Administration, an environmental settlement and numerous private donations.
- The Aquarium is a 501(c)(3) registered private not-for-profit corporation. As such, the Aquarium relies on the generosity of individuals, corporations and foundations to fulfill its mission of education and conservation of the aquatic environments of South Carolina.

## Economic Impact

*Analysis conducted by the Center for Business Research of the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce*

- According to an independent report the 2007 Annual Economic Impact Report of the South Carolina Aquarium's out-of-town visitors was more than \$145 million
- This impact supports an estimated 2,000 jobs in the region
- The economic impact of the South Carolina Aquarium is estimated at \$153 million annually
- 125 jobs in the Charleston region were created as a result of the direct spending of the South Carolina Aquarium and its employees in 2007

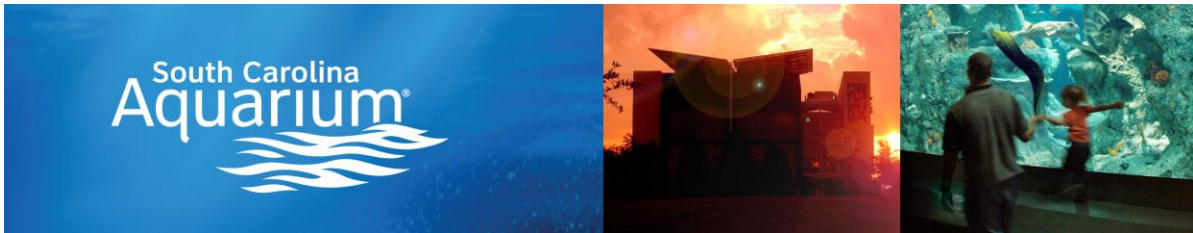
## Exhibits

- Features 5,000-6,000 amazing aquatic animals from river otters and sharks to loggerhead turtles, 47 exhibits with animals, 42 aquatic exhibits, 51 aquatic back-up tanks, and 10 turtle hospital beds
- Exhibits contain close to 550,000 gallons of water, with near 28,000 gallons of freshwater and 520,000 gallons of seawater
- Currently 6,243 specimens of animals within 350 species
- Currently 12,000 specimens of plants within 215 species housed in the Aquarium and its nursery
- Exhibit path leads visitors through the five major regions of the Southeast Appalachian Watershed as found in South Carolina: the *Mountains*, the *Piedmont*, the *Coastal Plain*, the *Coast*, and the *Ocean*
- Interactive exhibits at the Aquarium include the new Feed the Rays experience and renovated Salt Marsh Aviary (Opens March 2011), Toddler Cove, (Opens February 2011), the Albino Alligator, Camp Carolina, Touch Tank, Ollie's Trading Post, Marine Debris and several Education Stations.

## Volunteers

- The Aquarium relies on a corps of over 350 diverse, enthusiastic and skilled volunteers
- A variety of positions are available including Exhibit Guide, Hospitality Team Member, Aquarist Assistant, Diver, Behind-the-Scenes and in the office
- Receive ongoing training, a newsletter and are invited to share in educational opportunities, field trips and annual celebrations

## Membership



- More than 7,500 households representing close to 20,000 members
- Annual memberships range from \$50 for an individual membership to \$135 for a family plus membership
  - Family Plus, \$135 Best Value
    - 2 listed adults in the same household plus all listed children under 18 plus 2 Guest privileges
    - *\*The perfect membership for families with babysitters, nannies, grandparents, adult children or visiting guests!*
  - Family, \$90
    - 2 listed adults in the same household and all listed children under 18
  - Grandparent, \$80
    - 2 listed adults in the same household and all listed grandchildren under 18
  - Individual Plus, \$75
    - 1 listed adult plus 1 guest privilege
  - Dual, \$65
    - 2 listed adults
  - Individual, \$50
    - 1 listed adult
- Also available is a donor-level program, the Aquarium Society, which begins at \$250
  - Friend \$250-\$499:
    - Our Aquarium Society Friends are entitled to any membership level, all member events, 2 Behind-the-Scenes tour passes, a free single use parking pass, recognition on our Annual Donor Wall and invitations to select Aquarium Society events. *At this level, your gift provides funding to feed two river otters for a week.*
  - Associate \$500-\$999:
    - Our Aquarium Society Associates are entitled to any membership level, 4 Behind-the-Scenes tour passes, a free single use parking pass, all member events, recognition on our Annual Donor Wall and invitations to exclusive Aquarium Society events. *At this level, your gift enables the Aquarium to feed all of the birds in the Saltmarsh exhibit for six months.*
  - Patron \$1000 or more:
    - Our Aquarium Society Patrons are entitled to any membership level, private Behind-the-Scenes and Sea Turtle Hospital tours, a free single use parking pass, all member events, recognition on our Annual Donor Wall and invitations to exclusive Aquarium Society events. *At this level, your gift supports medical care and a place in our Sea Turtle Hospital for one rescued Loggerhead for one month.*
- One of the largest membership programs of its kind in the region
- Benefits include Admission Benefits, Members' Express Entrance, 10 percent discount in the Aquarium Shop, Quarterly Membership Magazine, *tributaries*, Educational Programs, Special Events, and bi-monthly electronic newsletter
- Other opportunities that can be taken advantage of by members include exclusive member-only programs and pre-views, community classroom programs and behind the scenes tours and members-only discounts.

