It’s time to live blue™

Aquarium volunteer named ‘Hero’
Get an insider’s tour!
Aquarium animals from A to Z

Members’ Magazine
Volume 51, Number 1 Winter 2018
Happy New Year!

On behalf of all of us at the New England Aquarium, I hope you enjoyed the festive holiday season and rang in the new year with great appreciation for a terrific 2018. I also hope you’re planning to spend some of the coming year with us.

By now you should have received your 2018 Members’ Programs and Events guide, which is chock full of ways to help you make the most of your membership year. But don’t think this is all! We’re working hard to keep bringing you fun and engaging opportunities to explore your Aquarium, learn about the oceans, and stay apprised of the progress we’re making to protect the blue planet through our many research and conservation efforts. Besides blue and your 2018 guide, be sure to stay tuned to SeaMail and neaq.org to always be in the loop.

Speaking of being in the loop, on your next visit, stop by the Olympic Coast exhibit to meet our newest giant Pacific octopus, Freya (named after a bit of a party girl of Norse mythology, her name translates to “the Lady”). In her early days with us back in October she was quite active and as she continues to make her new home, well, hers, she’s already winning hearts and imaginations.

For those who like to check in with Myrtle the green sea turtle on your visits, you may notice that there’s a little less of this regal lady these days. Continuing on her strict diet and enrichment regimen, she recently weighed in at a healthy 527 pounds and even at more than 80 years old she actively reigns supreme in the Giant Ocean Tank.

With plenty to see, we look forward to welcoming you to the Aquarium again soon! Here’s to a happy and healthy 2018 and, as always, we thank you for your support.

Deborah Kulich
Director, Membership

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New England Aquarium Proudly Recognizes Our Lead Sponsors

At the Aquarium: The Education of Ron the California Sea Lion

Some say it takes a village to raise a child. So it’s good that the Aquarium’s newest California sea lion has his aunts to lend a flipper as he grows.

Ron, who was born to Tipper in early July in the New Balance Foundation Marine Mammal Center, has a special attachment to the other two sea lions at the Aquarium, Sierra and Zoe.

The quartet—Ron, Tipper, Zoe, and Sierra—will bed down together for the night in typical sea lion fashion. The aunts, as they are called by the staff of the marine mammal center, also at times keep an eye on and play with Ron, allowing Tipper some independent time.

Tipper was rescued from a California beach in 2013. Young and emaciated at the time, she was treated in California and made her home in New Jersey before coming to Boston. As Ron matures, the staff offers him the same enrichment as the rest of the group of California sea lions and Northern fur seals. He is learning a lot through mimicry. In the early fall, he started to play after watching the other sea lions interact with toys and the staff. They seem to have taught him how to play with water from the hose, paper towels, and Jello. One of his favorite activities is playing with ice cubes.

Ron was born with a rich, dark fur, which will lighten as he ages. After molting twice in his first six months, he will likely be a tawny brown color similar to his mother and aunts. Once he reaches full maturity, Ron could weigh as much as 600 pounds! But it will be some time before he reaches that size.

Next time you visit the Aquarium, take a walk to the harborside of the building to the marine mammal center and see Ron and the other seal lions dart and scoot their way around their open-air exhibit.

—Jon Kinson

Frey, a new giant Pacific octopus, can be found on Level 3 in the Northern Waters Gallery.

Dive into a sea of resources online at neaq.org. Our website is full of conservation information, animal facts, and details that will help you plan your next trip to the Aquarium.

On the cover: Pacific bluefin tuna (Thunnus orientalis)

At our core: Pacific longhorn cowfish (Lactoria cornuta)

ABCs of the Aquarium

Find out what’s hiding in plain sight

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New England Aquarium

Ron is the new kid on the rock at the New Balance Foundation Marine Mammal Center.
Robert Cuddi
Aquarium Volunteer and live blue™ Service Corps Leader

Rob Cuddi doesn’t have a job, per se. He’s retired. When he’s not traveling to dream destinations like the Galapagos Islands and Antarctica, he enjoys slow mornings watching his dogs romp in the backyard. But every Tuesday, he still dons a uniform and goes to work. Actually, you may have seen him in action. He’s a dedicated volunteer at the New England Aquarium, and he spends hours interacting with visitors and sharing his passion for our blue planet.

Rob is much beloved and respected among his fellow volunteers. So much so, Ryan Kingston, coordinator of the live blue™ Service Corps program, nominated Rob as a Cox Conserves Hero for his work as a project leader in the Service Corps. After an online voting campaign, Rob won!

Among his many accomplishments and many, many hours served, Rob was recognized for leading projects such as volunteer cleanups at Revere Beach and working with the Boston Water and Sewer Commission to label storm drains. The award, which is a partnership between WCVX Boston 25 and The Trust for Public Land, recognizes local conservation volunteers and awards $10,000 to the charity of the winner. The honor is a testament to his vast network of friends who voted for him as well as his efforts to improve the local environment while building connections between people and their natural surroundings.

“Rob has made a tremendous impact,” Ryan stressed. “In 2017, he organized and led 14 projects, engaged about 150 Service Corps volunteers who each logged more than two hours of service. And on top of that, he helped initiate other cleanups and shorebird monitoring projects.” There’s no question that Rob is a conservation hero.

As a longtime teacher in the Winthrop public school system, Rob inspired generations to love to learn about the oceans. He even introduced some kids in this seaside town to the marine world. Field trips to explore tidepools and salt marshes opened their eyes to extraordinary habitats in their backyard. When Robert retired after 37 years, volunteering with the Aquarium was a natural step.

“I was just looking online for volunteer work and saw the live blue™ Service Corps,” he explained. This volunteer program lets people get involved with the mission of the Aquarium on a schedule that works for them. After an hour-long orientation, volunteers are able to sign up for projects throughout the year—from clearing invasive species to beach cleanups.

“I really liked that the Aquarium was partnering with local environmental agencies and organizations to tackle all sorts of environmental problems,” Rob said. “I got more and more involved and finally, since I do have the time, I figured I might get involved with the Classic Corps of volunteers at the Aquarium.” The Classic Corps requires a time commitment of a full or half day once a week for at least six months. Volunteers can spend that time preparing food for the fishes in the Giant Ocean Tank, cleaning the penguin exhibit, or constructing toys for the seals. Rob volunteers a half day in the Visitor Experience department, bouncing from Live Animal Presentations to fielding questions at the tidepool touch tank to roving the exhibit path with a biofact.

Of course, his teaching experience shines as he engages visitors of all ages with inquisitive tidbits about resident marine animals while also incorporating information about the threats they face in the wild. But teaching isn’t even Rob’s favorite aspect of volunteering at the Aquarium.

“What I love most about volunteering here is learning. I’m constantly learning, and the more I learn, the more I get excited about sharing information about our blue planet,” he exclaimed. “I also have found a wonderful community among my fellow educators and volunteers. The New England Aquarium is a community, and I get to be part of that community.”

Get Involved!

The efforts of hundreds of volunteers play a large part in the success of the Aquarium. If you have the time and inclination, consider volunteering with us.

Classic Corps
Donate one full or a half day per week for at least six months.
Visitor Education, Penguins, and Animal Husbandry at our Quincy Animal Care Center are especially in need of weekday volunteers. Many of our staff members started their careers as volunteers!

live blue™ Service Corps
Volunteer when you can after completing a short orientation.
Sign up for projects that interest you and fit your schedule. Most of our events are field based and allow you to see the impact of what you’ve done that day. You can also apply to become a Service Leader to organize and lead projects to deepen your impact.

Learn more online at serve.neaq.org.
Want to Know if a Marine Mammal Is Stressed?

Check Its Scat!

A good scientist understands that knowledge can come from some strange places. For some of the researchers at the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium, it’s whale scat! It’s hard to take a blood sample from a 50-ton whale to learn what’s making it sick or stressing it out, so Aquarium researchers needed to find another way to study the health of these important marine mammals. It turns out that scat contains a wealth of information about an animal’s health and stress levels, and what’s happening in its environment.

Since 1999, our scientists have been collecting fecal samples from critically endangered North Atlantic right whales. The samples allowed them, for the first time, to learn about hormones in living whales as well as dead ones. Before 1999, scientists could get this information only by performing a necropsy after the animal died and was towed into port. Even then, it wasn’t always possible to learn what killed it.

There are about 450 North Atlantic right whales left in the wild, and both entanglement in fishing gear and accidental vessel strikes kill these rare giants. By studying the levels of stress hormones in a whale’s feces, our researchers can tell how individual whales died—an important step in figuring out how to save them.

Our scientists lead the way on scat science and currently use their methods to learn about the health and hormones of six different species: five large whales—right, beaked, sperm, humpback, and bowhead—and the Northern fur seal. Aquarium researchers just received a grant to add a seventh subject to their feces database: the Florida manatee. Since they’re sensitive to changes in the environment and vulnerable to human activities, marine mammals are indicator species that can help scientists determine if ecosystems are healthy. Understanding how and why marine mammals die or thrive is critically important to understanding how we can improve the health of our oceans.

Learn More
Stay tuned! In the months ahead, Anderson Cabot Center researchers will share yet more exciting science-based solutions to problems facing our oceans. Please visit andersoncabotcenterforoceanlife.org to learn more about our work or to make a donation.
From the American lobster to the zebra bullhead shark, an animal beginning with every letter of the alphabet can be found among our tens of thousands of marine animals. OK, we cheated a little on one: the xenia is actually the pulsing xenia.

Visit the Aquarium and try to find all the marine animals on this list or make your own list of favorites (share it with us at comments@neaq.org).

Illustrations: Sarah Landry and Luna Deltani
Aquarium Explorer

An insider’s tour with an educator

Whether you use your membership to visit the Aquarium once a year or once a week, you probably have favorite animals or exhibits you like to check on during every visit. Squawking penguins waddling on their rocks or darting through the water are a must-see. Myrtle the green sea turtle munching on lettuce never gets old. Watching seadragons glide through their tank across from sharks and rays. “What’s interesting about these fish is that they are very hard to keep in captivity, and the Aquarium has several!” Matt added that the aquarists keep them healthy with a special diet of small worms and shrimp.

“Everyone wants to find Nemo, and it’s easy to understand visitors’ fascination. Ocellaris clownfish are movie stars,” said Matt. “I always point out the mandarinfish, too.” Mandarinfish are small fish decorated with dazzling swirls of dark blues, greens, oranges, and yellows. You can find them on Level 1 in the Living Coral exhibit across from the little blue penguins, as well as in the large tropical reef exhibit. It’s a good way to draw attention to one of the smallest tanks, where humble cardinal tetras swim alongside discus and farlowella.”

in Plain Sight

Where the Cool Sharks Hang Out

“So the first place I’d start a visit is at our newest exhibit—Science of Sharks—downstairs from The Trust Family Foundation Shark and Ray Touch Tank in the West Wing,” Matt said. “Three full walls of Brian Skerry’s photographs are exciting, and the brightly lit life cycle tanks with egg cases, newborns, and adults are a great way to get up close to sharks. But I also like to call visitors’ attention to the cold water adult tank just at the bottom of the stairs.” Dimly lit and furnished with rugged rock structures, this exhibit showcases a diverse array of smaller sharks, such as horn sharks, chain catsharks, and swell sharks.

“On the second floor you can find our door to the Nursery exhibit. It’s a must-see. Myrtle the green sea turtle never gets old. Watching seadragons glide through their tank across from sharks and rays. “What’s interesting about these fish is that they are very hard to keep in captivity, and the Aquarium has several!” Matt added that the aquarists keep them healthy with a special diet of small worms and shrimp.

Dazzling Under the Radar

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In the Shadow of Giants

When goliath is in its name, you know a fish is going to be big. So it’s no surprise that the goliath groupers garner much of the attention in the Blue Hole exhibit on Level 2. “Oh, but there are so many other cool animals in this exhibit,” said Matt, who listed the large hermit crab creeping around in its conch shell, the red and white cleaner shrimp, and the colorful anthias. “I love to invite visitors to look closely at the Caribbean spiny lobster since they look so different from our local American lobsters,” he said. “No big claws!”

Feeling Fresh

“The freshwater exhibits are teeming with interesting animals, like piranha and anaconda,” said Matt. “But I make a special point to draw attention to one of the smaller tanks, where humble cardinal tetras swim alongside discus and farlowella.”

Matt explained how the tetras are part of an important conservation effort called Project Piaba. Our aquarists work in conjunction with resident fishermen in the Rio Negro basin of Brazil to create a sustainable fishery for these popular home aquarium fish. This in turn provides protection for this vital rainforest ecosystem from harmful farming practices and habitat destruction.

Left: California horn shark in the Science of Sharks exhibit.

Caribbean spiny lobster in the Blue Hole exhibit on Level 2.

Going Deep in the Coral Reef Center

“One of my absolute favorite exhibits is the deepwater tank in the Yawkey Coral Reef Center at the top of the Giant Ocean Tank,” Matt said. “The species in this exhibit are found so deep that they need to be collected using a submarine.”

Matt said that the fish, corals, and sea whips are brought up slowly so the animals can adapt to less pressure. The black brotula, a small black fish with a blunt face and undulating body, is especially interesting to observe. “These fish are on exhibit in very few aquariums around the world!”

“I could go on and on about all the cool animals and exhibits that you can find at the Aquarium,” said Matt. Our members would likely tap up that information tool. But Matt has given you a start. And while you’re here, be sure to look for Matt or any of our awesome educators. Find out if they have any updates on your favorite exhibits, or ask them about their favorite exhibit. It’s a good way to see the Aquarium in a whole new light.

Find Out

What is Hiding in Plain Sight

Going Deep in the Coral Reef Center

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heating up at the Aquarium. It may be cold outside, but it is your hands as you gently stroke and Ray Touch Tank wash over The Trust Family Foundation Shark and its more than 1,000 marine and take in the coral reef exhibit way around the Giant Ocean Tank Aquarium lets members escape to school vacation? A trip to the Don’t have exotic plans for February 10 11 night extra special. and Swedish Fish for their generous in-kind donations and to the army of staff Best Science of Sharks Best Group Costume: the Muri-Rosenthal family Best Adult Costume: S. De Leon Best Child Costume: L.Peric behind-the-scenes experiences to look forward to. Contest winners, who have earned bragging rights polymers!—it was certainly a night to remember. spooky, silly, science-y fun—ask us about pencils and extravaganza, Fish, Fun, and Fright. Chock full of Thanks to everyone who joined us for our 2017 Halloween 15-20 October, 2017. Fish, Fun, and Fright Aplenty! tricks, treat, and frights. And the hits just keep on coming. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did. Please join us in congratulating our Kooky Costume Contest winners, who have earned bragging rights for a full year and walked away with some exciting behind-the-scenes experiences to look forward to. Best Child Costume: L.Peric Best Adult Costume: S. De Leon Best Group Costume: the Muri-Rosenthal family Best Science of Sharks-themed Costume: the Brown family We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Reynolds DeWalt, Wegmans, and Swedish Fish for their generous in-kind donations and to the army of staff and volunteers who gave their time, expertise, and infectious humor to make the night extra special. Member Visiting Tips Quick Entrance As a member, you never need to wait to enter the Aquarium. Expedite your admission by having your membership card and a photo ID in hand. Unless you need additional tickets, you can proceed directly to an entry scanner to the left of the Information Desk. Renew Your Membership Online Visit neaq.org/membership any time to renew your membership; just bring your confirmation email with you when you visit the Aquarium. However, memberships purchased online require a minimum of 48 hours to be processed into our system, which means that access to other member benefits and discounts, such as Simons IMAX® Theatre passes, whale watch tickets (during the season), and educational programs, will not be available until after that time. To take immediate advantage of these benefits, renew in person in our lobby or by calling 617-973-6555 weekdays 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Avoid Peak Times Most visitors arrive at the Aquarium in the middle of the day. Beat the crowds by arriving before 10:30 a.m. or after 3 p.m. As always, be sure to check online at neaq.org for any Aquarium alerts before leaving home. Reserve Tickets in Advance Our special venues—like the Simons IMAX® Theatre—can sell out quickly. Ensure you get to do everything you want to do on your visit by ordering your tickets in advance. Don’t forget to use your member IMAX e-passes when ordering by phone or in person. The Tide is Rising on Central Wharf! 2017 was a great year for The Tide, the Aquarium’s young professionals group. Guided by a dedicated volunteer committee, The Tide, which launched last May with great success, hosted a sold-out launch event, a fabulous brunch on the harbor, and a sunset cruise. The momentum will keep rolling in 2018 with plans for several more events, along with exclusive volunteer opportunities and chances to connect with the Aquarium’s network of scientists and community leaders. Whether your favorite childhood field trips were to the Aquarium, you spend your summers on the water, or you want to take action to protect the future of our oceans, now is the time to join The Tide. For more information about The Tide or upcoming events, visit neaq.org/thetide. In April 2017, the Aquarium launched an expanded membership structure that allows you, our valued members, to personalize your membership to better fit your needs. For folks who are simply looking to enjoy easy access and special perks, Standard membership is a perfect fit. But for those who are interested in enhancing their member experience and taking a deeper dive into learning about all the Aquarium does in its mission to protect the blue planet, the new Premium membership may be the right choice. Among other benefits, early adopters of the Premium tier hit the ground running with advance registration and ticketing for some of our most popular member events, as well as a few exclusive opportunities. September Sundays gave Premium members the chance to experience the Aquarium before it opened to the public. They got to see and discuss with staff and volunteers what it takes to prepare the building for guests, care for our many residents, and even watch some groundbreaking research in action. In 2018, these VIP early mornings will break out of September and happen throughout the year. Stay tuned to neaq.org/memberevents for dates and details. Following up on the great feedback we received for our Premium Holiday Breakfast, we’ll be bringing that back in 2018. Plus, we’re working on two very special Premium-exclusive, adults-only opportunities that will be announced in the coming weeks. As always, the best way to be apprised of all late-breaking news and invitations is by subscribing to SeaMail, your monthly member e-newsletter. If you’re not already subscribed, you can do so any time at neaq.org/pemail. Members may purchase discounted tickets for as many additional guests as are covered by their membership level. For example, a Standard 4 level membership admits four people (one member and three guests) plus discounted admission may be purchased for an additional four guests. Discounted tickets may be purchased in the lobby for same-day use. live bluener—Take Public Transportation The Aquarium is located just off the MBTA’s Blue Line, so taking the T is easy—and good for the environment. If you are driving, check neaq.org/parking for area parking options where the Aquarium validates; and remember that only Aquarium members receive a discount at the Harbor Garage, adjacent to the Aquarium. 10
January

1/8
Member Advance Registration Begins for Harbor Discoveries Summer Camps

Children entering grades 4 through 10 will have fun while learning about marine biology and environmental science in the Harbor Discoveries summer camps. The one- and two-week programs include behind-the-scenes activities in Aquarium galleries, excursions to Boston Harbor Islands, daily field trips to North Shore and South Shore habitats, and an overnight experience as nature serves as their outdoor classroom.

November

2018 Members’ Programs and Events Guide in Homes Now!

By now you should have received your 2018 Members’ Programs and Events guide in your mailbox or with your new membership materials. It’s chock full of things to do this year, from member events to courses and programs, and other ways to get involved at the Aquarium. If you haven’t received it yet, just email members@neaq.org, and we’ll be happy to send one to you.

February

1/28
VIP Premium Member Sunday
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Premier members are invited to experience the Aquarium before we open to the public. Whether you’re looking to learn more about what it takes to care for our many amazing residents or just want to breathe in the “Zen” of the exhibits as the lights begin to rise, this free VIP morning is a great way to get an early start on adventure. Admission is limited to the number permitted with your Premium-level membership.

Visit neaq.org/camps or call 617-973-5206 for more information or to register.

2/9
That’s A-Moray Adults-Only Member Event
7 p.m. – 10 p.m.

Embrace the amore of Valentine’s Day with your someone special amidst unparalleled ambiance at our member-exclusive, 21+ evening featuring live music, a sumptuous buffet dinner, and signature cocktail. Watch the mail for your invitation. neaq.org/memberevents

2/19
Dive In! A Member-Exclusive Evening
6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Stave off the winter blues with a night of vivid reds, oranges, and yellows as you enjoy the medley of colors of our marine animals. Chill out with the multi-colored flower hat sea jellies. Leisurely wind your way up the Giant Ocean Tank after the daytime crowds have departed to take in the myriad hues of all the GOT inhabitants, like the vibrant green of the moray eel and the royal green of the queen of the Aquarium, Myrtle the green sea turtle (now weighing in at a svelte 527 pounds). Make your evening a rainbow of color. No reservations are required for this event, but admission is strictly limited to the number permitted with your membership level.

Visit neaq.org/camps or call 617-973-5206 for more information or to register.

2/24
Whale Watch Season begins

Be among the first to get a front-row seat to view some of the ocean’s most magnificent and fascinating animals. Get a personal brush with these beautiful behemoths as they breach, roll, feed, and flap their flippers on Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary this spring. Be sure to show your member card to get your discount on tickets. Check neaq.org/whale-watch for the Whale Watch schedule.

March

3/24
VIP Premium Member Sunday
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Did you know that as part of an intricate system supporting the well-being of our residents, the Aquarium’s lights are timed to rise with the sun? Premium members are invited to experience this and so much more that goes on here on Central Wharf before we open to the public! Admission, which is free, is limited to the number permitted with your Premium-level membership.

Visit neaq.org/camps or call 617-973-5206 for more information or to register.

3/25
Sign Up for SeaMail!

From insider information to member alerts to late-breaking news, SeaMail is the best way to stay in-the-know throughout your membership year. Sign up at neaq.org/SeaMail and never miss out!

Films

Amazon Adventure 3D
45 minutes

Explore the ancient forests of the Amazon, where parrots flit and jaguars stealthily stalk their prey in the sun-dappled rainforest. Amazon Adventure takes you back in time to follow a curious scientist in his quest to document the birth of a species. Thrash through thick jungles and float along the sprawling Amazon River as you marvel at the incredible species that call this biodiversity hotspot home. You’ll encounter clumsy sloths swimming through flooded forests, bizarre bugs scurrying on the rainforest floor, and colorful butterflies mimicking their poisonous cousins all in IMAX 3D on the largest screen in New England.

Galapagos 3D: Nature’s Wonderland
39 minutes

Take the trip of a lifetime with Galapagos 3D: Nature’s Wonderland. Watch iguanas claw their way along the seashore. Swim with tropical penguins. Wallow with grunting giant tortoises. Meet the animals that gave us a greater understanding of life on our blue planet.

Great White Shark 3D
40 minutes

Get ready for a shark’s-eye view as you plunge straight into the underwater world of nature’s most renowned predator. Skip the shark cage; discover the importance of this spectacular species and explore our blue planet.

Rentals:

Movies: Call 617-973-5206 for more information or to register.

Films, tickets, and showtimes are subject to change. Standard 4 members and above receive a select number of one-time-use IMAX e-passes, and all Giving Society members receive discounts. Check neaq.org/memberevents for a complete list of films and showtimes!
Mark your calendar!

Harbor Discoveries
Summer Camps
members-only
advance registration
starts January 8, 2018.

Join us for a member-exclusive,
family-friendly evening
at the Aquarium.

Dive In!

Monday, February 19
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Bring your friends and family to discover the Aquarium
after the vacation crowds have left for the day.
Details inside.