

NATIONAL AQUARIUM
2019 IMPACT REPORT





impact

INSPIRING TOMORROW'S LEADERS
AND EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

The National Aquarium is a nonprofit organization changing the way humanity cares for our ocean planet. Through unparalleled exhibits, science-based education programs and hands-on field initiatives, we are creating a community of hopeful conservationists, driven by our mission to inspire conservation of the world's aquatic treasures. We are proud of what we accomplished in 2019 to benefit people, animals and the planet.

National Aquarium Animal Rescue released rehabilitated sea turtles back into the ocean in February, March and April 2019, pushing the Aquarium to a new milestone with more than 250 animals rehabilitated and released since the program's inception in 1991.

nature

RESTORING VITAL HABITATS FOR WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE

Over the past 20 years, we have helped restore thousands of acres throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed—including planting native gardens and wetland grasses in Baltimore City and beyond to provide habitat for wildlife and promote coastal resiliency. We work to combat climate change, save wildlife and habitats, and stop plastic pollution.

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States. Its watershed is home to more than 18 million people and 2,700 species of animals, all of which depend on a healthy Bay for survival.

Volunteers planted wetland grasses to help with restoration efforts at Masonville Cove, located on the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River, a Chesapeake Bay tributary.



nature 2019 impact

- 1 We protected wetland and coastal habitats by planting 41,954 native trees and plants and removing 84,895 pieces of debris from waterways. Nearly 60% of the items removed from critical habitats by the Aquarium team and volunteers during 2019 field events were plastic or foam.
- 2 We received significant support from public and private funders for our expansive waterfront campus project, including a generous \$3 million gift from CFG Bank, the project's lead sponsor; \$2 million from the Whiting-Turner Contracting Company; \$1 million from Constellation, an Exelon company; \$1 million from Mary Catherine Bunting; \$500,000 from the Bunting Family Foundation; and support from Baltimore City, Baltimore County and the State of Maryland. Our award-winning floating wetland prototype continues to benefit the Inner Harbor ecosystem by promoting healthy water, attracting native species, and educating students and other visitors.
- 3 For the second year in a row, we led Baltimore's participation in the City Nature Challenge, an international competition to engage community scientists in finding and documenting plants and wildlife in urban areas around the world. Of 159 participating cities, Baltimore ranked fourth for number of observers and fifth for number of species identified among metro areas of a similar size.
- 4 We rallied public support to protect freshwater habitats by advocating for the Clean Water Act, which garnered 754 signatures from people in 40 states, and to support Baltimore City's Comprehensive Bag Reduction Act, which drew 505 pledges from people in 22 states. Baltimore Mayor Bernard C. "Jack" Young signed the bag bill, which will reduce plastic pollution in neighborhoods and waterways, into law at the Aquarium.



nurture

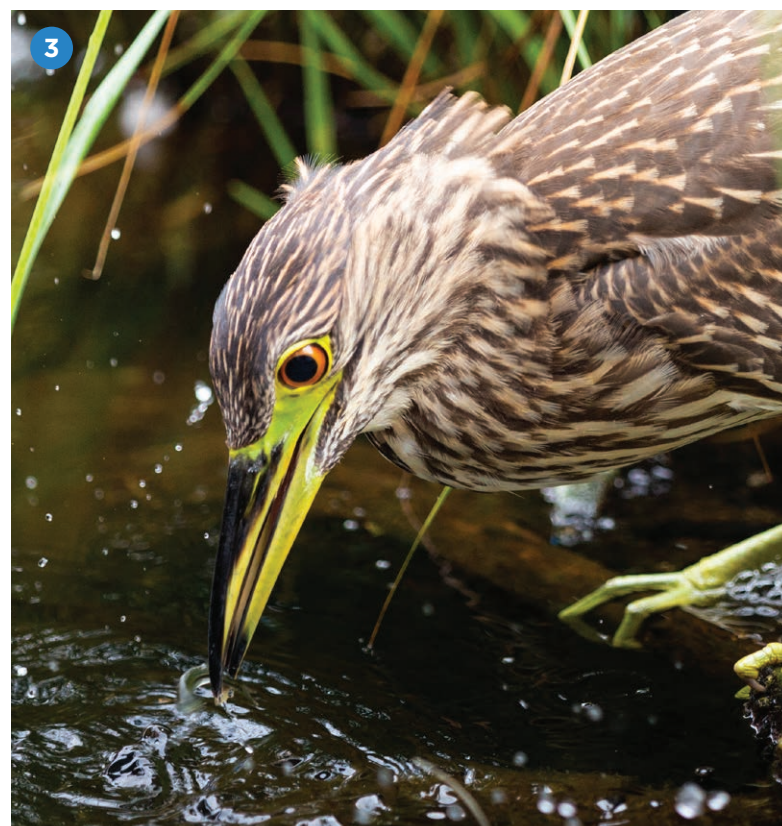
CARING FOR ANIMALS AT THE AQUARIUM AND IN THE WILD

We practice the highest standards of animal care and promote animal welfare—both inside the Aquarium and out.

All animals—from microorganisms to apex predators—play critical roles in maintaining healthy ecosystems and a healthy ocean, which humans rely upon for oxygen, water, climate regulation, food, energy and other resources.

The Aquarium's newest puffin, Macaroni, spent 40 days in its burrow being fed and cared for by parents Vigo and Staypuft before fledging with a full coat of feathers in the Sea Cliffs habitat.





nurture 2019 impact

- 1 We cared for 20,000 animals at the Aquarium as well as 127 rescued sea turtles and seals in short- and long-term rehab, and we celebrated the first anniversary of the opening of our world-class Animal Care and Rescue Center in Baltimore's historic Jonestown neighborhood.
- 2 In an effort to preserve North America's most important reef habitat, aquarists at the ACRC began caring for nearly 100 healthy corals rescued from the path of a bacterial disease affecting the Florida Reef. The Aquarium is one of more than 30 organizations housing, monitoring and protecting Florida corals in the hopes of one day repopulating damaged portions of the reef.
- 3 Aquarium staff and volunteers continue to document a wide range of flora and fauna in Baltimore City through efforts like the City Nature Challenge, Masonville Cove BioBlitz and Inner Harbor Biohut inventories. Sightings in 2019 included several threatened species, such as a pair of bald eagles nesting at Masonville Cove, a black-crowned night heron on the floating wetland prototype and American eels in the harbor outside the Aquarium.
- 4 In collaboration with the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Aquarium experts sequenced the DNA of a new species of box jellyfish discovered in an Aquarium habitat. They got an 88% match with a known species, which allowed them to determine the jelly's family: *Alatinidae*. Aquarium aquarists successfully raised these jellies from polyps to the juvenile life stage and will be able to formally describe the species and give it a new scientific name once they reach their adult life stage.

next generation

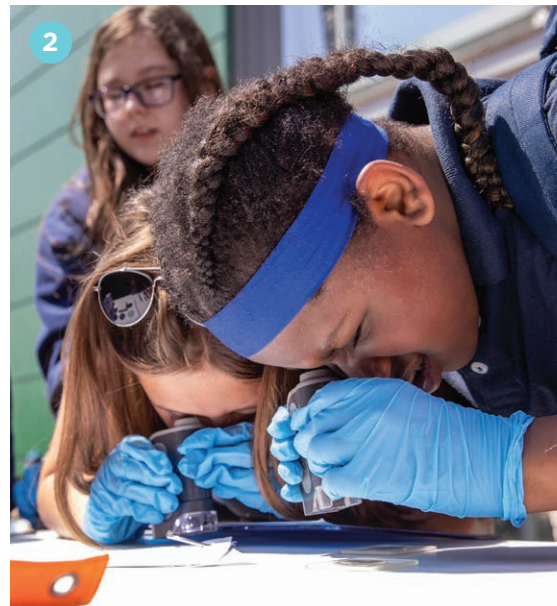
INSPIRING THE OCEAN
CONSERVATIONISTS OF TOMORROW

With a wide range of programs for students from pre-K through college, we are an educational partner that works with young people, families, schools and communities to build STEM skills, spur conservation action and prepare students for college and careers.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics expects overall employment to grow by 5% between 2018 and 2028, but forecasts that jobs in STEM fields—science, technology, engineering and math—will expand by nearly 9%. Women continue to be underrepresented in the STEM workforce, as do some ethnic groups, including Black and Latinx communities. We believe diverse backgrounds, thoughts and opinions are critical to scientific progress and the continued development of inclusive conservation and climate change solutions.

In 2019, more than 1,700 Baltimore City Public Schools sixth graders took part in the What Lives in the Harbor environmental education program, up from 918 in 2018. Students test water quality in the Inner Harbor outside the Aquarium to form hypotheses about what Chesapeake Bay animals live there.





next generation 2019 impact

- 1 We reached more students locally and nationally in 2019 than ever before. In total, we engaged 136,510 students in education programs throughout the year. These programs include Terrapins in the Classroom, AquaPartners, What Lives in the Harbor, Henry Hall summer camps and in-school programs.
- 2 Of the 136,510 students engaged in Aquarium education programs in 2019, nearly 122,000 visited the Aquarium on a field trip, many at no cost thanks in part to the Maryland State Department of Education. More than 1,700 Baltimore City Public Schools sixth graders were connected with the Chesapeake Bay watershed through our What Lives in the Harbor environmental education program.
- 3 Through a partnership with the Enoch Pratt Free Library, we offer Read to Reef, a conservation-themed book club for young readers in Baltimore City. In 2019 alone, children earned 12,070 free Aquarium visits through Read to Reef, a 5% increase from 2018. Since the program began in 2016, a total of 59,925 books have been read by 11,985 Baltimore-area children, and we have welcomed 43,296 guests to the Aquarium.
- 4 To celebrate students who participate in our summer programs, T. Rowe Price, the National Aquarium's official community engagement sponsor, sponsored an inaugural showcase event in August. More than 500 students and family members attended and learned about the year-round educational opportunities the Aquarium offers.

neighbors

HONORING OUR COMMITMENT
TO OUR COMMUNITY

The National Aquarium attracts visitors from around the globe, but we belong to Baltimore. We work to ensure that a visit to the Aquarium is accessible to all our neighbors. We also invest in projects and engage city residents in important conservation work right in their own neighborhoods—from Jonestown to Locust Point to Curtis Bay.

Guests of all ages from Baltimore's historic Jonestown community explored the Aquarium's Animal Care and Rescue Center during a neighborhood open house.





neighbors 2019 impact

- 1 We welcomed 88,361 local guests for free or reduced admission through a variety of programs, events and celebrations in 2019. These included Grade A Student Night, sponsored by Pepsi; Half-Price Friday Nights, presented by M&T Bank; Community Connections, made possible by National Aquarium corporate members; Maryland Mornings; Dollar Days, in partnership with the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore; and Free Fall Friday Night in partnership with the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts.
- 2 We began hosting social gatherings and maintenance events in the Exeter Street Community Garden in Jonestown in response to residents' requests. The garden is community-owned, community-run and open to anyone who wants to join. Through these events, we engaged 45 neighbors and youth in planting, maintaining and cleaning up the garden.
- 3 We marked 20 years of partnership with the National Park Service to restore habitat, remove debris and maintain trails at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, and 10 years of stewarding community education and outreach programs at Masonville Cove, the first Certified Urban Wildlife Refuge in the nation.
- 4 We hosted five special events through the Marjorie Lynn Bank Lecture Series—including our second annual Nature For All conversation about diversity and inclusion in the conservation field, and the first International Ocean Film Festival traveling program to be held on the East Coast.

by the numbers

OUR ECONOMIC IMPACT

Since the day the Aquarium opened in 1981, we have served as an important economic anchor in Baltimore City and throughout Maryland. Our award-winning exhibits attract visitors from the local area, across the nation, and around the world, creating jobs and generating tax revenue. As one of the top three aquariums in the United States and the largest paid cultural destination in Maryland, we create \$455 million in economic activity statewide each year. Nearly 90% of Aquarium visitors report that the Aquarium is their primary reason for visiting Baltimore.

(Source: "The Economic Contributions of the National Aquarium: A 2017 Update" created by Sage Policy Group, September 2017.)

The National Aquarium marked its 38th anniversary on August 8, 2019.



**1.2
million
guests**
in 2019

1 in 3
Aquarium guests stay in
the area overnight

**4,500
jobs**
supported statewide

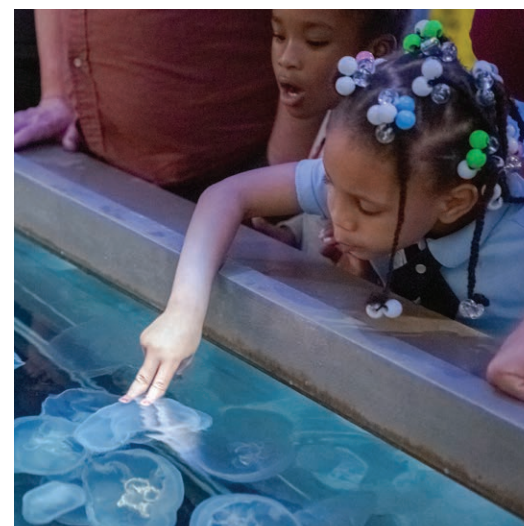
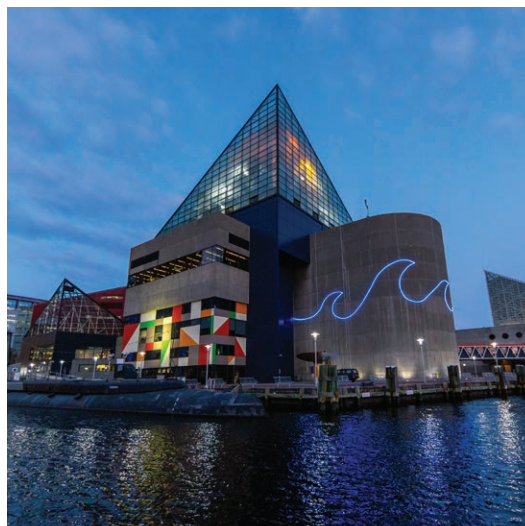


**\$9
million**
in annual tax revenue
for Baltimore

**\$20
million**
in annual tax revenue
for Maryland

5 in 6
Aquarium visitors
are from outside the
Baltimore region

**\$455
million**
in economic activity
across Maryland



**400
jobs**
in Baltimore City



aqua.org

The National Aquarium is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to inspire conservation of the world's aquatic treasures.

 We choose recycled.