



NATIONAL  
AQUARIUM®

# Accessibility Guide





## FIRST SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS

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For a more leisurely, crowd-free experience, visitors with disabilities and their guests may enter 30 minutes before the general public on the first Saturday and Sunday of each month.

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## WELCOME!

With thousands of animals in award-winning habitats, there's much to experience at the National Aquarium. Let's get started!



**Entering:** Our accessible entrance is the Member Entrance in the Glass Pavilion.



**Getting around:** This guide features maps of the accessible path. There are four accessible elevators throughout the buildings.



**Taking a break:** The Guest Relations Room is available for anyone who needs a quiet space to recharge. If you need to leave the Aquarium, hand stamps for same-day re-entry are available at the exit. Speak with staff there to confirm the day's last entry time.

For more information, visit [aqua.org/accessibility](https://aqua.org/accessibility).





## NAVIGATING OUR THREE CONNECTED BUILDINGS

We invite you to connect with nature as you travel through our three main buildings: **Blue Wonders**, **Pier 4** and the **Glass Pavilion**. The Aquarium has an accessible route for guests using mobility aids that are not suited for escalators and moving ramps.

**Blue Wonders** takes you on an aquatic journey as you follow the flow of water around our planet. In **Pier 4** you can watch dolphins swim in *Dolphin Discovery* and jellies float in *Jellies Invasion*. And, for those drawn more to land than sea, head to the **Glass Pavilion's** rugged outback, *Australia: Wild Extremes*.



## GLASS PAVILION | 3 LEVELS

Entrance/Exit, Pier 3 Cafe, *Australia: Wild Extremes*, the National Aquarium Gift Shop, Information Desk, 4D Immersion Theater, Harbor Overlook



**Entrance:** The Main and Member Entrances are on Level G (the ground floor).



**Elevator:** The elevator is located across from the main Aquarium entrances. Level 1 takes you to accessible paths throughout *Blue Wonders* and Pier 4, while Level 2 takes you to *Australia: Wild Extremes*.



**Exit:** Take the elevator to Level G. Exit through the far doors around the corner from the Member Entrance.

# GLASS PAVILION KEY



**AED (Automated External Defibrillator)**



**Gift Shop**



**Assistive Listening System**



**Guest Services**

Wheelchair  
Checkout, Stroller  
Check, Lockers,  
Restroom, and  
Family Restroom



**Closed Captioning**



**Digital Monitor With Schedule**



**Information**



**Drinking Water**



**Mobility Needs Suggested Route**



**Elevator**



**Public Areas**



**Emergency Exit**



**Restrooms**



**Entrance**



**Seating**



**Exit**

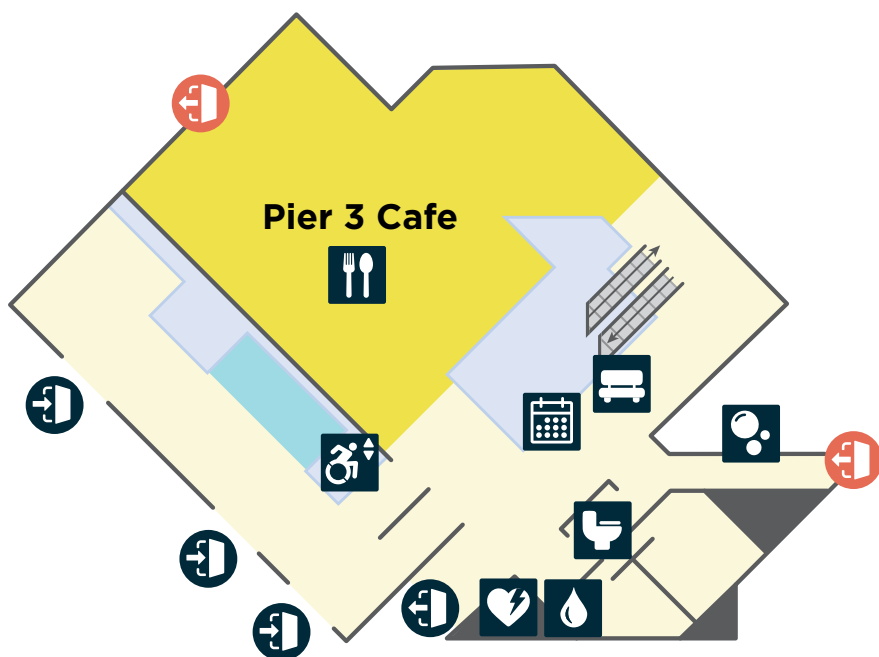


**Uneven Terrain**



**Food**

Main Entrance and Exit, Pier 3 Cafe,  
emergency exits



**Amenities:** Aquarium map, drinking water station, food for sale, Guest Services (including wheelchair checkout/return and stroller check), photo pickup, restrooms and family restroom

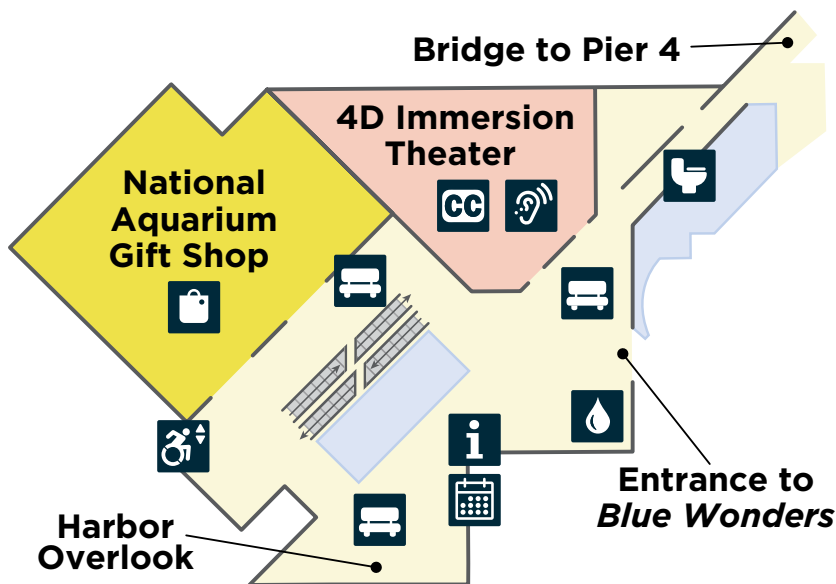


**Elevator:** Across from the Main Entrance.  
Go to Level 2 to visit *Australia: Wild Extremes* or  
to Level 1 for all other exhibits and experiences.





# GLASS PAVILION | LEVEL 1

National Aquarium Gift Shop, Harbor  
Overlook, 4D Immersion Theater, Information  
Desk, connections to *Blue Wonders* and Pier 4



**Amenities:** Restrooms, drinking water station, Aquarium map

 **4D Immersion Theater:** The theater is equipped with closed-captioning (CC) and assistive-listening systems (ALS). Theater attendants are ready to assist you with express entry, finding accessible seating or borrowing CC units or ALS headsets.

 **Elevator:** Left of the National Aquarium Gift Shop near the shark jaws.

# GLASS PAVILION | LEVEL 2

*Australia: Wild Extremes*



This is an immersive exhibit with water and animal sounds, birds that fly freely, and flooring that is textured and slightly uneven. The atmosphere is warm and humid.



**Elevator:** Outside the exit of *Australia: Wild Extremes*, across from the escalators. Take the elevator down to Level 1 to access other exhibits and amenities. Take the elevator down to Level G to exit the Aquarium.



## ***BLUE WONDERS: REEFS TO RAINFORESTS | 5+ LEVELS***

Several major exhibit areas across multiple levels, Harbor View Room, Guest Relations Room



**Entrance:** *Blue Wonders* is accessible from Level 1 of the Glass Pavilion.



**Elevators:** Two elevators, marked A and B, are available. Please note: Elevator B does not take guests to Level M (*Blacktip Reef* underwater viewing area) or Level 5 (*Upland Tropical Rain Forest* and *Hidden Life*).



**Exit:** On Level 1, go toward the National Aquarium Gift Shop. Take the elevator by the shark jaws to Level G.

# BLUE WONDERS KEY



**AED (Automated External Defibrillator)**



**Food**



**Assistive Listening System**



**Guest Relations Room**



**Closed Captioning**



**Information**



**Digital Monitor with Schedule**



**Mobility Needs Suggested Route**



**Drinking Water**



**Public Areas**



**Elevator A (Recommended)**



**Seating**



**Elevator B**



**Restrooms**



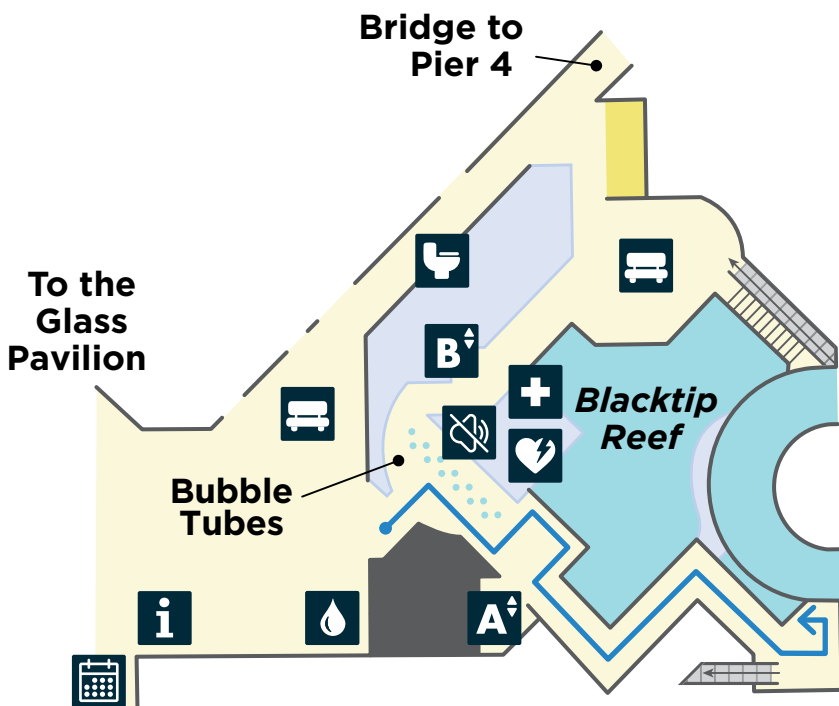
**First Aid Room**



**Uneven Terrain**

# BLUE WONDERS | LEVEL 1

## Blacktip Reef



**Amenities:** Restrooms, drinking water station, Aquarium map, Guest Relations Room, First Aid Room

### Elevators

**A** In the hallway to your right as you enter *Blacktip Reef*. Recommended for those with mobility needs.

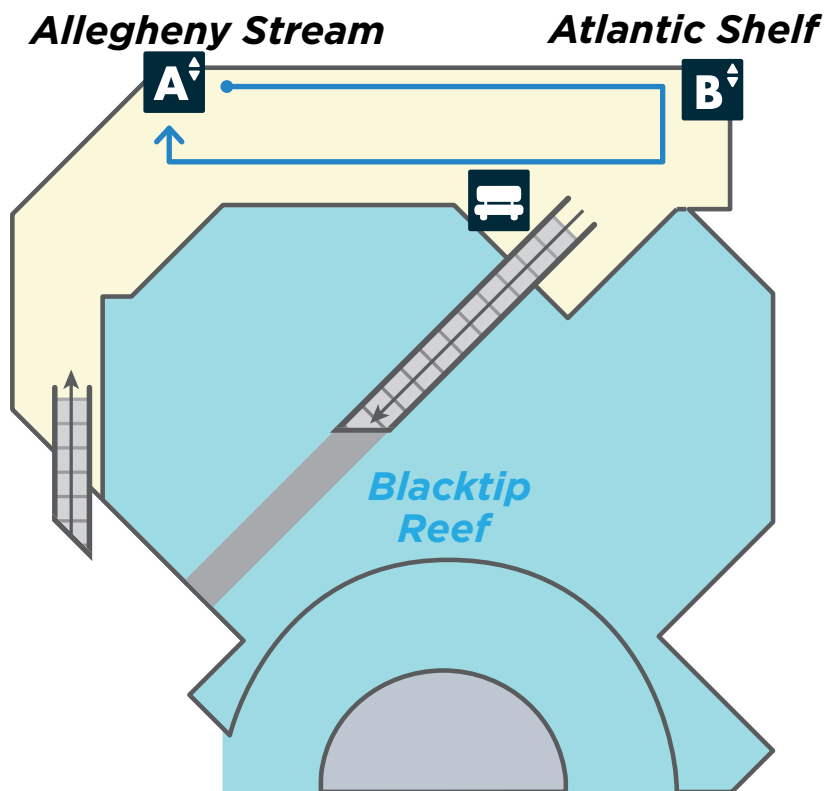
**B** To the left past the bubble tubes as you enter *Blacktip Reef*.

To reach the next exhibit, take either elevator to Level 2.



# BLUE WONDERS | LEVEL 2

*Maryland: Mountains to the Sea*



## Elevators



To the left of the *Allegheny Stream* exhibit.  
Recommended for those with mobility needs.

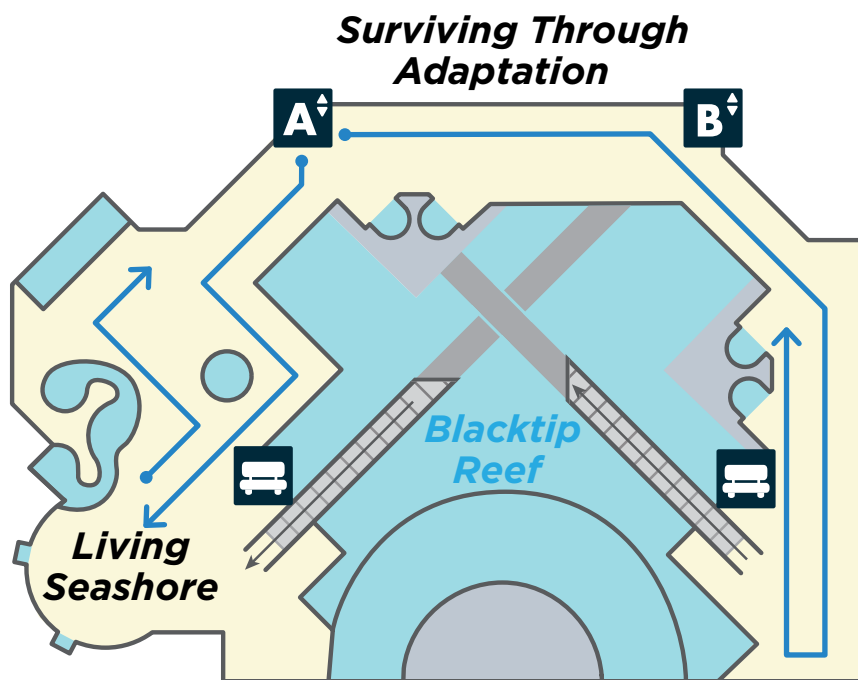


To the right of the *Atlantic Shelf* exhibit.

To reach the next exhibit, take either elevator to Level 3.

# BLUE WONDERS | LEVEL 3

*Living Seashore, Surviving Through Adaptation*



**Living Seashore:** If you'd like an alternative touchpool experience, ask the staff here for access to a tactile bin with whelks (a type of sea snail).

## Elevators

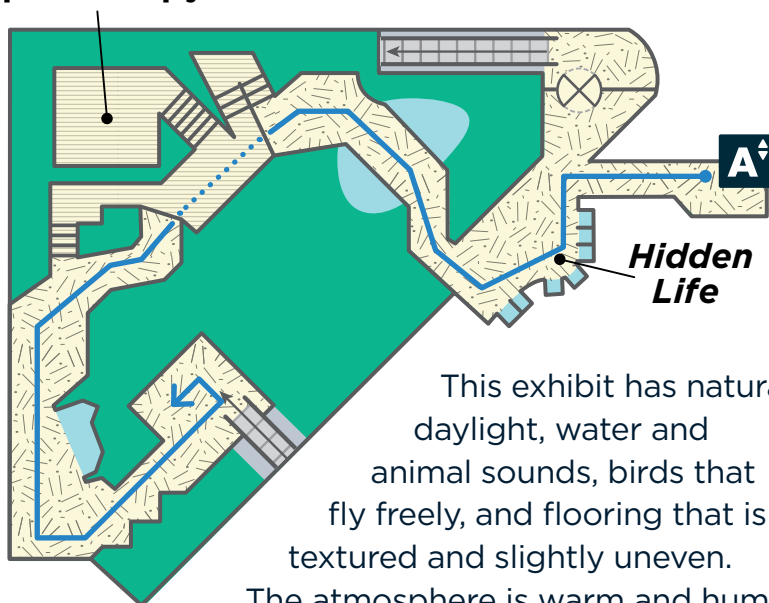
**A** To the left of *Surviving* (our sturgeon and gar exhibit). **We recommend proceeding to Level 5 next.** Take Elevator A to the *Upland Tropical Rain Forest*. After touring Level 5, resume your journey by taking Elevator A to Level 4.

**B** To the right of the smaller *Adapting* exhibits.

# BLUE WONDERS | LEVEL 5

## *Upland Tropical Rain Forest, Hidden Life*

### Upper Canopy Platform



This exhibit has natural daylight, water and animal sounds, birds that fly freely, and flooring that is textured and slightly uneven. The atmosphere is warm and humid.

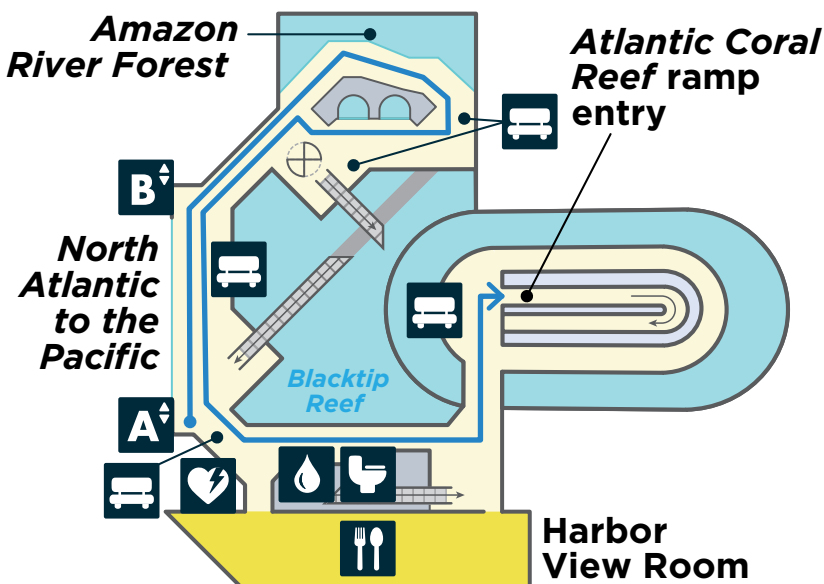
When you exit Elevator A, you'll be moving against the flow of traffic. The path is narrow with some inclines. To exit, you'll make a U-turn at the end of the path and retrace your route to Elevator A. Please note that the upper canopy platform is only accessible by stairs.



**Elevator:** Down the hall behind the *Hidden Life* exhibit (be alert—it's dark!). Take the elevator to Level 4 to tour its exhibits before heading to the *Atlantic Coral Reef* and *Shark Alley*.

## BLUE WONDERS | LEVEL 4

*North Atlantic to the Pacific, Amazon River Forest, Harbor View Room, path to Atlantic Coral Reef, Shark Alley and Blacktip Reef underwater viewing area*



**Amenities:** Restrooms, drinking water station, food for sale

Be cautious on the many sloping ramps that begin in *Atlantic Coral Reef*. There is a level landing at the end of each ramp. They take you down through *Shark Alley* to Level M.

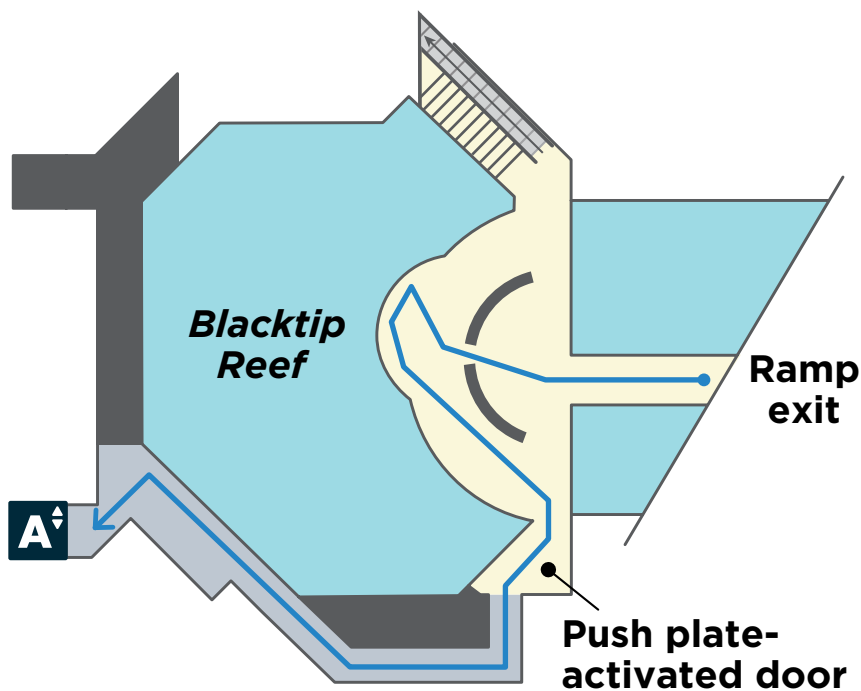
### Elevators

**A** To the left of *Sea Cliffs* (our puffin exhibit). If you haven't toured the *Upland Tropical Rain Forest*, take this elevator to Level 5.

**B** **(DOWN ONLY)** To the right of *Pacific Coral Reef*.

## BLUE WONDERS | LEVEL M

*Blacktip Reef* underwater viewing area



**Elevator:** Through the wheelchair-accessible door to your left as you exit the ramps. A push plate button will open the door. Follow the signs through an office area to Elevator A.

Go to Level 1 to cross the bridge and continue your journey on Pier 4. Or, exit the building by going toward the National Aquarium Gift Shop and taking the elevator by the shark jaws to Level G.





## PIER 4 | 3 LEVELS

*Dolphin Discovery, Jellies Invasion: Oceans Out of Balance, Children's Discovery Gallery, Immotion Virtual Reality (VR) Experiences, Pier 4 Canteen*



**Entrance:** Pier 4 is accessible from Level 1 of the Glass Pavilion and *Blue Wonders* via an indoor bridge.



**Elevator:** Located on Level 1 to the left after crossing the bridge, opposite the women's restroom.



**Exit:** Return to *Blue Wonders* and the Glass Pavilion via the bridge and go toward the National Aquarium Gift Shop. Take the elevator by the shark jaws to Level G.

# PIER 4 KEY



**AED (Automated External Defibrillator)**



**Food**



**Assistive Listening System**



**Mobility Needs Suggested Route**



**Digital Monitor with Schedule**



**Public Areas**



**Drinking Water**



**Restrooms**



**Elevator**



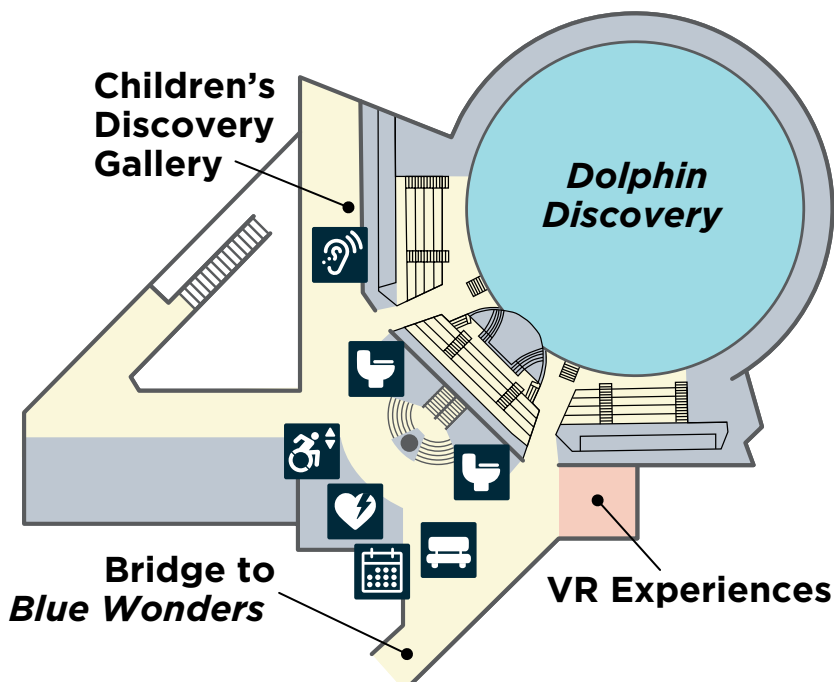
**Seating**



**Emergency Exit**

# PIER 4 | LEVEL 1

*Dolphin Discovery*, Children's Discovery Gallery, Immotion Virtual Reality (VR) Experiences, bridge to *Blue Wonders* and the Glass Pavilion



**Amenities:** Restrooms, Aquarium map



**Elevator:** Left of the *Dolphin Discovery* entrances, near the women's restroom.



***Dolphin Discovery*:** For the easiest wheelchair access and best view of *Dolphin Discovery*, take the elevator to Level 2. An assistive listening system is available in the designated area. If you need a receiver, staff inside the exhibit will be glad to assist you.

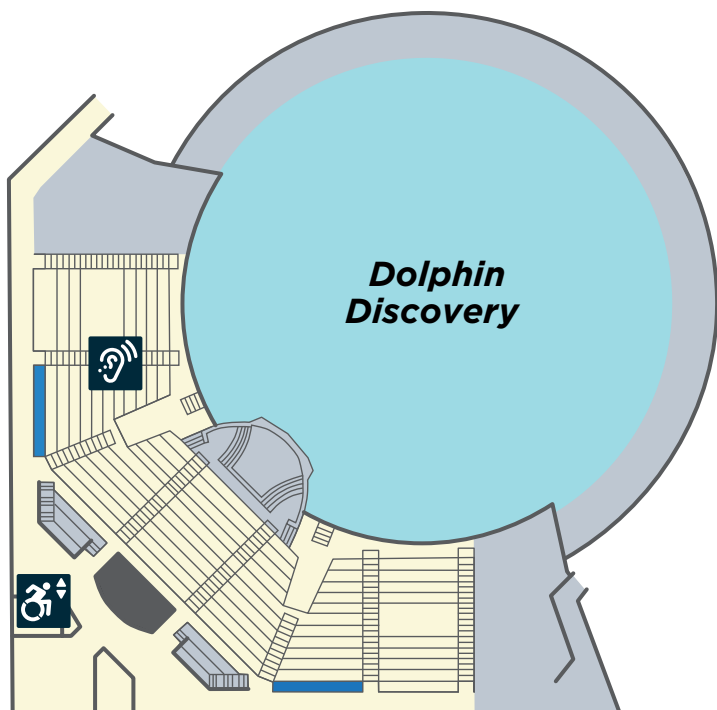




**Virtual Reality:** Seating is accessed via small steps. If you cannot get into or out of the seats, staff can reroute a headset so you can enjoy the visual and auditory components while seated in a stationary chair or wheelchair.

## PIER 4 | LEVEL 2

*Dolphin Discovery* priority seating



**Priority Seating:** Accessible spaces are reserved along the top rows. Seating is available for family and friends.

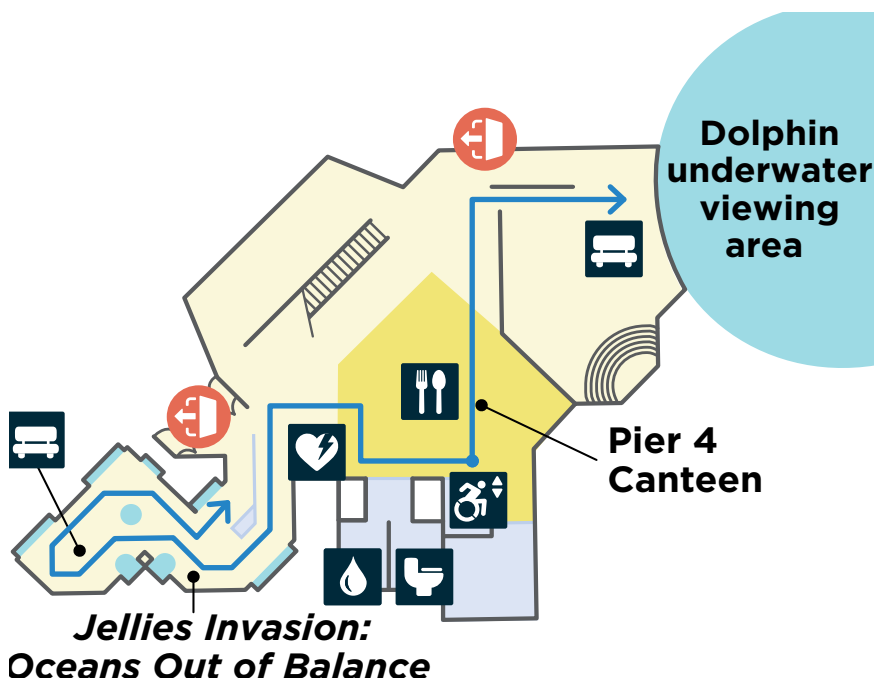
**Elevator:** Between the two priority seating areas.

Head to the ground floor to reach the *Dolphin Discovery* underwater viewing area, *Jellies Invasion: Oceans Out of Balance* and the Pier 4 Canteen. Take the elevator to Level 1 to proceed to *Blue Wonders*, the Glass Pavilion and the exit.



## PIER 4 | GROUND LEVEL

*Jellies Invasion: Oceans Out of Balance*,  
*Dolphin Discovery* underwater viewing area,  
 Pier 4 Canteen, emergency exits



**Amenities:** Food for sale, restrooms, drinking water station



**Elevator:** Near the food service area adjacent to the restrooms

Take the elevator to Level 1 and cross the bridge to return to *Blue Wonders*, the Glass Pavilion and the exit. Wheelchairs and this guide can be returned at Guest Services.

# WHEELCHAIRS & STROLLERS

The Aquarium has an accessible route for guests using wheelchairs and strollers. The maps in this guide will help you avoid escalators and moving ramps that cannot accommodate these mobility aids.

Complimentary wheelchairs can be borrowed at Guest Services with a photo ID. They are available in limited numbers on a first-come, first-served basis.

Strollers are only allowed for children and caregivers with disabilities. While touring, an Aquarium stroller tag (available at Guest Services' stroller check) must be displayed.

## SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

We welcome service animals in all public areas of the Aquarium. However, they may be prohibited in behind-the-scenes locations visited during specific add-on experiences. Please get in touch with the Tours and Experiences team at 410-576-8822 for more information.

# GUESTS WHO ARE BLIND OR LOW VISION

## Tours and Guidebooks

- A braille guidebook is available at the Information Desk on Level 1 of the Glass Pavilion for additional or alternative reference.
- An audio tour highlighting the Aquarium's exhibits and providing basic directional information is available. Borrow receivers and earpieces at Guest Services on Level G of the Glass Pavilion, near the entrance. An exchange of a photo ID is all that's needed.
- The audio tour can also be accessed online at [aqua.org/audio-tour](https://aqua.org/audio-tour).



Scan this QR code for quick access to our online audio tour.

## Touch Bags

- A touch bag of tactile items representing animals in the exhibits is available to borrow from Guest Services on Level G of the Glass Pavilion.

# GUESTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

## Sign Language Interpretation

- An interpreter accompanying a guest who is deaf or hard of hearing receives free admission to the Aquarium.
- Guests who would like to request an interpreter should contact our accessibility liaison at 410-576-8745 or leave a message on our TTY at 410-727-3022 at least two weeks prior to their visit.

## Presentations and Videos

- Scripts for public presentations are available at the Information Desk on Level 1 of the Glass Pavilion.
- Captioning is available on all narrated films and VR experiences.
- The 4D Immersion Theater is equipped with closed-captioning (CC) and assistive listening systems (ALS). CC units and ALS headsets are available from theater attendants before entering the theater.
- In *Dolphin Discovery*, an assistive listening system for those with T-switch capabilities is available in specially marked seating. Those with hearing aids not equipped with a T-switch can borrow a receiver from staff inside the exhibit.

# GUESTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

## During Your Visit

- Temperature, lighting and noise levels fluctuate from gallery to gallery—especially in *Upland Tropical Rain Forest* on Level 5 of *Blue Wonders* and *Australia: Wild Extremes* in the Glass Pavilion. Our staff can help if you have questions about any sensory or environmental elements.
- Virtual Reality (VR) experiences and the 4D Immersion Theater are fun and immersive, but have visual, auditory and haptic components that some may find overstimulating.

## Need A Break?

- The Guest Relations Room on Level 1 of *Blue Wonders* is a calm, quiet space for anyone who needs a private moment away from the crowds. Ask a staff member for help accessing the Guest Relations Room.
- Hand stamps are available at the exit doors if you need to leave the building for a break and re-enter later in the day.

## KultureCity

- We are a KultureCity-certified Sensory Inclusive Organization and take pride in offering great experiences to people with sensory needs. Look for signage and available sensory bags when you arrive. Our specially trained staff are ready to welcome you!



## GUEST RELATIONS ROOM

The Guest Relations Room, located on Level 1 of *Blue Wonders*, is a private space available to all guests who need a quiet moment away from the crowds. Parents who are breastfeeding are welcome to use the room's separate nursing suite.

## EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

The Aquarium's security staff is trained to assist you in the event of an emergency. In case of fire or other emergency, move toward the lit exit signs where security staff will help you to safety.

## ACCESSIBILITY LIAISON

The Aquarium's accessibility liaison is happy to answer any accessibility-related questions you may have or to schedule individual tours. Contact them at 410-576-8745 or by TTY at 410-727-3022.

Please contact us at least two weeks ahead of your visit to arrange an interpreter, reader and/or guide, available on a limited basis.

## GROUPS

Groups of 15 or more should contact Central Reservations at 410-659-4269 at least three weeks in advance of their visit to obtain a reduced admission rate. Please request any special arrangements at the time of booking. We offer free admission to licensed caregivers for qualified groups.



**NATIONAL AQUARIUM®**

Thanks for visiting!

The National Aquarium is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to connect people with nature to inspire compassion and care for our ocean planet.

[aqua.org/accessibility](https://aqua.org/accessibility)

