

# Hope Floats

## ***Harbor Wetland***<sup>®</sup> One-Year Progress Report

Free and open to all, *Harbor Wetland* brings to life the National Aquarium's mission to connect people with nature to inspire compassion and care for our ocean planet. Through this innovative exhibit—the first floating wetland of its kind anywhere in the world—we are giving back to Baltimore. We created *Harbor Wetland* for the people and the city that have given us so much, the harbor that is our home, and all the wild things whose home it is, too.

National Aquarium *Harbor Wetland* presented by CFG Bank opened on August 8, 2024, the 43rd anniversary of the Aquarium's 1981 grand opening. This progress report covers *Harbor Wetland's* first 365 days of operation.

# The First 365 Days...



## ANIMAL VISITORS

More than 120 community scientists documented 496 observations of 139 different species of wildlife and plants on, in and around the exhibit. These included 31 birds, 24 insects, 12 fish, eight arachnids, six mammals, four reptiles, two mollusks and one amphibian. Observations tracked in the iNaturalist National Aquarium Harbor Wetland and Waterfront project.



## HUMAN GUESTS

We welcomed 120,000 visitors to Harbor Wetland, including more than 1,000 participants in the first annual Harbor Wetland BioBlitz, part of City Nature Challenge, and 813 Baltimore City sixth graders through our What Lives in the Harbor education program.



## WATER QUALITY

During low-oxygen events in the Inner Harbor, Harbor Wetland provided healthier oxygen conditions 34% of the time. We collect water data in partnership with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.



## EXHIBIT RESILIENCE

Harbor Wetland withstood Tropical Storm Debby, a pistachio tide-driven fish kill, record-breaking drought and even a tornado.

## The Future In Front Of Us

**This is just the beginning.**

We will continue to welcome guests, document wildlife, measure water quality and build on our solid foundation with exciting new projects and initiatives through 2025 and beyond. We joined the Chesapeake Bay Otter Alliance and are supporting a study of river otters' diets and parasites by providing scat samples to the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. We're in the process of patenting the floating wetlands used in the exhibit to safeguard the technology we invented and invested in. We continue to field inquiries from groups interested in using this technology, including a project in Newtown Creek, a Superfund site in Brooklyn, New York.



## The Foundation Harbor Wetland Is Built Upon...

**10,000**  
SQUARE FEET

**32,000**  
GRASSES AND SHRUBS

**4**  
PROTOTYPES

**14 YEARS**  
OF RESEARCH AND PLANNING

**9 MONTHS**  
OF CONSTRUCTION

**\$4.5 MILLION +**  
IN CONSTRUCTION COSTS  
paid to minority-owned, women-owned  
and small business enterprises

**\$14 MILLION**  
IN TOTAL PROJECT COSTS  
(PRE-OPENING)

**\$390,000**  
FIRST-YEAR OPERATING COSTS  
(POST-OPENING)

Harbor Wetland is presented by Baltimore-based CFG Bank, along with investment from the Whiting-Turner Contracting Company, the Bunting Family Philanthropies, Constellation and the generosity of the Aquarium's philanthropic community and local, state and federal government support. We thank all who supported Harbor Wetland's development and who continue to fund its everyday operation.