



Media: For more information, contact SeaWorld Public Relations at (619) 225-3241 or SWCPublicRelations@SeaWorld.com.

SEAWORLD'S COMMITMENT TO ANIMAL RESCUE AND CONSERVATION EXTENDS BEYOND PARK'S BORDERS

Conservation, animal rescue, research and education are in SeaWorld's DNA

For more than 55 years, SeaWorld has been dedicated to improving the lives of marine animals and protecting the health of our oceans. SeaWorld animal experts care for thousands of animals every day and are on call 24/7 to rescue marine animals in need along the San Diego coastline. While guests are enjoying all the animals, exhibits and education programs SeaWorld is famous for, behind the scenes there is a mission—one that has continued since the park's inception—to care for the environment and the animals that extends beyond the park's borders. And with every ticket and visit to a SeaWorld park, guests help fund wildlife rescue and rehabilitation efforts, habitat protection programs, and ocean health initiatives. To date, SeaWorld has rescued 36,000 animals and counting, with SeaWorld San Diego alone accounting for more than 21,000 of those animals.

Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program

SeaWorld continues a longstanding commitment to the preservation of the Southern Resident killer whale population in the Pacific Northwest by supporting the Killer Whale Recovery and Conservation Program. SeaWorld, together with the National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF), created the program in 2015 and has thus far contributed \$3 million. SeaWorld's decades of killer whale knowledge is instrumental in pursuing efforts to address issues/challenges facing the Southern Resident population, and the parks also provide unparalleled access to their family of killer whales, allowing for invaluable research.

"SeaWorld is a proud partner in the Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program, and together our efforts are making strides in not only better understanding the myriad issues that the Southern Resident population is facing, but developing the necessary action plans to address these challenges," said Dr. Hendrik Nollens, vice president of animal health and welfare for SeaWorld. "Our collective goal is the recovery of these killer whales, and the strength of the partnership is harnessing the expertise our grantees bring to the table in this important collaboration."

The most recent grants in support of the Killer Whale Recovery and Conservation Program were announced in November of 2019 by NFWF, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), SeaWorld and other partners. A total of six grants were awarded to fund projects including research to better understand the Chinook salmon shortage and a "Be Whale Wise" campaign focused on educating local boaters.

Southern Resident killer whales were listed as endangered in 2005, and NOAA Fisheries has highlighted the population as one of eight national "[Species in the Spotlight](#)," at greatest risk of extinction. The Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program works to understand why the population has failed to recover and takes steps identified in the [recovery plan](#) and recommendations from the November 2018 Orca Task Force to bring this population back from the brink.

Conservation efforts in the parks and beyond

SeaWorld San Diego continues to embrace initiatives that address some of today's most pressing environmental challenges in the areas of **waste, water and food**. Every year SeaWorld recycles millions of pounds of paper and plastic products, metals, greenery, food scraps, pallets, construction demolition debris, and batteries, in addition to more traditional recyclable materials. Since 1994, the park has received a city recycling award more than 20 times and is a nine-time recipient of the State of California Waste Reduction Awards program.

CONSERVATION COMMITMENT EXTENDS BEYOND SEAWORLD BORDERS

Page 2

Thanks to a solar panel installation at Aquatica SeaWorld's Waterpark in Chula Vista, 80 to 90 percent of the park's annual energy use is now generated by renewable energy from the sun. The environmental impact is significant, reducing CO₂ emissions by more than 10,000 metric tons over the life of the system (approximately 20 years), equal to removing 124 passenger vehicles off the road. This is important to SeaWorld as increasing carbon emissions have been linked to ocean acidification and declining coral reefs.

The *SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund* is a registered, non-profit foundation that has granted \$18 million to more than 1,200 projects around the world. In addition to direct support of environmental, research and conservation projects, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment provides financial and human resources to the Fund. It also offers an outlet for visitors to the parks, as well as the general public, to help protect wildlife. The Fund commits 100 percent of donations to on-the-ground wildlife conservation focusing on t areas: animal rescue, habitat protection and species preservation.

SeaWorld San Diego *eliminated all polystyrene tableware and flatware* in its restaurants and employee cafeterias in 2013. With millions of meals served in the park each year, the removal of polystyrene foam products is heralded as another important environmental stewardship initiative by SeaWorld. Discarded polystyrene foam, which is not biodegradable, ends up in local landfills, on beaches and in the ocean ecosystem. This pollution can be extremely detrimental to marine animals. In all, more than 8 million individual pieces of tableware and cutlery—plates, bowls, hot cups, forks, spoons and knives—were shifted to compostable material. Bowls and plates are now made from molded fibers, flatware is made from cornstarch, and hot cups are made from recycled paper.

In 2011, SeaWorld San Diego *eliminated the use of plastic bags* in the park's gift shops. Plastic bags are a huge problem for certain species of sea turtles, especially leatherbacks, which sometimes mistake the bags for jellies. Guests can purchase either a paper or reusable bag when purchasing items from the gift shops. Net proceeds from the purchase of paper shopping bags are donated to Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (HSWRI), while 5 percent of a reusable bag's purchase goes directly to the SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund.

SeaWorld San Diego has a long history of advancing *water conservation* through innovative practices and programs. In April 2015, SeaWorld implemented a saltwater flushing system in one of the park's restrooms. The restroom facility is 3,000 square feet with 21 urinals and 34 water closets that contain individual partitioned toilets that utilize saltwater for flushing. The savings in freshwater is nearly a million gallons annually.

In addition to the saltwater restroom project, other water conservation initiatives include the use of a Cyclone CY5500 and Advance Ride-On Scrubber deep-cleaning concrete device to clean pathways, saving more than a million gallons of freshwater annually. The park also has increased installation of drought-tolerant plants, computerized irrigation controllers and 4,000 low-flow irrigation nozzles. In addition, SeaWorld has increased the mulching of landscape areas to conserve soil moisture, and replaced some lawn areas with artificial turf. The increased use of high-pressure water machines, and high-efficiency, low-flow toilets and sinks with aerated faucets in its restrooms also contributes to SeaWorld's water conservation efforts.

SeaWorld's Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Program

SeaWorld parks have rescued more than 36,000 animals and counting over the last five decades. Of that number, SeaWorld San Diego alone has rescued more than 21,000 animals, including seabirds, sea lions, seals, turtles, whales and dolphins. The goal of the program is to give rescued and rehabilitated animals a second chance at life.

In 2019, the SeaWorld San Diego Rescue Team came to the aid of: 808 birds (representing 74 species), 202 California sea lions, 21 northern elephant seals, eight harbor seals, eight Guadalupe fur seals, five dolphins, two sea turtles, one northern fur seal, and one humpback whale.

CONSERVATION COMMITMENT EXTENDS BEYOND SEAWORLD BORDERS

Page 3

To care for stranded animals, SeaWorld's Animal Health and Rescue Center is equipped with state-of-the-art tools, facilities and equipment to provide the best possible care for ill or injured wildlife:

- Critical care unit with built-in scale
- Medical facility, which houses a sophisticated laboratory with hospital-grade hematology and chemistry analyzers, microbiology lab for identifying bacteria and fungi, and in-house pharmacy with antibiotics, fluids and emergency medications
- Surgical suite, which contains a custom surgery table, monitoring equipment, X-ray, ultrasound, endoscopy and therapeutic laser anesthesia equipment
- Nutrition Center, where fish is thawed and weighed for distribution to all animals, and special formulas are prepared for rescued animals
- Examination room with digital radiograph system that communicates with the digital radiograph storage server with all other SeaWorld and Busch Gardens parks
 - Digital radiograph system features a wireless cesium plate that can be used at a distance of up to 50 feet away from the laptop capture unit, enhancing the portability for use in animal habitats in the park or in the wild; new cesium plate is very sensitive, allowing for lower radiation yet providing high-quality images
- 40-inch viewer that allows veterinarians to compare radiographs side by side; large screen enables doctors to view radiographs in close detail when examining for internal injuries
- Boston Whaler with two 600-horsepower outboard engines; this 27-foot boat, named Second Chance, has an unsinkable hull, a large dive door and state-of-the-art navigation technology
- Recovery areas, including pools and enclosures, tailored to meet the specific needs of each rehabilitating animal

Once a rescued animal is medically rehabilitated and demonstrates to the animal care team that it is able to fend for itself, it is returned to the ocean. To give these animals the best chance at survival, SeaWorld often returns them to the ocean by boat. Sea lions, seals and dolphins are returned off the coast in areas where sufficient food sources are available and are populated by like species.

SeaWorld is part of the West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network, which is organized by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Members of the public, lifeguards and other individuals report strandings to SeaWorld's rescue hotline (800-541-SEAL) or on SeaWorld's website (www.SeaWorldSanDiego.com). SeaWorld's Rescue Team responds using guidelines governed by NMFS. Once rescued, animals are nursed back to health and, whenever possible, returned to the wild. If an animal is deemed not releasable, NMFS determines whether the animal is to remain at SeaWorld or to be cared for at another facility.

Marine animals strand for a variety of reasons: illness, injury, exhaustion or separation from their mother. Two of the most common conditions are malnutrition and dehydration. In addition, animals also may become entangled in fishing gear or accidentally ingest plastic or other foreign objects.

Oiled Wildlife Care Center

SeaWorld San Diego's ***Oiled Wildlife Care Center*** (OWCC) was built to care for animals that fall victim to oil spills. The 8,000-square-foot center was established in 2000 by SeaWorld San Diego, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the University of California, Davis. It includes examination, treatment and food preparation areas, flight pens and a 32,000-gallon rehabilitation pool that can hold 20 oiled sea otters or pinnipeds in the event of an oil spill in Southern California. The facility can treat as many as 200 oiled seabirds at a time. When the OWCC is not being used for oil spill rescue, it houses rehabilitating marine mammals, sea turtles and seabirds.

Animal care specialists from SeaWorld have received Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN) certification and annual training to care for oiled wildlife. The most recent time San Diego's OWCC was activated for an actual spill was in May of 2015, when SeaWorld San Diego's team was called upon to

CONSERVATION COMMITMENT EXTENDS BEYOND SEAWORLD BORDERS

Page 4

assist with the rescue and rehabilitation of marine animals affected by the Refugio Oil Spill in Santa Barbara, California.

Scientific Research

High-quality research is a key component of the park's larger commitment to conservation. SeaWorld publishes peer-reviewed research and provides access to its animals for scientists conducting studies on a variety of subjects.

Research is being conducted with an *Orcinus orca* (killer whale) at SeaWorld San Diego to ***evaluate cardiac function*** using a heart monitor adapted for the marine environment. This work not only will benefit veterinarians' diagnostic efforts, but may be essential to improving cardiac monitoring of free-ranging orcas and understanding dive physiology. Dr. Paul Ponganis, a research physiologist at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at University of California, San Diego, is currently studying electrocardiograms and heart rate of Corky, a 55-year-old killer whale, as well as other animals at the marine park. The study is looking to develop reliable techniques to record electrocardiograms on killer whales while they are in the water, document cardiac characteristics at rest and during exercise, and develop reliable suction cup attachment techniques that can ultimately be used in the wild.

Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (HSWRI) is a non-profit research organization committed to conserving and renewing marine life to ensure a healthier planet. HSWRI provides innovative and objective scientific solutions to challenges facing ocean health in our rapidly changing world. While HSWRI is an independent research organization, it has partnered with SeaWorld for more than 50 years, sharing a fundamental appreciation and respect for animals as well as a commitment to ocean health and marine animal rescue. HSWRI's research takes its scientists to ocean basins and coastlines in the United States and around the world, but some of their most important work has been done at the SeaWorld parks. Access to SeaWorld's extensive marine zoological collection and superb facilities provides the Institute with unparalleled opportunities to advance its public-trust mission "*to return to the sea some measure of the benefits derived from it.*"

Education

The education programs* at SeaWorld San Diego have helped schools, teachers, children, and adults explore the world and all its inhabitants by providing award-winning education programs that include structured teaching. ***SeaWorld Camps***—which are accredited by the American Camp Association, meeting or exceeding their standards for health, safety, and program quality—offer the experience of a lifetime, with activities ranging from touching and feeding marine animals to out-of-park excursions. There are also many informal teaching experiences inside the park: educators, show and exhibit narrations, and interpretive and interactive graphics. And, SeaWorld's Instructional Field Trip program offers students from preschool through college an opportunity to use the park as their own outdoor classroom.

In 2016, SeaWorld's educators found yet another way to bring marine conservation to life with the debut of ***SeaWorld's Ocean Link Lab***. In collaboration with the San Diego Unified School District and the San Diego Workforce Partnership, this program immerses middle school students into the heart and science of the park with project-based learning experiences that focus on SeaWorld's Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Program. Ocean Link Lab allows 6th, 7th and 8th graders to develop an appreciation of life science topics through hands-on interaction with marine animals, career exploration, and science stations focused on water quality, sustainable seafood and animal observation.

*SeaWorld supports the National Science Education Standards and California Science Content Standards. SeaWorld Education programs support the high standards established by the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums and the Association of Zoos & Aquariums.

—SeaWorld—