



# Summer of Wonder

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*Digital Images Available Upon Request*

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## **ENDANGERED ANIMALS—FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC—TO DEBUT THIS SUMMER AT THE AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC**

**Find out what can be done to protect these animals  
and threatened habitats that may hold the next big medical cure for humans**

**April 2, 2014, Long Beach, California**—Embark on a journey from an exotic island in the South Pacific to the urban rivers of Southern California at the Aquarium of the Pacific during its Summer of Wonder. Starting May 23, 2014, visitors to the nonprofit aquarium can discover the wonder with new exhibits, interactive experiences, and programs. The Aquarium hopes to further education about and conservation of endangered species and habitats through these new permanent exhibits and programming.

Southern California steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) have historically travelled up and down the Los Angeles, San Gabriel, and other local rivers to spawn and return to the ocean. In fact, at one time, the San Gabriel River was known as one of the best steelhead fishing rivers in the state. After coming close to extinction, in 1997 the Southern California steelhead was listed as an endangered species. Today, they continue to face major threats. The Aquarium's *Southern California Steelhead Story* exhibit will document their resilience in the face of these challenges, forecast the species' ability to adapt to future changes to its habitat, and explore what we can do to help. "Our drought, pollution, and other factors are affecting an endangered species found in our own backyard—the Southern California steelhead. We want visitors to leave our new exhibit inspired to make a difference," said Dr. Jerry R. Schubel, Aquarium of the Pacific president and CEO.

Visitors to the Aquarium of Pacific will also be able to see one of the world's most endangered species, which can no longer be seen in the wild. The Guam Kingfisher was nearly wiped out of existence by the invasive brown tree snake. Around the time of WWII, the snake slithered onto ships in the South Pacific. When the ships docked in Guam, the snakes invaded the island decimating its kingfisher population. The Guam Department of Aquatic Wildlife Resources, the Aquarium and Zoo Association (AZA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and several other institutions collected the remaining birds in Guam, and a recovery program for the species was established in 1984. The Aquarium of the Pacific is participating in an AZA program aimed at repopulating these birds in the wild. The Aquarium acquired its breeding pair of Guam Kingfishers through its partnership in the Species Survival Plan administered by the AZA. "There are just over 130 left on this planet. That is why it was critical for us to participate in the breeding program. We hope to be able to one day help introduce them back into the wild," said Rob Mortensen, Aquarium of the Pacific assistant curator. The Aquarium's staff members collectively contributed more than \$40,000 toward the new aviary for the Guam Kingfishers.

Beyond learning about endangered species, guests will learn ocean animals play a role in human health care. For instance, some threatened ocean habitats are home to species that may be the source of medicines and cures for cancer and other human illnesses. "Protecting marine life can help save human lives," said Dr. Schubel. The Aquarium of the Pacific is adding two new exhibits to its Molina Animal Care Center, a new sponge and coral aquarium and a horseshoe crab touch exhibit. Corals and sponges live in marine environments that are highly threatened, but hold the most promise for advancements in the arena of human health and medicine. Ocean warming and acidification are major threats to these animals. In a new

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partnership, the Aquarium of the Pacific will send tissue samples from its new coral and sponge aquarium to City of Hope in Duarte, California, where researchers will test them for cancer-fighting properties. Visitors will also discover the horseshoe crab, a 20 million-year-old arthropod species whose blood aids in medical care. "It is imperative that we protect the ocean. By protecting the ocean, we can better protect humans and all life on our planet," said Schubel.

In addition to debuting these new exhibits during its Summer of Wonder, the Aquarium will feature a new bonnethead shark and cownose ray touch experience, behind-the-scenes looks at animal feedings, and the chance to make and drive a remotely operated vehicle through September 1, 2014, as well as a morning penguin walk in June only. The Aquarium of the Pacific will also be the first aquarium with a 3-D microscope on display. The microscope will give guests a glimpse into the minuscule world that exists under the sea in full-color 3-D. A newly enhanced app for iPhone and Android, a film in its Great Hall, and education programs in its Marine Life Theater are part of the Summer of Wonder. Honda and Charter Communications are the summer sponsors for the Summer of Wonder. Lead sponsors for the *Southern California Steelhead Story* exhibit include the Annenberg Foundation, Long Beach City Council, and The Ahmanson Foundation. The Bay and Paul Foundations, Inc. is the sponsor of the Guam Kingfisher exhibit.

The nonprofit Aquarium of the Pacific is a community gathering place where diverse cultures and the arts are celebrated and where important topics facing our planet are explored. The Aquarium is open daily, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. General admission is \$28.95 adult (12+), \$25.95 senior (62+), \$14.95 child (3-11), and free for children under age three and Aquarium members. During Sundays in summer, admission is just \$14.95 per person after 5:00 p.m., and the Aquarium remains open until 8:30 p.m. The Aquarium is located at 100 Aquarium Way in Long Beach, California. For more information call (562) 590-3100 or visit [aquariumofpacific.org](http://aquariumofpacific.org).

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