

Contact: Marilyn Padilla  
Aquarium of the Pacific  
(562) 951-1684 / [mpadilla@lbaop.org](mailto:mpadilla@lbaop.org)  
*Digital Images Available*

## **AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC TAKES A NATIONAL LEAD ON ADDRESSING URBAN OCEAN ISSUES**

***Aquarium will lead first attempt to apply coastal marine spatial planning on Southern California's urban ocean with stakeholder group in July***

**June 20, 2011, Long Beach, California**—The Aquarium of the Pacific has announced that it will be leading a gathering of key stakeholders in making the first attempt in the nation to apply coastal and marine spatial planning (CMSP) on Southern California's urban ocean in late July. CMSP is among the recommendations for ocean stewardship published by the Obama administration's Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force. "The Aquarium is leading the dialogue on urban ocean issues at local and national levels, raising awareness among the public, and bringing together stakeholders to make innovative plans for the future," said Margaret Davidson, director, NOAA Coastal Services Center.

This past weekend, the Aquarium of the Pacific celebrated the unique, vibrant section of coastline shared by humans and diverse wildlife in Southern California with the public during its second annual Urban Ocean Festival. During the festival, the Aquarium launched its summer-long Urban Ocean boat cruise, which gives the public the opportunity to see local wildlife, ports, and other activities off the coast. The Aquarium has also been highlighting urban ocean issues with lectures, CMP sessions, and by raising awareness of the urban ocean through presentations at national conferences, including Capitol Hill Ocean Week on June 9, the Blue Vision Summit in Washington, D.C. on May 22, and on May 24 at the Headwaters to Ocean (H2O) Conference in San Diego, where the Aquarium's president & CEO presented a keynote address on the subject of CMSP.

"The Southern California Bight is one of the world's best examples of an urban ocean—a segment of the World Ocean used extensively and intensively by humans. This area is also one of the regions of the Pacific Ocean most intensively used by marine life," said Dr. Jerry Schubel, Aquarium of the Pacific president and CEO. Animals found in the coastal waters off Southern California include sea lions, seals, fish, marine invertebrates, sharks, dolphins, and the largest and most diverse assemblage of whales in the ocean. Kelp forests here provide rich habitat for these animals. "As the ocean becomes more urbanized, the Southern California Bight can be a valuable laboratory for designing, developing, testing, and refining strategies for humans to live in greater harmony with nature through the allocation of spaces for uses by nature and humans to reduce competition and conflicts. It is for these reasons that we chose to celebrate the Southern California urban ocean," said Dr. Schubel.

"Yet again, the Aquarium of the Pacific has pointed the way to the future. The Aquarium has engaged the surrounding community and continues to offer pioneering exhibits and programs that specifically highlight the unique and complex challenges and opportunities presented by the urban ocean. The Aquarium has also benefited inner city youth in ways that other aquariums are only just now beginning to emulate," NOAA's Davidson said.

Aquarium of the Pacific, a nonprofit institution, is dedicated to instilling a sense of wonder, respect, and stewardship for the Pacific Ocean, its inhabitants, and ecosystems. It is the fourth largest aquarium in the nation and displays over 11,000 animals in more than 50 exhibits that represent the diversity of the Pacific Ocean. Beyond its exhibits, the Aquarium offers educational programs for people of all ages from hands-on activities to lectures by leading scientists. Through these programs and a variety of multimedia experiences, the Aquarium provides opportunities to delve deeper into the ocean. It is a community gathering place where diverse cultures and the arts are celebrated and a place where important topics facing our planet and our ocean are explored by scientists, policy-makers and stakeholders in the search for sustainable solutions. For more information call 562-590-3109 or visit [www.aquariumofpacific.org](http://www.aquariumofpacific.org).

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