

SC Aquarium Public Program Worksheet
(Adapted from NAI, Certified Interpretive Guide Training workbook)

Your names: Jon Ivey, Drew Heyward and Shelley Dearhart

Program Title: The Dr. Gill Show

Theme: The GOT has many interesting animals with amazing adaptations to help them survive.

Audience: Families of all ages

Goals: (Why are we doing this program?): Teach the Aquarium's visitors about the animals of the Great Ocean Tank in a fun and interactive way by getting them involved in a television show style program.

Objectives: (Remember to include a conservation objective):

- Audience will remember at least 3 fun facts about the animals of the GOT.
- Audience will remember one of the Aquarium's conservation messages within the show (SSI, Sea Turtles, Leave No Trace,...).

How will you measure the objectives?

- Post show survey
- When SSI conservation message is used, at least 10 visitors will take an SSI brochure.

Materials Needed:

Director's Chairs

Dr. Gill Costume

7 Letters and Envelopes

Answer Key

Audience reaction signs

Props (educators choice)

Program Outline:

Introduction:

Hit play on the CD player and listen for your introduction. Enter the lower ocean gallery in style, holding up the applause sign as you make your way to the director's chair and begin the show by introducing yourself as Dr. Gill. Let the audience know that here at the South Carolina Aquarium animal care is of the utmost importance. We need to make sure that all of our animals have everything they need. For this reason we have a suggestion box where animals

can voice their concerns. Unfortunately, some animals haven't signed their letters, so it is up to us to figure out who wrote the letters so we can address their concerns.

We won't have to do this alone however; we will have some help from our audience members and our resident fish psychologist, Dr. Diver.

Introduce the Diver and have the diver talk a little bit about the GOT.

Again, explain to the audience that we will be reading some of the animals' letters that have not been signed and we will need to figure out who the author is so we can help them with their problems.

Pick a volunteer to be our special guest fish psychologist and have them come to the front and have a seat in one of the director's chairs.

Get to know the volunteer by asking what their name is and where they are from. Give them the laminated answer sheet and explain to them that you will be reading a letter and they are supposed to decide who wrote it from the options given on the sheet. Read them a letter of your choice. The options are below:

Moray Eel

Dear Dr. Gill,

I would like to start off by saying I love your show. However, the real reason I'm writing is for advice about some issues I've been having. My entire life I have been kind of a night owl and to be honest, most days I don't even want to leave the feeding tube. If by chance I venture out, my fellow fish make fun of me because they think I talk to myself and I look different than they do. Please help!

Sincerely,

Bewildered below water

Talking points

- Moray eels are nocturnal animals and here at the aquarium we feed it inside of his tube
- Eels have very different body composition than other fish in the GOT
- They gasp water with their mouth open to help them breathe which makes them look like they are talking to themselves.

Diver

Dearest Dr. Gill,

I can't get enough of your program. Anyway, lately I have felt under a lot of pressure here in the great ocean tank. I am a bit of a clean freak and just can't get this place clean enough. I also feel the pressure to make sure everyone gets fed. Some days I feel like a fish out of water in here. Am I going crazy?

Your avid viewer,

Obsessed While Compressed

Talking points

- Divers have to deal with pressure from the water depth in the GOT
- Divers do the cleaning for us in the GOT
- Divers prepare and feed the fish in the GOT

Shark

My Dear Dr. Gill,

I have been feeling pretty misunderstood lately and would love some advice on what to do. I've noticed that all of my neighbors seem to be avoiding me. All of this neglect is causing side effects that are freaking me out! First, my skin feels like sandpaper, not even moisturizer helps. Secondly, I am extra sensitive to movements and vibrations in the water. And on top of all that, all the stress is making my teeth fall out! I'm telling ya, those TV shows have me all wrong. What should I do?!?

Love your show,

Loose Tooth Larry

Talking points

- One of the top predators in the GOT
- Skin feels like sandpaper because of placoid scales, used for protection and moving body through the water

- Sensitivity due to the Ampullae of Lorenzini ,the pores that help with sensing electrical signals in the water
- Rows of teeth that will replace when one falls out

Porcupine Puffer

Dear Dr. Gill (the only doctor worth watching on TV)

I am writing you to blow off some steam! Lately I've noticed that I have not been as patient with my tankmates as usual. It seems like the smallest things make me blow up at them. I've also had a hard time keeping up with the faster swimming fish like I used to. This could be a result from the added water weight that has come on from all the stress. Don't even get me started about the stretch marks. Please help!

Sincerely,

Your Bloated Bony Fish

Talking points

- Puffer fish will suck in water and blow up as a defense mechanism under stressful conditions
- They do not swim as fast as most of the fish in the GOT because of their smaller fins and plump shape

Sea Turtle

My Wonderful Dr. Gill,

An animal with my peanut-sized brain can only wish to one day be as wise as you. Anyway, the reason I am writing you is to voice some concerns I have. My tankmates say that I sleep way too much. I have been known to nap while holding my breath for up to four hours at a time. When I wake up I am terribly hungry. Last week I ate what I thought was a jellyfish. Unfortunately it turned out to be a grocery bag...talk about indigestion! Please help!
 ????????????

P.S. You got any remedies for dry scaly skin?

Talking Points

- Caretta takes long naps in the GOT that can last up to four hours. She can hold her breath for that long but has to come up for air

- Sea Turtles get confused by plastics in the water and mistake them for jellyfish, a main prey item of theirs.
- Sea turtles do not have teeth but rather a beak that is used to crush hard shelled items of food

Dolphin

Dearest Dr. Gill,

I am a big fan of yours and it pains me to know that I will never be allowed to be in your live studio audience. You see South Carolina, being the progressive state that it is, has made it illegal to have animals like me in captivity. Though this is great for me, I feel like many people have a hard time telling me apart from many other marine animals. Oh yeah, and just to clear the air, that hole in the top of my melon is no fluke. That's how I breathe and boy does it get the looks. All this bottled up anxiety has given me a nervous click.

Sincerely,

Stressed Out Cetacean

P.S. People are still calling me a porpoise...the nerve.

Talking points

- They cant be in the GOT because the state of South Carolina does not allow cetaceans (whales and dolphins) in captivity
- Dolphins are easily confused with other marine animals like sharks and porpoises. Bottlenose dolphins live in our waters where porpoises prefer cooler waters offshore.
- Dolphins are mammals and need ways to breathe. They use a blowhole on the top of their body to breathe at the surface.

Patagonian Toothfish

Darling Dr. Gill –

Let me start off by telling you how fond of your program I am, and I am a pretty picky species so that means something! I spend most of my time in the deeeepest, darkest, coldest waters and honestly am not very social unless I'm in the market for a new relationship. It probably doesn't help my self confidence that I was voted "least attractive" in school... weird because fishermen say I'm a reel catch. Yeah, yeah, I know I'm delicious and all that, but you humans are catching me faster than I can reproduce. I know I'm a pretty big deal and all, but at this rate soon there won't be any of us left. Isn't there a way for all of us to be happy?

Even though the GOT is the deepest tank in North America, it isn't deep enough for this hombre. So, I'll have to continue watching your program from afar.

Forever yours,
Slightly dramatic tooth fishy
P.S. What's with all my different common names?

Talking Points

- Patagonian Toothfish (aka Chilean seabass) is not as sustainable as other popular restaurant menu fish. They do not mate as frequently as many other, more sustainable options
- Chilean seabass is a fairly unattractive fish but fishermen still target them because of their high prices in restaurants.
- Chilean seabass cannot live in the GOT for 2 reasons, 1. They are not native to SC like the other residents of our tank. 2. They prefer very deep and dark water and the GOT will not suffice.

After you have read the letter, ask the volunteer to choose from the answer sheet which animal wrote the letter. After they come up with their answer, ask Dr. Diver to confirm whether or not they were right. Have the audience give them a round of applause and allow the diver to talk a little bit about that particular animal.

Three to four letters per show is probably plenty. In the summer, it is good if the shows last about 20 minutes total (Intro, Body and Conclusion).

Body (subthemes): The subthemes of this show will be ever changing depending on which letter the educator chooses to read. The main thing to remember is to explain the reasons for the issues brought up in the letters. It is important to make sure that the audience understands that each "condition" is actually a specialized adaptation that is perfectly natural and in many cases, beneficial. The diver can explain many of these while you supplement the answer where it's needed. For example:

Educator reads the sea turtle letter and says– "This one is tough, but I bet you can give us a guess (Volunteer gives his/her guess) How about you guys? How many of you think his/her answer is correct (audience raise hands)? Well, (insert divers name), you are our expert fish psychologist, I bet you know the answer..."

Diver – "Well this letter sounds like it is from the Sea Turtle. You see we have one loggerhead sea turtle in the tank named Caretta and she behaves very typical to a sea turtle you might find out in the wild. While those four hour naps she mentions might sound concerning, she is more than capable of holding her breath for four hours while she sleeps. That's right, she holds her breath because she doesn't breathe underwater

like the other animals in the tank. She has to come up to the surface for air occasionally. All that stuff about plastic bags is pretty concerning too. Sea turtles out in the wild can get pretty confused by plastic objects in the ocean. Those objects look like jellyfish and most species of sea turtle enjoy jellyfish as food. Unfortunately, we get a lot of sea turtles here at the Aquarium who end up in our hospital as a result of trash out in the ocean that they have eaten. ”

Educator – “You heard right ladies and gentleman, Sea turtles have a rough go of it when it comes to trash floating around in their habitat. One way we might avoid all that trash and plastic being in the water is to reduce the amount of trash we use altogether. Maybe get involved in a recycling program or perhaps use reusable bags at the grocery store. All these things can help save sea turtles out in the wild.”

Keep repeating letter reading until 3 or 4 (more or less to fill the time) are done. Some letters are designed to cover conservation topics more in depth, like the toothfish and the sea turtle. Be sure to mention things like SSI and Sea turtle Hospital, as well as other topics as they come up.

Conclusion: Once letters are read, have audience give volunteers a round of applause (Have volunteers sit down. You can give them a megalodon shark tooth if you would like and if we have them available) and thank the audience for joining us for this week’s rendition of Dr. Gill. Be sure to thank the diver for his time as a special guest. Give a special thanks to our members in the audience, Thanks for your support. If you’d like to become a member come on up and see me. Have a great day everyone and come back for another taping of Dr. Gill. Remember, (insert conservation statement)!!!” Choose one that fits your earlier conservation message. You could say:

“Remember, help us protect sea turtles by picking up trash!”

“Remember, help us protect sea turtles by turning off beach front lights!”

“Remember, help us protect sea turtles and fill in holes at the beach!”

“Remember, make good seafood choices and come get a SSI brochure!”