

## SC Aquarium Public Program Worksheet

(Adapted from NAI, Certified Interpretive Guide Training workbook)

**Your Name:** Kristen and Travis (May 2019)

**Program Title:** Great Ocean Heroes (11:00)

**Theme:** Each ocean animal has a specific role in protecting a healthy marine ecosystem.

### PROGRAM OUTLINE

#### **Introduction:**

Welcome guests to the SCA, introduce yourself and ask the audience where they're from. Let them know the G.O.T is the largest exhibit in the Aquarium with roughly 550 animals that call it home. Today, we will be meeting one of our divers and ocean heroes that live in the GOT.

**Educator:** Hello Diver \_\_\_\_, how is the weather inside of the tank?

**Diver:** Hey there! The weather is great in here! \*insert temp\*

**Educator:** Sounds pretty nice. How deep is that tank you're swimming in?

**Diver:** The Great Ocean Tank is the deepest tank in North America at 42 feet deep. I am currently about 27 feet deep in the GOT (bottom of big window). Because of the tank being so deep, we are able to show over 40 different species native to South Carolina.

**Educator:** That's a whole lot of fish. Did you know that some of the animals who live in this tank aren't just animals? They're also ocean superheroes!

**Diver:** Whoa... You mean they fight crimes?

**Educator:** Well... not quite. They all play important roles in the ocean and make huge positive impacts on their ecosystem! Today, I'm dressed like my favorite ocean superhero - Coral! It provides a habitat for all kinds of other animals, creating one of the most diverse ecosystems on the planet!

**Diver:** Here in the Great Ocean Tank we actually don't have any coral. Our "coral" is made out of gunnite, a kind of concrete! But I think it would be fun to get some people up here to dress like the other superheroes who do live here in the GOT.

\*\*\* You will need a total of at least 3 helpers to dress up as superheroes\*\*\*

### **Shark**

Dress up items: superman cape, dorsal fin and staff

**Educator:** I'm having a hard time telling if our first superhero is a dolphin or shark based on the grey dorsal fin and superman cape. Audience do think our first hero is a dolphin or shark?  
*Audience responds.* Who is our first superhero of the GOT?

**Diver:** Our first superhero of the GOT is the shark. In the state of South Carolina zoos and aquariums are not allowed to have animals like whales and dolphins in human care, but you can see the Bottlenose dolphins in the Charleston Harbor outside the building.

**Educator:** That's cool that we can see dolphins in our waterways in Charleston, but wouldn't sharks be considered super villains of the ocean?

**Diver:** No they are very good superheroes to have in the ocean. They are the apex predators in the ocean, they help with keeping fish populations healthy by eating both sick and injured fish before they could harm other fish. It is also a myth that sharks need to constantly feed in the wild, and it is simply not true. In the wild sharks eat meals only 2-3 times a month.

**Educator:** I'm glad to know that sharks are definitely superheroes, not villainous eating machines. Can you tell us how many sharks are in the GOT and how we feed all of them?

**Diver-**Tell audience there are 11 sharks (talk about current number and species) and how we tong feed the sharks 3 time a week. (Educator will demonstrate using the volunteer)

**Educator-** It is good to know our sharks are well fed so that they can be good tank mates.

### **Sea Turtle**

Dress up items: superman cape and shell shield and umbrella hat

**Educator:** This next superhero is a favorite here at the South Carolina Aquarium. Do we have anyone here today who really likes sea turtles who might want to dress up as our next hero? (*call up volunteer and give them cape/shield*)

**Diver:** It seems like we have a lot of sea turtle fans here today! Here at the aquarium, we're also big fans of our local sea turtles. Our sea turtle hospital plays a big role in helping out sick and injured turtles from our local waters. But what is it that makes them superheroes?

**Educator:** Well, let's put it this way... How many of you out in the audience are reeeeeally really passionate about hagfish?! (*show laminated picture and pause*) Nobody, right? There are so many organisms in the ocean like these fish that play important roles, but they're not very nice to look at. On the other hand, everybody loves sea turtles! They're what we call an umbrella species. (*put umbrella hat on the volunteer*) Diver, can you tell us what an umbrella species is?

**Diver:** Just like an umbrella keeps everything underneath it shielded from the rain, an umbrella species helps protect all of the other organisms in its environment. When we do things to help out our sea turtles, whether we realize it or not, we're protecting everything else that lives in their habitat as well, even those hagfish!

**Educator:** There are a lot of things that we can do to help protect our sea turtles that can also help out our oceans. Can you tell us a couple things we can do to keep our oceans a safe habitat for our sea turtles?

**Diver:** One of the biggest impacts we can have is by reducing the use of single-use plastics. For example, you can use reusable shopping bags and water bottles. We also want to be really mindful of how we treat our beaches, especially during nesting season. During the summer, our local sea turtles come up to our beaches to lay their eggs, so we want to make sure to knock down any sand castles and fill in any holes so that they can make their way safely back to the ocean.

**Educator:** Those are all great things we can do to help sea turtle off our coast, and we have reusable bags like this one for sale in the gift shop (*tote can be purchased at info desk*) if you are interested. Just like our sea turtle finds its way back out to the ocean, let's have our volunteer find their way back to the audience and give them a round of applause!

### **Porkfish**

Dress up items: superman cape, mask and toilet bowl cleaner

**Educator:** Our next superhero is not as well known, but they still play a vital role in maintaining a healthy ocean. Do we have any other volunteers that would like to dress up as our next hero? (call up volunteer and have them put on yellow cape and mask)

**Educator:** It looks like our next hero is an animal that is yellow with black eye mask. I see a fish in the tank next to us (rocky reef) that looks similar... what fish hero are we talking about here?

**Diver:** Yes, Porkfish are ocean heroes. Despite their small size, groups of Porkfish act as the car washes of the ocean to help clean other animals. They will eat algae and parasites that grow on other species of fish, sharks and on occasion sea turtles. Porkfish have even been known to clean left over food stuck from the mouth of other animals.

**Educator:** That sounds like a super important job. For my superhero that joined us today, I have a brush to give you that will help you fight against algae, parasites, and left over food. \*Give volunteer toilet brush\*

**Educator:** Do we feed the Porkfish in any special way, or do they get all the food they need from what they clean off their tank mates here in the GOT?

**Diver:** Besides eating what they clean off other animals, we also feed them food from the yellow chum-bucket. For all the animals that live in the deeper part of the GOT like the reef area, we will drop these chum buckets filled with food 25 feet deep into the tank. (Elaborate on other methods of feedings and food types)

**Educator:** I'm glad to hear that we have a way to feed the animals that live deeper in the tank so that everyone has a chance to eat.

### **Diver**

Dress up items: BCD vest, lionfish tub

\*with the diver superhero, we can either call up a volunteer to dress in BCD vest and hold lionfish tube, or we can just talk about the diver as the hero and skip the last volunteer – keep an eye on the time and make the appropriate decision\*

**Educator:** Diver \_\_\_\_\_, I have a feeling you might be pretty familiar with this last superhero. The last hero we're going to talk about is... drumroll please! Our SCUBA diver! Did you know you are a great ocean hero?

**Diver:** I mean, that's what my mom has always told me, but what do you think makes me an ocean hero?

**Educator:** You're actually super in a bunch of ways! In case you guys didn't know, all of our divers here at the aquarium are volunteers. They come in at least a couple of times per month and are responsible for cleaning this giant tank, feeding 60 lbs of food to the 550 animals in the tank, and doing all of these shows! As if that wasn't enough, they're also an important part of one of our conservation initiatives offshore. Can you tell us a little bit about our reef research program?

**Diver:** Well, some of our divers travel offshore to artificial reefs to remove invasive lionfish. Lionfish act as villains in our oceans outcompeting native fish for food they need to survive. Since there are no native predators of these South Pacific invaders, only divers (or humans) can come to the rescue of our local reefs by removing them!

**Educator:** **\*\*At some point in the summer, we will have signage up in OFT about the MPA lionfish project - when that is finished, we can direct people to get more info on that side of the gallery if they are interested.\*\*** Thank you so much for everything you do to help out the animals both in the tank here at the Aquarium and out in our oceans! I also wanted to thank our audience for coming to visit us today. We are a non-profit, so your ticket price goes right back into helping care for our animals, both within our walls and out in the wild. You guys are our heroes!

### **Conclusion:**

I would like to call our Great Ocean Heroes back up in front of the tank. \*Thank the superheroes for the great work they do maintain a healthy ocean ecosystem!\* We are glad that you joined us to meet our superheroes of the Great Ocean Tank! There will be a daily Turtle Talk in ZFSTR at 11:30pm if you would like to learn more about our Sea Turtle Care Center. Let the audience know that you will be sticking around for questions after the show, and that our diver superhero will be here for pictures.