

## SC Aquarium Public Program Worksheet

(Adapted from NAI, Certified Interpretive Guide Training workbook)

Program Title: Meet the Diver (a basic dive show)

**Theme:** Divers have an important job at SCA.

**Sub-Themes:**

- 1) Equipment 2) Cleaning 3) Feeding 4) Reef Research

**Audience:** General public: adults, families, school groups, locals, and tourists

**Goals:**

- To inform the audience of the importance of our volunteer divers
- To highlight animals living in the GOT

**Objectives:**

- Guests will be able to name two ways the volunteer divers help take care of the exhibit and the animals in it.
- 60% of the guests will stay for the entire program.

**How will you measure your objectives?**

- Observe the audience reaction. Do they smile, laugh, leave the show, etc.?
- Count the number of guests at the start and end of the program.

**Materials Needed:**

- Yellow food bucket
- Stuffed animal puppets (shark, eel, fish, sea turtle)
- White milk crate
- Eel pictures and x-rays
- Scrub brushes
- Special acrylic cleaning pad
- PVC pipe
- Shark tongs
- Milk jug (optional)
- Reusable bag (optional)
- Plastic bag in water (optional)
- Flippers

- Dive Mask
- BCD
- Regulator

## PROGRAM OUTLINE

### Introduction:

Welcome guests to the SCA, introduce yourself and ask the audience where they're from. Get to know your diver (how long have they been diving here/ favorite place to dive/ etc)

Let them know the GOT is the largest exhibit in the Aquarium with roughly 550 animals and about 40 different species all native to SC's ocean and coastal waters.

### Body (sub-themes)

- **Tank Basics:** Ask diver questions about the exhibit they are swimming in. Be sure to cover # of animals (550, 40 different species), depth (42 feet, deepest tank in North America), amount of water (385,000 gallons), window thickness (bring a volunteer up for a high five with the diver to demonstrate the 18 inches that separate their hands). Acrylic holds water back, but doesn't magnify and distort like glass, so the fish we see swimming by are actual size.
- **Diver Jobs:** To care for a tank so large takes a lot of helpers! There are over 80 *volunteer* divers currently. These divers dedicate their time to support the SCA mission. Divers generally do 4-5 dives during their 8 hour shift.
  - **Equipment:** Special equipment allows divers to stay underwater like air tanks, regulator (reduces air pressure from the tank to comfortable breathing levels), BCD (Buoyancy Compensator Device fills with air), mask, fins, wetsuit.
  - **Cleaning:** Ask diver where the water comes from (Answer: The Cooper River. It is collected and filtered in the basement before entering the GOT. Once in the GOT, it is continuously being filtered.) Ask the diver what else they do to clean the exhibit and how often they do it. Have them talk about cleaning while you show the scrub brushes to the audience.
  - **Feeding:** On average, 60 pounds of food is prepared daily for the GOT. Various tools and methods are used to get the right food to the right animals. Ask an audience member to come up and help demonstrate at least one of the feeding methods.
    - **Sea Turtle:** Use small tongs and white bin, fed 3 x per week, target fed salmon, mackerel, and lettuce

- **Eel:** 1 nocturnal fish, swims into large PVC pipe at the corner of the tank to retrieve piece of mackerel, only fish that can swim backwards out
- **Sharks:** currently 8 sharks, 4 species (nurse, blacknose, sandbar, sand tiger), fed 2-3 salmon and 12-15 mackerel (total) 3 x per week
- **Fish:** smaller, less aggressive fish have their food delivered in a chum bucket. These buckets are lowered into the water and open when divers pull on them from above. The larger schooling fish are broadcast fed- this involves throwing food onto the surface of the water.
- **Educating:** Through the use of special technology- like the full face mask- divers can teach us about their job and the animals they swim with. Ask the divers how they communicate with other divers (demonstrate a dive sign or two).
- **Reef Research Initiative:** If that wasn't enough, our divers also assist with an ongoing research project offshore. Divers are surveying the types of fish found in Marine Protected Areas and removing an invasive species, the lionfish, in certain areas. To learn more about this project and why reefs are so important, please read more on the signage located in this Lower Ocean Gallery.

### **Conclusion:**

Thank you all for coming to learn more about the important role that our scuba divers play. We're a non-profit organization. In fact, government funding accounts for less than 1 % of our budget. Now, in addition to caring of our animals and keeping the lights on, your ticket fee also helps us share these wonders with our community through open access events and free school programs for those in need. Thank you for helping us to connect others with the world of water, wildlife, and wild places. Let's give our diver one more thank you! (announce next show and location)