



FIELD TRIP TOOLKIT

INSPIRE A NEW GENERATION OF CONSERVATIONISTS



South Carolina
Aquarium

Ignite Passion for Water, Wildlife and Wild Places



Spark enthusiasm for conservation of the natural world in your students with a visit to the South Carolina Aquarium. As a class, take an educational journey through South Carolina's diverse habitats while learning what you can do to protect them. From start to finish, interactive exhibits support state standards and inspire STEM education. It's more than just a field trip – it's an opportunity to discover the wonder of water, wildlife and wild places.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I qualify for the group rate?

You must have 10 paid guests to qualify for the group rate.

How do I book a field trip?

Begin your reservation by completing the online inquiry form at scaquarium.org/fieldtripinquiry

When should I book my field trip

Most groups book their reservations anywhere from a month to a year in advance. A minimum of 48 hours notice is preferred, but we can accommodate groups on shorter notice.

How many teachers and chaperones are included with my reservation?

Certified South Carolina teachers receive free admission. Complimentary admission is given to one adult chaperone per 10 students. Additional chaperones are \$15 each. Please note: We highly recommend one chaperone per five students elementary age and younger.

How can I make changes to the number of attendees on my reservation?

Call a customer service center specialist at (843) 577-FISH (3474) to make changes to your reservation details up to one week in advance of your visit.

Where can I park my bus or van?

Free parking is available for buses and motor coaches in the bus lane behind the Aquarium Garage. Vans may park inside the Aquarium Garage. Learn more on page seven.

Will my visit be led by a tour guide?

No, your group's tour will be self-guided at your own pace. Education interpreters throughout the building can help you learn more about the animals and habitats that interest you most. Our Onsite Activities include Scavenger Hunts (available to print at school) as well as Exhibit Activities and Discovery Bins that can be reserved for the day of your visit.

To learn more, visit scaquarium.org/onsiteactivities

How do I reserve Onsite Activities for my visit?

When you call to make your deposit or final payment at (843) 577-FISH(3474), let your customer service center specialist know you want to use a Onsite Activity during your visit.

Frequently Asked Questions

What time should I arrive?

Arrive at least 30 minutes before your reservation time for restroom breaks and orientation.

Does the Aquarium offer special programs and shows?

We host programs throughout the day, from animal enrichment to feedings.

Learn more at scaquarium.org/daily-programs

Do I need to purchase separate tickets to visit Zucker Family Sea Turtle Recovery™?

No. Admission to the entire Aquarium, including Zucker Family Sea Turtle Recovery, is included in your reservation.

Can my group eat lunch at the Aquarium?

Although the Aquarium cannot provide lunches for groups, there are local restaurants that offer boxed lunch delivery. Your class may eat lunch in Liberty Square under Fort Sumter Museum's covered pavillion or in the arrival area of the Aquarium Garage. See page seven for a map of these areas.

Can students visit the gift shop?

Students may peruse the gift shop in small groups with the supervision of a chaperone.

No backpacks are allowed in the gift shop.

Do you offer education programs for groups in the evenings?

Science at Sunset allows your group to explore the Aquarium's exhibits and galleries, learn about our natural world and come face to face with live animals. These programs are highly customizable and great for scout groups working toward badge requirements. To learn more and to check out other opportunities, like sleepovers, visit scaquarium.org/groups

What if my headcount changes the day of arrival?

Deposits and final payments are non-refundable. (Overpayments or cancellations following payment will be held as a credit toward a future reservation for one year.) All chaperones excluded from the final confirmed headcount will be charged general admission upon arrival. Additional students above the confirmed headcount must be paid for via credit card upon arrival.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do you offer specific resources for students with accessibility needs?

All areas of the Aquarium are accessible to wheelchair users, who may use either of two guest elevators to move between floors. If a member of your group has sensory sensitivities, we offer complimentary sensory bag check-out upon entrance. Please contact us prior to your visit should you have a specific accessibility need or request. For more information on all our accessibility resources, please visit scaquarium.org/accessibility

Can students or chaperones use their membership to the South Carolina Aquarium for free admission with the group?

Memberships cannot be used in conjunction with a group visit. Aquarium members wishing to join your party must NOT be included in the group's headcount and are required to reserve separate member tickets under their account online. They are not permitted to partake in the group's check-in process, orientation or handle any Onsite Activities that may be checked out by the group.

How long will my field trip last?

The average field trip experience is around two hours.
Field trips may be booked between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

How do we pay for our trip?

We accept checks by mail and credit card payments over the phone. We are unable to accept purchase orders, ACHs, or third party online payments at this time.

Field Trip Checklist

How to Book

- Book your trip by filling out the Field Trip Inquiry form at scaquarium.org/fieldtripinquiry
- Provide a finalized count of students, teachers, and chaperones no later than 21 days prior to your trip to (843) 577-FISH (3474) or reservations@scaquarium.org
- Submit payment for any changes no later than seven days prior to your trip by contacting the Customer Service Center at (843) 577-FISH (3474).
- Print the Field Trip Toolkit and review it thoroughly. Provide your bus driver with the directions, which are found on page seven.

Arriving at the Aquarium

- Arrive at least 30 minutes prior to your reservation time for restroom breaks and orientation.
- If you are running late, please call (843) 577-FISH (3474) and inform the Aquarium customer service center specialist of your estimated time of arrival.
- When you arrive, unload in the bus lane next to the parking garage and walk toward the Aquarium. One group leader should proceed to the ticket window to finalize group visit details. An Aquarium team member will greet the group in front of the building for a brief orientation before leading you inside.
- Please note: The Aquarium experience is a self-guided tour. We host programs throughout the day, from animal enrichment to feedings. If you have reserved any Onsite Activities, you may pick them up at the Information Desk located to your left as you enter the Aquarium. ID is required.

Useful Links

- Standards-Based Curriculum — Take advantage of teaching opportunities before or after you visit with our standards-based curriculum. Download grade-specific activities at curriculum.scaquarium.org
- Onsite Activities — Multiple options are available to enhance your students' experience. Scavenger Hunts can be found and printed at scaquarium.org/onsiteactivities. Discovery Bins and Exhibit Activities must be reserved in advance by calling our customer service center specialists at (843) 577-FISH (3474).
- Education Outreach — Let the Aquarium come to you with our outreach program, where we bring interactive, hands-on learning to your facility. Each standards-based program includes engaging activities, wildlife artifacts and live animals. For more info, visit scaquarium.org/educationoutreach
- Virtual Field Trips — Visit the Aquarium from the comfort of your classroom by booking a Virtual Field Trip! These engaging programs are highly customizable to fit class curriculum and can be tailored to focus on specific student interests. For more info, visit scaquarium.org/virtualfieldtrips
- Acknowledgement of your reservation and payment of deposit and final balance confirms that you agree to our Group Policies and Procedures, which be found at scaquarium.org/grouppolicies

Directions for Buses and Motor Coaches

These directions have been customized for buses that are restricted in their use of city streets. In order to abide by Charleston tourism laws, it is important that you follow these directions.

From I-26 East

1. Take I-26 to the end and follow the signs to Exit 221B (Meeting Street/Visitors Center/Downtown).
2. Merge right onto Meeting Street approximately 10 blocks to Calhoun Street.
3. Turn left onto Calhoun Street and continue to Washington Street.
4. Turn left onto Washington Street and follow the signs for motor coach and bus pick-up and drop-off area.

From Highway 17 North (West Ashley)

1. Take Highway 17 North across the Ashley River Bridge, and follow the signs to Calhoun Street.
2. Turn left onto Calhoun Street.
3. Stay on Calhoun Street approximately 15 blocks to Washington Street.
4. Turn left onto Washington Street and follow the signs for motor coach and bus pick-up and drop-off area.

From Highway 17 South (Mount Pleasant)

1. Follow Highway 17 South across the Cooper River.
2. Take the East Bay Street / South Carolina Aquarium exit.
3. At the light, turn left onto East Bay Street and follow to Calhoun Street.
4. Turn left onto Calhoun Street and continue to Washington Street.
5. Turn left onto Washington Street, and follow the signs for the motor coach and bus pick-up and drop-off area.

Please be prepared for inclement weather. Your group will walk approximately 100 yards from the drop-off area to the Aquarium.

Buses and motor coaches may park in the bus lane. Vans may park in the Aquarium Garage. Vans under 6 feet 7 inches must park in the Aquarium Garage. Rates are \$1 per half hour. The Aquarium can not validate parking vouchers.

Visiting tour vehicles must secure a permit from the City of Charleston. Permit applications are available at scaquarium.org/parkingpermit



Map Key

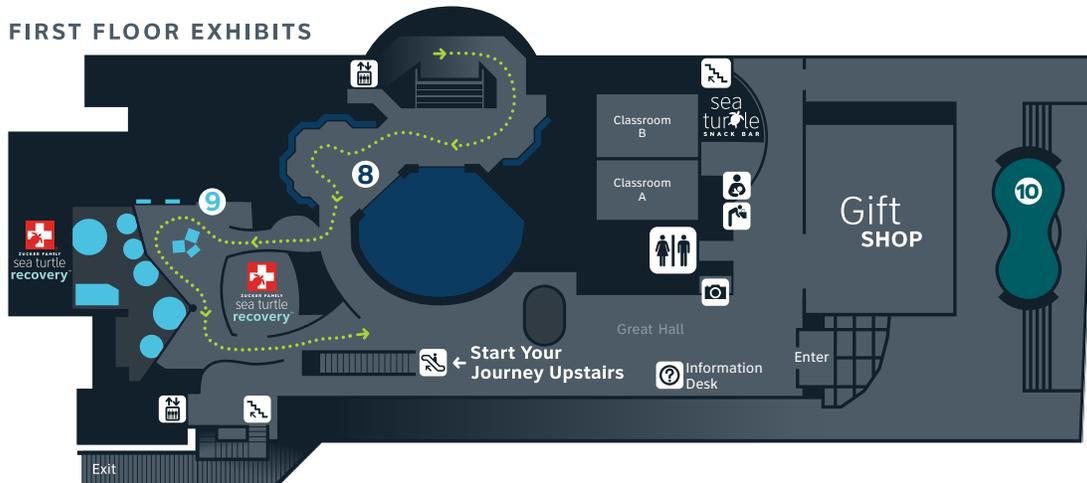
★ - Lunch areas

Aquarium Floor Map

SECOND FLOOR EXHIBITS



FIRST FLOOR EXHIBITS



Restrooms are located on the first floor across from the Gift Shop. Need assistance? Stop by the Information Desk for help. The Nursing Station is located on the first floor adjacent to the classrooms.



Smoking (including e-cigarettes), balloons and concealed weapons are prohibited throughout the South Carolina Aquarium.

1 MOUNTAIN FOREST

Begin your journey from the mountains to the sea with a bald eagle and playful river otters.

2 PIEDMONT

Visit the rich and varied aquatic life supported by streams, rivers and artificial reservoirs.

3 COASTAL PLAIN

Visit the Trading Post and learn about reptiles and amphibians that call South Carolina home.

4 KIDS COAST

Explore and discover the natural world through playful, hands-on science simulations.

5 SALTMARSH AVIARY

See coastal birds up close and observe terrapins and other marsh creatures in their natural habitat.

6 TOUCH TANK

Visit our Touch Tank and encounter stingrays, sea urchins and more.

7 COAST

From seahorses to lionfish to a goliath grouper, meet the creatures that inhabit our coastal waters.

8 OCEAN

Pretend you're a scuba diver in the 42-foot-deep Great Ocean Tank. See a loggerhead sea turtle, sharks and more than 500 fish!

ZUCKER FAMILY 9 SEA TURTLE RECOVERY™

Experience the rescue, rehabilitation and release of sea turtles. Visit our current patients and practice caring for sick and injured turtles through augmented reality.

10 THE SHALLOWS

Come fingers to fins with rays at this 20,000-gallon outdoor touch tank overlooking the Charleston Harbor.

Support the South Carolina Aquarium



- **Adopt a Loggerhead as a Class**

Raise funds as a class to symbolically adopt a loggerhead. Your donation will help provide exceptional care for animals here at the Aquarium as well as help protect water, wildlife and wild places.

Learn more at scaquarium.org/adopt

- **Become Citizen Scientists**

Learn about science and make a positive environmental impact by removing litter from your favorite places. Download the South Carolina Aquarium Citizen Science app (available on the App Store or Google Play) to learn how to conduct a litter sweep and how to contribute data on the debris your class observes in your local environment. Then, explore the app's database and graphing tools to analyze your class' conservation impact! Learn more at scaquarium.org/citizenscience