



Audubon Aquarium  
of the Americas  
*A Facility of Audubon Nature Institute*

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **Washed Ashore Sculptures Land at Audubon Aquarium of the Americas and Audubon**

**(New Orleans, La.)** – In celebration of World Oceans Day, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas is announcing its latest conservation initiative: “Washed Ashore: Art to Save the Sea.” This limited-time special exhibition features larger-than-life aquatic animal sculptures crafted from plastic trash collected from beaches and designed to educate a global audience about the threat that plastic pollution poses for the ecosystems of the world’s oceans and waterways.

Made entirely of debris removed from Pacific Coast beaches, the “Washed Ashore” traveling exhibit offers visitors a powerful, visual reality of the proliferation of pollution in the world’s waterways through marine animal representations that use thousands of pieces of plastic in every color of the rainbow.

Examples include sculptures of a 10-foot Sea Jelly, a 10-foot-long leaping Marlin named “Flash,” a 1,500-pound Great White Shark named “Greta” and 12 other large aquatic animals. As part of the exhibit, Sebastian James the Tufted Puffin and SeeMore the Sea Lion Pup will be on display at Audubon Zoo.

“Plastics have entered into all marine habitats and every level of the ocean food chain,” said Rich Toth, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas managing director.

“Whales, fish, zooplankton and numerous other animals are eating our trash. Approximately 80 percent of marine debris comes from land-based sources – streets to streams to rivers to oceans.”

Toth said the Washed Ashore artworks can act as a powerful messenger.

“As our guests look closely at these sea life creations,” he said, “we hope that they are motivated to learn more about the tragic issue of marine debris in a way they can embrace. At Audubon, we’ve committed to reducing single-use plastics by phasing out plastic straws from concessions and plastic bags from gift shops - more than 200,000 individual pieces of single-use plastics since 2017.”

Angela Haseltine Pozzi, Artistic Director and Lead Artist for the Washed Ashore Project, said "It is a great privilege to bring the Washed Ashore exhibit to Audubon Zoo and Aquarium and to partner with such a historically significant organization which has conservation at its core. Working with the Audubon team, we hope to convey the powerful message about how our everyday choices affect plastic pollution in the ocean and waterways and do it in a way that will engage all ages."

Pozzi added: "Having our marine debris sculptures next to the animals affected by this tragedy is a great opportunity for people to stop and think about how they can make a difference. We are also very excited to have such a significant exhibit next to the Gulf and the Mississippi!"

The not-for-profit Washed Ashore Project was created in 2010 after Pozzi witnessed mounds of plastic trash piling up on formerly pristine beaches along her native Oregon coast. She organized all-volunteer cleanups and used the collected trash – washed and sorted – to create massive, realistic sculptures of sea animals most affected by the pollution.

Since the project began, more than 10,000 volunteers have participated in the project, collecting, washing and hand stitching parts of sculptures. More than 42,000 pounds of plastic pollution have been collected from over 300 miles of beaches and turned into more than 70 sculptures that tour the country.

The exhibit will be included with a general admission ticket to the Aquarium of the Americas. Sculptures will be placed throughout the Aquarium through April 30, 2019.

### **PLASTIC HORROR STORIES**

- About 300 million pounds of plastic is produced globally each year and less than 10 percent of that is recycled.
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration estimates that 80 percent of the debris found on beaches comes from land via rivers and waterways.
- Every year, mankind adds millions of pounds of plastic into our oceans that collect in gyres, which are large, slow-spinning vortexes of ocean currents caused by trade winds and the earth's rotation.
- There are five major gyres in the world's oceans that collect, churn and disperse millions of tons of plastic pollution from every continent.
- Sea birds, whales, sea turtles and other marine life die regularly after ingesting plastic or becoming entangled in it.
- Plastic pollution has spread into all marine habitats and every level of the food chain.
- According to a report by the World Economic Forum, at the current rate, we can expect to have more plastic than fish, by weight, in the world's oceans by 2050.

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**Audubon Nature Institute operates a family of museums, parks and research facilities dedicated to celebrating the wonders of nature. Through innovative live animal exhibits, education programs, and scientific discovery, Audubon makes a meaningful contribution to preserving wildlife for the future. Audubon Nature Institute flagships include Audubon Park, Audubon Zoo, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, Entergy Giant Screen Theater, Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium, Audubon Louisiana Nature Center, Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center, Woldenberg Riverfront Park and Audubon Wilderness Park. Ron Forman is President and CEO of Audubon Nature Institute.**

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