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NATIONAL AQUARIUM IN BALTIMORE TAKES CONSERVATION 'BEYOND THE BOARDWALK' IN OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND

Week-long Event to be Held July 9 – 14

Baltimore, Md. (June 22, 2006)--The National Aquarium in Baltimore will lead Beyond the Boardwalk, a week-long celebration of the ocean and its inhabitants, from July 9 through 14, 2006.

Previously called Ocean Awareness Days, this year's celebration will include events to connect the public with the health of the ocean and the creatures that live in it. The activities will also serve as a way to inform people of what they can do at home to lessen their impact on ocean wildlife.

A recent Nature Conservancy study found that Americans are spending less time visiting national parks, and more time doing indoor activities, such as watching television. The result is a nation that is less in touch with nature and conservation efforts. Knowing this, the National Aquarium in Baltimore is committed to showing people the importance of learning and caring about nature. Beyond the Boardwalk is a great way to show children and adults how to enjoy nature anywhere; not just at the beach, but beyond the boardwalk.

"The week's events will allow the public many chances to participate in hands-on activities and help protect our beaches" said Jenn Dittmar, acting stranding coordinator of the Aquarium's Marine Animal Rescue Program, and event co-coordinator. "Aquarium staff and volunteers will share artifacts and lead activities with the public at all of our events. Each event illustrates the importance of wildlife conservation and helps people get closer to nature here and at home."

During the week, the Aquarium will lead the state's annual dolphin count and other events including a *Maryland Coastal Bays canoe trip; a *cruise on the Discovery, where people can learn about Assateague from the water; and an Ocean City Bonfire, where Chief Sewell Fitzhugh of the Nause-Waiwash tribe will share stories and songs about the importance of conserving the Earth's resources.

The celebration will conclude at Seacrets Bar and Grille on Friday from 5-9pm, where all cover charges during these hours will be donated to the National Aquarium in Baltimore's Marine Animal Rescue Program.

The National Aquarium in Baltimore, a non-profit organization, is Baltimore's leading attraction, hosting more than 1.6 million visitors per year. The Aquarium's mission is to connect people with aquatic life in order to create a better world for both. It's dedicated to education and conservation through more than a dozen programs that serve the environment and the community.

Schedule for Beyond the Boardwalk:

Sunday, July 9	Monday, July 10	Tuesday, July 11	Wednesday, July 12	Thursday, July 13	Friday, July 14
<i>Sundaes in the Park</i> 6-8pm Northside Park – 127 th & Bay	<i>Reach the Beach</i> 10am-3pm The Commander Hotel- 14 th Street, and Bethany Beach Boardwalk Stage	<i>Family Fun Day</i> 10am-3pm Assateague	<i>Dolphin Count</i> 9am-12pm 10 sites along MD's shore between the DE and VA state lines	<i>Reach the Beach</i> 10am-3pm Holiday Inn- 67 th Street	<i>It's a Seacret!</i> 2-5pm Seacrets Bar and Grille- 49 th Street & Bay All ages <i>Seacrets Fundraiser</i> 5-9pm Seacrets Bar and Grille -All cover charges between 5pm and 9pm benefit the Aquarium's MARP. Staff will lead fun activities and give away prizes!
	<i>Chill Out with the Aquarium</i> 7-9:30pm Dumser's Dairyland Drive-In – 49 th Street	<i>*Canoe Trip</i> 4-6pm Assateague National Park \$10 ticket plus \$10 entrance to park	<i>*Cruise on the Discovery</i> Early Evening Leaves from O.C. \$15	<i>Bonfire</i> Sunset (around 9 pm) N. Division Street and the beach	

* Reservations encouraged, call for details.

For more information on these activities, call the Beyond the Boardwalk phone line at 410-371-9802.

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