Take your family and friends on a TROPICAL HOLIDAY ADVENTURE

PLUS: Exhibit news, Our Blue Planet Speaker Series, Serve & Protect update and more
Ranger Rick’s Backyard Safari has a whole new cast of friendly animals waiting to greet visitors during the Aquarium’s “Tropical Holiday Adventure.” Brightly colored birds will put a smile on faces as they free-fly through the gallery or entertain from the main stage. “I think everyone will fall in love with “Monte,” our new, keel-billed toucan,” said senior aviculturist Amy Graves. “He has a beautiful beak and spectacular plumage.”

It will be quite a contrast to compare Monte to his toucan cousin “Squirt,” the Aquarium’s green aracari. Squirt made his Tropical Holiday debut two years ago. Since that time he’s learned how to catch fruit in mid-air and fly from perch to perch through the Ranger Rick™ gallery. From beak tip to tail, Squirt is only about as long as Monte’s beak! “In spite of their size difference, there are a lot of similarities in their behavior,” said Graves. “Toucans do a lot of hopping and short flights. And both of these guys love fruit, especially blueberries.”

Squirt and Monte have several new bird friends. The Aquarium has now added to the aerial show in River Journey “Daisy,” a trumpeter hornbill, “Butch & Sundance,” a pair of red-fronted macaws and “Dodger & Fagin,” a pair of pink-crested cockatoos. They join “Boo” the African gray parrot who is another crowd favorite. “We also have many other animals from the tropics like the amazing Brazilian rainbow boa,” said Graves. “She shimmers in the light as if she was covered in glitter.”

The Caribbean vibe continues in Ocean Journey where guests can feed stingrays and guitarfish, bask in the warmth of the Butterfly Garden and talk to tropically clad divers as they float among colorful reef fish several times each day. New this year will be weekend appearances by SCUBA Claus who will be diving in the Aquarium’s Lake Nickajack exhibit. Look for the jolly old elf among the paddlefish, sturgeon and catfish at 11AM on Saturdays and Sundays beginning November 19th.
### DAILY SCHEDULE

**Nov. 18, 2011 - Jan. 1, 2012**

The Aquarium is closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Help keepers feed stingrays &amp; guitarfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Tropical Cove, Stingray Bay, Level 4</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Surf’s Up Penguin Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Penguins’ Rock, Level 2</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Join keepers to release butterflies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Butterfly Garden, Level 4</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 a.m.</td>
<td>Talk to tropical “Santa” divers and learn about sharks and colorful reef fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Join keepers to release butterflies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Butterfly Garden, Level 4</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Surf’s Up Penguin Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Penguins’ Rock, Level 2</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 p.m.</td>
<td>Talk to tropical “Santa” divers and learn about sharks and colorful reef fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Talk to tropical “Santa” divers and learn about sharks and colorful reef fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 p.m.</td>
<td>Surround yourself with butterflies and meet crested wood partridges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Butterfly Garden, Level 4</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Special Presentation: Tropical Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Ranger Rick’s Backyard Safari</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11 a.m.</td>
<td>Animal Adventure Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Ranger Rick’s Backyard Safari</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Enjoy the playful antics of river otters during “enrichment” time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Cove Forest, Level 4</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Animal Adventure Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Animal Adventure Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 p.m.</td>
<td>Discover amazing seahorse facts with an Aquarium expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Discover amazing seahorse facts with an Aquarium expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Seahorse Gallery, Level A</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Above: While she doesn’t have the bright plumage and beak of the keel-billed toucan (opposite page), “Daisy” the trumpeter hornbill will amaze guests with her aerial wizardry. Hornbills are very intelligent, social birds native to southern Africa.

**Special Weekend Diving Appearances by Santa Claus:** The jolly old elf will become “St. Nick-a-jack” when he dons SCUBA gear in the Lake Nickajack exhibit. Look for him at 11 AM on Saturdays and Sundays from Nov. 19th – Dec. 24th. After that, he’ll be a pretty busy fella.

Tropical Holiday Adventure is presented by...
Want to enjoy tropical diving year-round?

The Aquarium is seeking certified SCUBA divers who would like to take the plunge with us. Come face to face with paddlefish, gars, turtles, sharks and schools of beautiful saltwater species. And soon, you’ll be among the first to dive with the new additions in the River Giants exhibit. Apply online by Friday, January 27th, 2012. Applicants must be available to dive on a weekday and be able to attend both of the following meetings: Orientation & Written Test: Thursday, February 9, 2012 @ 5:30 pm, and a Pool Test: Saturday, February 25th. For qualifications and to apply online, go to: tnaqua.org/GetInvolved/VolunteerOpportunities/VolunteerDiver.aspx
Getting to Know “Demon Fish”

By Susannah Taylor, NOAA grant coordinator

The first time you met a shark face to face, it may have been in front of the Secret Reef tank in Ocean Journey. You might have been fascinated by its swim patterns or fearful of its fierce reputation. But after learning more about these creatures, one “unravels the myths and misconceptions associated with sharks.” So says Juliet Eilperin, environmental reporter for the Washington Post and recent speaker at the Tennessee Aquarium’s Our Blue Planet Speaker Series.

Author of Demon Fish: Travels Through the Hidden World of Sharks, Eilperin has traveled across the globe researching and exploring the roles sharks play in different cultures. In America, there is a “killer” reputation associated with sharks, even though humans pose more of a threat to sharks than they do to humans. While there are typically less than 10 human fatalities worldwide per year caused by sharks, humans kill between 80 and 100 million sharks annually. Their misleading reputations can distract us from the very serious threats that sharks face.

“The greatest threat sharks face today is overfishing,” says Eilperin. “In some cases it’s intentional—fishing operations target them for their fins, which are used in the Asian delicacy shark’s fin soup—and in other instances it’s accidental, when sharks are caught in nets and on hooks aimed at tuna and swordfish. Humans are catching tens of millions of sharks each year, and these populations cannot sustain that kind of fishing pressure.”

At the top of the ocean food chain, sharks are critical in maintaining normal populations of fish lower on the food chain, especially mid-level predators. “Sharks play a critical role in maintaining the ocean’s natural balance, which ultimately can influence the fish folks eat in Tennessee,” says Eilperin. By learning more about the truth about sharks, you are taking the first step to help shark conservation efforts worldwide.

Eilperin has been the latest speaker brought to the Aquarium through a generous grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. As the grant concludes in 2012, we invite you to look forward to the final two speakers in the series. Famed ocean explorer, Bob Ballard, will join our series on February 16, 2012, and environmental advocate and National Geographic Emerging Explorer, Alexandra Cousteau, will close the series on September 6, 2012.
A Travelin’ Ray Finds a New Place to Stay

By Rob Mottice, senior aquarist

It’s always fun to work with a new species for the first time, so I was excited to learn a roughtail stingray was coming to the Tennessee Aquarium.

This particular female was born on exhibit at the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center in Virginia Beach, VA. “Her mother had been bitten by one of our sharks and was in recovery when she pupped,” said Beth Firchau, Curator of Fishes & Dive Operations Supervisor at the Virginia Aquarium.

The newborn ray was kept off exhibit until she was big enough to be placed on display in the Virginia Aquarium’s ray touch tank. But roughtail rays grow quickly. In the wild, this species can grow to a width of more than seven feet and tip the scales at more than 660 pounds. So when this ray outgrew the touch tank, she needed a larger, more permanent home. That’s when the Virginia Aquarium contacted us about donating this creature.

Roughtail rays come by their scientific name honestly. Dasyatis centroura is Greek in origin. Dasyatis is derived from the Greek word “dasys,” which means rough, and centroura from the Greek word “centoro,” which means pricker. Their long, slender and whip-like tails contain numerous rows of small thorns and are armed with three spines. Rays use these spines only as a defense mechanism if stepped on or attacked by predators. While the tail spines can inject venom, the toxin is rarely life threatening to humans.

And at this stage in her life, this ray’s tail distinguishes her from the other stingrays in the Secret Reef exhibit. Her body is only about three and a half feet wide now, but her tail is nearly twice as long as she is wide.

In the wild, roughtail stingrays prey upon bottom-dwelling fishes such as scup and sand lances, as well as cephalopods and crustaceans. The Aquarium’s roughtail ray will be fed a diet of squid, clam, shrimp, smelt and capelin. But training her to eat on exhibit is challenging.

The southern stingrays in the Secret Reef, which are also members of the same family as roughtails, are trained to eat at a particular spot near the surface at one end of the tank. We implemented this feeding technique to make certain the other fish would not out-compete the rays for food.

Aquarists Jake Steventon and Danny Alexander were in charge of similar training of our roughtail ray in the Secret Reef’s Introduction Pool. “We used both visual and audible cues to train the roughtail stingray,” said aquarist Jake Steventon. The aquarists attach a white lid from a five gallon bucket to a rope placed in the water at feeding time to show the ray where to go to receive food. “We also have a rattle, made from a jar of nuts and bolts that has been attached to the end of a pole that serves as a dinner bell,” said Steventon. “We made it a rattle because we wanted this dinner bell to sound completely different from the banging sound of Oscar’s target pole to keep from confusing the turtle.”

Although it doesn’t sound high-tech, the procedure is effective. Aquarists refer to this as “bridge training.” The visual cue is at first reinforced with both the aroma of seafood in the water and then the sound of the rattle as the food is taken. “We’ll know the training is complete when we can consistently place the visual target in the water, shake the dinner bell and the ray quickly responds without any food in the water,” said Steventon.

With plenty to eat and room to grow, this roughtail ray may become one large, and very popular, animal guests see at the Aquarium.
Meet EVERETT KERR
Volunteer & Conservation Society Member

By Judy Powell, director of development

I recently had the pleasure of speaking with Everett Kerr, a native of Chattanooga, who has been a volunteer at the Aquarium since 1992 and is an annual donor to our Conservation Society. Mr. Kerr worked for TVA for 39 years and retired in 1980. We sat down for a Q&A in the Volunteer Resource Center after he completed his morning duties as a horticulture volunteer, tending plants and trees in the Cove Forest exhibit.

Powell: You have been a member and volunteer here since we opened. What prompted you to become involved with the Aquarium?

Kerr: There was so much publicity about the Aquarium before it materialized. Some of it good, some of it negative. I wanted to look at the positive. The more I looked at it, the more I felt I would like to be involved. When I heard about the volunteer program, the horticulture job opportunity looked appealing. I’m not a big gardener at home, but I like the outdoors. When I’m watering in the Cove Forest gallery, the birds come and sit in a nearby tree and preen. That’s what makes my job worthwhile, just little things like that.

What do you tell people about the Aquarium when they come to visit or are new to town?
Don’t leave Chattanooga without seeing the Aquarium! That’s the first thing I tell people. It’s the most exciting thing for children and adults. My next door neighbor’s grandson and his family were here a few weeks ago. The children were ages 9 and 11 and just had a ball. I encourage everyone I know to come back and see what’s new. It’s not the same Aquarium [from visit to visit].

I understand you are part of Chattanooga’s Big Brothers/Big Sisters program and bring your little brother to the Aquarium. What’s his experience like?
When my little brother comes, he has to read everything. He doesn’t just walk through. He’s a pretty bright boy to start with. He has to KNOW. Adults need to point this signage out to the kids. There’s so much out there to learn. Joseph, my little brother, is 16 now. I’ve known him since he was seven.

You have been retired almost as long as you worked at TVA. Do you mind if I ask how old you are?
I’m 90. I have good genes! After I retired, I did short term missionary work around the world. I’ve been to 13 different countries in Europe, Asia, South America and Central America, along with the United States. Now I go every February to help at an orphanage in Honduras. Everyone in the United States needs to travel to a third-world country to appreciate just how lucky we are.

You’ve been extremely generous with your time here at the Aquarium and with other organizations since retiring. The Aquarium relies on the generosity of donors like you to fulfill its mission. What inspires you to include the Aquarium in your charitable giving?
I want to see the Aquarium succeed beyond our imagination. We’ve got to look down the road to the future and if we don’t support it now, how will we succeed? Only by the support of the community will there always be something new and exciting to see, like the Ranger Rick exhibit this summer. Fortunately, I think the majority of people in Chattanooga are supporters. The Aquarium is the catalyst that has made Chattanooga what it is today.

What’s your secret for the good life at 90?
You just have to turn over a new page and start a new story. I’m afraid that’s what a lot of people haven’t learned to do.

Thank you, Everett. You’re an inspiration! ♦

Our Aquarium supporters come from many backgrounds, ages and income levels, but all of them have in common a desire to give back to their community through volunteering and charitable giving. If you are interested in making a contribution like Everett, go to tnaqua.org/donate for information on annual giving. To volunteer, go to tnaqua.org/GetInvolved.
Pre-registration is required for events! Register online at www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx

### DECEMBER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>AGES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>10 a.m.-Noon</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Create a Festive Holiday Garland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>10 a.m.-4 p.m.</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Howesse Refuge by Kayak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sun.</td>
<td>6:30-9 p.m.</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Caroling with the Fishes: Member Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>12:30-2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Family Critter Cruise-Tails on the River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Sat.-Sun.</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.-8:30 a.m.</td>
<td>A &amp; 6+</td>
<td>New Year's Sleep in the Deep</td>
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### JANUARY

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>9 a.m.-Noon</td>
<td>A &amp; 6+</td>
<td>Learn to Snorkel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>1-4 p.m.</td>
<td>A &amp; 6+</td>
<td>Learn to Snorkel</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>6:30-9 p.m.</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Point &amp; Shoot Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>6:30-9 p.m.</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Macro Photo Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Sandhill Crane &amp; Eagle Cruise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>9-10 a.m.</td>
<td>2-3 &amp; A</td>
<td>When it Snows, Where do they Go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>6:30-8 p.m.</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Comfort Food Dinner at 212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>9-11 a.m.</td>
<td>A &amp; 10+</td>
<td>Try SCUBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>11 a.m.-1 p.m.</td>
<td>A &amp; 10+</td>
<td>Try SCUBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>10-Noon</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Rain Barrel Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>8:30-10 a.m.</td>
<td>5-7 &amp; A</td>
<td>It's Freezing!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>12:30-4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>A &amp; 12+</td>
<td>Weave a Kudzu Basket</td>
</tr>
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### FEBRUARY

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>10-11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>3-4 &amp; A</td>
<td>Groundhogs, Shadows &amp; Weather Predictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>1-3 p.m.</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Mason Jar Terrariums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sun.</td>
<td>1:30-3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Trekkling with Tykes at Greenway Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>Fri.-Sat.</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.-8:30 a.m.</td>
<td>A &amp; 6+</td>
<td>Valentine Sleep in the Deep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>8:30-9:45 a.m.</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Breakfast with the Penguins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>9-11 a.m.</td>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>&quot;Team Parrot&quot; Behind the Bird Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>3-6 p.m.</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Valentine Sunset Cruise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**FAMILY FUN**

**New Year’s Sleep in the Deep**

Usher in the New Year — Aquarium-style  
**Sat., Dec. 31, 2011 • 5:30 p.m. - Sun., Jan. 1, 2012 • 8:30 a.m.**  
Usher in 2012 with the Tennessee Aquarium! Celebrate with special New Year’s Eve shenanigans from around the world and a “midnight” toast with a sparkling non-alcoholic beverage. On your night of adventure inside River and Ocean Journey, explore behind the scenes, get up-close with our critters, and encounter animals that might come out with the dark to greet you and the New Year. At lights out, bed down in the Undersea Cavern of Ocean Journey, while sharks and thousands of colorful fish swim over and around you. Includes overnight, guided tours, special activities, pizza and continental breakfast.  
/Register by Wed., 12/28/

Families with children AGE 6 AND OLDER, accompanied by an adult  
$45/Member, per person; $55/Non-Member, per person

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**Valentine Sleep in the Deep**

**Fri., Feb. 10 • 5:30 p.m. - Sat., Feb. 11 • 8:30 a.m.**  
Love, Aquarium-Style! Give your family a very special Valentine’s experience this year and celebrate this special holiday as you Sleep in the Deep. During your night of adventure inside River and Ocean Journey, you will discover the wonderful and sometimes wacky world of critter courtship. You will also enjoy an IMAX® 3D movie, explore behind the scenes and encounter Aquarium animals close-up. At lights out, bed down in the Undersea Cavern of Ocean Journey, while sharks and thousands of colorful fish swim over and around you. In the morning, we’ll even give the river otters a special Valentine’s treat. Includes overnight, guided tours, special activities, pizza and continental breakfast.  
/Register by Wed., 2/8/

Families with children AGE 6 AND OLDER, accompanied by an adult  
$50/Member; $55/Non-Member • Minimum of 30; maximum of 40

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**Family Critter Cruise — “Tails” on the River**

**Wednesday, Dec. 28 • 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.**  
Join us for a fun-filled family critter cruise on the River Gorge Explorer. The river gorge has a unique beauty in the winter and you never know what you’ll see! An Aquarium educator will enthrall kids, and the young at heart, with an interactive turtle tale and close encounter of the special kind with a live box turtle.  
/All Ages • Limited to 68 • $24/Member Adult; $18/Member Child (0-12) $29/Non-Member Adult; $21.50/Non-Member Child (3-12); $18/Child under 3/

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**Winter Trekking with Tykes**

**At Greenway Farm**  
**Sunday, Feb. 5 • 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.  (Rain date: Feb. 12)**  
Bundle up and join us at Greenway Farm, a wooded preserve with a scenic trail that follows the North Chickamauga Creek. Our guide will lead parents and tots on a discovery hike around an open prairie where we hope to see colorful wintering birds and find animal tracks. Please bring your own water, snack or lunch.  
/Parents and young children - Limited to 20, minimum of 5  
Free/Member; $5/Non-Member per person/

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**Breakfast with the Penguins**

**Saturday, Feb. 11 • 8:30 – 9:45 a.m.**  
Enjoy a Continental buffet breakfast, juices and coffee before finding out what’s on the menu in Penguins’ Rock during a special feeding show by a penguin keeper at 9:30 a.m. Original paintings by our penguins make unique gifts and will be available for purchase! Have more fun exploring the rest of the galleries after the Aquarium opens at 10 a.m.  
/Register by Wed, 2/11/

All Ages • Limited to 150 • $10/Member per person (age 3 and older)  
$34.95/Non-Member Adult; $24.95/Non-Member Child (age 3 and older)  
Non-member price includes Aquarium admission to both buildings

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REGISTER NOW online at www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx or mail form on page 16 or call 423-267-FISH (3474).
Bug Club 2011-12

Bug Club is for kids who love learning about fascinating multi-legged creatures. Club meets from 4 to 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month and membership includes a monthly newsletter and T-shirt. Games, snacks and experiments round out the fun. Visit tnaqua.org/Education/BugClub.

December – Insect Ornaments
January – Winter Evidence of Insects
February – Ugly Bug Ball XII

Ages 5-11 • $20 Member; $30 Non-Member per quarter (every 3 months) plus a one-time $15 initiation fee – Call Aquarium Educator Julia Gregory at (423) 785-4054 to register and pay. (The membership department does not take registrations for Bug Club!)

Please alert us about any food allergies.

When it Snows, Where do they Go?

Saturday, Jan. 14 • 9 - 10 a.m.

Where do all the critters go? How do they stay warm when it’s so cold? Learn what animals do in the winter by playing migration and hibernation games and creating some fun critter crafts! Please advise us of any known food allergies.

Ages 2-3, accompanied by adult • Limited to 15, minimum of 3 (register child only) • $5/Member; $13/Non-Member • River Journey, Delta Swamp Classroom

It’s Freezing!

Saturday, Jan. 28 • 8:30 - 10 a.m.

Winter means ice, snow and fun treats. We’ll see how some of our animals enjoy the cold and are able to stay warm, make an ice craft and enjoy a winter treat. Please advise us of any known food allergies.

Ages 5-7, accompanied by an adult • Limited to 10, minimum of 5 (register child only) • $8/Members; $13/Non-Members • River Journey, Delta Swamp Classroom

Groundhogs, Shadows and Weather Predictions?

Saturday, Feb. 4 • 10 - 11:30 a.m.

We have just celebrated Groundhog Day, our only holiday focused on a critter! Meet one of these famous weather forecasters in person. We’ll discover whether groundhogs — ‘aka woodchucks — really can predict the coming of spring, find out what they like to eat, where they live, and how they are related to another common backyard visitor. Through many fun-filled activities, we will learn how this critter adapts and may even to get to feel Chattanooga Chuck’s amazing fur coat. Please advise us of any known food allergies.

Ages 3-4, accompanied by an adult • Limited to 15, minimum of 5 (please register child only) • $8/Member; $13/Non-Member • River Journey Auditorium

“Team Parrot” — Behind the Bird Show

Saturday, Feb. 11 • 9 - 11 a.m.

How do they get those birds to do such awesome tricks? Think you want a pet parrot? Go behind the scenes of the Aquarium’s bird shows as a member of “Team Parrot,” and learn about the care and training of our show birds, plus another animal or two, and what it takes to put on six shows every day in Ranger Rick’s Backyard Safari. After a morning with us, you may discover that the pleasure of having an exotic bird as a pet is more challenging than you thought!

Ages 8-12 (children only, please) • Limited to 10, minimum of 3 • $8/Members; $13/Non-Members • River Journey, Delta Swamp Classroom
Create a Festive Holiday Garland

Saturday, Dec. 3 • 10 a.m. - Noon

Get ready for the holidays by creating a lovely garland of fresh greens, berries and bows to decorate your front door, mantel or railing. We’ll put you in the mood with music and spiced cider as lead horticulturist Christine Bock shares other natural holiday decorating ideas. Includes fresh greenery, artificial berries and bows. Please bring garden clippers and a glue gun if possible along with any special bows or decorations you’d like to add.

Adults • Limited to 20 • $15/Member; $20/Non-Member

Close-Up & Macro Photography

With Tom and Pat Cory
Thursday, Jan. 12 • 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Close-up photography allows a photographer to explore a wonderful world that many never notice, like a bead of moisture on a flower petal. Begin with a photo talk by our professional photographers with demonstrations and hands-on exercises. The Cory’s will cover technical and artistic considerations for successful close-up and macro photography such as distance from a subject, use of flash, composition, realistic or impressionistic style choice, and the special equipment they use. Bring your camera, manual and other equipment you own. (Most point and shoot cameras have built-in macro controls symbolized by a small flower.)

Adults • Limited to 12, minimum of 8 • $30/Member; $45/Non-Member

Rain Barrel Workshop: Go Green!

Saturday, Jan. 21 • 10 a.m. - Noon

A rain barrel collects water from gutters and stores it for future uses like watering plants and washing cars, especially during periods of drought. Go Green by converting an empty 55-gallon Coca-Cola syrup drum into a working rain barrel attaching connectors during the program with the help of an Ace Hardware expert. Learn how to install your rain barrel onto your home downspout and the importance of practicing water conservation. Includes pre-drilled barrel and a kit with hose adapters, spigot and basket for trapping debris. Bring a vehicle to accommodate a 55-gallon (39-40” tall by 76” round) rain barrel.

Adults • Limited to 20 • $25/Member; $30/Non-Member

Location: IMAX Center Classrooms

REGISTER NOW online at www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx or mail form on page 16 or call 423-267-FISH (3474).
Weave A Kudzu Basket!

_Saturday, Jan. 28 • 12:30 – 4:30 p.m._

Weave a unique Appalachian-style egg basket with the notorious kudzu vine, using techniques hundreds of years old. All materials are provided, but please bring a pair of garden clippers. Your instructor is Bill Haley, Aquarium education outreach coordinator and well-known basket weaver.

_Adults (plus children 12 and older accompanied by an adult) Limited to 15; Minimum of 5 $30/Member; $35/Non-Member Aquarium: Delta Swamp Classroom_

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Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge by Kayak

_Saturday, Dec. 3 • 10 a.m. – 4 p.m._

The Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge is one of the largest migrating stopovers for sandhill cranes. Quiet and stable touring kayaks are one of the best ways to observe these and other wintering species of birds. Join Aquarium Senior Aviculturist, Kevin Calhoon, for a three-hour paddle. Participants must have previous kayaking experience to avoid the risk of cold water immersion. Includes equipment, warm drink, snack and transportation from Greenway Farm with expert staff from Chattanooga OutVenture.

_Adults, 18 and older • Limited to 10, minimum of 6 • $28/Member; $33/Non-Member_

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Learn to Snorkel

_Saturday, Jan. 7 • 9 a.m. – Noon & 1 – 4 p.m._

Learn to snorkel, adjust and care for your equipment, including snorkel-vest and weights when using a wetsuit. Get valuable tips for safely entering and exiting the water from shore or from a boat and coping with surf or currents. Includes: instruction in the classroom and in the pool and use of snorkeling equipment.

_Adults or children ages 6 and older • Limited to 8 per session • $28/Member, $33/Non-Member • Choo-Choo Dive Center_

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Try SCUBA!

_Saturday, Jan. 21 • 9 – 11 a.m. & 11 a.m. – 1 p.m._

Nothing can describe the sensation of breathing under water. Experience what it’s like to scuba dive at the Choo Choo Diving & Aquatic Center. After explaining state of the art scuba equipment, their staff will show you how to use it and prepare you for an actual dive adventure in the pool. You’ll even play a game of underwater Frisbee! Includes the use of all scuba equipment. We will add additional 2 hour concurrent sessions as needed.

_Adults and ages 10 and older accompanied by a participating parent or guardian Limited to 6 per session • $10/Member; $20/Non-Member in support of the Aquarium dive program • Choo Choo Dive Center_

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Mason Jar Terrariums at The Barn Nursery

_Saturday, Feb. 4 • 1 – 3 p.m._

Terrariums are all the rage again! Join lead Aquarium horticulturist Christine Bock and knowledgeable designers at The Barn Nursery to create a miniature landscape under glass. Plant tropical materials like ferns, pepperomia and more in a mason jar tended by a small dragonfly, and leave with tips for how to care for your little world. The Barn designers will also demonstrate fun fairy gardens, complete with dwarf plants, paths and even tiny furniture!

_Adults • Limited to 20 • $25/Member; $30/Non-Member_

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Presented by

The Barn Nursery

Go play in the dirt!

_REGISTRATION FORMS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx or in person at Aquarium. Register early to avoid disappointment or call 423-267-FISH (3474). Renew your membership — anytime! Visit www.tnaqua.org/Membership.aspx_
SPECIAL EVENTS

Sandhill Crane and Eagle Cruise
In the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge
Saturday, Jan. 14 • 9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Join us for our annual winter wildlife adventure in the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge to see magnificent Sandhill Cranes, nesting bald eagles and other wildlife aboard the Blue Moon, a cruise boat with a climate-controlled lower deck and upper open decks. Hiwassee Island, located in the refuge, is the prime wintering observation site in the southeast for observing thousands of migrating Sandhill Cranes. Naturalists will point out a variety of wildlife and provide interesting facts. Includes a BBQ lunch, 3 ½-hour cruise and naturalists.

All Ages • Limited to 75 • Adult: $34/Member; $39/Non-Member (age 16 and older)
Youth: $25/Member; $29/Non-Member (age 6-15), accompanied by an adult
Child: Free/Ages 5 and younger, accompanied by an adult
Board at Sale Creek Marina near Soddy Daisy

Winter Comfort Food
At 212 Restaurant
Thursday, Jan. 20 • 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

No need to hibernate this winter! Join us to savor the delicious and soothing cuisine known as comfort food. Begin with a warm beet salad with cornbread crostini topped with Tennessee Chevre goat cheese. Our entrée is pork loin, filled with figs and roasted apples with a rosemary-scented jus, accompanied by sweet potato gratin and wine-braised red cabbage topped with bacon “cracklings.” Top it all off with chocolate souffle. Includes dinner, cooking demonstrations a glass of house wine and gratuity.

Adults • Limited to 35 • $35/Member; $45/Non-Member

Valentine Sunset Cruise on the River Gorge Explorer
Saturday, Feb. 11 • Last cruise of the day, check time online

Love is in the air so “go a little overboard” and treat someone special to a memorable experience aboard the Aquarium’s own “Love Boat.” Our romantic three-hour sunset cruise takes you into the gorgeous Grand Canyon of Tennessee where a naturalist will point out wildlife as you munch on complimentary appetizers. Sing along to “Muskrat Love” and discover the special courtship of some animals that live and “love” along the river. Pop the question, renew your vows or even tie the knot! Our captains are ordained ministers. You just need to bring the license and witness and let us know beforehand! Cash bar available for wine, beer and soft drinks.

All Ages • Limited to 67 • $36/Member Adult; $29/Member Child (4-12)
$41/Non-Member Adult; $34/Non-Member Child (3-12)
$20/Member or Non-Member Child (3 and younger)

REGISTER NOW online at www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx or mail form on page 16 or call 423-267-FISH (3474).
Costa Rica — Off the Beaten Path
Butterflies, Volcanoes and Rainforests
Feb. 7 – 16, 2012

Join us on a nature expedition to Costa Rica where our professional native guide promises to show you the real side of his beautiful country. Walk among hundreds of tropical butterflies at The Butterfly Farm where the Tennessee Aquarium attains chrysalis for its Butterfly Garden. Discover a coffee plantation on an interactive tour with humorous but insightful guides. Traverse a lush virgin rainforest in search to meet a butterfly farmer who raises these jeweled beauties to supply The Butterfly Farm. We’ll explore the Arenal Hanging Bridges that overlook a dense rainforest canopy with close-up looks at wildlife and fantastic views of the Arenal Volcano. Hike to a majestic waterfall, search for Quetzels, watch for monkeys, birds and crocodiles on a nature river float, and immerse yourself in relaxing mineral springs. Stay at quiet authentic resorts, even at a sustainable organic ranch on beautiful Lake Arenal, with optional activities like zip-line canopy tours, horseback riding, kayaking, massage or Yoga in a rainforest.

Mongolia: Land of the Blue Sky
August 27 – Sept. 7, 2012

If you treasure exploring unspoiled and less-traveled places and learning from the diverse and wondrous cultures of the world, travel with us to Mongolia. Explore cosmopolitan Ulaanbaatar before venturing into “Outer Mongolia” staying in authentic felt-lined Gers, the Mongolian equivalent of African tented camps. Our journey takes us from the vast rolling grasslands of the steppe and forested mountains of the north, south to the shifting sand dunes and stunning landscapes of the arid Gobi Desert.
PROGRAM REGISTRATION — REGISTER NOW!  www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx

Registration is required for all programs with payment in full.

ONLINE:
www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx

PHONE: 423-267-FISH (3474) or 800-262-0695, ext. 3400, 8:30 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. weekdays. Please have event and credit card information ready.

PAYMENT is required by credit card, cash or check when registering.

CONFIRMATION with event details will be mailed upon receipt of event fees.

CANCELLATIONS/REFUND: We cannot provide refunds for no-shows. Unless noted differently, cancellations must be received no less than two weeks prior to event date for a refund. A full refund is made if the Aquarium cancels an event or if an event is full.

PROGRAM REGISTRATION FORM

<table>
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<th>Program Date/Time</th>
<th>Participant Name</th>
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*Indicates second choice of date/time if program is offered more than once.
**Guests who are not members must pay non-member fees.

MAIL TO:
Member Programs
Tennessee Aquarium
P.O. Box 11048
Chattanooga, TN 37401-2048

Card Number
VISA  Mastercard  Discover  Amex
Exp. Date
Cardholder's Signature

YOU CAN ALSO READ ABOUT MEMBER PROGRAMS ONLINE AT: www.tnaqua.org

RENEW ONLINE — ANYTIME! Visit www.tnaqua.org

Let’s Stay in Touch
Do you we have your current email address? If you would like to stay on top of the latest Aquarium news, get notifications on new events, receive personalized membership updates and timely renewal reminders, register for our new online community at: www.tnaqua.org/membership.aspx.

Go Green!
Riverwatch is also an electronic magazine with the same great articles, vivid photos, and listings of fun-filled events as the print version. You can now receive your full-color Riverwatch, enhanced with interactive features, delivered directly to your inbox. It’s a great way to be “green” and support the environment. Visit www.tnaqua.org/membership/riverwatch.aspx to sign up today. And remember, you can also renew your membership online anytime and continue to receive the great benefits of unlimited admission, exclusive discounts, and more without interruption. Visit www.tnaqua.org to renew — it’s fast, convenient and paperless!

Join us on Facebook, Twitter and Flickr
Not only can you join in the conversation, you’ll be surprised by some of the things that don’t make the pages of Riverwatch.

Official sponsor of the Tennessee Aquarium Membership Program.
Hey Kids! In each Riverwatch issue, look for fun activities in this section. Collect the Tennessee Aquarium’s Animal Trading Cards, send us your own Animal Art or Silly Animal Jokes and Riddles and ask us your “How Do They Do That” questions. Send all submissions (along with your name & age) to jal@tnqua.org.

CONTENT FOR “GETTING OUR FEET WET” PROVIDED BY THE TENNESSEE AQUARIUM EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

How do corals eat? Corals are colonial organisms which are composed of many individual animals called polyps.

Polyps are multicellular yet simple animals with much of their body being their stomach. Most corals feed at night when polyps extend their tentacles to catch plankton and sometimes small fish. Stinging cells called nematocysts are located on the tentacles and once stimulated they snare and subdue their prey. The tentacles then pull the food through an opening to the polyp’s stomach. Once digested, the waste is excreted through this same opening.

Corals have another means of getting their essential nutrients. Living inside each polyp is a type of algae called zooxanthellae. Through photosynthesis, this algae provides the coral with what it needs to make proteins, fats, carbohydrates and calcium carbonate. In return, the coral provides the algae with a safe place to live and the compounds it needs to carry out photosynthesis.

All of the coral species in Ocean Journey’s Live Coral exhibit require light to survive. However, many species of coral are able to survive in dark places free of light. These corals do not house zooxanthellae but rely solely on food they catch with their nematocyst-laden tentacles.

DIAGRAM BY NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION OCEANSERVICE.NOAA.GOV/EDUCATION/TUTORIAL_CORALS
**MAKE A CD ORNAMENT**

Reuse old CDs instead of sending them to the landfill! With a bit of imagination and creativity, turn them into decorations that light up the holidays, brighten a child’s room or add life to a classroom. Use paint, fingernail polish, glue, glitter, and small plastic items that you would otherwise throw away to transform the shiny discs into colorful tropical fish!

**MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED:**
- Jar with a lid (reuse a clean peanut butter, pickle, or mayonnaise jar)
- 1 teaspoon of clear liquid soap
- 1 teaspoon of vinegar

**DIRECTIONS:**
- Fill the clean jar three-fourths full with water.
- Add the soap and vinegar.
- Place the lid on tightly and mix contents thoroughly by shaking it.
- Swirl the jar in a circular motion to create a twister.

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**MAKE A TORNADO IN A JAR**

**MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED:**
- Jar with a lid (reuse a clean peanut butter, pickle, or mayonnaise jar)
- 1 teaspoon of clear liquid soap
- 1 teaspoon of vinegar

**DIRECTIONS:**
- Fill the clean jar three-fourths full with water.
- Add the soap and vinegar.
- Place the lid on tightly and mix contents thoroughly by shaking it.
- Swirl the jar in a circular motion to create a twister.

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**Trumpeter Hornbill**

- **Habitat** — River forests, dense woodlands and savannah in Africa.
- **Diet** — Mostly fruit and some large flying insects.
- **Size** — Length is 23-26 inches. Wingspan is 24 inches.

**Rose-breasted Cockatoo (Galah)**

- **Habitat** — Found in Australia in a large variety of timbered habitats, usually near water.
- **Diet** — Seeds of grasses and cultivated crops, which makes these pretty birds agricultural pests in some areas.
- **Size** — Length is about 14” from beak to tip of tail.

**Red-fronted Macaw**

- **Habitat** — A small semi-desert mountainous area of Bolivia in South America.
- **Diet** — Fresh fruit and vegetables.
- **Size** — 22-24 inches long. Wingspan is 32-34 inches.

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The Tennessee Aquarium is dedicated to preserving the beauty of the natural world through education and conservation.
Unraveling Tornado Mysteries

By Thom Benson, communications manager

The sky near Abilene, Texas was dotted with a few harmless-looking clouds on April 4th, 1991 as I raced toward the giant storm on the horizon. Black as night near the bottom, the cauliflower updrafts boiled upward, bumping into the top of the troposphere more than 10 miles overhead. The anvil spread out in a majestic, yet menacing way. As a meteorologist I wanted to observe, and hopefully document, how this storm was evolving. This was not a red-letter severe weather day; a monster was about to be unleashed.

Shortly before I arrived in Haskell, Texas that day, an F-3 tornado (with winds between 158 and 206 mph) tore through the town before most of the residents knew it was coming. “We didn’t have any warning,” the wide-eyed young lady told me. Still shaking, she told me how she huddled with her two children and mother-in-law in a tiny laundromat office as the tornado smashed the rest of the building. At the time I was stunned at how lucky these four people were. Looking back, I am amazed at how far weather technology has come in the last 20 years.

Today’s broadcast meteorologists are armed with radar technology that saved lives during the April 2011 tornado outbreak. The human loss is still heartbreaking to think about, but imagine how much greater the toll might have been if it had occurred twenty years earlier. Will warnings improve to save even more lives in the future? Researchers like Dr. Karen Kosiba hope so.

Kosiba and an army of scientists from VORTEX2 are featured in the IMAX® film Tornado Alley 3D. The most ambitious scientific mission of its kind, VORTEX2 was comprised of 100+ severe-weather researchers from around the world, a fleet of radar trucks, mobile weather stations and the most sophisticated weather-measuring instruments available. The mission: probe nature’s most violent storms to better understand how tornadoes form and develop. “The data we collected on about 60 tornadic storms will help us improve the predictability of tornadoes,” said Kosiba. “We also want to better understand and correlate how the winds inside a tornado cause damage.”

Tornadoes are still atmospheric animals that scientists don’t completely understand. Researchers want to learn why one storm will go haywire and produce a giant tornado, like the one that devastated Tuscaloosa, Ala., while nearby thunderstorms fail to produce ANY tornadoes. “What we’re trying to do is warn people BEFORE a storm produces a tornado,” Kosiba said. “Currently a radar signature may indicate a potential tornado, but 75 percent of those storms don’t produce tornadoes. So we need a better discriminator to reduce false alarms and more accurately warn people.”

IMAX audiences will learn how difficult it is to get direct weather measurements inside a tornado. Kosiba recorded indirect measurements from the Doppler on Wheels truck. She was also responsible for coordinating the teams placing weather sensors in the path of oncoming twisters. “There’s a real gap in correlating wind speed measurements to damage,” said Kosiba. “We want to know if duration or peak wind causes the majority of the damage. This may help others design stronger homes and buildings in the future.”

Some direct measurements were collected while film-maker Sean Casey’s Tornado Intercept Vehicle was inside a twister. Kosiba recorded indirect measurements from the Doppler on Wheels truck. She was responsible for coordinating the teams placing weather sensors in the path of oncoming twisters. “It’s surreal, unimaginable,” said Casey. “My dream has always been to get footage that’s as powerful as the subject matter.”

Kosiba would like Tornado Alley 3D audiences to gain a deeper appreciation for the researchers on the front lines of severe weather research. “I hope people get a better understanding of the science and actually see that there are people out there trying to find the answers that may help save lives in the future.”
Since we announced our new sustainable seafood initiative, **Serve & Protect**, this summer, we’ve made steady progress in bringing the seafood conversation to Chattanooga.

In August, Alton Brown, the celebrity chef known for *Good Eats* and *Iron Chef America* on Food Network, publicly announced our new partnership while diving in the Aquarium’s *Secret Reef* exhibit. After a quick change out of his wetsuit, he headed over to Bluewater Grille to meet with chefs and wait staff from our eight partner restaurants. Because 70 percent of seafood that is sold in the U.S. is bought at restaurants, helping them provide sustainable options for diners is an important goal. Through both an hour-long presentation to the large group and a smaller lunch with the chefs, Brown explored issues that Chattanooga restaurants face in supplying and serving sustainable seafood.

During his restaurant presentation, Brown announced the five healthy seafood choices featured in our program this year: farm-raised rainbow trout, farm-raised catfish, American oysters, American lobster and yellowtail snapper. You’ll notice that our definition of seafood encompasses...
freshwater animals as well as ocean-dwellers. We also have a mixture of farm-raised and wild-caught animals, as both options can be sustainable for different species.

Here in Chattanooga, farm-raised rainbow trout and channel catfish are our most local options. They’re lower on the food chain because they’re fed mostly vegetarian diets, and both can be raised in systems that minimize pollution. Oysters can actually improve the water quality where they’re raised because they filter out debris as they feed.

Yellowtail snappers are caught in the U.S. with a hook and line fishery that minimizes damage to the reef habitats where they occur. And American lobsters are not only the classic American seafood, they’re also sustainably harvested by Maine fishermen.

In late September, Brown visited Chattanooga again for the inaugural Serve & Protect weekend celebration presented by First Tennessee. On Thursday night, he entertained the sold-out audience during his cooking demonstration at the IMAX® Theater. While completely captivating the crowd with his humor and cooking knowledge, he also devoted time to serious conversations on the many issues around sustainable seafood. When asked whether we should eat farm-raised fish instead of wild-caught, Brown replied that it had to be considered on a “fish-by-fish basis.” Farming top predators, like tuna or swordfish, is like farming lions. But for those looking for the first steps in making a change, he concluded, the simplest answers are to buy U.S. seafood and to “eat bait,” or smaller species.

After his presentation, our guests dined at the Aquarium, enjoying savory dishes prepared by the chefs of our Serve & Protect partner restaurants. Over the weekend, these restaurants served up similar specials, offering sustainable seafood information to patrons along with the meal.

Brown also emceed the Cast-Iron Cookoff held at the Chattanooga Market. The chefs competed against each other to serve delicious dishes using U.S.-caught pink shrimp and local ingredients from the market. If you missed the excitement of the weekend, you can still head over to the Aquarium to see and learn more about the animals we’ve featured for the program. Embark on a scavenger hunt and look for new signs about seafood and special Alton Brown cell phone audio tour stops near the exhibits where our five featured species are displayed.

Look for more sustainable seafood dinners, cooking demonstrations and other Serve & Protect events in the Events section of upcoming Riverwatch issues. We’ll continue working with our restaurants to help them find sustainable seafood they can feature on their menus year-round. We’ll also create educational programs that help bring this message to the younger decision makers in the family. Teens and tweens can have a big influence on what you buy for dinner!

You can make a difference, too. Every time you buy seafood, make sure to ask where it came from and how it was caught or raised. If you buy American seafood, especially what is caught by hook and line, trolling, or traps, you’re making choices that are healthiest for our ocean. This New Year’s make a resolution to take on something healthy: seafood. You can find the catfish recipes that Brown demonstrated at the IMAX on our website. And if catfish aren’t what you had in mind, there are four other species to choose from with special Alton Brown recipes to wow — and educate — your holiday guests.

Hungry for more? Visit: tnaqua.org/SustainableSeafood
Big Change for Large Exhibit

Stewie, the Aquarium’s big, green sea turtle, has returned to the Secret Reef exhibit in the Ocean Journey building to make way for a big change. The Gulf of Mexico exhibit in River Journey will get an extreme make-over and re-open in May as a freshwater exhibit.

The new River Giants exhibit will feature an awesome collection of freshwater species that can reach almost legendary sizes. Coffee-table sized whiprays from Australia will be joined by giant pangasius catfish that can grow to lengths of nearly 12 feet. A seven-foot beluga sturgeon will hover near the equally massive arapaima and a menagerie of other monsters found in rivers and lakes from around the world. “Anyone who’s heard of Volkswagen-sized catfish will see the species that can get that large,” said Thom Demas, the Aquarium’s curator of fishes. “The rays are one of my favorite species in the new exhibit. These guys will be eye-opening because many people don’t realize freshwater rays can get this huge.”

Converting a tank as large as the Gulf of Mexico to freshwater is a massive undertaking. “We will be reconstructing this tank from top to bottom,” said Demas. “This exhibit will get new filtration, substrate and décor.”

Large species, such as those that will be exhibited in River Giants, are declining in the wild. And according to Demas, that’s a global wake up call for humans. “Large animals take longer to grow and reproduce. So their presence indicates that an ecosystem is healthy,” said Demas. “But, when they disappear we need to recognize what’s causing that change. Hopefully this exhibit will inspire our visitors to help keep our river systems healthy for our local giants like lake sturgeon.”

Winter Offers Great Birding Opportunities in the Gorge

If you’re a birder, boating during the winter months might not be on your “to do” list, but it should be. Colder weather often brings large numbers of bald eagles into the area. These majestic birds spend a lot of their time close to the water’s edge, offering River Gorge Explorer passengers great viewing and photo ops. The landscape also takes on a different mood from November through February. “Winter is honestly my favorite time of the year to be in the Gorge,” said Captain Pete Hosemann. “You’re able to see farther into the woods so you see more animals. And if we’re lucky enough to have snow or ice, the view from the river is fantastic.”

The River Gorge Explorer has a climate-controlled cabin, so everyone enjoys the view while remaining toasty warm. For excursion times and ticket information, go to: tnaqua.org/RiverGorgeExplorer.
Holiday Help Creating Something Yummy

Winter months bring thoughts of Holiday meals and cookies! Whether you’re looking for a cookbook of sustainable seafood recipes, good old-fashioned recipes, or one of Chef Alton Brown’s best-selling books, look no further than the Tennessee Aquarium’s Gift Shop. Where else can you find a cookie cutter shaped like a parrot, penguin, frog or shark? Browse our shops during your next visit, or check out our online store at: store.shopaquarium.org. Members receive their 10% discount at checkout with the promo code JELLIES.

Another “People’s Choice” Award for Educators

The Aquarium’s distance learning programs have been recognized for excellence for the second year in a row. The Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration (CILC), compiles educator evaluations throughout the school year for their annual Pinnacle Awards. Each provider is judged based on seven critical areas: two related to effectiveness of the presenter and five related to the educational content of the program.

This year, educators who participated in Tennessee Aquarium distance learning programs voted our educators high enough in all categories to earn Honorable Mention in the 2010-2011 Pinnacle Awards.

Distance learning programs enable the Aquarium to extend the reach to every corner of the country via the Internet. Aquarium educators delivered 62 distance learning programs to 17 states during this evaluation period.