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## WHAT A YEAR.

Without question, 2017 was, for all of us, one of the most challenging, exciting, and rewarding years in our 27-year operational history. From the completion of Campaign Caribbean and the remarkable grand opening of Caribbean Journey, to the devastation wrought by Hurricane Harvey, 2017 tested us like no other year. By almost any measure, it was our most successful year ever. Annual attendance reached nearly 600,000, and we engaged 73,000 students and teachers through our Flint Hills Resources Center for Excellence in STEM Education. We treated over 500 patients at our Wildlife Rescue Center. We generated nearly \$16 million in operating revenue, a 35% increase over the previous year. Driving this growth were significant increases in our membership, special events, and food & beverage programming. These enterprises, along with your generous support, allowed us to operate the Aquarium with virtually no external funding, and continue to support our STEM education initiatives, our wildlife rehabilitation efforts, and ultimately, our field conservation work.

Like all in our community, the Aquarium experienced the multiple impacts of Hurricane Harvey. Our physical damage was minimal; however, the loss of tourism during our last few weeks of summer was significant. Even more so, the most impacted were our team members who live in our north bay region. Many of them suffered significant damage to their homes, and some lost virtually everything. Heartfelt thanks go out to our generous Trustees and our aquarium and zoo colleagues from around the nation, all of whom rallied quickly with significant donations to help our teams through this difficult period. Little did we realize that we would soon be tested again with the unusually frigid winter of 2017/2018. The coda to this remarkable year—the surprise snow event in early December—sent bay and gulf water temperatures plummeting, commencing the largest sea turtle cold-stunning event in Texas recorded history. From December 1 through the end of January, 1,069 cold-stunned green sea turtles were admitted into our Wildlife Rescue Center. As of this writing, more than 1,000 of those turtles have now been safely returned to the Gulf of Mexico.

A stronger focus on wildlife rehabilitation and conservation is a key component in our new strategic plan. We need to make sure we are prepared for whatever Mother Nature sends our way. You'll hear more about our future plans in the coming months. In the meantime, enjoy this look back at a most amazing 2017.

Thank you for your ongoing support. We want to do more and, with your help, we can.

<sup>-</sup> Tom Schmid, President & CEO



ON MAY 13, 2017, the Texas State Aquarium officially opened the doors to Caribbean Journey, allowing guests to tour the vibrant sights and sounds of immersive exhibits depicting the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve in Mexico. Caribbean Journey welcomes guests into a lush jungle habitat with flying birds and reptiles, illuminated by a 152-foot wide skylight. Traveling through the jungle and past aquatic overlooks and the Maya Ruins, guests "dive" under the sea to view a colorful Coral Reef habitat, the mysterious Blue Hole exhibit, and, most notably, the 400,000-gallon H-E-B Caribbean Sea, which showcases sandbar sharks, stingrays, and other aquatic species

swimming among a replica shipwreck. In Caribbean Journey's largest exhibit, guests can soak in the sights from the longest curved aquarium display window in North America or travel through a tunnel to get a sense of what it's like to scuba dive a Caribbean reef. Guests can then take in a show at the Whataburger 4-Dimension Theater, which uses state-of-the-art technology and special effects to provide a unique entertainment experience. Caribbean Journey transports guests to a whole new world and completes a more than 30-year vision to bring the sights of the Caribbean to the Texas State Aquarium.

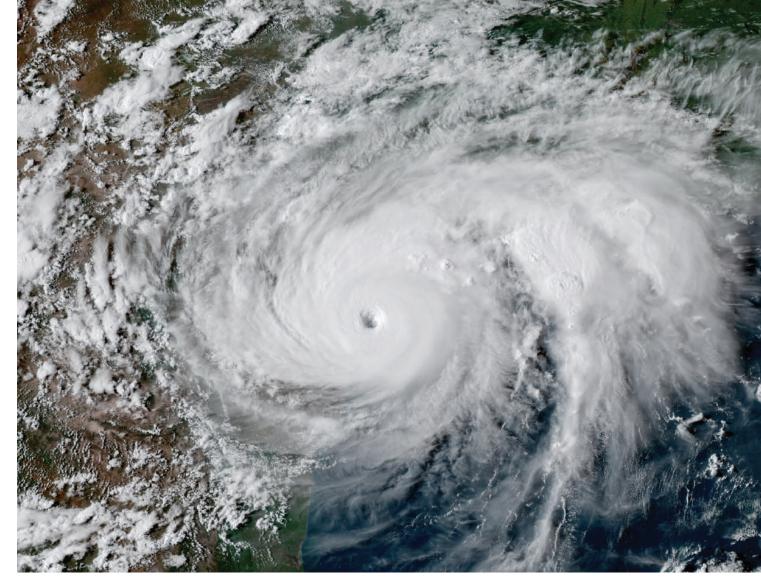


Animals like Melvin the green iguana and blue-crowned motmots are allowed to roam the Caribbean jungle space. With the underwater view, guests get an up-close look at nine-foot long sandbar sharks.



SHORT TO THE STATE OF THE STATE

In Caribbean Journey's Maya Ruins, guests can find reptiles native to the Caribbean including the emerald tree boa.



## HARVEY



As Hurricane Harvey swept into coastal Texas in August 2017, Aquarium staff made preparations to keep our animals, staff, and building safe from harm.

HURRICANE HARVEY escalated quickly, and Aquarium staff were prepared and had a plan in place long before the storm fully developed. With landfall in Corpus Christi imminent, workers removed chairs, tables, and other outdoor features that could be affected by strong winds and, more importantly, moved outdoor exhibit animals into indoor refuges. Animals in outdoor exhibits and rehabilitated animals at the Aquarium's offsite Wildlife Rescue Center-including hawks, macaws, otters, sea turtles, and stingrays, among others—were all successfully transported into the safe confines of the Category 4-rated Caribbean Journey building or into compatible Gulf of Mexico exhibits. The most challenging animals to move by far were the Aquarium's four resident dolphins—Liko, Kai, Shadow and Schooner. Because the storm arrived more quickly than expected, an early plan to transport the dolphins to San Antonio was abandoned in favor of keeping them at the Aquarium. Using specially-designed containment systems, the dolphins were housed in Caribbean Journey where their water could be filtered



using Caribbean Journey's systems and staff could keep a close eye on them. A large ride-out team stayed at the Aquarium throughout the storm, ensuring each animal was well-fed and healthy. Thanks largely to this team's work, all animals remained safe through Harvey. The Aquarium suffered no major property losses and opened to the public just a few days later as a welcome symbol of resilience and recovery in South Texas.









Transporting animals into a safe environment was the utmost priority during Hurricane Harvey. Among the animals that were temporarily relocated were stingrays into Gulf of Mexico's Nearshore exhibit and dolphins into containment units in Caribbean Journey.

As a longtime accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the Texas State Aquarium provides its animals with the highest quality of care, including the best possible environments, diets, and veterinary treatment. Staff in 2017 not only continued to deliver top-notch animal care to the Aquarium's Gulf of Mexico wildlife, they prepared for the arrival of 60 additional species in Caribbean Journey, each with their own unique needs.



Divers in Caribbean Journey's Coral Reef feed the fish daily by hand to make sure these aquatic animals get a varied and nutritious diet.





In 2017, the Texas State
Aquarium's Wildlife
Rescue Center cared for
and released 206 animals,
including 137 sea turtles.

# TEXAS STATE AQUARIUM W I L D L I F E RESCUE

THE TEXAS STATE AQUARIUM'S WILDLIFE RESCUE CENTER, supported by the Aquarium's proceeds and through private donations, is the only rescue center in Texas capable of simultaneously treating shorebirds, raptors, sea turtles, and marine mammals. Altogether, 522 animals were admitted into the Wildlife Rescue Center after becoming ill, injured, orphaned, or stranded in the wild. The Aquarium's patients included 66 shorebirds, 283 raptors, and 173 sea turtles.

With so many partnering rescue organizations affected by Hurricane Harvey, the Wildlife Rescue Center made an even greater commitment to rescuing sea turtles and other injured wildlife in 2017. Rescue Staff underwent extensive

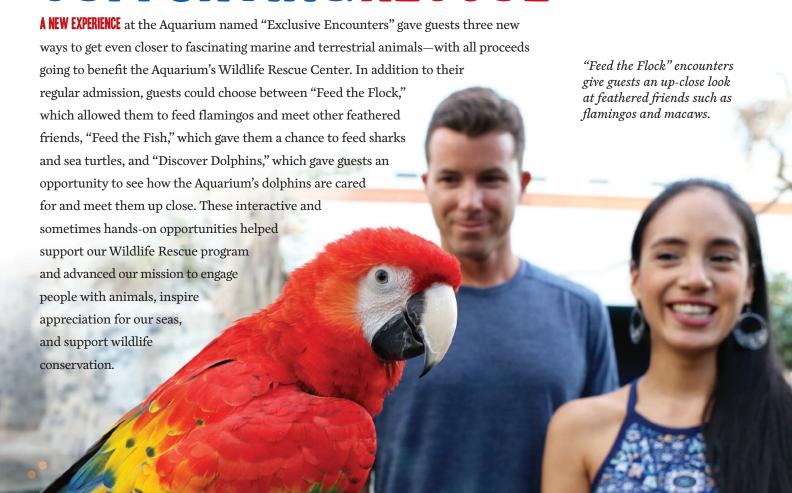
training for treating endangered marine reptiles.

Working in close partnership with the Padre Island National Seashore's Division of Sea Turtle Science & Recovery, the Aquarium kicked off 2017 with the release of several sea

turtle patients in February and closed the year with another wide-scale release of 80 sea turtles in December, releasing a total of 137 sea turtles throughout 2017. All in all, it was a breakthrough year for the Wildlife Rescue Center and a big step forward in its ongoing mission to save ill, injured, and endangered wildlife in Texas.



## **SUPPORTING RESCUE**



Over 73,000 students were educated in 2017 through the immersive and engaging programs offered by the Texas State Aquarium's Flint Hills Resources Center for Excellence in STEM Education. With the opening of Caribbean Journey, these young learners had more opportunities to explore and discover the various sea life and habitats of the Aquarium.











Children learn best when they have the chance to participate, which is why hands-on and up-close opportunities were regularly offered during SeaCamp, Creature Tales, and other educational events.





JUNGLES, SHIPWRECKS, CORAL REEFS, and more were "classrooms" for the thousands of students who took in Caribbean-focused education programs in 2017. Every day, learners of all ages had the opportunity to track sharks and sea turtles, chat with ocean scientists, and dive into other challenging and exciting activities that nurtured creativity and critical learning skills. While students continued to learn about the wonders of their own "backyard," the Gulf of Mexico, in 2017 they were also introduced to a whole new world in Caribbean Journey—from lush jungle lagoons to vibrant coral reefs and mysterious underwater caverns. Students on school field trips in May were among the first visitors to take in these exciting new sights and displays, while nearly 900 SeaCampers participated in

Caribbean-themed events during the summer. New Caribbean species like Xena the two-toed sloth, sandbar sharks, and flamingos enthralled young guests during educational animal encounters like Creature Tales, while special day trips like Homeschool and Mini-Camp allowed for learning opportunities these young guests wouldn't receive during a typical visit. Thousands of learners worldwide were also introduced to the sights of the Caribbean Journey through new Flint Hills Resources Aquavision cameras, which gave a remote view of sharks, flamingos, and other animals. This year launched a larger, more global, and more transformative educational program, expanding the horizons of young learners and growing a new generation of inspired scientists, ocean explorers, and STEM professionals.



## CONSERVATION

Aguarium conservation efforts, which have historically focused largely on the Gulf of Mexico, expanded in 2017 to also protect and conserve the Caribbean.

AS CARIBBEAN JOURNEY OPENED to display 60 new Caribbean species and the habitats of the Yucatán Peninsula, the Aquarium also expanded its conservation mission to focus on the protection of these animals and their native environments. With the proceeds earned from members, guest admission, and generous donors, the Aquarium provides financial assistance to conservationists and research scientists in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. Coral reefs, sharks, and single-use plastic were also highlighted as critical conservation issues in Aquarium programs, exhibits, and events. Through daily exhibits including the Coral Propagation Nursery and the Coral Reef, the Aquarium opened a window into the fragile and vulnerable underwater landscapes of the

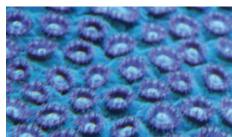
Mesoamerican Barrier Reef and showed how the Aquarium is helping scientists collect and grow coral polyps to form a foundation for new coral reefs. TSA also promoted a greater understanding of sharks, which are being killed at the rate of over 100 million a year, showing guests the critical role these misunderstood predators play in the ocean's overall health. Engaging displays and events were also used to communicate the threat of single-use plastic, which litters and endangers ocean environments around the world. The Aquarium led the way by phasing out all of its own single-use plastic products in its overall operations. Through these measures, the Aquarium showed that it practices what it preaches in wildlife and habitat conservation, and encourages its guests to do the same.







Educational events like
Party for the Planet and
conservation-focused
displays like the Coral
Propagation Nursery helped
guests better understand
how to conserve our natural
resources. Single-use plastic
items like bottled water
were also phased out at the
Aquarium in favor of more
eco-friendly products liked
Boxed Water.







Admission to Texas State
Aquarium supports the
conservation of Caribbean
Journey's real-life
counterpart, the Sian
Ka'an Biosphere Reserve.
Aquarium displays also
illustrated conservation
issues such as the
damaging role of
single-use plastic
on ocean health.

UNII

Through offerings like Dollar Days, SeaCamp scholarships, and ticket donations to other nonprofit organizations, the Aquarium grew in its role as an integral part of the community.





In 2017, the Aquarium had a \$63 million impact on the Corpus Christi area, according to Impact DataSource, including 883 area jobs, \$21.9 million in salaries and contributions of more than \$4.6 million for local taxing districts.



WITH THE SUPPORT of generous corporate partners, ExxonMobil Foundation, H-E-B, NavyArmy Community Credit Union, and Whataburger, the Aquarium held several Dollar Days in 2017, giving guests access to the Aquarium's experiences including Caribbean Journey—for only one dollar per person.

The Aquarium also made daily contributions to community events, including donating tickets to nonprofit organizations, hosting visits for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and providing discounted admission for a variety of groups and organizations. The Aquarium's event spaces were also a gathering space for many important community events in 2017.

The Aquarium's significance to the local community was all the more evident in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. The reopening of the Aquarium just days after the storm passed was a welcome sign of a return to normalcy and a chance for many to escape their worries, if only for a few hours. The Aguarium stepped up during these tough times to contribute a portion of its sales to Hurricane Harvey victims and provided a helping hand for those in need.





## VOLUNTEERS

**THANK YOU** to all the amazing volunteers, interns, and AquaTeens for all their hard work in 2017! Volunteer Services had a great year that saw an increase of more than 20% in volunteer hours. Volunteers served in all Animal Care departments as well as guest services, membership, marketing, volunteer services, and at all TSA special events. Volunteers not only gave back, they had a chance to participate in some exclusive opportunities, including adult volunteer exchanges with the San Antonio Zoo and the Houston Zoo, as well as a full week of animal encounters during Volunteer Appreciation Week. With a record 97 AquaTeens for 2017, it shows that this program is making a significant influence on a new generation. We're looking forward to a another year of big things from our volunteer team!



RICHARD SOYOS started as a volunteer in the Aquarium's AquaTeen program in 2014. Through his years in the program, Richard learned valuable leadership skills and, in 2017, was asked to join the Guest Services team. The Aquarium staff has seen Richard grow from a somewhat reserved AquaTeen to a confident and capable Aquarium team member. Richard attributes his personal growth and leadership skills to having the opportunity to participate in the AquaTeen program.



The Texas State Aquarium AQUA Society was established in 2011 to honor the Aquarium's most generous donors. Individuals, foundations, corporations, and organizations who have supported the Aquarium with cumulative giving of \$25,000 or more are recognized by this prestigious donor society. AQUA Society members have made a significant commitment to advance the Texas State Aquarium's mission of engaging people with animals, inspiring appreciation for our seas, and supporting wildlife conservation through their philanthropic giving. Each year, members of the AQUA Society are honored at the AQUA reception. A highlight of the evening is the announcement of the Aquarium Golden Star Award recipient. The Golden Star Award is given annually to recognize those who through the years have been the Aquarium's most passionate and visionary supporters. It was our honor to recognize Deneece A. Squires and The Brown Foundation, Inc. as the 2017 Golden Star Award recipients.





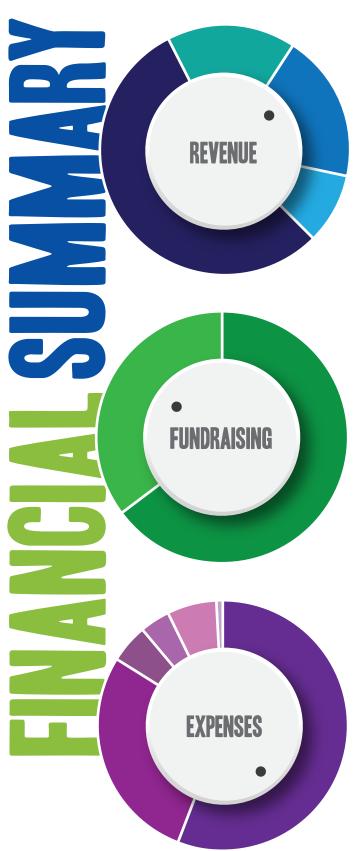
The Nautilus Society honors those individuals who leave a legacy gift to the Texas State Aquarium to endow the future of the Aquarium.

By becoming a member of the Nautilus Society, you will provide lasting resources that will ensure the Aquarium remains a Texas star for generations to come, while also addressing your financial goals. For more information on leaving a legacy gift to the Texas State Aquarium, contact Courtney Cook McLain





WITH THE OPENING of Caribbean Journey in 2017, guests of private events had 10,000 square-feet of new space with scenic views to celebrate and commemorate their special occasions. The CITGO Skyline Venue and the Caribbean Jungle Overlook, situated on Caribbean Journey's top floor, were among the most striking event space additions. The CITGO Skyline Venue includes a luxurious dining room and a long stretch of windows overlooking the sparkling Corpus Christi Bay. Private event space was also made available in the exhibits themselves, letting guests dine among sharks next to the 400,000-gallon H-E-B Caribbean Sea, stroll through the jungle, or sip cocktails next to a coral reef. In 2017, 16,496 private event guests attended 164 separate events at the Aquarium, with more than 9,000 revelers celebrating in the CITGO Skyline Venue.



<b>ATTENDANCE</b>
OPERATING REVENUE*
• General Admission
• Visitor Programs
• Retail Programs2,987,450
• Enterprise Programs

TOTAL OPERATING REVENUES ......\$15,519,101

#### **FUNDRAISING INCOME\***

- Campaign Caribbean..... \$ 1,972,163
- Donations, Grants & Special Events . . . 1,081,913

TOTAL FUNDRAISING INCOME ...... \$ 3,054,076

#### **OPERATING EXPENSES\*\***

• Salaries & Benefits \$7,966,816
• Aquarium Operations 3,959,311
• Cost of Goods Sold
• Accrued Interest545,813
• Advertising
• Major Repairs & Equipment97,327

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES .......\$14,202,071
NET INCOME .....\$1,317,030

<sup>\*</sup> Unaudited

<sup>\*\*</sup> Does not include depreciation expense



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