

How to Explore Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium



沖縄美ら海水族館
Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium



New

Includes aquarists' comments and tips!

Everyone can experience the beautiful sea of Okinawa!

World records, and world firsts!

沖繩美ら海水族館
Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium



Director of
Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium
Keiichi Sato

[A Global Hub for Marine Science and Public Engagement]

Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium is a center for marine biodiversity where you can encounter Okinawa's oceanic environment. Whereas typical aquariums assemble species globally, Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium showcases only Okinawa's native biodiversity, highlighting the region's unique marine ecosystems. This concept helps us highlight the biodiversity of Okinawan waters. The facility is home to roughly 780 species. About 13,000 marine creatures are kept in the aquarium, including many globally endangered species like whale sharks and manta rays. Protecting these rare species is one of our main missions. Researchers and aquarists work together to study and breed these animals with conservation in mind. We hope you enjoy your visit to the aquarium. In addition to observing the amazing animals on display, please take the opportunity to learn about our research, conservation efforts, and other meaningful activities behind the scenes.

Contents

General Information	p.3
Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium	
A Journey from the Coral Reef to the Deep Sea ...	p.4
Knowledge makes it more fun!	
Achievements of Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium ..	p.6
Aquarist Comments and Tips!	
Aquarist interviews! Floor Guides	p.10
■ 3F to 2F Journey To The Coral Reef	p.10
■ 2F to 1F Journey to the Kuroshio Sea	p.12
■ 1F Journey into the Deep Sea	p.14
■ Outdoor Exhibits	p.18
Discover the Secrets of the Aquarium on a Tour	
See what happens behind the scenes	p.16
Interviews with Aquarists!	
What's your favorite marine creature?	p.17
Churaumi Times	
Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium's Public Awareness Outreach and Research ...	p.20
So many opportunities!	
Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium's Annual Passport	p.22
Share your vows of love in the presence of a whale shark and manta rays	
Okinawa Churaumi Wedding	p.23



General Information

General Information



Logo

The simple design includes the aquarium's name below a blue rectangle. This blue is linked to the Kuroshio Sea tank, which houses a whale shark, a symbol of the aquarium. The aspect ratio corresponds to the acrylic panels of the tank.

Official Name

Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium

Facility

Building Area : Approximately 10,000 m²

Total Floor Area : Approximately 19,000 m²

Water Tank Size : Total water volume approximately 10,000 m³

Largest Tank : 7500 m³ (Kuroshio Sea Tank)

Numbers of Exhibited Tanks : 75 Tanks

Representative

Keiichi Sato (Director)

Aquarium Concept

Based on the concept of recreating the Okinawan sea, this aquarium exhibits species that naturally inhabit the surrounding waters. The aquarium also conducts conservation and research, and is one of the world's most advanced aquariums with numerous research achievements.

Established

November, 2002

Six months after the International Ocean Exposition, Okinawa 1975 (EXPO '75), the site in Motobu was transformed into the Okinawa Commemorative National Government Park, aka Ocean Expo Memorial Park. The park's original aquarium closed in August 2002. In November 2002, adjacent to the original aquarium, the new Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium opened.

Business Hours and Phone Number

Business Hours

8:30 ~ 18:30

※ Last admission is one hour before closing

※ For info on extended hours, please visit the official website

Closed Days

Please visit the official website.

Phone Number

0980-48-3748



URL : <https://churaumi.okinawa>

Address and Access

Address

424 Ishikawa, Motobu-cho, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa Prefecture

Access

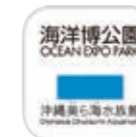
Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium is located in Ocean Expo Park, Motobu Town. It is in the northern part of Okinawa Main Island. From Naha Airport, it takes approximately 2 hours by car via the expressway. Other ways to access the area include highway buses and local buses.



Other

Churaumi App, the Official App of Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium

This is the official app for the aquarium. It provides information about the facility and the animals that are reared here! The app's "Scannable AI Encyclopedia" feature provides the name and description of an aquarium creature by simply scanning it with your smartphone. Identified creatures are automatically logged within the app, allowing you to create your very own Churaumi Encyclopedia.



Awards and Records

Koga Awards : Two awards Reproduction of the second generation of whitetip reef sharks (1987) Sea turtle reproduction research (2023)

Reproduction Awards : 45 species (Including Alfred manta and Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin)

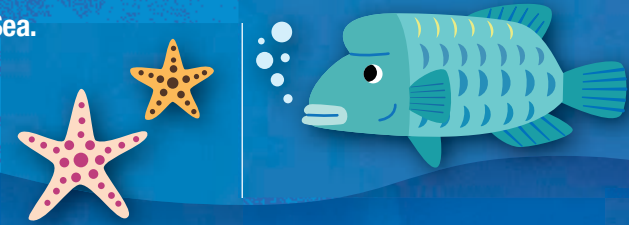
※ What is the Koga Award? It is the most prestigious award given to Japanese zoos and aquariums that have made an outstanding contribution to breeding rare animals. This award is given when a significant contribution is made to the conservation of a species that is difficult to breed and rare worldwide.



Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium

A Journey from the Coral Reef to the Deep Sea

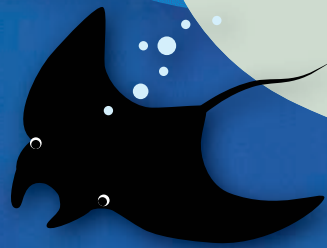
From a viewpoint overlooking the ocean, take the escalator down to the third-floor entrance. Inside the aquarium, you'll gradually descend to the first-floor exit. The exhibit is designed to make visitors feel as if they are diving deeper and deeper into Okinawa's sea. From the shallow coastal waters surrounded by coral reefs, descend through the Sea of Tropical Fish and the Kuroshio Sea, before finally reaching the Deep Sea.



Journey to the Kuroshio Sea

The Kuroshio Sea is the largest tank in the aquarium. A whale shark and manta rays swim gracefully in the tank. The Shark Research Lab features explanations about shark ecology, allowing visitors to satisfy their curiosity for knowledge.

2F
1F



There are so many mysterious creatures.



Whale shark statue at the entrance

4F

Amazing corals and tropical fish!



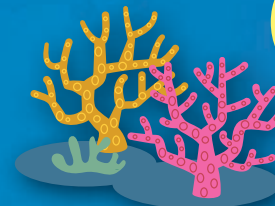
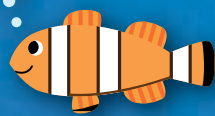
沖縄美ら海水族館

Only exhibiting and rearing Okinawan species
The species reared within the facility are found in Okinawan waters. We collect them ourselves with the help of local fishermen.

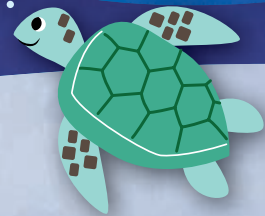
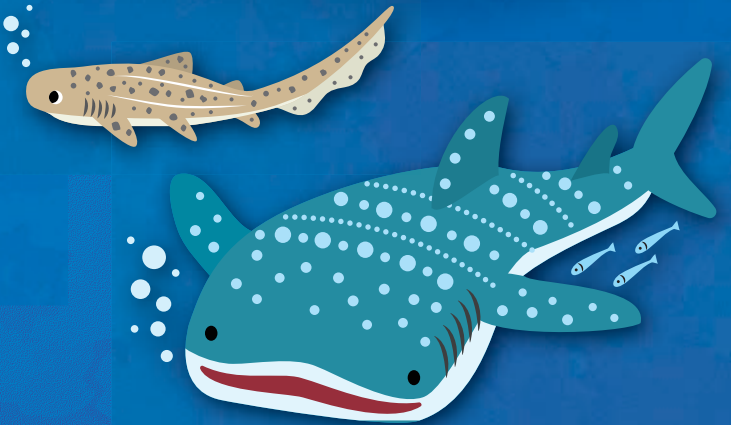
Journey to the Coral Reef

From Uminchu Gate, take the escalator down to the third-floor entrance. Journey to the Coral Reef is the first area. This exhibit recreates Okinawa's coral reefs, and the tanks are home to a multitude of corals and beautiful tropical fish.

3F
2F

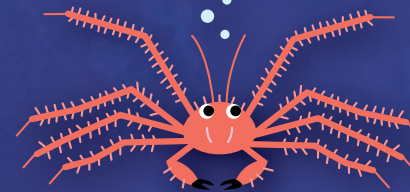
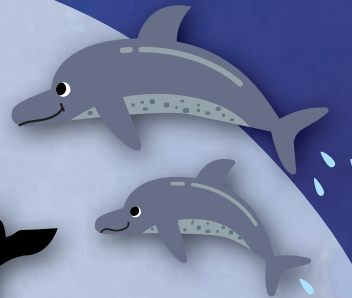
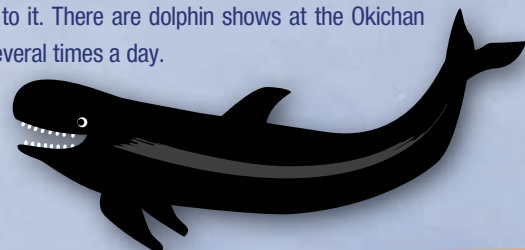


Let's go to the Kuroshio Sea Tank, the main attraction.



Outdoor Exhibits

After exiting the aquarium, walk toward the ocean, and you will find the Manatee Pool, the Sea Turtle Pool, and the Dolphin Lagoon, with the Okichan Theater located right next to it. There are dolphin shows at the Okichan Theater several times a day.



Journey into the Deep Sea

This area replicates the deep sea, depths below 200 meters. As you gradually descend within the aquarium, the lights become dimmer. The Deep Sea area is the aquarium's darkest place, but the faint soft lights create a dreamy feeling. There are many rare creatures, some unique to this aquarium.

1F



Knowledge makes it more fun!

Achievements of Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium

Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium holds many world records in areas such as Long-Term Husbandry, breeding, and displays of live specimens. These accomplishments are the result of the daily efforts made by the aquarists and researchers. Let's look in detail at three of the aquarium's species and learn about their record-breaking achievements.

It eats food on the surface while swimming vertically. This can be seen during feeding.



Whale shark

The whale shark is the world's largest fish, it can reach 13 meters in length. Although large, it feeds on tiny plankton and krill. In Okinawa, sightings of whale sharks are most likely from May to June.



A world record for whale shark Long-Term Husbandry!

2025 marks the 30th year that the whale shark "Jinta" has been reared at the aquarium. This sets a world record for the longest continues husbandry of a whale shark. Thirty years ago, he was 4.6 meters long, and now he is twice that size.



The Secrets to Long-Term Husbandry

Thirty years ago, little was known about rearing whale sharks. Over time, we discovered the best food and rearing techniques and documented how whale sharks grow. A whale shark's lifespan is estimated to be between 100 and 130 years. We are confident that caring for and observing Jinta will lead to further scientific discoveries.

The aquarium takes in seawater directly from the ocean in front of Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium. Seasonal changes in water temperature have been observed to influence the behavior of the whale shark.

Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin (Okichan)

Okichan, a female bottlenose dolphin, arrived for the opening of the International Ocean Exposition in Okinawa in 1975. She has distinctive speckles on her belly. These speckles have increased as she has aged, and Okichan now has countless speckles!



#1 Longest Reared Dolphins

There are four species of dolphins reared at the aquarium. Okichan an Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin, and Gonchan a false killer whale hold the Long-Term Husbandry records for their species. Okichan and Muku have been reared for 50 years, and this is the only facility in Japan to rear Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins.

The Secrets to Long-Term Husbandry

The secrets to longevity are eating well and staying active. Okichan and Muku eat eight to nine kilos of food each day, while Gonchan, who is much larger, can consume over 20 kilos. They stay active by performing in daily dolphin shows. The trainers carefully monitor the dolphins so they don't miss even the slightest change in their condition.



False Killer Whale (Gonchan)

This female false killer whale has been reared at the aquarium for 42 years. She is a veteran who has performed in the dolphin show for over 30 years, and her spectacular jump is a true showstopper!



Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin (Muku)

Muku is a male Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin who arrived with Okichan. He has been reared for the same number of years as Okichan, and they are a world record-holding pair for their species. They have a friendly personality and perform in the experience programs.

Staff Voice The dolphins have daily health checks and body temperature readings. Dolphins are mammals, and their normal body temperature is similar to a human's, around 35 to 36 degrees Celsius.



Reaching 6 meters in length, the giant manta is the largest ray in the world. It inhabits the open ocean, unlike the coastal Alfred manta. The two species differ in their mouth color, dorsal patterns, and the arrangement of scales and teeth.



In 2019, we achieved the world's first successful exhibit of a smoothtail devil ray, a species that was previously difficult to transport over long distances. We aim to shed light on this mysterious species' reproductive behavior.

Mobula Species Simultaneous Exhibition of Four Species

Besides the giant manta and the Alfred manta, the Kuroshio Sea tank houses two other species in the Mobula genus: the giant devil ray and the smoothtail devil ray. The giant mantas and Alfred mantas are the only ones displayed in Japan. This is the only facility that rears a melanic variation of the Alfred manta, called a black manta.

World's First

Successful Captive Breeding

In 2007, Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium achieved the world's first successful breeding of an Alfred manta. In 2024, we succeeded in the birth of a black manta. The mother black manta and her baby looked very similar.



Mother and baby black manta right after its birth!

Mobula Species

Species of Mobula have distinctive curled cephalic fins on each side of their head. The two largest species, the giant manta and Alfred manta, are the only Mobula commonly called mantas.

The other Mobula at the aquarium are the giant devil ray (up to 3 meters in width), and the smoothtail devil ray (up to 2 meters in width).

Staff Voice The gestation period of Alfred mantas is approximately one year. The fetus develops while receiving milk inside the uterus. The average width of a newborn manta is about 1.8 meters.

Aquarist interviews! Floor Guides

3F 2F Journey to the Coral Reef

We asked the aquarists at Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium about their favorite creatures, interesting facts, and recommendations. These aquarists care for and study the aquarium animals every day!

The Life in the Inoh tank represents the shallow lagoons called inoh in the Okinawan language. The Coral Sea tank showcases reef-building corals, and the Sea of Tropical Fish tank is filled with colorful fish. In these areas, you can closely observe coral reef habitats and the creatures living among them.

It feels like you are scuba diving in Okinawa's ocean!

Watching the beautiful reef is so relaxing.

1 The Coral Sea

So many soft and hard corals

We aim to present the marine environment as authentically as possible. When arranging the corals, we draw inspiration from the natural ocean. Most of the corals in this aquarium were bred here, and we have successfully spawned them for 23 consecutive years. Starting in 2020, we adjusted the lighting to allow corals to spawn during the day, giving visitors the opportunity to witness the spawning process firsthand.



Nagata

The Coral Sea is a large, curved tank that contains about 80 coral species. Each coral is a colony of tiny animals called polyps, and there are roughly 420 colonies in this tank. It is an open system without a roof and is constantly supplied with fresh seawater. Natural light filters through the water, causing its appearance to change throughout the day. You can also view the Coral Sea tank from above at the Uminchu Gate on the 4th floor.



Tropical fish are displayed in their natural habitat.

Meet the Aquarists!



Fumihiko Nagata

Nagata oversees the Coral Sea tank. An avid scuba diver, he joined the aquarium because he wanted a career related to the sea. He scuba dives regularly and studies corals.



Itsuki Waniya

Waniya oversees the Sea of Tropical Fish tank. It is his third year at the aquarium. His hobby is fishing, and he often catches parrotfish.



Mayu Nagata
Sou Takase

Nagata and Takase oversee the Coral Reef Gallery. Nagata is in her third year, and loves marine sports. Takase joined the aquarium in 2024.



Takuo Higashiji

Higashiji oversees the seaweed and algae. He's been at the aquarium for 20 years! Previously he oversaw the Deep-Sea tank. He is drawn to the beauty of corals and algae.



Natsuko Enoki

Enoki oversees the Journey to the Coral Reef. She lovingly cares for the broadclub cuttlefish eggs and monitors their growth.

Common blue stripe snapper
Stripes on its yellow body. Lives among corals.



Clown anemonefish
Anemones are their home

Palette surgeonfish
It has a bright blue body and a yellow tailfin.



All Okinawan Fish!



Bicolour parrotfish
An iconic colorful Okinawan parrotfish.



Moorish idol
It has long dorsal fin and a thin (laterally compressed) body.



Humphead wrasse
Also called the Napoleon fish. The largest wrasse species.

2 The Sea of Tropical Fish

Replicating Okinawa's Coral Reef

The Sea of Tropical Fish features many corals and the tropical fish that inhabit them. There are approximately 180 species, including schools of vibrant snappers.

Let's focus on the fish's environment. As the tank gets deeper, the terrain becomes more complex, including caves. The species of fish vary with changes in depth and terrain.



Waniya

3 Coral Reef Gallery

Tiny creatures become stars!

Small coral reef creatures are showcased in 30 tanks of various sizes. The exhibits change with the seasons, so there's always something new to see on each visit.



Above/Various exhibits with different themes. Right/The gallery features many tiny creatures.



Nagata

The aquarists choose the themes and the display of creatures for each gallery tank. The aquarists carefully plan, collect the animals, and set up the small tanks.



Takase

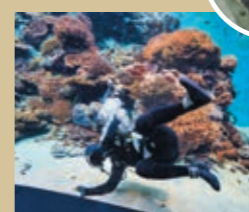


The gallery's superstars are the spotted garden eels and the splendid garden eels.

Behind the scenes

Creating a nutrient cycling tank

We recreated a seagrass bed that is home to various species. The sea stars feed on leftover food from the broadclub cuttlefish, and the feces from fish become nutrients for the seagrasses. This creates a nutrient cycling tank.



Higashiji

Seagrasses produce tiny flowers. They bloom in December. You're lucky if you see them!

Breeding and Growth of the Broadclub Cuttlefish

The broadclub cuttlefish reared in the aquarium were born here in 2024. Initially, they were exhibited as eggs in the Life in the Inoh area, then moved to tanks as they grew. Currently, they are displayed in the Coral Reef Gallery. Our goal is to continue breeding.



Broadclub cuttlefish feed on shrimp and crustaceans. We feed them 4 to 5 times a day.



Enoki

2F
&
1F

Journey to the Kuroshio Sea



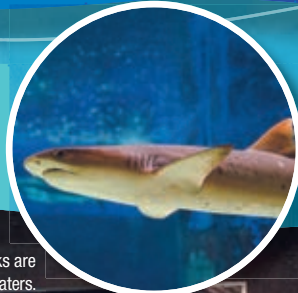
I'll explain!



Jo Okamoto

Okamoto oversees the Journey to the Kuroshio Sea area. He undertakes various tasks from feeding whale sharks and manta rays to collecting specimens.

This area exhibits migratory fish that swim in the Kuroshio current that flows offshore of Okinawa. The entire facility is centered on the Kuroshio Sea tank, where a whale shark and manta rays swim. Other fascinating exhibits are scattered throughout the facility.



Whitetip reef sharks are common in tropical waters.

The rare bowmouth guitar fish. It looks like a shark, but in fact, it is a ray.



The jaws of various shark species are on display. Including the jaw of a whale shark!

Learn about sharks through specimens and academic research

1 Shark Research Lab

The aquarium has approximately eight species of sharks and rays. One of them, the bowmouth guitar fish, was born at the aquarium. It is listed as endangered on the Red List, which means it is in urgent need of conservation. Our successful breeding of sharks and rays has drawn worldwide interest. Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium is home to many other species of sharks and rays, including species that are not found in other aquariums.



Okamoto

Rarely seen shark eggs are on display.



The Shark Research Lab is home to around eight species of shark, and there are comprehensive explanations about the ecology of sharks. The number and quality of exhibited items are the result of years of research by researchers and aquarists, including Dr. Keiichi Sato, a shark specialist. As you learn more about sharks, you will no longer see them as just man-eating monsters. Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium developed the world's first artificial uterus apparatus, which is now on display.



Although sharks have a fierce reputation, most are quite calm.



During feeding, watch as mantas somersault backwards, efficiently filtering their food.

Japan's largest aquarium is home to a whale shark and manta rays.

One of the signature exhibits of Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium

2 The Kuroshio Sea

The whale shark is the main attraction, but there are around 70 other species. Some species are part of Okinawan culinary culture, these include tuna and bonito.



The largest tank at Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium holds 7,500 m3 of water. Watch a whale shark and mantas through the enormous acrylic panels of the main window. Feeding takes place three times a day, check it out!

Seats are available for you to sit and relax.

3 Churaumi Theater

Observe the Whale Shark Up Close

This is a great spot to see the Kuroshio Sea tank from a different angle. It is a relaxing environment that feels like a movie theater!



The window in the Churaumi Theater is located roughly halfway up the Kuroshio Sea tank. It was designed this way so the whale shark can swim directly past the window. This offers visitors a different perspective compared to looking up at the whale shark from the main viewing area.

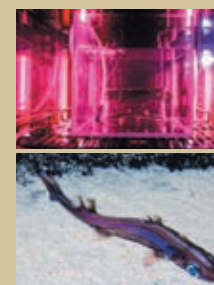


See eye to eye with the whale shark.

Behind the scenes

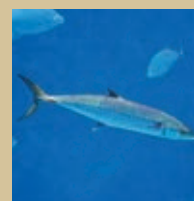
Shark Fetal Development Using an Artificial Uterus Apparatus

Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium developed the world's first artificial uterus apparatus for sharks. This device can save shark embryos by raising them till birth in an artificial amniotic fluid that closely mimics being inside a shark's uterus. A successful birth of the deep-sea shark, *Etmopterus schmidtii*, occurred in 2021. If an embryo is in the process of incubating, you can also see it growing inside an artificial womb in the Shark Research Lab.



Success in Rearing Delicate Mackerel

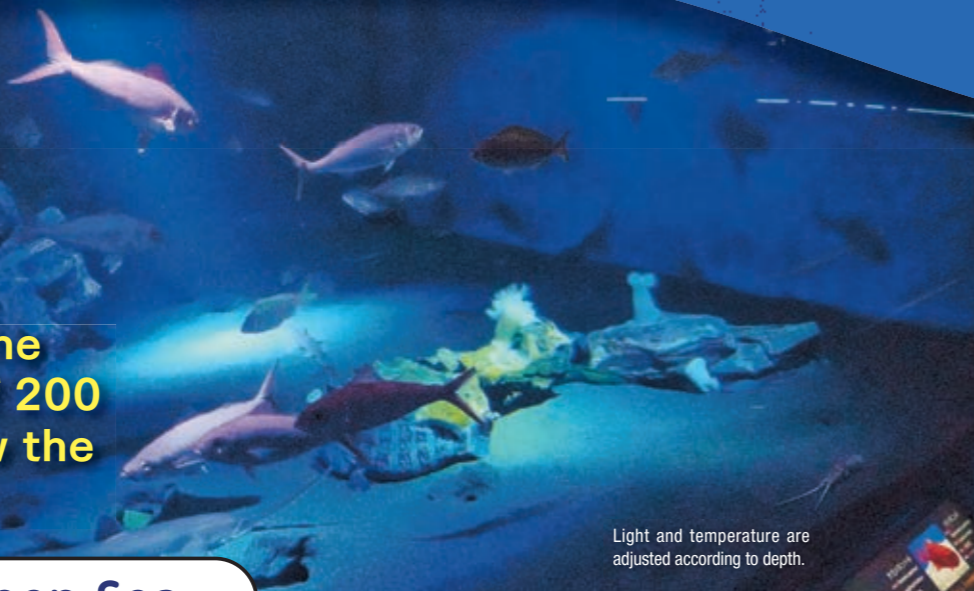
Mackerel are difficult to rear because they are quite delicate. Special equipment and fast transportation are needed to move mackerel. Our aquarists hand-made the nets used to collect them. The school of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel in our tank is the only exhibit of its kind in Japan. We are now able to study their growth process.



1F Journey into the Deep Sea

Journey to the Deep Sea is on the 1st floor. This floor has many creatures that the aquarium has collected and successfully bred! Many of the exhibits feature newly discovered species or creatures found nowhere else in Japan.

Replicating the conditions of 200 meters below the surface!



Light and temperature are adjusted according to depth.

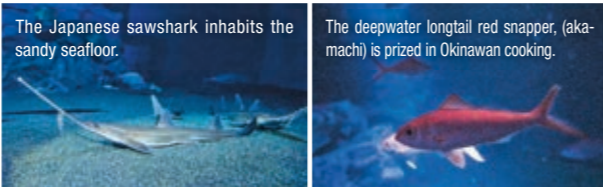
1 The Deep Sea

Although the deep sea is dark, there are strong currents. To recreate a similar environment, we generate artificial water currents. This enabled the successful rearing of the deep-water longtail red snapper. If you look closely, you can see them swimming against the current.



Takaoka

This tank recreates the deep sea at depths of 200 meters and below. It is the largest tank in the Journey to the Deep Sea section, featuring over 40 species. These include the deepwater longtail red snapper and Japanese spear lobsters, both of which are hard to breed. On the sandy seafloor, you can see Japanese sawsharks that have been successfully bred at this aquarium. Hidden from view, the Deep Sea tank has many secret features that allow for Long-Term Husbandry! Don't miss the Ocean Planetarium, where you can see creatures that glow in the deep sea.



The Japanese sawshark inhabits the sandy seafloor.

The deepwater longtail red snapper, (aka-machi) is prized in Okinawan cooking.

Behind the scenes

We use a remote control to operate the ROV's arms and suction device when collecting specimens.



Morota

ROV Collection to Exhibition

During surveys at depths from 100 to 500 meters, we use an ROV (remotely operated vehicle) to collect deep-sea creatures. At the aquarium, the deep-sea animals are immediately placed in a gravity-based pressure treatment compression chamber. Over one to two weeks, the creatures acclimate to normal water pressure. You can see an ROV on display near the entrance to the Journey to the Deep Sea section.



Japanese Spear Lobster Behavior

Aquarist Soeya gave a research presentation on the behavior of Japanese spear lobsters. Her research began in 2020 after discovering a lobster in a burrow in the sand during an ROV survey. There are twelve burrows in the Deep Sea tank, and you can see the lobsters there. Soeya continues her research by observing them in the tank.



Meet the Aquarists!



Hiroko Takaoka

Takaoka primarily oversees the Deep Sea tank. After overseeing the Coral Sea tank and other projects, she is now captivated by the mysteries of the deep sea.



Yuichirou Baba

Baba oversees small deep-sea organisms. In the Journey to the Deep Sea section, he wants to introduce these tiny, inconspicuous yet incredibly important creatures and their environment.



Reika Soeya

In 2025, not long after she joined the aquarium, Soeya presented research on Japanese spear lobster behavior. She is a rising star of the Journey to the Deep Sea section.



Hiromi Morota

Morota is a skilled ROV operator. He is a pioneer in collecting unknown deep-sea creatures. His first catch with an ROV was a *Pterygotrigla multipunctata*.

2 Small Life in the Deep Sea

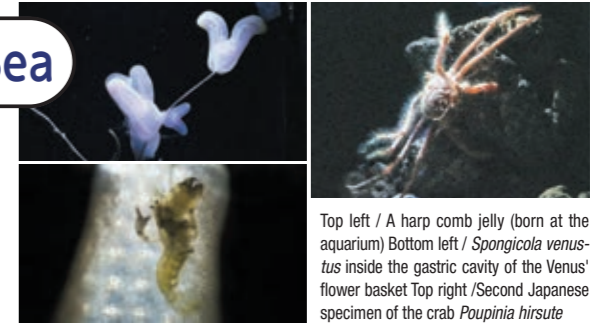
Mysterious Deep-Sea Creatures

There are many small tanks along the wall. They display rare organisms, including new species and creatures found nowhere else in Japan. There are many unusual organisms, so be sure to check out the information panels to learn more.



Baba

We exhibit mysterious creatures of the deep sea, like the marine worm *Paradiopatra willemoesii* and the harp comb jelly. Depending on what is collected with the ROV, new species are displayed. You can always discover something new.



Top left / A harp comb jelly (born at the aquarium) Bottom left / *Spongiocola venus-tus* inside the gastric cavity of the Venus' flower basket Top right / Second Japanese specimen of the crab *Poupinia hirsute*



Top / See the ocean depths in Deep Sea World Tank right / Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium announced a new species in 2019, the *Churaumi actinernid sea anemone* Bottom right / A giant squid specimen

Each tank is designed to replicate the natural habitat of each species. An aquarist studies images taken during the ROV collection of a species to create a similar environment. The water temperature in the tank is also matched to the original habitat.

3 Deep Sea World

Get a glimpse of the deep-sea world in an aquarium.

The Deep Sea World area has a medium-sized tank that recreates a habitat at a depth of more than 200 meters. This tank, as well as four smaller tanks, displays various rare deep-sea creatures.



Soeya

1F Ryukyu Arc Riverside

After the Journey to the Deep Sea, you pass through the exit gate. The Ryukyu Arc Riverside features Okinawan freshwater fish, turtles, frogs, snails, and other creatures. Many of these species are endemic to Okinawa.



Top / Recreation of an Okinawan mountain stream Bottom / Ryukyu black-breasted leaf turtle

Behind the scenes

Breeding and Conservation of Land Snails

Three species of land snails are being exhibited: *Satsuma amanoi* (endemic to southern Okinawa Main Island), *Nesiohelix omphalina omphalina* (endemic to Kitadaito Island), and *Nesiohelix omphalina bipyramidalis* (endemic to Minamidaito Island). All three are on the Ministry of the Environment's Red List and face a high risk of extinction.



We are working with the Ministry of the Environment to protect these species.



Oversees the Ryukyu Arc Riverside Hajime Igei

We have successfully achieved Long-Term Husbandry of breeding specimens of harp comb jellies. Research will continue to understand their age of sexual maturity, and how their colors change during breeding.

Discover the Secrets of the Aquarium on a Tour

See what happens behind the scenes

Explore behind the scenes at the aquarium. Visit areas usually only accessed by our aquarists! A guide will lead you through the facility and answer all your aquarium questions. The tour occurs four times a day, and requires a reservation. For more details, please visit our official website.

Start



Let's discover the secrets of the aquarium!

Feed the fish at The Sea of Tropical Fish

Stand above the Sea of Tropical Fish tank and observe the corals and the tropical fish. You can also take part in the fish feeding experience.

It mimics a natural habitat.



Enter through the staff entrance behind the observation platform!

Meet up at the Life in the Inoh tank. The staff will lead you through the aquarium. It's exciting to see behind the scenes!



There's the manta!



Seeing the daily life of the aquarists.

It's food preparation time. Food for the fish is prepared, along with a large amount of krill! Please note that this may not be available in the afternoon.

Goal



A crane to bring in large animals.

Investigate the Kuroshio Sea tank.

Heading to the Kuroshio Sea tank. Watching whale sharks and mantas from above is exciting! There are creatures born in the aquarium that are being prepared for their display.



Learn about our high-tech collection methods in the deep-sea area.

Check out the remotely operated vehicle (ROV) that collects deep-sea organisms. You can view the ROV as the staff explains how it is controlled to collect specimens. After learning about the gravity pressure compression chamber, the tour concludes with an up-close observation of a deep-sea giant isopod.

Some people think it is cute!



Exploring the Kuroshio Sea Tank Observation course above the water!

On the 4th floor, this popular course allows you to observe the Kuroshio Sea tank from above. You can look down on the whale shark and mantas. For more information, please visit the official website (no reservation required, time limit applies).



Learn about the aquarium and it's most popular creatures.



Guide Asuka Higa

Interviews with Aquarists! 推し♡ What's your favorite marine creature?

We interviewed our aquarists to discover their favorites of the marine creatures exhibited in the aquarium.

- ★ Oriental butterflyfish
- ★ Sea sponge
- ★ Japanese spear lobster



推し



Oriental butterflyfish have been my favorite for a long time. They are so colorful and cute. Of course, I also love seagrasses!

Takuo Higashiji

- ★ Bubble Coral
- ★ Blue green damselfish



推し



After I've arranged coral in the tank, I'm delighted when I see schools of tropical fish living among them.

Fumihiko Nagata

- ★ Long-spine porcupinefish
- ★ Shao's moray
- ★ Hawksbill turtle



推し



I love Shao's moray, it was discovered in 2022. In Japan, we think it looks like tapioca

Mayu Nagata

- ★ Broadclub cuttlefish
- ★ Northern pygmy squid



推し



I'm crazy about the broadclub cuttlefish! I can't take my eyes off them, they change color all the time!

Natsuko Enoki

- ★ Leopard coral grouper
- ★ Blacksaddled coral grouper
- ★ Blue-barred parrotfish



推し



I love to go fishing, especially for parrotfish. The blue-barred parrotfish is one of my favorites!

Itsuki Waniya

- ★ Spotted seahorse
- ★ Sponge crab
- ★ Bluespine unicornfish



推し



I love the coral reef fish that I'm responsible for. They represent the charm of Okinawa so well.

Sou Takase

- ★ Bowmouth guitarfish
- ★ Dogmouth tuna
- ★ Leopard whiplay



推し



I love watching fish and rays swim gracefully in the Kuroshio Sea tank. It's both cool and beautiful!

Jo Okamoto

- ★ Japanese sawshark
- ★ Sordid snapper
- ★ Deepwater longtail red snapper



推し



I'm fascinated by the wonders of deep-sea fish. I'm torn, but I chose these three species!

Hiroko Takaoka

- ★ Paradiopatra willemoesii
- ★ Holothuria (Cystipus) dura
- ★ Poupinia hirsuta



推し



These species are small and easy to overlook, and I might be the only one who notices their charm.

Yuichirou Baba

- ★ Golden grouper
- ★ Jaggedhead gurnard
- ★ Giant ruby snapper



推し



I love all the deep-sea fish I have gathered using the ROV.

Hiromi Morota

- ★ Paradiopatra willemoesii
- ★ Species of snapping shrimp
- ★ Japanese spear lobster



推し



I love invertebrates. There's so much we don't know about them; they give me a sense of wonder.

Reika Soeya

- ★ Loggerhead Sea Turtle
- ★ Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin
- ★ Ryukyu ground gecko



推し



I love all sea turtles, but my favorite is the loggerhead sea turtle.

Nene Ogino

- ★ Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin
- ★ Common bottlenose dolphin
- ★ Whale shark



推し



Of course, my favorite is Okichan (the dolphin)! She is an icon of tourism in Okinawa!

Suguru Higa

- ★ False killer whale
- ★ Common bottlenose dolphin
- ★ Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin



推し



I dreamt of being an aquarist after meeting a false killer whale.

Minami Uemura

- ★ Manatee
- ★ False killer whale
- ★ Common bottlenose dolphin



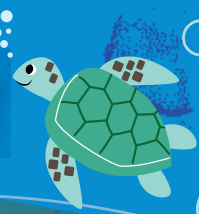
推し



I like dolphins, but love manatees more. They are the cutest!

Masae Makabe

Outdoor Exhibits



Dolphins, sea turtles, and manatees are reared outdoors of the Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium main building. You can visit these facilities for free.

Meet the Aquarists!



Minami Uemura

Uemura has loved false killer whales since she was a kid. She now trains dolphins, her dream job. She also performs on stage with Gonchan.



Nene Ogino

Ogino oversees the Sea Turtle Pool. She loves Okinawan nature, and her goal was to work for the Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium.



Masae Makabe

Makabe oversees the Manatee Pool. A veteran aquarist of over 30 years, she bottle-fed Kyu (baby manatee) and is crazy about him.



Suguru Higa

Higa oversees the dolphins. He has been studying dolphins for many years, including Okichan. He conducts a lot of the research and gives presentations.



Gonchan performing.

A synchronized jump! Dolphin shows are free.

1 Okichan Theater

Okichan is our most famous dolphin. We often get people asking, "Which generation is she?" We always reply, "She is the original, the 1st generation." Okichan celebrated 50 years of rearing in May 2025! Everyone on stage cheered her achievement!



Uemura



Four species of dolphin perform at the Okichan Theater: the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin, common bottlenose dolphin, false killer whale, and rough-toothed dolphin. The dolphins display their natural abilities to jump and turn, and the shows also introduce visitors to local culture and the Okinawan language. The show is held five times a day, each lasting 15 minutes. After the shows, you can get your photo taken with the dolphins (additional fee).



Okichan holds the world record for Long-Term Husbandry of an Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin.

Watching dolphins jump together in unison is a dynamic sight!

2 Sea Turtle Pool

A facility for breeding and the protection of sea turtles.

We rear loggerhead sea turtles, green sea turtles, hawksbill sea turtles, olive ridley sea turtles, and black sea turtles. There is a nesting ground beside the pool. Hatchlings are reared for a year, tagged, and released.



Feeding time

Feeding can be viewed from different perspectives, from above the water and from the basement.

Each year, we successfully breed turtles and have produced three generations of loggerhead and hawksbill sea turtles. In 2023, we received a Koga Award for our research on breeding sea turtles.



Ogino

Kyu, born in June 2021, is growing and doing well.



Seeing them holding their veggies with both hands while eating is so cute. Watching their playfulness as they peck each other on the cheek is heartwarming. We hope you can see their unique personalities. You might even be able to hear their cute squeaks.



The first successful manatee breeding was in 1990. Yuma was born in 2001, and Kyu is the third successful manatee birth.

Makabe



3 Manatee Pool

The only American manatees bred in Japan.

Manatees are rarely kept in Japan. The first manatees at Expo Park were a gift from the Mexican Government. There have been three cases of successful breeding, and of the four manatees here, Yuma and Kyu were born here. Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium is the only place in Japan where manatees are successfully bred.

4 Dolphin Lagoon

Interact with dolphins at the pool beside the theater.

At the pool next to the Okichan Theater you can see the dolphins up close, and at times, dolphin feeding is also available (for a fee).

We manage the feeding of the dolphins meticulously. Depending on the individual, we feed a certain amount each day, and each dolphin has different preferences.



Higa



Take a picture to remember the occasion!

Behind the scenes

Manatee Experience Program

During this program, you can feed manatees and learn about their ecology. Their small, round eyes create the cutest expressions! Their soft mouths produce utterly adorable munching sounds! (Advanced reservation required) Fri, Sat, Sun, and national holidays (once a day).



Dolphin Health Checks

Each morning, we check the body temperature of each dolphin. Once a month, we do blood tests and measure their weight. We have a special scale that can measure up to two tons. Gonchan, the false killer whale performing in the Okichan Theater, weighs a whopping 600 kg!



A Premium Dolphin Experience Program

The aquarium offers two types of dolphin experience programs. The Premium Dolphin Experience Program lets you feed, touch, and take memorable photos with the trainers. You can even participate in training for the show! After training, join the mini show to sign out commands like "jump!" This experience is available once every Sunday. (Advanced reservation required.)





Churaumi Times

Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium's Public Awareness Outreach and Research

Educational Programs

The aquarium is actively involved in education and welfare!

Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium has many educational programs for schools, hospitals, and social care centers. These programs are completely free, and require advanced registration. (The programs are not available for individuals.)



For Medical and Welfare Facilities

Mobile Aquarium

The Mobile Aquarium is a mobile exhibit of aquarium creatures that visits hospitals and elderly care facilities. This program is for people who are unable to visit the aquarium. This is a popular program that has been operated for over 20 years.

For Hospitals and Special Needs Schools

Remote Classes

Our aquarists provide online lessons about marine creatures for hospitalized children and those attending special needs schools. The program was launched in 2020, during the COVID pandemic. It provided a new way to learn when human contact was restricted. These remote classes are not limited to Japan, and we have held events for overseas audiences.



For Special Needs Schools for the Visually Impaired

Learning Through Touch Program

The Learning Through Touch Program is designed to give visually impaired children the opportunity to enjoy the aquarium. We provide an experience where these children can learn about sea cucumbers, sea stars, fish, and sharks through hands-on interactions. Schools for the visually impaired across Japan use this program.



For Nurseries, Kindergartens, and Elementary Schools

Picture Card Show

Using Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium's handmade picture cards, we tell stories about marine life. This is available to all nurseries, kindergartens, elementary schools, and facilities related to them in Japan. The children can also color in pictures of marine creatures. For facilities outside the prefecture, online classes are possible.



Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium * Night Guided Tour



Explore the aquarium with our aquarists after closing! The aquarium has a much quieter atmosphere than during the day. After exploring the facility, head outside to the Sea Turtle Pool. One-year-old baby sea turtles are tagged and released into the wild from here. You'll feel emotional as you watch them head toward the sea with all their might. (Program available to the public.)



Rearing Experience for Kids

Go behind the scenes with our aquarists, and discover what they do each day. You can even help prepare food for the fish. Maybe this fantastic experience will lead to a future career! For more information, visit the official website. (Program available to the public.)

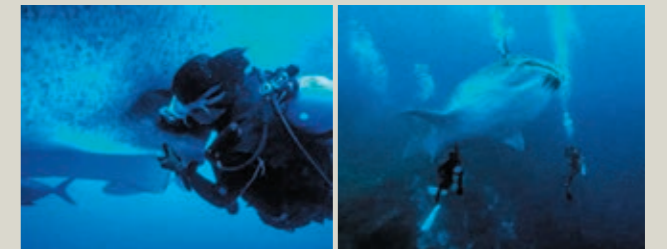


※ Please note that information regarding the Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium * Night Guided Tour and Rearing Experience for Kids is subject to change, and they may not be available during certain seasons.

Around the World

International Joint Research in the Galápagos Islands

Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium's goal is to support whale shark conservation through captive breeding. The Galápagos Islands are the only place in the world where only female whale sharks migrate. Female whale sharks, which are highly likely to be pregnant, gather there. Our experience in collecting blood samples and performing underwater ultrasounds can provide valuable insights into whale shark reproduction.



Aiming for the World's Best Treatment Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium's Animal Health Management Section

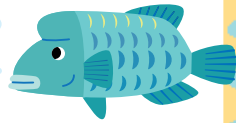
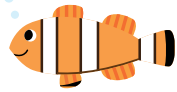
The Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium's veterinary team is called the Animal Health Management Section. The Aquarium Clinic is where the health of all the aquarium's animals is maintained, and where checkups and treatments occur. The veterinary team collaborates with aquarists to protect and save the lives of various creatures, including marine mammals like dolphins, large fish such as whale sharks, and tropical fish species. We perform daily health checks, and if we notice any unusual changes or injured animals, we take them for further testing and treatment. Some-

times, an animal requires a CT scan for detailed information, which is done at an external facility. All data from testing and treatment is analyzed, and this information plays a vital role in the future health management of aquatic animals. The vets, vet nurses, assistant staff, researchers, and aquarists work together around the clock, aiming to provide the animals with the best possible care.



So many opportunities!

Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium's Annual Passport



"What a deal!" Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium's Annual Passport is the ticket everyone is talking about. Let's compare prices and bonus features! We'll also show you how to get the passport at the aquarium.

	Tickets	Annual Passport
Adult	¥2180	→ ¥4360
High School	¥1440	→ ¥2880
Elementary & Middle School	¥710	→ ¥1420

You'll get your money's worth with just two visits!

Great Benefits!

Benefit 1

5% discount in all Ocean Expo Park Shops

Enjoy discounts at shops and restaurants in Ocean Expo Park facilities. Use it to purchase gifts. (Not applicable at food trucks)



More Benefits!

Renewing your annual passport unlocks enhanced benefits!

- ① Discounts at shops increases from 5% to 10%
- ② Three people win original goods every month!
- ③ Every month, 30 people win a ¥2,000 Churaumi coupon!

Benefit 2

Free shuttle bus!

Ocean Expo Park can be quickly explored by shuttle bus. The usual price is ¥500, but it's free for those who have an annual passport.



Benefit 3

Half-price entry to the Tropical Dream Center!

This is a popular spot for visitors. The admission fee is half for visitors with an aquarium annual passport.



How to apply for the annual passport



STEP 1

Fill out your information.

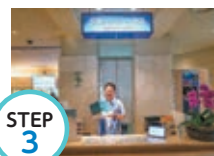
Input the required information (name, date of birth, gender, and address) at the application touch screen near the aquarium entrance. Don't forget to take the receipt.



STEP 2

Pay at the ticket window.

Take the receipt from the application touch screen to the aquarium ticket window. Pay the annual passport fee at the window.



STEP 3

Passport Reception

Proceed to the Annual Passport Reception Counter, and show the application fee receipt to the staff. Next, we will take a photo for your annual passport.



STEP 4

Receive your Passport

All steps are completed! Please wait near the reception counter while we make your passport. Once you have your passport, show it to the staff at the entry gate.

We issue it right here!

Share your vows of love in the presence of a whale shark and manta rays

Okinawa Churaumi Wedding

Pledge your love in front of the Kuroshio Sea tank, and have a magical photo session. If you love aquariums, why not have a wedding that's truly one of a kind?



With Okinawa Churaumi Wedding, you can reserve the area in front of the Kuroshio Sea tank after the aquarium has closed to the public. At Emerald Beach, take photos while watching the sunset. At the Tropical Dream Center, you can have a unique wedding photo shoot surrounded by colorful flowers. For more information, scan the QR code on the right.



Okinawa Churaumi Wedding



OKINAWA-CHURAUMI-2025-SP-ED

OKI 50YERAS, JINTA 30YERAS



OKINAWA CHURAUMI AQUARIUM

List Price : PRICELESS

(Base Price ¥0+Tax 0%)



ESTABLISHED IN 2002

Shop at Naha's Kokusai Street!
Official Churaumi Aquarium Shop

うみちゅらら
umichurara

ACCESS : 3-minute walk from Kencho-mae Prefectural Office Monorail Station 2nd floor of the Washita Shop, Kokusai Street



umichurara Instagram

Shop from anywhere!
The Official Online Shop of Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium

沖縄美ら海水族館
Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium



首里城公園
SHURIJO CASTLE PARK

公式オンライン



Official Online Shop



YAHOO! Store



沖縄美ら海水族館
Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium

Publication : Okinawa Churashima Foundation
Production : Globe-Trotter Guidebook, Grupo Pico
Photo: Ocean Expo Park : Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium, Grupo Pico (Taizo Takei)
Illustration : Yoko Akaebashi

※ Please note that the article and data published in this booklet are current as of January 2025. Fees, business hours, and regular holidays are subject to change after publication. Please note that all listed prices are tax-inclusive. Unauthorized reproduction, copying, or translation of this book is strictly prohibited. Under copyright law, scanning or digitizing this book by third parties, such as scanning services, is not permitted, even for personal or household use.