



Joining the Volunteer Dive Team

The volunteer dive program at the Oregon Coast Aquarium offers a range of opportunities for qualified divers, tenders and support personnel.

- **Husbandry Divers:** Most of our divers provide support to our animal care staff, assisting with feeding, cleaning, and routine husbandry care of our exhibits.
- **Interpretive Divers:** Over the summer months we have an interpretive dive program with scheduled dive shows using full face masks and underwater communications equipment.
- **Research Divers:** All divers in our program become Scientific Aquarium Divers, but for those who wish to progress to full (open water) Scientific Diver certification we offer training for our Scientific Diving research team, with regularly scheduled research dives on the Oregon Coast.
- **Non Diving Positions:** Tenders and other support personnel provide valuable contributions to the safety, efficiency and effectiveness of our operation.

Step 1. Attend a Recruiting Day

These are offered every couple of months and include:

- Overview of the dive program
- Overview of the prerequisites, required commitment, and duties/benefits of volunteering
- Tour of the diving facilities and dive platform
- Opportunity to see one of our dive teams at work
- Interview with our Dive Safety Officer and Volunteer Services Manager

Note: divers that do not yet meet the prerequisites may join as tenders/dive program support, and/or will be referred to local training resources for additional qualifications.

Step 2. Submit Application

The Recruiting Day provides you an opportunity to decide if becoming a volunteer diver is for you. If it is, the next step is to complete an application and be scheduled for training. Training includes the Habitat Diver Certification Course and Orientation (which are scheduled 3-4 times per year). Though not required, divers are also encouraged to attend a 30 hour interpretive training program (see optional training below) to achieve the maximum experience.

Step 3. The Habitat Diver Certification Course

An Oregon Coast Aquarium "Habitat Diver" course has been developed specifically to meet the needs of the dive program here at the Aquarium, and is required of all prospective volunteer divers and tenders (tenders are required to complete "dry" components only). This is a specialty certification course through PADI. The curriculum includes watermanship/scuba skills evaluation, underwater naturalist, plus aquarium diving and tending techniques. The course includes class, pool, and Aquarium dives and requires about 3 days to complete. It is usually scheduled in concert with the Orientation Course (see below). The cost for the course is \$175.

Step 4. Orientation Course— The orientation is usually scheduled along with the Habitat Diver Course and is a one day program. This course includes an induction session on the history, structure and mission of the Aquarium; volunteer benefits, policies and procedures; a tour of the Aquarium behind the scenes; incident and emergency management procedures; role of the surface tender, lead diver and shift captain; a session on animal husbandry techniques and water quality; scientific diving standards; shark diving policies/techniques; shark behavior observation session; and a tour of other diving exhibits. Upon successful completion divers are assigned to a shift schedule that suits both the diver and the Aquarium. Cost for course is \$0.

Step 5. Optional Training: The Aquarium also offers an optional 30-hour interpretive training course. Staff and experienced volunteers give talks about the animals, habitat, and marine biology of the Oregon coast as well as the animals exhibited in the Aquarium. There are also components dedicated to the development of interpretive skills. Divers who wish to attend this optional training are asked to contact the Volunteer Services Assistant, Beth Hawkyard, 541-867-3474 ext 5316, beth.hawkyard@aquarium.org.

Prerequisites

Diving recruits must hold Advanced Open Water certification (or equivalent), have a minimum of 25 logged dives, cold water diving experience, and be cleared medically fit to dive by a physician. As a minimum, divers are expected to possess an Advanced Open Water Diver level of diving knowledge and have good to excellent diving and watermanship skills. Divers must possess current First Aid, CPR and Oxygen Provider certification, or obtain it within 2 months of commencement. Divers must also have and maintain Divers Alert Network membership insurance. You can get more information on membership, insurance, benefits and training opportunities at www.diversalertnetwork.com

Equipment Needs

Volunteer divers provide the following equipment: mask, fins, thermal protection, buoyancy compensator, and regulator. Thermal protection includes drysuit (with appropriate undergarments) or wetsuit, plus gloves, hood, and boots as needed. The aquarium provides steel cylinders for the divers and an assortment of soft weights that can be loaded into an integrated system on a BC (which you provide) or divers can use one of the aquarium provided weight harnesses or weight belts.

Scheduling

Volunteer diver positions require a commitment of at least one 6 hr shift every three weeks. Each team has a Lead Diver/Shift Captain assigned by the Dive Safety Officer. The schedule is determined by your availability and the Aquarium's needs. We are committed to providing a quality volunteer diving experience and believe we can do this best within the structure of teams.

Commitment – Volunteers in the dive program are required to commit a minimum of one full year (about 100 hours) to the Aquarium. We realize that this is a significant commitment, and we want you to consider it carefully. Do you have that much time? Is it important to you? We are happy to answer your questions before you make that final decision. Most of our divers stay well beyond the requested one year, but that is the minimum commitment require.

Other Opportunities

Divers wishing to progress on to the Interpretive Diver Program will need to demonstrate a good attendance record, make application to Wendy Spalding, Education Coordinator, wendy.spalding@aquarium.org and complete training in full face masks, underwater communications and interpretive diving techniques.

Those wishing to become fully certified Scientific Divers (American Academy of Underwater Sciences) and participate in open water diving and research projects will need to demonstrate a good attendance record, make application to the Dive Safety Officer, and complete the Scientific Diving training Course (offered once yearly).

Contacts– For more information on becoming a volunteer and dates for the next Recruiting Day and Habitat Course, contact our Volunteer Services Assistant, Beth Hawkyard, 541-867-3474 ext 5316, beth.hawkyard@aquarium.org.



Applicant name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email address: _____

Cell Phone: (_____) _____ Home phone: (_____) _____

What is the best way to contact you (please check): Home Phone Cell Phone Email

Name of emergency contact: _____ Relationship: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Address: _____ City, State & Zip: _____

Physician's name: _____ Phone: _____

The following information is requested to develop demographic reports.

Birthday: _____

Gender: Male Female

Are you employed? Yes No If yes, full time or part time? If no, are you retired? Yes No

Occupation (current or past): _____

Currently a student? Yes No If yes, full time or part time? Institution: _____

Highest education level completed: Grade _____ High School Some college

Associate degree Bachelor's degree Master's degree Doctorate

Major: _____

Scheduling Information

What schedule would you prefer? One day: Once a week Once biweekly Once every 3 weeks

What day of the week would you like to volunteer? _____

Diver Certifications and Experience

Please check all certifications and if applicable, list date achieved.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Water Certification | Date Achieved: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 Logged Dives | Date Achieved: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Open Water Diver | Date Achieved: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid/CPR | Date Achieved: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oxygen Administration for Diving | Date Achieved: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divers Alert Network Membership | Date Achieved: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diving Medical (signed by physician) | Date Achieved: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cold Water Dives | Number of Dives: _____ |

Please list any additional certifications with applicable dates. _____

By submitting this application, I understand I am agreeing to...

1. Read the Dive Volunteer Information Packet
2. Pay all costs of training on exhibit diving at a designated training facility.
3. Complete a criminal background check.
4. Provide any pertinent medical information related to your volunteer activities.
5. Complete orientation weekend held at the Aquarium.
6. Interview with Aquarium Dive Safety Officer and Volunteer Services.
7. Understanding that my acceptance into the program is contingent upon my completion of all training and requirements to the *satisfaction of the dive safety officer*.
8. Volunteer for a minimum of one year based upon a predetermined schedule.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Data entered by: _____ Date: _____