



A VISIT TO

**MOTE**

MARINE LABORATORY  
& AQUARIUM

## A Note to Caregivers:

Though in general the Aquarium offers a high-sensory experience, we have tried our best to indicate areas of particular concern via icons in the sensory key highlighted in this book. Please note: due to the nature of the Aquarium, there could still be triggering smells, sounds, and sights in any location at any time.

There are a limited number of sensory-friendly backpacks available for check-out (with ID exchange) at the front Admissions desk for aquarium guests with sensory differences to borrow. A list of items included can be found in this guide.

As we strive to make the Aquarium as welcoming and inclusive as possible, we would love to hear your feedback following your visit.

**1600 Ken Thompson Parkway, Sarasota FL 34236**

**941-388-4441**

**[mote.org](http://mote.org)**

# Notes for Caregivers





### Included in Backpack:

- Ear protection
- Sunglasses
- Fidget toys
- Plush stress toy
- Mote Aquarium story



# Sensory Backpack





This symbol indicates a very dark or very bright area.  
If my eyes hurt, I can wear sunglasses.



This symbol indicates an area with loud sounds.  
If my ears hurt, I can cover my ears or wear ear protection.



This symbol indicates an area with strong smells.  
I can cover my nose and breathe through my mouth instead.
























This symbol indicates an area where I can touch animals.  
I will touch gently with two fingers only where I see this symbol.



This symbol indicates an area where I can have a drink or snack.

# Sensory Key



EXHIBIT	SENSORY CONCERN
Indoor Galleries	 
Exploration Gallery	
Coastal Waters	 
Shark Zone	
Contact Cove	 
Ray Touch Pool	  
Fossil Creek	  
Ancient Survivors: Sea Turtles	 
Manatee Habitat	
Otters & Their Waters	
The Teeth Beneath	
Oh Baby!	 

# Exhibits At A Glance





I am going to visit Mote Aquarium! At the Aquarium, I will learn about animals that live in or near the water.

I may be visiting with my family, friends, or on a field trip with my school.

# Going to Visit



## FINDING THE ENTRANCE:

From the parking lot, we will follow these signs. I will stay near the chaperone I am with because it can be a busy area with lots of traffic!



When we get to the entrance, we may have to wait in line and/or make a quick stop at the Admissions desk to get tickets.

# Arrival



# Main Aquarium



# Map of Main Aquarium





## FINDING ECO BOAT TOURS:

Sarasota Bay Explorers is located to the right of Mote Aquarium's entrance. We will need to purchase a separate ticket for this eco-boat trip.



# Sarasota Bay Explorers



## ASK QUESTIONS:

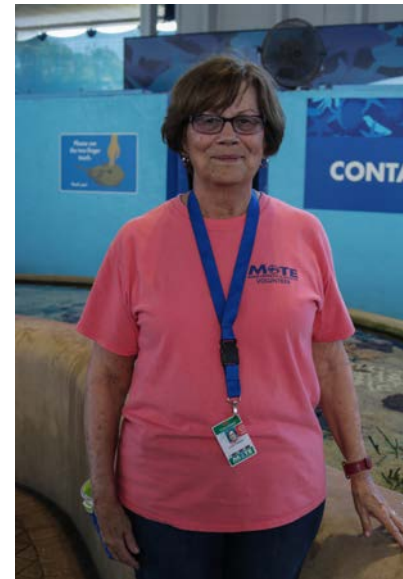
The front Admissions windows are just outside the entrance. I can go there any time during my visit to ask questions. If I get lost, I will go to the Admissions windows.



## GET HELP:

People that work or volunteer at the Aquarium wear shirts that say Mote Staff or Mote Volunteer.

Staff and volunteers are all throughout the Aquarium, and I can ask them questions or ask for help if I need it.



# Ask Questions or Get Help





Before entering the aquarium exhibits, I can present my tickets to the volunteer or staff at this kiosk.

# Welcome to Mote!

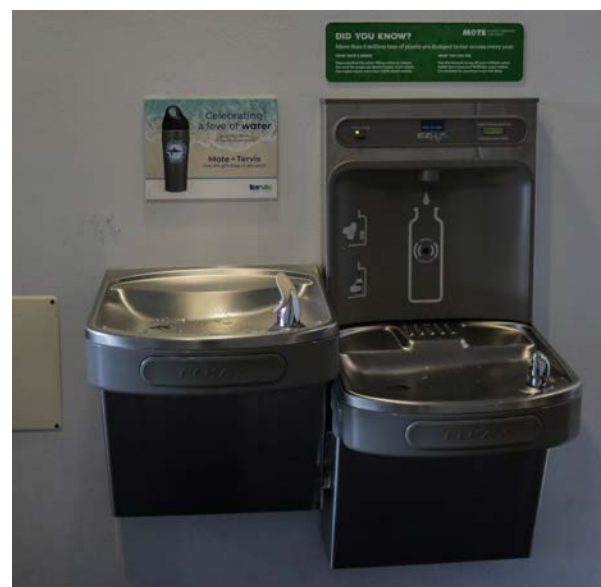
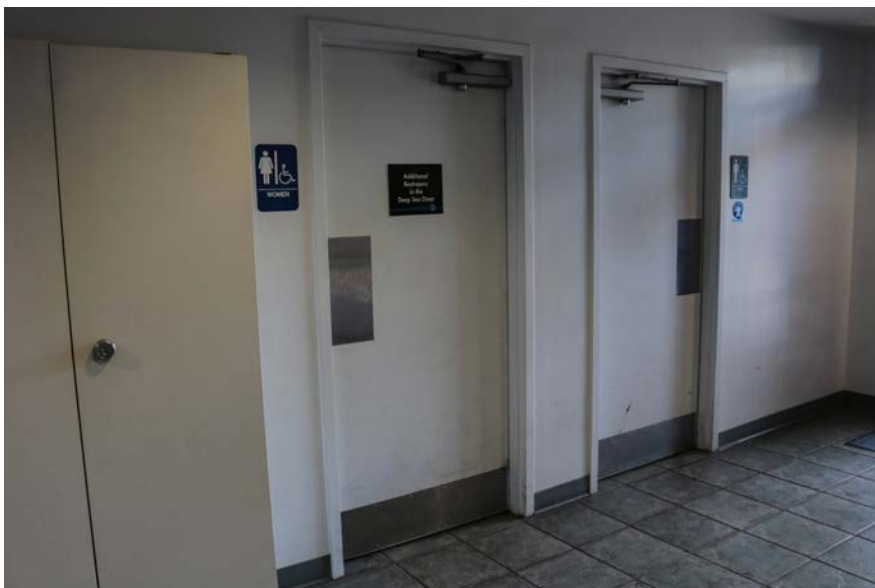




## Restrooms and Drinking Water:

To the left of the entrance to the Indoor Galleries are restrooms, a drinking fountain, and a water refill station.

There is also a door that I can use to get some fresh air or head straight to our outdoor exhibits.





# Indoor Galleries



## ENTERING THE INDOOR GALLERIES:

I will be walking into a dark open room that is sometimes loud. Here I can see animals that live in Florida's freshwater habitats or coastal - ocean homes.



I will see an open tank with seagrass and animals, but they are not for touching, so I will keep my hands out of the water.





**TERRAPIN**



**MORAY EEL**



**CORAL**



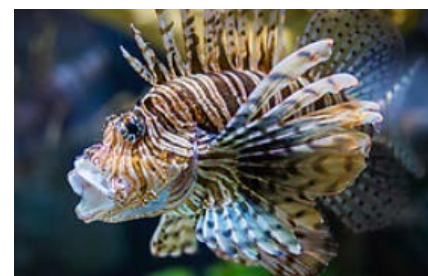
**CLOWNFISH**



**CUTTLEFISH**



**SEA CUCUMBER**



**LIONFISH**



**MOON JELLIES**



**SURGEONFISH**

**Can you spot these animals?**





# Exploration Gallery





## ENTERING EXPLORATION GALLERY:

I can turn left to enter the Exploration Gallery. There are two dark enclosed rooms to explore, including a virtual reality experience with an additional fee.

I can see a preserved giant squid and learn from two interactive exhibits - 2115: The Future of Our Coral Reefs and Science on a Sphere. I may have to wait my turn to play.



# Exploration Gallery





# Coastal Waters



## ENTERING COASTAL WATERS:

I will exit outside and walk down a narrow pathway to enter the Coastal Waters exhibit. Outside may be a different temperature than the Inside Galleries. If it is too bright I may wear sunglasses to protect my eyes.



I will see a long open tank with animals that live near mangroves but they are not for touching so I will keep my hands out of the tank.

Here I can also see an exhibit where I can push buttons to hear different sounds that fish make underwater.



# Coastal Waters





**DWARF SEAHORSE**



**SCORPIONFISH**



**SCRAWLED COWFISH**



**BAY SCALLOP**

**Can you spot these animals?**



presented by the Roberta Leventhal Sudakoff Foundation

# shark zone

### Milestones:

1955

Dr. Eugene Clark, an up-and-coming ichthyologist, becomes head of the new Cape Fear Marine Laboratory (now the Walter Branch Laboratory).

1959

Dr. Clark publishes a groundbreaking series of experiments that prove sharks could learn through training.

1967

Dr. Perry Gilbert takes over as director of the Cape Fear Marine Laboratory, which is renamed Walter Branch Laboratory. He is the first non-Fisheries scientist to head the lab.

1979

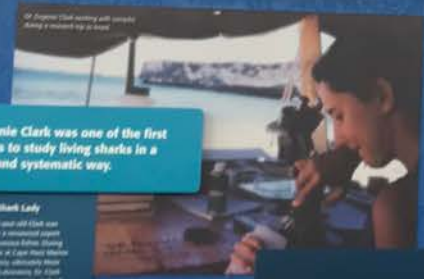
Shark is the first shark movie to be shown in theaters. It is the first to show sharks in a realistic way.

1991

Dr. Gilbert publishes a landmark book on shark behavior.

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ch at mote

**Dr. Eugenie Clark was one of the first scientists to study living sharks in a serious and systematic way.**



**The Shark Lady**  
The 31-year-old Clark was already a renowned expert on poisonous fishes. During her time at Cape Fear Marine Laboratory, she discovered the shark's ability to learn through training. She also discovered that sharks have a sense of smell that would later prove to be the "shark lady's" secret.



**Early shark research was driven by the military in the years after World War II.**

**Delivering Shark Bites...**  
Years of experiments with live and dead sharks showed that sharks in the water of the Pacific preferred the Department of Defense to "bite" anything to get rid of their stomachs. Experiments led to the creation of "Shark Bites" - a chemical solution that breaks apart or kills any live animal that swallows it. The solution, "Shark Bites" was used to deliver vaccines to the sharks.



By the late 1950s, more scientists agreed that general knowledge of shark biology and behavior was needed.



**Dr. Perry Gilbert was a guiding force for a new wave of shark research.**

**A New Leader**  
In 1967, Dr. Gilbert took over as director of the Cape Fear Marine Laboratory, which was renamed Walter Branch Laboratory. During the 1960s, Dr. Gilbert published more than 100 scientific papers on shark behavior and biology.



**A New Method**  
In 1967, Dr. Gilbert was the first to use a shark's sense of smell to track its movements. He used a shark's sense of smell to track its movements in a large tank.



**Overfishing threatens shark populations.**

**A Change in Focus**  
In the 1970s, Dr. Gilbert was the first to use a shark's sense of smell to track its movements. He used a shark's sense of smell to track its movements in a large tank.

However, important research during the past half century has revealed the complexity of this fascinating animal. Ongoing shark studies can even help us understand human biology and the environment we all share.

# Shark Zone



## APPROACHING THE BONNETHEAD HABITAT:

I can view the animals from two different sides of the exhibit.

If it is too crowded on this side I can walk around the corner past Contact Cove to view them from the other side where there is more space.



# Shark Zone





## APPROACHING LARGE SHARK HABITAT:

I can view the animals in the shark habitat from below in a semi-enclosed darker room or I can use the stairs on the right to view the animals from above.



# Shark Zone



## APPROACHING CONTACT COVE:

Across from the large shark tank is Contact Cove. Contact Cove is a touch tank so I am allowed to gently touch the animals here.



# Contact Cove





**REMEMBER:**

I may touch the animals using a "two finger touch." This means I may gently touch the animal on top with two fingers only.

I will keep the animal in the touch tank and will not take it out of the water or move it.

If I am not touching an animal I will keep my hands out of the water.

It is safe to touch these animals, but I do not have to touch them if I do not want to.





**HORSESHOE CRAB**



**PENCIL URCHIN**



**CUSHION SEA STAR**



**TULIP SNAIL**

**Can you spot these animals?**



## FIND A QUIET SPACE:

At the end of Contact Cove past the bonnethead tank on my right, there is a large open space.

If I feel like I need a quiet break, sometimes this courtyard is a good place to take one. I can focus my attention on the shell display if I'd like.



# Courtyard



## AQUACULTURE FEATURE:

At the far end of the courtyard there is an open pond with aquatic plants and fish.

I can learn about how Mote grows fish and plants at the Mote Aquaculture Research Park to provide sustainable seafood and edible plants.



# Aquaculture Pond



## APPROACHING THE RAY TOUCH POOL:

To the left of the large shark tank is a thatched roof gazebo. The Ray Touch Pool is a touch tank so I am allowed to gently touch the animals here.

This exhibit is adjacent to the Deep Sea Diner so it may smell like lunch here.



# Ray Touch Pool



**REMEMBER:**

I may touch the animals using a "two finger touch." This means I may gently touch the animal on top with two fingers only.

If I am not touching an animal I will keep my hands out of the water.

It is safe to touch these animals, but I do not have to touch them if I do not want to.

**GUITARFISH****COWNOSE RAY**

# Ray Touch Pool



## APPROACHING FOSSIL CREEK:

Opposite the Ray Touch Pool is Fossil Creek, where I can sift out hidden fossils for an additional fee. If I have not paid for this experience, I can look but I cannot put my hands in the water.

This exhibit is close to the Deep Sea Diner so it may smell like lunch here.



# Fossil Creek



## PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:

Past Fossil Creek is a replica jaw of the extinct megalodon shark.

I can take a picture in front of it to remember my trip to Mote Aquarium.



# Megalodon Jaw





## DEEP SEA DINER:

If I am hungry or thirsty I can get something to drink or eat at the Deep Sea Diner.

I can sit down and rest inside or outside at one of the tables provided. There may be music playing inside.

If I need to use the bathroom, I can use the restrooms located inside the Deep Sea Diner.



# Deep Sea Diner



## SCIENTISTS AT WORK:

Mote is a research laboratory where scientists study the ocean.

Some of the scientists' labs are inside to the left of the Deep Sea Diner.

I can quietly watch through the windows.



# Sea Science at Work



## GIFT SHOP AND EXIT:

To get to other Mote Exhibits I must walk through the gift shop.

I can buy a souvenir to remember my trip to Mote or just walk through to the exit.

The exit door is to the left at the end of the gift shop.

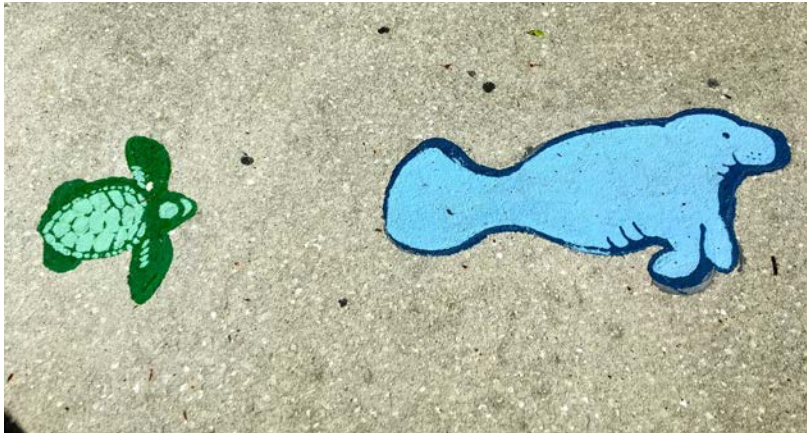


# Gift Shop and Exit



## LEAVING THE MAIN AQUARIUM:

From the Main Aquarium, I can follow the manatees and sea turtles painted on the sidewalk to get to the Ann and Alfred E. Goldstein Marine Mammal Research and Rehabilitation Center.



The distance to Marine Mammal Center is approximately 1/4 mile, and the walk may take 5-10 minutes. I will be walking outside the entire time, but if I need a break I can use the covered picnic tables on the left side of the pathway.



# Walking to the Mammal Center



## APPROACHING THE MAMMAL CENTER:

After crossing the street, we will walk towards the ticket booth. I will stay near the chaperone I am with because it can be a busy area with lots of traffic!



When we get to the entrance, we may have to wait in line to give our tickets to the person at the admissions desk.

If I am tired, I may sit down on a bench. If I am thirsty, I can use the water fountains nearby. Sometimes there will be a mist of water to cool me off.

# Arrival: Marine Mammal Center



# Marine Mammal Center Second Floor

# Marine Mammal Center First Floor



# Map of Marine Mammal Center



## ENTERING ANCIENT SURVIVORS:

The sea turtles on exhibit are all former hospital patients that were deemed non-releasable because they would not survive in the wild.

I can stay behind the railings to view these turtles and observe them from the window below. There is sometimes a loud stream of water flowing into the tank, so if it is too loud, I can put on ear protection.

Outside the Marine Mammal Building, I can view the turtle hospital to the right of the entrance.



# Sea Turtles: Ancient Survivors





## APPROACHING THE MANATEE HABITAT:

Just past the sea turtle exhibit are the resident manatees, Hugh and Buffett.

I can view them from three different windows and/or play a game to test my manatee knowledge.



# Manatee Habitat







## APPROACHING OTTERS AND THEIR WATERS:

Around the corner from turtles and manatees are the North American river otters.

I can view them from the first floor or take the stairs or elevator to observe them from the second floor.



# Otters & Their Waters



## APPROACHING THE TEETH BENEATH:

Across from the otter habitat are American alligators and spectacled caimans. I can view them from the first floor or take the stairs or elevator to observe them from the second floor.



# The Teeth Beneath



## GETTING TO THE SECOND FLOOR:

To get to the second floor of the Mammal Center, I can use the elevator or stairs.

There is also a vending machine to buy a drink if I am thirsty.



# Second Floor Exhibits

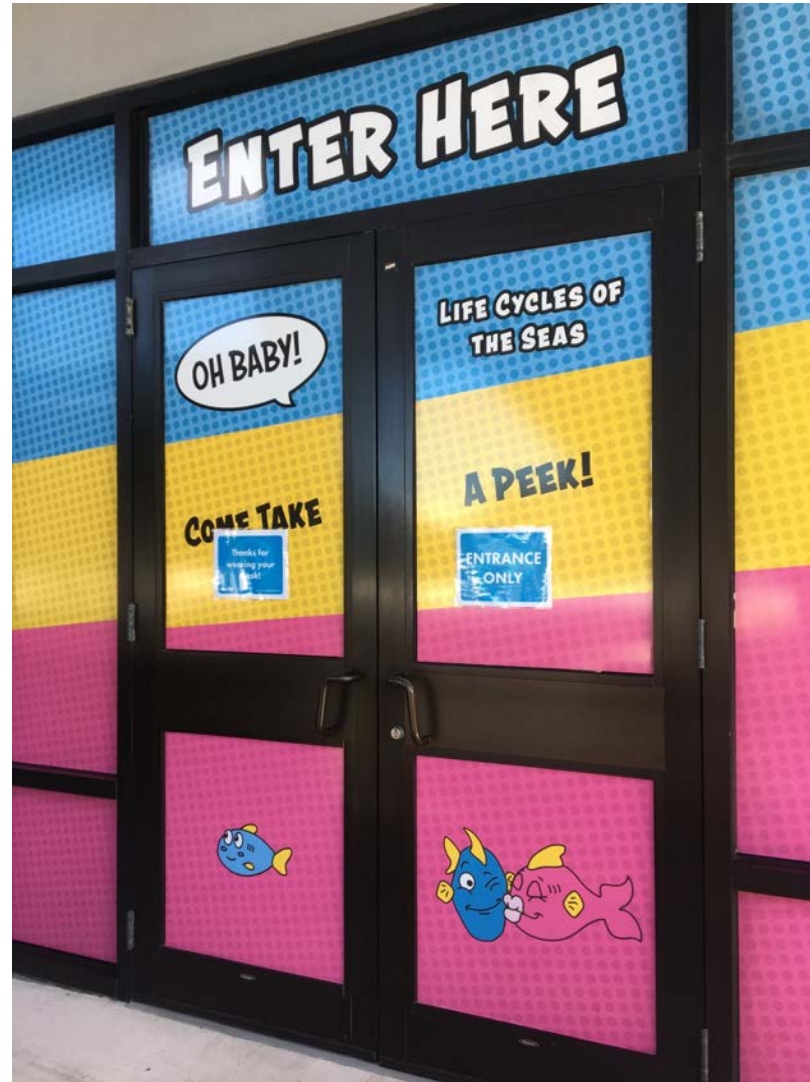


## ENTERING THE OH BABY! EXHIBIT:

I can enter this exhibit through the brightly colored double doors on the second floor.

The exhibit will be very dark compared to outside.

I can learn about life cycles in the sea by viewing the animals and/or by playing a multi-player game called "Who Wants to Be a Sea Star?"



# Oh Baby! Life Cycles of the Seas





**GARDEN EEL**



**JAWFISH**



**CHOCOLATE CHIP SEA STAR**



**DANCING SHRIMP**

**Can you spot these animals?**



## APPROACHING THE SHARK POOL:

The last exhibit in Oh Baby! is the Shark Pool which is a touch tank.

I may touch the animals using a "two finger touch." This means I may gently touch the animal on top with two fingers only.

If I am not touching an animal I will keep my hands out of the water.

It is safe to touch these animals, but I do not have to touch them if I do not want to.



# Oh Baby! Life Cycles of the Seas



## EXHIBITS FROM ABOVE:

After exiting Oh Baby!, I may view the alligators, caimans, and river otters from above.

It may be very bright outside compared to the inside exhibits.



# Exhibits from Above



## GIFT SHOP AND EXIT:

After exiting Oh Baby! I can follow the signs to find the exit and gift shop.

On the way to the gift shop I can stop for a drink of water or to use the restroom.

To get to the first floor I can take the stairs or the elevator located outside the gift shop.



# Gift Shop





## TIME TO GO!

After my visit to Mote is done,  
it will be time to leave.

Goodbye, Mote! Thank you  
for a wonderful visit.



# Time To Go!



## THANK YOU!

Thank you for visiting Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium.

We hope you enjoyed your time here and hope to see you soon!



# Thank You from Mote!

