



2025

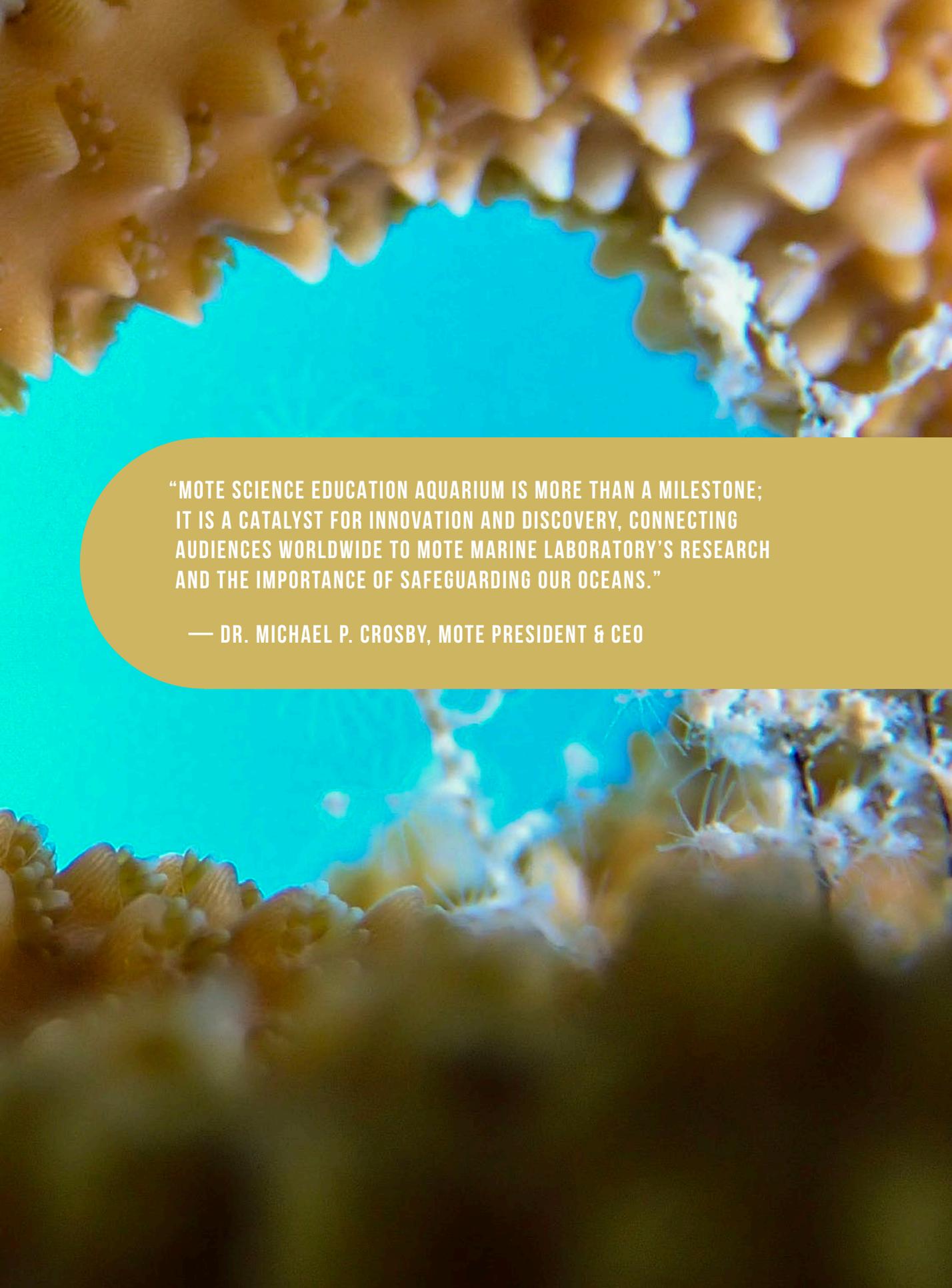
ANNUAL REPORT



Mote's 2025 Annual Report presents accomplishments and finances for the 2025 fiscal year, Oct. 1, 2024 - Sept. 30, 2025.

For the digital version of this report, scan this QR code or visit: mote.org/2025AR



A vibrant underwater scene featuring a coral reef. The top and bottom edges of the frame are filled with various types of coral, including branching and table corals, in shades of orange, yellow, and white. The background is a clear, bright blue water, creating a sense of depth and clarity.

**“MOTE SCIENCE EDUCATION AQUARIUM IS MORE THAN A MILESTONE;
IT IS A CATALYST FOR INNOVATION AND DISCOVERY, CONNECTING
AUDIENCES WORLDWIDE TO MOTE MARINE LABORATORY’S RESEARCH
AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFEGUARDING OUR OCEANS.”**

— DR. MICHAEL P. CROSBY, MOTE PRESIDENT & CEO



FROM THE CHAIR

I'm delighted to report that 2025 was a year of remarkable resiliency and transformation for Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium. One focus of our current *Beyond 2020 Vision & Strategic Plan* is to expand research infrastructure and accessibility to support global leadership in addressing the grand challenges facing oceans and coastal ecosystems.

Despite ongoing recovery efforts in the aftermath of Hurricanes Helene and Milton, 2025 saw Mote add two new campuses and expand infrastructure at a third.

Most notably, we completed construction of our new Mote Science Education Aquarium (SEA) at Nathan Benderson Park. This world-class, 146,000-square-foot facility is dedicated to marine science, education and immersive public experiences. Mote SEA is already succeeding in its intended goal of transforming Mote's ability to provide informal science education and enhance ocean literacy for much larger and more diverse audiences.

In partnership with Crane Point Museum & Nature Center, we also celebrated the debut of Mote's 10th location, the Mote Mangrove to Reef Exhibit at Crane Point's newly renovated museum. The first of two phases planned at Crane Point, the exhibit immerses visitors in the connections among Florida Keys ecosystems such as mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs. Through interactive displays and engaging storytelling, the exhibit brings Mote's

cutting-edge research and marine science education to life in Marathon, Florida.

Finally, we opened three state-of-the-art research facilities to advance the restoration, resilience, and sustainability of Florida's critically important seagrass ecosystems: The Ron and Marla Wolf Seagrass Restoration Center for Ocean Sustainability Greenhouse Facility, the Biogeochemical Carbon Sequestration Lab, and the Publix Seagrass Genetics Research Hub. These facilities comprise Mote's Seagrass Ecosystem Restoration Research Compound (SERRC) at the Mote Aquaculture Research Park (MAP).

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, it's my pleasure to extend our sincere thanks to each of our generous donors and incredible partners for making these milestones a reality.

Hobart (Skip) Swan

Hobart (Skip) Swan
Chair, Mote Marine Laboratory
Board of Trustees



FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Over 10 years ago, Mote’s Board of Trustees embraced a strategic vision for creating a new, larger, more impactful and accessible science education aquarium facility. We wanted to create more than just a place to view marine life—we wanted to ignite curiosity, inspire innovation, and celebrate the power of science. On Oct. 3, 2025—45 years after the original Mote Aquarium opened on City Island, Sarasota—we cut the ribbon to open our new Mote Science Education Aquarium (SEA).

Mote SEA is much more than just an aquarium; it stands at the intersection of—and serves as a continuum for—paradigm-changing research, science education, and community engagement. With the strong support of so many members of our Mote family, we’ve built a one-of-a-kind, experiential learning facility that will bring a smile to your face while showcasing global marine science, fostering discovery, and inspiring a deeper appreciation for the rich diversity of marine life.

When you walk into Mote SEA, right away you’ll see three state-of-the-art STEM Teaching Labs where 70,000 students from around the region will come to learn. Throughout the building are five STEM Workforce Training Labs, where teams of Mote scientists and their student interns are forging new solutions to emerging ocean challenges.

Where else can you marvel at a giant Pacific octopus, laugh along with a child as they come face to face with

a penguin, and see first-hand how Mote researchers are leading science-based approaches to restoring the world’s threatened coral reefs, seagrass meadows and fisheries? Mote SEA is a window into the globally significant marine research of Mote Marine Laboratory. But this is just the beginning of achieving our full *Beyond 2020 Vision*.

Mote is one of the most unique and impactful, independent nonprofit marine science institutions in the world. We have grown and excelled over the last 70 years because resiliency and innovation are infused in the DNA and culture of our Mote family. Together with our partners and supporters, we have achieved remarkable advances in marine research, technology, science education and conservation. We’re laying the scientific groundwork for potential therapies for 15 types of human cancer and uncovering marine sources of antibiotics to fight resistant bacterial infections such as MRSA*. We have developed and advanced sustainable, land-based, recirculating marine aquaculture technologies to help feed the world. We are front-line leaders of the science-based responses to multiple environmental emergencies in our oceans—developing technologies to mitigate impacts of harmful algal blooms and restore genetically resilient coral reefs and seagrass meadows.

Innovative marine research that pushes the frontier of science is the heart of Mote Marine Laboratory

*METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS

and leads to real-world impacts in addressing grand challenges to ocean sustainability, growing economic opportunities aligned with an enhanced quality of life in our communities, increasing ocean literacy via public service, and recruiting and nurturing the brightest scientific minds, while providing critical research infrastructure.

A vibrant future for oceans depends on significantly expanding our capacity for innovative research. We are now launching a new era of creatively disruptive innovation initiatives and partnerships, at a time when they matter more than ever. The next step is a vision for the evolution of our City Island campus, into a state-of-the-art, International Marine Science & Technology Innovation Park (S&T Innovation Park) that will include:

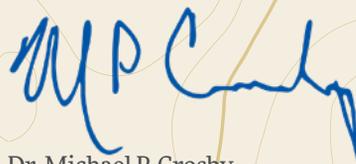
- A new Center of Excellence for Ocean Technology & Artificial Intelligence focused on autonomous and remotely operated vehicles, next-generation robotics and sensor development, and use of artificial intelligence and swarm model algorithms.
- A new Center of Excellence for Derived Products from the Sea that will weave together Biomedical, Immunology, Molecular Microbiology, Ecotoxicology and Medicinal Chemistry Research Programs.

This new S & T Innovation Park would more than double Mote's research infrastructure on City Island and add ~10 Ph.D.-level scientists and engineers to our current staff of ~45 Ph.D.-level researchers. This will provide Mote scientists and engineers, visiting partners, and

S & T entrepreneurs from around the world with expanded, state-of-the-art R&D facilities vital for addressing significantly complex threats to our oceans.

Mote's world-class research will be integrated with emerging ocean technologies sectors to leverage the new S & T Innovation Park as the launchpad for a thriving new high-tech cluster. The innovations and intellectual property generated by Mote and its partners from this launch will ignite an expansion of Florida's blue economy. Sarasota will become the catalyst for a "Silicon Valley" of marine S & T throughout southwest Florida. Mote will fuel new industry sectors, drive economic growth, and add high-wage jobs to our community and state, while having incredible positive impacts on the health of our oceans around the world.

With your continued passionate support, the serial disruptors and innovators of Mote will never cease pushing the frontiers of science and technology. Together we will create a new era for Mote that will both respond to the grand challenges facing our oceans and fuel a dramatic expansion of the Florida Blue Economy with impacts felt well beyond our state. Please join us on this voyage into the future!



Dr. Michael P. Crosby
President & CEO



THE MAKING OF MOTE SEA

Top: Visitors inside Mote SEA.

Bottom: Buffett the manatee eats lettuce in his Mote SEA habitat.





The opening of Mote Science Education Aquarium (SEA) required all hands on deck—bringing together Mote scientists, educators, aquarium biologists, exhibit fabricators, donors and volunteers in a shared mission to bring “Oceans for All” to life. At 1,791 days in the making, this major collaborative achievement represents innovation, dedication and passion, resulting in a world-class facility where science, education and inspiration shine.

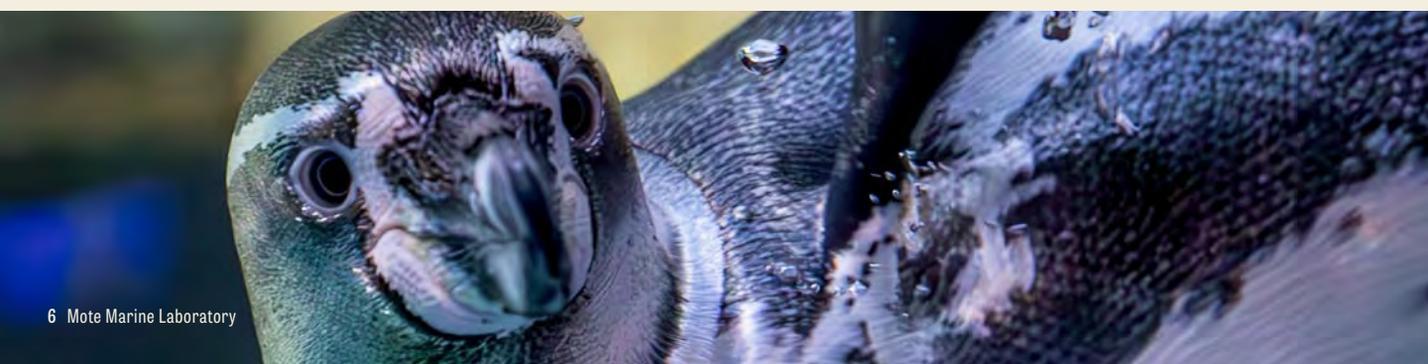
On Oct. 3, Mote Marine Laboratory President & CEO Dr. Michael P. Crosby cut the ribbon to officially open Mote SEA, joined by U.S. Rep. Greg Steube; U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan; Florida Sen. Jim Boyd; Florida Reps. James Buchanan, Will Robinson and Fiona McFarland; and former Mote President Dr. William H. Taft, who opened Mote Marine Laboratory’s original Aquarium on City Island, Sarasota, in 1980. Since Mote SEA opened, it has attracted more visitors to our science education experiences than initially projected—a success all around. Before welcoming its first human visitors, Mote’s dedicated aquarium biologists worked tirelessly

to ensure the comfort and well-being of the Aquarium’s new animal residents. More than 500 marine species are now in care at Mote SEA—each one carefully transferred and acclimated to ensure a safe, seamless transition into its new environment.

Mote SEA encompasses 146,000 square feet and over 1 million gallons of water across its diverse habitats. The Aquarium’s largest gallery, Florida’s Gulf Coast, holds 400,000 gallons.

Prior to the move, each animal underwent a thorough quarantine monitoring period and health assessment. Then, in carefully planned stages, Mote transported them in spacious, temperature-controlled containers to Mote SEA. There, each animal was gently placed into its new habitat, where it could explore, adjust and settle in under the watchful care of Mote’s team.

While Mote’s aquarium biologists carefully relocated hundreds of marine species, Mote’s exhibit team was



hard at work developing a guest experience accessible to everyone. New features such as Spanish translations at every exhibit and a comprehensive audio tour expand Mote's ability to deliver transformative, informal science education experiences. These enhancements strengthen Mote's mission to foster ocean literacy among audiences of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

Mote SEA creates unprecedented opportunities for students and visitors to engage directly with marine science, with three state-of-the-art STEM Teaching Labs and five advanced STEM Workforce Training Labs. Each of these labs features glass windows, allowing guests to observe the dynamic process of science in action as students and researchers collaborate in real time, serving as a reminder that Mote SEA is not just an aquarium, but a living laboratory for the next generation of ocean innovators. Read more about Mote SEA's educational impact on pages 20–21 of this Annual Report.

“We've built a one-of-a-kind experiential learning facility that will bring a smile to your face while showcasing Mote's global marine science, fostering discovery and inspiring a deeper appreciation for the rich diversity of marine life,” said Dr. Michael P. Crosby, President & CEO of Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium.

In addition to its immersive exhibits and labs, Mote SEA stands out as a unique event venue. Its scenic terraces and aquarium backdrops create a stunning



Above: Visitors at Florida's Gulf Coast habitat at Mote SEA.

setting for weddings, corporate events and community gatherings. Through Mote's partnership with Deep Blue Hospitality, these events are elevated by sustainable, coastal-inspired catering.

While construction of Mote SEA is complete and the doors are open to the public, fundraising continues to address remaining project costs, with nearly \$20 million still needed to reach the \$167 million stretch goal. Every dollar raised now strengthens the mission of Mote Marine Laboratory by allowing more of Mote SEA's operating revenue to be directed where it matters most—advancing marine research, expanding education initiatives, and accelerating solutions for ocean conservation.



Top left: Guests explore Genie's Magic Book interactive at Mote SEA.

Left: Dr. Michael P. Crosby welcomes congresspeople, donors, and partners at the ribbon cutting of Mote SEA.



TECH TRANSFORMATION



When the public Mote Science Education Aquarium (Mote SEA) opened in fall 2025 on mainland Sarasota County, it started a chain reaction that will ultimately energize the region’s science, technology and innovation economy.

Mote SEA is the rebirth of Mote Aquarium, which previously adjoined Mote Marine Laboratory on City Island, Sarasota. The Lab—a 70-year nonprofit leader of marine science and conservation worldwide—has exciting plans to fill the former Aquarium’s footprint.

Mote aims to transform its City Island campus into an International Marine Science & Technology Innovation Park, and ultimately, catalyze a new regional “Silicon Valley” of marine science and technology. The Park will feature Centers of Excellence for Ocean Technology & AI—focused

on autonomous systems, robotics, sensors, and AI tools—and Sea-Derived Products—uniting biomedical, microbiology and chemistry research.

This year, Mote scientists focused on a key step toward this vision—developing new technologies to benefit the ocean and society with a deepening focus on attracting ocean-friendly industries to the region.

“Mote Marine Laboratory scientists uncover solutions to the challenges affecting our oceans and society through marine research worldwide; here at home, we are thrilled that our communities are recognizing Mote’s innovation as a magnet for businesses to join the region’s ocean economy,” said Dr. Michael P. Crosby, President & CEO of Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium and Secretary on the Board of Directors for the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County (EDC).

Top: Mote President & CEO Dr. Michael P. Crosby describes research and innovation at a technology-focused event.

Bottom: Fluorescent imaging of a roundworm used in research on aging. PHOTO BY MOTE POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW DR. SAM VIELEE.

The EDC collaborated with Mote this year on a new web platform to attract technology businesses to Sarasota County, including a Mote-centered Ocean Economy landing page (edcsarasotacounty.com/ocean-economy/) highlighting how businesses can partner with or contract Mote for research and development, consulting, intellectual property licensing and more.

As this annual report went to press, Mote SEA was hosting the 2026 Sarasota Tech Summit—led by the grassroots initiative Sarasota Tech in collaboration with the EDC and the Truist Foundation and focused on the future of Sarasota’s tech ecosystem.

That future is bright, as indicated by Mote’s scientific progress in the past year.

RED TIDE MITIGATION

Mote and industry partners completed field tests of multiple technologies designed to mitigate red tide in Florida’s Gulf waters—key advancements in the multi-year Florida Red Tide Mitigation & Technology Development Initiative led by Mote Marine Laboratory in partnership with the State of Florida.

In the past six years, the Initiative has subcontracted and collaborated with more than 50 partners in private businesses, agencies and academia to develop technologies to fight the ecological and economic damage of red tides, leading to national and

international collaborations studying how to mitigate multiple other algal blooms.

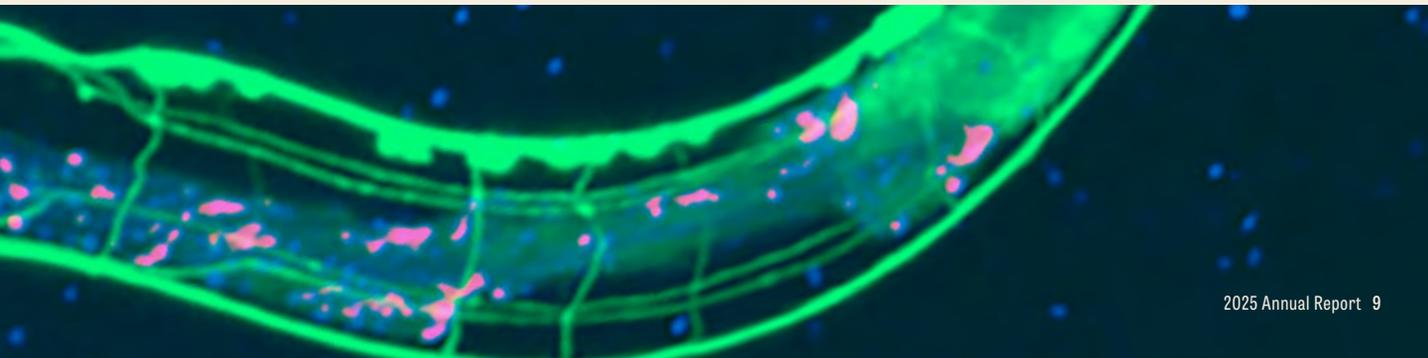
INNOVATIVE MEDICINES FROM THE SEA

This year, Mote scientists received a grant from the Florida Cancer Connect Innovation Fund to investigate new marine-based sources of cancer treatments, drawing upon the Mote Microbial Library that contains over 700 isolates of marine bacteria and fungi.

The Lab recruited Mote Postdoctoral Research Fellow Dr. Sam Vielee to undertake other novel studies of ocean and human health—for example, investigating how red tide toxins might contribute to chronic disease, how animal venoms might yield insights for treating neurodegenerative diseases, and whether long-lived marine animals can offer insights for human longevity.

SEAGRASS RESTORATION

To solve problems for the oceans and society, Mote is committed to enhancing its science and technology infrastructure. This year, Mote scientists and supporters celebrated the opening of three state-of-the-art seagrass restoration research facilities at Mote Aquaculture Research Park in east Sarasota County: The Ron and Marla Wolf Seagrass Restoration Center for Ocean Sustainability Greenhouse Facility, Biogeochemical Carbon Sequestration Lab, and the Publix Seagrass Genetics Research Hub.





INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

INNOVATING FOR HEALTH



+200 MICROBIAL EXTRACTS

screened for ability to fight antibiotic-resistant pathogens that pose serious risks to human health: MRSA*, VRE**, drug-resistant *Candida auris*, and carbapenem-resistant *Klebsiella pneumoniae*. Most pathogens were vulnerable to at least one of the extracts. *METHICILLIN-RESISTANT *STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS*. **VANCOMYCIN-RESISTANT *ENTEROCOCCI*

+998 PROTEINS

in stingray venom analyzed by Mote scientists with the ultimate goal to find molecules useful for advancing human medicine.



FIGHTING RED TIDE

+40 RED TIDE MITIGATION STUDIES

completed with +50 partners around the world through the Mote-led Red Tide Initiative supported by the State of Florida. 6 technologies have completed lab testing and received permits for field trials.

\$3 MILLION

awarded to Mote by the State of Florida to continue field testing promising red tide mitigation technologies in 2025-26.

CONTINUED →

Left: A barge from EM>RG Marine Recovery sprays the red tide mitigation product LakeGuard® OXY by BlueGreen Water Technologies for Mote scientists and partners who are testing its impact and effectiveness.

Top: Dr. Kirstie Francis studies microbes at Mote Marine Lab.

Middle: Mote staff test Xtreme RT by Heartland Energy Group—a natural, non-toxic red tide mitigation product—as well as new, innovative deployment tools.

INNOVATING FOR HEALTH CONTINUED

46 NESTING SEA TURTLES & 46 HATCHED NESTS SAMPLED

by Mote scientists for studies of how environmental contaminants affect loggerhead sea turtle populations and reproduction. Mote extracted toxins from 6 hatchlings found deceased in nests and cultured multiple cell types from 2 hatchlings. This research aims to reveal threats to turtles and support conservation.

47 MANATEES & 24 SEA TURTLES

had their blood plasma proteins analyzed after encountering red tide in the environment. Mote's research could help direct treatment options for animals being rehabilitated after red tide exposure.

+365 DAYS

How long Mote scientists have grown specific cells from redfish (red drum). This new "cell line" was developed by Mote and more than 150 samples were preserved for research on the future of sustainable seafood.

FIGHTING RED TIDE CONTINUED

21,286 WATER SAMPLES ANALYZED

for the red tide algae *Karenia brevis* by the Mote-FWC* Cooperative Red Tide Research Program. Water quality research helps reveal what might be feeding blooms and how ecosystems fare during and after blooms. In 439 of the samples, Mote scientists measured red tide toxins (brevetoxins), the molecules responsible for the harmful impacts of red tide.

FIRST MAJOR RED-TIDE MITIGATION FIELD TRIALS

with the products Xtreme and CLEAR against bloom of the red tide algae *Karenia brevis* in canals in Venice, Florida.

66,625 SAMPLES ANALYZED

for water quality assessments throughout Florida. Mote scientists monitor and study water quality to protect ecosystems, human health, and local economies, and to reveal impacts of major events like hurricanes.



SUPPORTING FISHERIES

FIRST ELECTRONIC MONITORING

of South Atlantic commercial snapper-grouper catch and discards launched by Mote scientists with two partner fishing vessels—part of Mote's expanding effort to improve data for fisheries management.

AI PARTNERSHIP

between Mote fisheries scientists and Amazon Web Services launched in 2025 to help enable AI processing of large sets of acoustic (sound) data.



424 ISOLATES OF MICROSCOPIC LIFE

sampled from deep-sea sediments and marine species added to the Mote Microbial Library, bringing the total to 878 isolates. Mote mines these microbial isolates for new potential sources of medicine.

+500 MICROBIAL EXTRACTS

screened for activity against the harmful algae *Alexandrium monilatum* using a high-throughput assay developed at Mote.

\$645,220 AWARDED

to Mote from the Florida Department of Health to screen Mote's natural product extract library for bioactivity against therapeutic targets in cancers and Alzheimer's Disease.



Left: A Mote scientist collects samples from local waterways to assess water quality.

Bottom: Red grouper (*Epinephelus morio*) caught on one of Mote's vessels.

\$1.2 MILLION AWARDED (AS 5 GRANTS)

for fisheries electronic monitoring research by Mote's CFEMM* team, including for a 2-year project** to enhance recreational fishing estimates in Alabama and Texas using shore-based cameras.

*CENTER FOR FISHERIES ELECTRONIC MONITORING AT MOTE

**2-YEAR PROJECT PARTNERS: MOTE, CVISION AI, AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND

749 COMMERCIAL FISHING TRIPS

documented from 2016 through this year by Mote's CFEMM* research to improve data for fisheries management off west Florida and around the Gulf. Mote scientists have reviewed 25% of the catch events from these fishing trips—totaling 267,448 catch events of 163 unique fish species.

*CENTER FOR FISHERIES ELECTRONIC MONITORING AT MOTE



SAFEGUARDING SHARKS

Mote Marine Laboratory's shark and ray scientists were hard at work this year, making big steps forward for shark conservation. From reducing harmful human-wildlife interactions in U.S. waters to uncovering illegal global shark fin trade, Mote scientists are driving change that protects both people and apex predators.

Sharks are predatory fishes essential to healthy, biodiverse oceans. To ensure that sharks can safely coexist with the growing human population, we must understand them using science. Mote's groundbreaking science this year included two complementary approaches: developing innovative tools to reduce shark depredation and uncovering illegal global shark fin trade. Together, they demonstrate Mote's commitment to conservation and sustainable use, informing policy, supporting fisheries, and protecting vulnerable species.

As some shark populations begin to recover in U.S. waters after decades of overfishing, interactions

between sharks and fishing activities are becoming more common. One of the most significant challenges is shark depredation, when sharks remove hooked fish from fishing lines, costing fishers their catch and increasing the risk of harm to sharks.

In a 2025 study published in the *Journal of Fish Biology*, Mote scientists tested an electronic pulse device (EPD) designed to deter sharks from baited hooks. The device, called Shark Guard, emits brief electrical pulses that harmlessly overstimulate sharks' electroreceptors. During 198 controlled trials at Mote's Marine Experimental Research Facility in Sarasota, Florida, bonnethead sharks (*Sphyrna tiburo*) were more than 45 times less likely to consume bait when an active device was present. Even when sharks did approach, they took longer to feed and often quickly turned away.

"We're seeing that a short, controlled burst of electricity can make a big difference in shark behavior," said Jack



CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABLE USE

Morris, Senior Biologist in Mote’s Sharks and Rays Conservation Research Program. These findings suggest EPDs could become valuable, non-lethal tools for reducing depredation, helping fishers retain their catch while minimizing harm to sharks. By reducing conflict, such solutions also help maintain public support for shark conservation as populations recover.

While local innovations can reduce conflict, global threats to sharks remain severe. A pair of Mote-led studies published in *Science Advances* and *Conservation Genetics* revealed widespread illegal trade of protected shark and rhino ray species, despite international trade regulations. Using DNA analysis on nearly 20,000 dried fin samples collected from Hong Kong markets between 2014 and 2021, the team found fins from four out of five CITES*-listed shark species and several listed rhino rays remained common, even though little to no legal trade had been reported.

“Shedding light on this problem is a major step toward solving it,” said Dr. Demian Chapman, Director of Mote’s Sharks & Rays Conservation Research Program. “CITES has internal compliance mechanisms to deal with illegal trade and in early December they will also decide whether to ban global trade in one of these shark species, the oceanic whitetip, and all of the rhino rays. We are at the point where these more stringent actions are needed.”

That possibility became a reality just before this annual report went to press. CITES announced in December

that 72 species of sharks and rays are subject to new international trade regulations including trade bans for oceanic whitetip sharks, rhino rays, whale sharks and devil rays (including mantas).

Together, these studies illustrate Mote’s holistic approach to conservation and sustainable use. By developing practical tools to reduce human–shark conflict and using cutting-edge science to expose illegal trade, Mote researchers are working to ensure sharks and rays continue to fulfill their critical ecological role.

With these new listings Mote research and advocacy has now helped achieve 98% of the dried fin trade being subject to international regulations, which is a major step towards forcing it towards sustainability and removal of the most threatened species.

“Protecting sharks and rays means protecting our oceans,” Chapman said. “Science-driven solutions like these are essential to securing a sustainable future for marine ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.”

*CITES: CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Top: Mote scientists tag a blacktip reef shark with an EPD.

Right: EPD, tested by Mote scientists to explore methods of deterring sharks from fisheries.



**CONSERVATION &
SUSTAINABLE USE**



AN ALLY TO ANIMALS

FIRST MANATEE REHABILITATION PATIENTS, Sleet and Cabbage, received months of expert care from Mote this year. As this report went to press, both were released successfully.

591 CALLS

fielded this year by Mote staff operating our 24-hour hotline (888-345-2335) for stranded marine life response. 117 calls about sea turtles; 220 about manatees; 40 about dolphins & whales; 151 other calls Mote rerouted as appropriate.



THE BRAINS BEHIND CONSERVATION

1,119 SEA TURTLES ENCOUNTERED

this year by Mote's tagging team—a record on Mote-monitored Sarasota County beaches. Mote tags new turtles and documents previously tagged turtles for conservation research.

400 DISTINCTIVE MANATEES

photo-documented by Mote this year to support conservation, including 119 that have been observed repeatedly and 5 that have been known for +32 years.

CONTINUED →

Left: Mote scientist surveys out-planted corals in the Florida Keys.

Top: Cabbage and Sleet—Mote's first manatee rehabilitation patients.

Above: Cold-stunned turtle receives care from Mote's Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Hospital.

AN ALLY TO ANIMALS CONTINUED

2,786 SEA TURTLE HATCHLINGS

treated by Mote's Hatchling Hospital; 126 sea turtle rescue, rehabilitation and/or recovery efforts conducted; 35 manatee rescue or recovery efforts assisted*; & 7 bottlenose dolphin recovery or preventive monitoring efforts conducted by Mote this year.

*MOTE AIDS THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION, FLORIDA'S LEADING MANATEE RESPONDER.

27,877 SNOOK RELEASED

in tidal creeks in the Sarasota Bay region this year—Mote's largest release to date—to help rebuild fish populations and support a more resilient Sarasota Bay. SUPPORTED IN PART BY THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION.



THE BRAINS BEHIND CONSERVATION CONTINUED

20 DOLPHINS of multiple species, 2 white sharks and a whale shark tagged with pole-mounted device called "TADpole" developed by the Mote-based SDRP* and WHOI** to tag animals for conservation and research without capture. These tags transmitted longer than those deployed by the existing remote method.

*SARASOTA DOLPHIN RESEARCH PROGRAM, BROOKFIELD ZOO CHICAGO PROGRAM IN COLLABORATION WITH MOTE.

**WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION

6,000 HOURS OF UNDERWATER FOOTAGE

reviewed by the Global FinPrint Project based at Mote to assess shark and ray population trends across 30 countries. This year Mote science also helped inform new global protections for 72 shark and ray species announced by CITES* as this annual report went to press. *CITES: THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

130 HOURS OF MANATEE

AERIAL SURVEYS conducted via 35 flights in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. Mote is in its 40th year of a long-term manatee abundance and distribution study in Sarasota County.*

*CURRENTLY SUPPORTED BY WEST COAST INLAND NAVIGATION GRANTS PROGRAM



RESTORING CORALS THROUGH SCIENCE

+263,000 CORALS OUTPLANTED

by Mote to restore Florida's Coral Reef with genetically diverse, resilient native corals from 2008 through this year. This year, Mote produced +70,000 coral fragments among +2,400 genetic varieties (genotypes) and +20 species for upcoming reef restoration.

+973 CORALS FRAGMENTS

of 192 new genetic varieties and 3 new species added to Mote's International Coral Gene Bank in 2025 for conservation, research, breeding and/or future reef restoration with genetically diverse, resilient corals.

STUDYING & SAVING SEAGRASS

15 NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS

funded by Mote's Seagrass Initiative* to study environmental stressors across Florida and their effects on multiple seagrass species.

*SEAGRASS RESTORATION TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE LED BY MOTE UNDER CONTRACT FROM THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

NEW SEAGRASS CENTER:

The Ron & Marla Wolf Seagrass Center for Ocean Sustainability Seagrass Greenhouse was completed with 24 raceways for seagrass genetic resiliency experiments. Mote also cut the ribbon for its new Publix Seagrass Genetics Research Hub and Biogeochemical Carbon Sequestration Lab.

+1,000 SEAGRASSES

grown by Mote for research projects and the Seagrass Genetic Library. The Library added 500 seagrass DNA samples this year, advancing research to help identify resilient genes—critical for outplanting stronger, more adaptable seagrass strains.

218 ENDANGERED PYGMY DEVIL RAYS

sampled, tagged and released for two Mote-led research projects. Data can help reveal which habitats the rays rely on throughout the year.

RESEARCH FUNDED BY SAVE OUR SEAS FOUNDATION, GEORGIA AQUARIUM AND MOTE SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION.

2,363 FISH TAGGED AND RELEASED

this year at Robinson Preserve and 1,183 fish tagged and released at Alligator Creek by Mote scientists for two different projects investigating how fish respond to environmental restoration in southwest Florida.

Top: Mote scientist cryopreserves seagrass to study its DNA.

Bottom: Staff maintain Mote's coral nursery in Key Largo, Florida.

+18 NEW CORAL SPECIES

in culture at Mote's coral nurseries in Sarasota and the Florida Keys this year. This expansion significantly broadens the genetic diversity available for reef restoration and enhances the long-term recovery potential of Florida's Coral Reef.

10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

of Mote's mountainous star corals (*Orbicella faveolata*) outplanted onto the reef in 2015. These corals have survived hurricanes, global bleaching events and stony coral tissue loss disease, demonstrating long-term resilience and success of Mote's restoration methods.

TODAY'S LABS, TOMORROW'S INNOVATORS



As this year drew to a close, incredible learning opportunities opened up at Mote Science Education Aquarium (Mote SEA)—eight advanced laboratories designed for southwest Florida students, visitors and STEM* career seekers.

This year, Mote SEA filled the three STEM Teaching Labs and five Workforce Development Labs with marine life-support systems, cutting-edge technology and custom lesson plans derived from Mote Marine Laboratory's ocean research.

STEM TEACHING LABS

The STEM Teaching labs on the first floor of Mote SEA will support all of Mote's 66 educational programs—particularly those for local schools.

“They’re incredible, state of the art,” said Dr. Sarah Burkett, High School Science Specialist for Sarasota County School District. “Everything has been engineered, adapted to meet our students’ needs, and Mote worked with our teachers to make sure it aligns to standards.”

These Teaching Labs aim to provide no-cost programming to about 70,000 local students each year. Students will interact with animals and plants in the Marine Ecology Teaching Lab, work with research-grade instrumentation and lab skill-building tools in the Biomedical and Immunology Teaching Lab, deploy a mini ROV in the 450-gallon raceway in the Ocean Technology Teaching Lab, and more.

This fiscal year, Mote SEA educators developed a new STEM curriculum and refined it with focus groups of Manatee and Sarasota teachers, who also informed Labs’ physical setup.



Top: Homeschool program participants learn from Mote educators in the Marine Ecology Teaching Lab.

Left: Students explore animal migration through an interactive, hands-on game.

*STEM: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH

“Teachers asked that we create a space where students feel supported and included, with the goal of helping them envision a future in STEM,” said Mote SEA Education Manager Dr. Kristen Ranges.

To help serve that need, the Mote STEM Teaching Labs display student art and science projects for inspiration while emphasizing accessibility for all.

“We’re now offering our first bilingual programming on demand and expanding our programming for those with hearing and vision impairments,” said Dr. Aly Busse, Associate Vice President for Education at Mote. “And in 2026 we’re excited to launch no-cost passes to Mote SEA for Title 1 school students and their families.”

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT LABS

On the second and third floors, five Workforce Development Labs saw a flurry of activity all year as Mote scientists installed specialized instruments and marine life-support systems for research and STEM career training for high schoolers, undergrads, and graduate apprentices and interns.

Just after the fiscal year ended on Sept. 30, 2025, Mote SEA welcomed its first career trainees.

In the Coral Workforce Development Lab, “Our intern will be analyzing coral growth and health across various temperatures, in combination with different algae control methods,” said Ayi Ajavon, Staff Biologist with Mote’s Coral Health & Disease Research Program.

“This will help inform procedures for Mote’s land-based coral nurseries”—facilities central to Mote’s science-based restoration of imperiled coral reefs.

In the Fisheries and Aquaculture Lab, Mote scientists demonstrate how they raise, tag, release and track fish to replenish wild fisheries and assess ecosystem restoration efforts—using passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags and antenna arrays that detect them.

“Our apprentice is learning to work with the PIT tag antenna array and the data it generates, and then she will set up our next habitat use study to help design shoreline enhancements,” said Dr. Ryan Schloesser, Manager of Mote’s Fisheries Ecology & Enhancement Research Program.

At press time, Mote SEA’s Veterinary, Conservation, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) labs were, respectively, providing animal health checkups, breeding species for sustainable educational displays, and exploring a new educational frontier.

The AI Workforce Development Lab at Mote SEA provides a window into Mote’s new AI Marine Science Center supported by the W Dale Brougner Foundation and I/ONX HPC.

“Something unique about Mote SEA is that we’re developing a model for AI-related education, both for integrating AI tools into Mote’s scientific mission and for educating students in Sarasota and Manatee schools,” Busse said.





TRANSLATE & TRANSFER SCIENCE



FOSTERING FUTURE SCIENTISTS

5-YEAR NSF-FUNDED MARINE SCIENCE LABORATORY ALLIANCE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

project concluded, engaging more than 900 undergraduates in research at Mote and demonstrating measurable gains in student confidence, identity, and belonging in STEM.

10 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

received hands-on research experiences this year through the National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded Research Experiences for Undergraduates program. Now in its 22nd year at Mote, the program has trained more than 225 students nationwide.



CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY

2,000 POUNDS OF LITTER AND DEBRIS

removed from Ken Thompson Park at Mote's Sea to Shore: Clean & Explore event. Mote partnered with Northwestern Mutual, Sarasota County Government's Keep Sarasota Beautiful, Sprouts Farmers Market, Florida Underwater Sports and Happy Paddler Kayak Tours & EcoVentures to make this event possible.

CONTINUED →

Left: Mote educator prepares for learning new classrooms at Mote Science Education Aquarium.

Top: In the Marine Ecology Lab, learners explore mangroves, seagrass, and coral reefs.

Above: Volunteer collects debris at Mote's Sea to Shore: Clean & Explore event.



FOSTERING FUTURE SCIENTISTS CONTINUED

35% OF MOTE EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAMS

engaged individuals from underserved and underrepresented populations, advancing Mote's commitment to accessible science education for all.

+\$500,000 AWARDED

by Mote in internship stipends, supporting over 150 interns in valuable hands-on learning experiences.



CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY CONTINUED

16,569 MENTIONS

of Mote on social media and in news media stories allowed us to share our science, education, and outreach through Mote's public Aquarium and other highlights from our mission this year.

43,792 PEOPLE

joined Mote's Education & Outreach programs this year. This included learners of all ages, from early childhood participants to lifelong learners.

176 PROFESSIONALS TRAINED

by Mote staff through the Mote Mentor Development Workshop (MDW), improving mentors' confidence and inclusive practices in STEM education.

1,408 VOLUNTEERS

gave 145,521 hours of their time to Mote's mission & our oceans this fiscal year.



MAKING AN IMPACT FAR AND WIDE

107 LOCATIONS IN 10 STATES & 1 U.S. TERRITORY

are now monitored by Mote's Beach Conditions Reporting System (BCRS), including 19 new sites added this year. CURRENT REPORTING REGIONS INCLUDE FLORIDA, GEORGIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, NORTH CAROLINA, OHIO, CALIFORNIA, HAWAII, TEXAS, LOUISIANA, ALABAMA, AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (ST. CROIX), FURTHER STRENGTHENING NATIONWIDE COASTAL OBSERVATION CAPACITY.

28 SCIENTISTS

from seven partner organizations, NOAA Fisheries, and the Sarasota County Sheriff's crime scene unit participated in a two-day, Mote-hosted training to learn how alternative light source techniques can be used as a forensic tool during necropsies.

GROWING ON ALL FRONTS

NEW MOTE LOCATION OPENS

at Crane Point Museum & Nature Center in the Florida Keys. The Mangrove to Reef Exhibit is the first of two phases planned at Crane Point and immerses visitors in the fascinating connections among Florida Keys ecosystems, such as mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs.

336 NEW VOLUNTEERS

joined the Mote family in 2025, seeing significant growth to our volunteer cohorts at our campuses across Florida.

+500 SPECIES OF MARINE LIFE

resided in Mote Science Education Aquarium as of its opening at the end of this year, serving as ambassadors for the ocean.

366 VOLUNTEERS

were honored this year during Mote's Volunteer Awards Ceremony celebrating milestones in their service to Mote.

AWARD WINNER:

MOTE'S TECH IN THE DEPTHS ocean technology exhibit at Mote Science Education Aquarium won the Graphic Design USA Award for 2025.



Top: Crane Point Museum & Nature Center in the Florida Keys.

Bottom: Runners cross the finish line at Mote's Run for the Turtles event.

984 PIECES OF DEBRIS COLLECTED

from St. Croix's shoreline through a partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of the Caribbean and Youth Ocean Explorers—while students gained hands-on field experience learning about coral health and disease and stepping into the world of environmental stewardship and marine conservation.

100 PARTICIPANTS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

convened for the 3rd annual Red Tide Initiative Workshop to share research findings, discuss deployment strategies, and engage with local, state, and federal representatives on permitting and regulatory pathways.

STAFF RECRUITMENT & NURTURING

SUPPORTING OUR BEST AND BRIGHTEST

Nurturing exceptional talent in marine science and technology is a cornerstone of Mote's *Beyond 2020 Vision & Strategic Plan*. With your generous support, Mote is able to present a range of awards and fellowships that honor excellence among our research staff. We are pleased to share this year's recipients below.

MOTE POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS ▼

These three-year fellowships provide 100% salary support, research start-up, supplies, equipment and mentorship to postdoctoral scientists conducting outstanding work early in their careers.



DR. KIRSTIE FRANCIS
Marine Molecular Microbiology Research Program



DR. DOMINIQUE GALLERY
Seagrass Restoration Research Program



DR. JENNIFER TOYODA
Ecotoxicology Research Program

MOTE EMINENT SCHOLAR AWARDS ▼

These three-year awards provide 50% salary coverage to Mote senior scientists with great potential to significantly advance or develop a research initiative consistent with Mote's *Beyond 2020 Vision & Strategic Plan* that will help ensure the long-term prosperity of Mote's research enterprise.



DR. ERINN MULLER, Associate Vice President for Research, Coral Health & Disease Research Program Manager



DR. CYNTHIA HEIL, Red Tide Institute at Mote Director, Harmful Algal Bloom Mitigation & Ecology Research Program Manager

MOTE SCHOLARLY & SERVICE AWARDS ▼

These two-year awards provide 25% salary support for scholarly and service activities that further Mote's mission, consistent with Mote's *Beyond 2020 Vision*.



DR. NATE BRENNAN Fisheries Ecology & Enhancement Research Program Staff Scientist



DR. SUMIT CHAKRABORTY Phytoplankton Ecology Research Program Staff Scientist



DR. EMILY HALL Ocean Acidification Research Program and Chemical & Physical Ecology Research Program Manager



JOHN LANGAN Ocean Technology Research Program Manager



DR. JAKE LASALA Sea Turtle Conservation & Research Program Manager



DR. JIM LOCASCIO Fisheries Habitat Ecology & Acoustics Research Program Manager



DR. VINCE LOVKO Phytoplankton Ecology Research Program Manager



DR. NICOLE RHODY Marine & Freshwater Aquaculture Research Program Manager



DR. RYAN SCHLOESSER Fisheries Ecology & Enhancement Research Program Manager



DR. TRACY SHERWOOD Environmental Laboratory for Forensics Research Program Staff Scientist



DR. JASON SPADARO Coral Reef Restoration Research Program Manager



DR. CATHY WALSH Marine Immunology Research Program and Manatee Conservation Research Program Manager



DR. DANA WETZEL Environmental Laboratory for Forensics Research Program Manager



COMING TO A PARK NEAR YOU



Top: Mote scientist raising corals in a land-based nursery.

Bottom: Florida seagrasses that Mote aims to restore.

SEAGRASS PHOTO BY: PETER CLARK/ADOBE STOCK

LOOKING AHEAD



This year, Mote Marine Laboratory signed three agreements with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to establish new research and education facilities within John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, John D. MacArthur Beach State Park, and Bahia Honda State Park. Together, these memoranda of understanding (MOUs) will strengthen Mote's long-standing partnership with the State of Florida and expand science-based efforts to advance conservation of Florida's coastal and marine ecosystems.

Each facility will serve as a hub for research, restoration, monitoring, and public engagement tailored to the unique ecosystems of its host park, while supporting Mote's mission to translate and transfer marine science as a public service.

At John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park in Key Largo, the proposed facility will focus on coral reef restoration, monitoring, and research, supporting studies of reef health, resilience, and recovery on Florida's Coral Reef. This location will enhance Mote's ability to conduct long-term coral research, including work related to coral stress, disease, and restoration strategies, while fostering collaboration with state partners and increasing opportunities for science-based education and outreach to hundreds of thousands of visitors within the nation's first undersea park.

Similarly, Mote's facility at John D. MacArthur Beach State Park in Palm Beach County will focus on science-based coral reef restoration. Work conducted at the park will complement ongoing park management and education initiatives by Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park.

The facility planned for Bahia Honda State Park on Big Pine Key will emphasize seagrass ecosystem science



Top: Bahia Honda State Park.

Left: Staghorn coral, a species Mote is working to restore.

CREDIT TOP: KHAIRIL/ADOBE STOCK
CREDIT LEFT: TOM STACK/TOM STACK & ASSOCIATES

and restoration, with a focus on these ecosystems and their role in broader coastal resilience. Research conducted at Bahia Honda will support seagrass propagation, restoration planning, and environmental monitoring, helping to inform management decisions and restoration efforts throughout the Florida Keys. The site will also provide opportunities to engage park visitors and stakeholders in understanding the importance of seagrass ecosystems to Florida's economy, biodiversity, and coastal protection.

Seagrass meadows serve as critical nursery habitat for many marine species and play a vital role in carbon sequestration and shoreline stabilization.

“These agreements reflect a shared commitment to protecting Florida’s natural resources through science,” said Dr. Michael P. Crosby, President & CEO of Mote Marine Laboratory. “By establishing restoration and education facilities within these iconic state parks, we can accelerate applied research, support ecosystem restoration, and help ensure all may benefit from healthy, resilient coastal environments.”

The three MOUs reinforce Mote’s role as a statewide and global leader in marine science, while deepening collaboration with the outreach capabilities at Florida State Parks to address pressing environmental challenges. Through these partnerships, Mote will continue to advance innovative research and connect the public with the science shaping the future of the world’s oceans.



Above: Mote's current and planned locations as of late 2025.



2025 HIGHLIGHTS



FARM TO FILLET

Guests gathered under shady oaks at Mote Aquaculture Research Park (MAP) for an inspiring afternoon. They enjoyed lunch, behind-the-scenes tours, and conversations with scientists about their work to advance sustainable aquaculture technology to feed the world, to restock depleted fish populations, to mitigate red tide and to restore Florida's coral reef.

Presented by: **Community Foundation of Sarasota County, James Ericson and 1st Source Bank Wealth Advisory Services**

- 1 Dr. Crosby welcomes guests at the Farm to Fillet event;
- 2 Sheryl Vieira and guests of Caldwell Trust gather for lunch at Farm to Fillet;
- 3 Volunteer Chris Garber leads campus tour of MAP;
- 4 Bluegrass band Apple Butter serenaded guests at the event;
- 5 Vickie Crupi, Andria Piekartz, Joseph Crupi and a guest pose for a photo with a vintage floral display;
- 6 Mote coral scientists guides attendees through their labs, offering an inside look at their work;
- 7 Dr. Nicole Rhody discusses the curated menu: pan-seared redfish, island clams and vegetables sustainably grown through Mote's innovative marine aquaponics systems and Beginner Farmer Education Program;
- 8 Guest, Linda Driggs, Pattie Connors, and Amy Berge cheers to a wonderful event.

PHOTOS BY: EMMA MCINTYRE



ILLUMINATE THE SEA

Mote Marine Laboratory welcomed more than 1,000 guests on Oct. 3, 2025, for the grand opening of Mote Science Education Aquarium (SEA). On this evening of firsts, guests explored interactive STEM Teaching Labs and Workforce Development Labs, discovered exhibits featuring diverse marine species, participated in a live auction of a one-of-a-kind painting by Dean Louks of TAOD and celebrated with an underwater ribbon cutting by Mote President & CEO Dr. Michael P. Crosby, an unforgettable way to Illuminate Mote SEA.

Presented by: Gene and Anne Beckstein

1 Dr. Crosby raises a toast at the inaugural event held at the new Mote SEA; 2 Guests enjoy curated cuisine by Deep Blue Hospitality; 3 Mote Trustee LTC Frances Presley Rice takes a photo in front of the "Trailblazers in STEM" exhibit; 4 Mote Trustee Barbara Brizdle poses alongside Brizzy, the giant Pacific octopus named in her honor; 5 Mote Trustee Don Featherman and President's Advisory Council member Arther Reilly gather ahead of the Mote SEA ribbon cutting, marking the start of the event; 6 Genie's Magic Book was frequented by attendees at the event; 7 Attendees enjoyed brand new exhibits, like the Portal to the Gulf; 8 Guests explore the Ocean Technology Lab at Mote SEA. PHOTOS BY: EMMA MCINTYRE & HAYLEY RUTGER





345 MOTE STAFF INCLUDING:

44 DOCTORAL-LEVEL STAFF
116 RESEARCH STAFF

107 AQUARIUM STAFF
28 EDUCATION STAFF

\$19,363,076 DONATED

TO MOTE VIA: 9,165 DONATIONS FROM 5,083 GENEROUS DONORS

13,584 MOTE MEMBERS
146 CORPORATE DONORS

38 PROGRAMS & CENTERS IN MOTE'S GLOBAL RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

22 MOTE RESEARCH PROGRAMS

- Benthic Ecology
- Chemical & Physical Ecology
- Coral Health & Disease
- Coral Reef Restoration
- Ecotoxicology
- Environmental Laboratory for Forensics
- Fisheries Ecology & Enhancement

- Fisheries Habitat Ecology & Acoustics
- Harmful Algal Bloom Mitigation & Ecology
- Manatee Conservation
- Marine & Freshwater Aquaculture
- Marine Biomedical
- Marine Immunology
- Marine Molecular Microbiology

- Marine STEM Education
- Ocean Acidification
- Ocean Technology
- Phytoplankton Ecology
- Sea Turtle Conservation
- Seagrass Ecosystems Restoration
- Sharks & Rays Conservation
- Strandings Investigations

2 MOTE TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

- Beach Conditions Reporting System (BCRS)
- Mote's Sea Turtle & Marine Mammal Hospitals

1 MOTE-AFFILIATED RESEARCH PROGRAM

- Sarasota Dolphin Research Program (SDRP)

13 CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Center for Research & Policy on Nanoplastic Pollution • Alfred Goldstein Institute for Climate Change Studies • Center for Fisheries Electronic Monitoring at Mote • Center for Shark Research • Florida Red Tide Mitigation & Technology Development Initiative • International Coral Gene Bank • Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation: Marine Science Laboratory Alliance Center of Excellence • Marine Policy Institute • Red Tide Institute • Seagrass Restoration & Technology Development Initiative • Ron & Marla Wolf Seagrass Restoration Center for Ocean Sustainability • U.S. Harmful Algal Bloom Control Technologies Incubator • Mote's Artificial Intelligence Marine Science Center

66 SCIENCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Animal Encounters • Breakfast with the Sharks • Camp programs • College internships, National Science Foundation-supported Research Experiences for Undergraduates, and preparatory programs • Community engagement & outreach programs • Adult learning program • Family programs & events • Florida Keys programs for schools and the public • Homeschool programs • Junior Educators in Training • Kayaking programs • Project NatureBridge • Professional development programs • School programs: field trips, classroom kits and outreach • Science talks & public outreach • Scout programs • SEA Trek and other virtual learning programs • Special needs programs • Shark Pups & Grownups • Youth Ocean Conservation Summit

6 ANNUAL GOALS MET OR SURPASSED

BEYOND 2020 VISION & STRATEGIC PLAN

TO DOWNLOAD MOTE'S FULL STRATEGIC PLAN, SCAN THIS QR CODE OR GO ONLINE TO: MOTE.ORG/BEYOND2020



Mote's Beyond 2020 Vision & Strategic Plan, endorsed by our Board of Trustees, charts a course for the success of Mote's mission. Below are the annual strategic goals met or exceeded by our hardworking Mote family this year.

INCREASE THE LEVEL OF FUNDING FROM ALL SOURCES FOR ANNUAL RESEARCH OPERATIONS TO APPROXIMATELY \$27 MILLION IN 2030.



INCREASE ANNUAL PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENTS SUPPORTING RESEARCH PROGRAMS TO AT LEAST \$12 MILLION IN 2030.



INCREASE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONAL (I.E., UNIVERSITY, AGENCY, NGO, CORPORATION) RESEARCH AND/OR COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS TO 30 BY 2030.



RECRUIT AT LEAST TWO NEW, FULL-TIME, SENIOR LEVEL RESEARCH STAFF BY 2030.



EXPAND THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MOTE PH.D.-LEVEL RESEARCHERS TO 45 IN 2030.



SCHEDULE AND COMPLETE CONSTRUCTION OF 110,000 SQUARE FEET OF NEW, STATE-OF-THE-ART MOTE SCIENCE EDUCATION AQUARIUM (MOTE SEA).



509,382 SQ. FT.
TOTAL BUILDINGS
AND STRUCTURES

8 PATENTS
HELD BY MOTE WITH
TEN APPLICATIONS PENDING

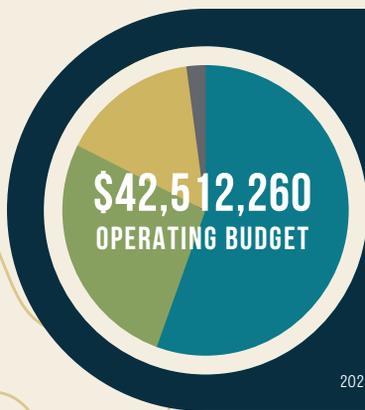
this year thanks to Mote's innovative science.

62 PEER-REVIEWED
PUBLICATIONS, BOOKS
AND CHAPTERS*

*From January 1 through December 31, 2025

\$972,945
PROTECT OUR REEFS
LICENSE PLATE REVENUE

supporting coral reef research, restoration and education.



RESEARCH \$26,005,769
EDUCATION & AQUARIUM \$12,617,734
FACILITIES & ADMINISTRATION \$7,107,782
HURRICANE RELIEF \$1,093,870

2025 FISCAL YEAR: OCT. 1, 2024–SEPT. 30, 2025



THE TIDE BEHIND THE MISSION

Supporters like you propel Mote Marine Laboratory's mission to advance marine science through world-class research, education and outreach. In 2025, the dedication of our 30 trustees, 1,408 volunteers, 5,083 generous donors, and a record-breaking 13,584 member households helped Mote break new ground in marine science and celebrate the grand opening of the Mote Science Education Aquarium (SEA).

Members were among the first to step inside this landmark facility. During a special two-day preview, they enjoyed early access to explore all three floors of Mote SEA—offering a premier look at this transformative expansion of Mote's mission.

Throughout the year, members also enjoyed a variety of new, exclusive experiences—including Yoga with the Sharks and a Mother's Day event, Mom, Manatees & Martinis—at the original Mote Aquarium before Mote began its final transition to Mote SEA.

Volunteers, including members of Mote's Board of Trustees, played an essential role in advancing our mission this year, stepping into new responsibilities created by the opening of Mote SEA and supporting key initiatives across the organization. Our volunteer family grew by 336, reflecting the community's enthusiasm to be part of Mote's next chapter and help bring "Oceans for All" to life.

OUR VOLUNTEERS:

- Reached incredible milestones serving Mote, with some celebrating 30-35 years of volunteering.
- Dedicated countless hours to training for their new roles at Mote SEA, studying the animals and learning new outreach techniques.
- Earned 366 awards at Mote's 2025 Volunteer Awards Ceremony, celebrating their commitment to supporting Mote's growing research, education and conservation efforts.

Our donors have been the quiet heroes behind so many of this year's achievements. Through your partnership, philanthropy and unwavering public support, you have helped bring Mote to the brink of completing our \$167 million campaign for Mote SEA. Your generosity also made it possible to open new research facilities, accelerate scientific initiatives and host meaningful community moments—such as our grand opening celebration Illuminate the SEA, which welcomed our supporters into this new era for Mote.

Mote enters this new chapter stronger, more innovative and more connected to our mission than ever before because of your support. As we look to the year ahead, we are filled with gratitude and excitement for all that we will continue to accomplish together for our oceans and our communities.



2025 VOLUNTEER AWARD MILESTONE RECIPIENTS

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

15 YEARS

Eugene Beckstein
Jim Ericson
Penelope Kingman

10 YEARS

Scott Collins

5 YEARS

Barbara Brizdle
Rod Herschberger
Dr. Harris Silverman
Hobart (Skip) Swan

3 YEARS

Susan Molinari
LTC Frances Presley Rice

1 YEAR

Donald Featherman
Jonathan Mitchell

ALL OTHER VOLUNTEER AWARDEES

35 YEARS

Thekla Kahn

30 YEARS

Dolores Andrew
Pamela Silagyi

25 YEARS

Richard Bird
Joe Mathis
Judy Williams

20 YEARS

Jerris Foote
Connie Schindewolf
Tim Thurman
Norman Vaughan-Birch
Mary Jean Wenzel

15 YEARS

Kenneth Babineau
Melanie Babineau
Beth Bertsch
Rebecca Cantrell
Shirley Fein
Sandra Hayes
Jan O'Neil
Denise Perreca
Tamara Schells
Beth Spencer
Joyce Thompson
Barry Zahnd

10 YEARS

Barbara Archbold
Bob Bianchi
Paul Blankman
Amy Collins
Maurice (Mo) Cunniffe
Christy Deonanan
Charlene Donnelly
Karen Douma
Sheryl Gofman
Lee Hasselbring
Mary Hasselbring
Caleb Jameson
Hilary Jones
Lois McCluskey
Jack McDonald
Jillian McGonigle
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Wendy Reuter
Alexis Rosebrock
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Susan Woodward

VOLUNTEER EMERITUS INDUCTEES

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Don Dietterick
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Edward Drapatin
Norm Gassman
Capt. Bobby Hilbrunner
Brian Kelly
Scott Pasawicz
Ken Wiggins
Cathy Wiggins

Top left: Volunteers gather over food and refreshments during the 2025 Volunteer Award Ceremony.

PHOTO BY: EMMA MCINTYRE

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Thank you to the following generous donors who have contributed to our *Oceans for All* campaign to create Mote Science Education Aquarium (Mote SEA), from its inception to December 31, 2025.

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\$1 MILLION OR MORE

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Charitable Foundation

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Company of Florida
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\$100,000 TO \$249,999

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Richard B. Bennett
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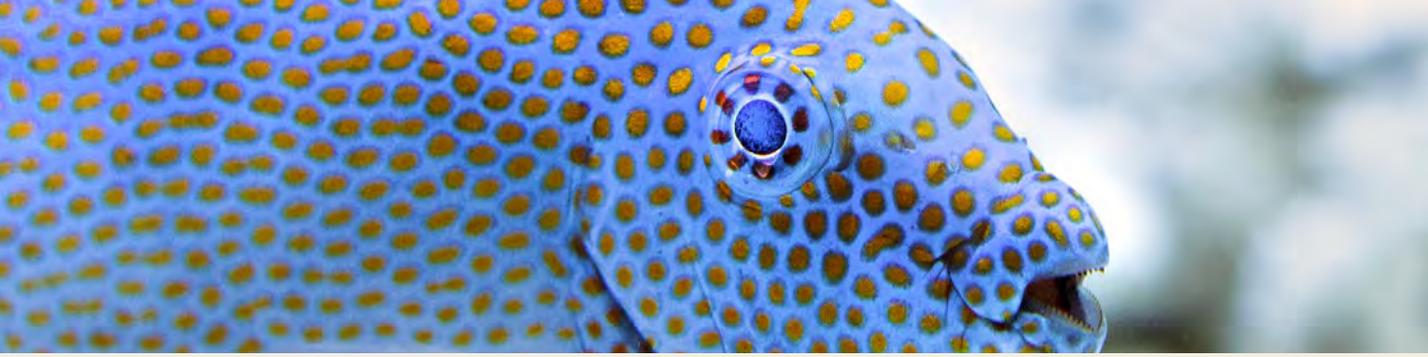
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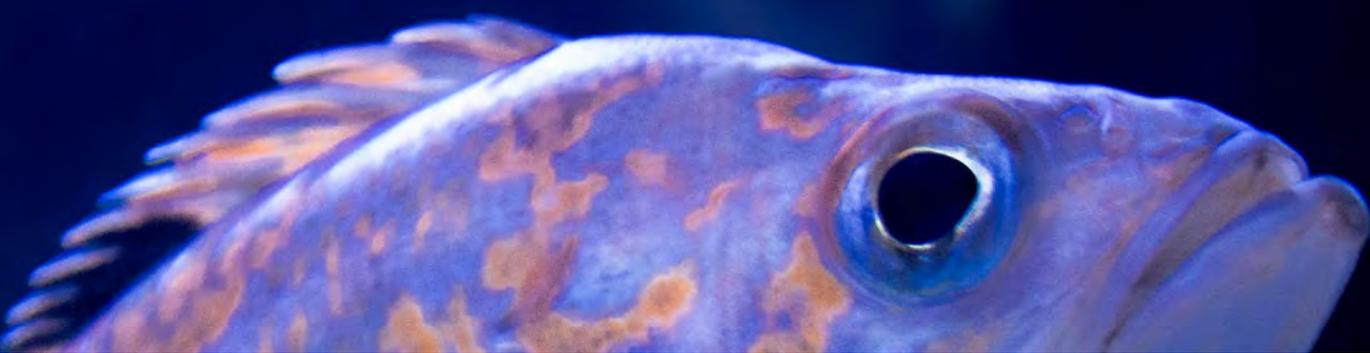
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