



NATIONAL  
AQUARIUM®

# Accessibility Guide

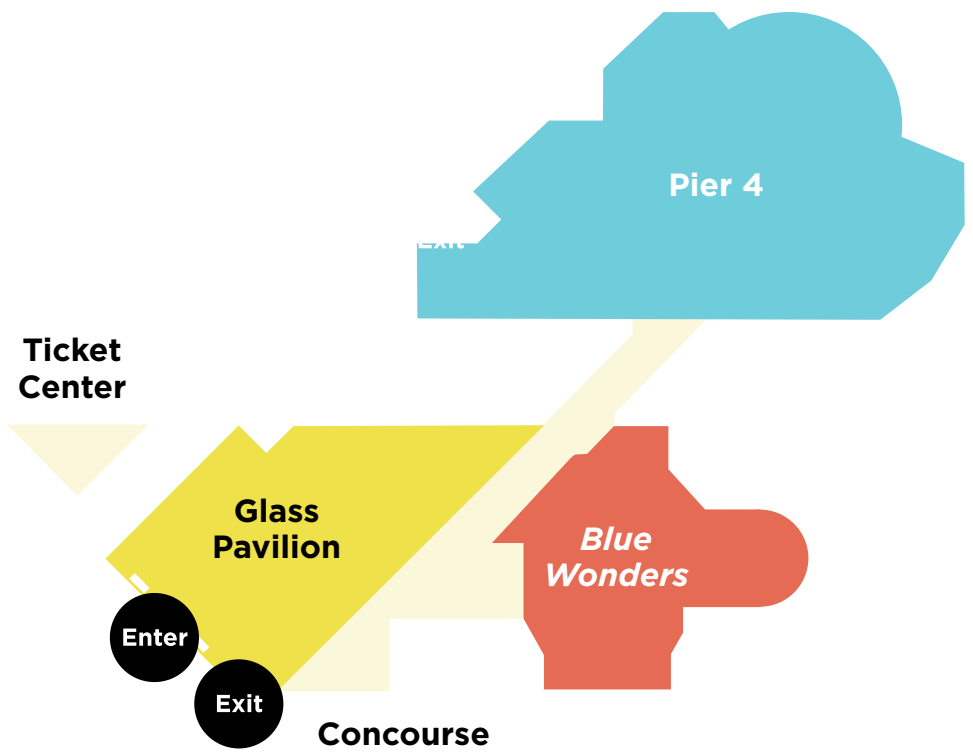




## First Saturdays and Sundays

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For a more leisurely, crowd-free experience, visitors with disabilities and their guests may enter 30 minutes prior to general entry time on the first Saturday and Sunday of each month.



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# Welcome!

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Journey from the depths of the ocean to the heights of the rain forest. With thousands of animals in award-winning habitats, there's so much to see and do! Let's get started!



Our **accessible entrance** is located at the Member Entrance in the Glass Pavilion.



**Elevators** displaying these signs have been designated for your use while touring the Aquarium.






Hand stamps for same-day re-entry into the Aquarium are available at the **exit**. Speak with staff at the exit to confirm the day's last entry time.

# Glass Pavilion

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## Houses *Australia: Wild Extremes*, the National Aquarium Gift Shop and Pier 3 Cafe.

-  **Entrance:** The Main Entrance to the Aquarium is on the ground floor of the Glass Pavilion. Wheelchairs are available for loan at the stroller check in exchange for a license or other form of photo identification.
-  **Elevator:** The elevator is located across from the main ground floor entrance. It provides access to all three levels of this building, up to *Australia: Wild Extremes*. Guests can reach all accessible elevators from Level 1.
-  **Exit:** Take the elevator to the ground floor. Exit through the far doors near the guest services area.

## *Blue Wonders: Reefs to Rainforests*

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### Houses seven major exhibit areas on five levels; connected to Pier 4 by an indoor bridge on Level 1.

-  **Entrance:** *Blue Wonders* is accessible from Level 1 of the Glass Pavilion.
-  **Elevators:** Two elevators, marked A and B, are available. Note that only Elevator A goes to Level 5, the *Upland Tropical Rain Forest* and *Hidden Life* exhibits. Elevator B goes no higher than Level 4.
-  **Exit:** On Level 1, go toward the National Aquarium Gift Shop in the Glass Pavilion. Take the elevator to the ground floor. Exit through the far doors near the guest services area.

# Pier 4

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**Houses *Dolphin Discovery*; *Jellies Invasion: Oceans Out of Balance*; and Pier 4 Canteen.**



**Entrance:** Pier 4 is accessible from Level 1 of *Blue Wonders*. An indoor bridge connects *Blue Wonders* to Pier 4.



**Elevator:** The elevator is located on Level 1 to the left after crossing the bridge and opposite the women's restroom. It provides access to the ground floor, Level 1 and the upper level of the amphitheater, where there is accessible seating for *Dolphin Discovery*.



**Exit:** Return to *Blue Wonders* via the bridge to complete your tour or return borrowed wheelchairs in the Glass Pavilion.

## Wheelchair and Stroller Route

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The Aquarium has an accessible route for guests using wheelchairs and strollers. Using the maps in this guide, you will avoid escalators and moving ramps that cannot accommodate wheelchairs or strollers.

Complimentary wheelchairs may be obtained with photo identification at the stroller check on the ground floor of the Glass Pavilion. Wheelchairs are available in limited numbers on a first-come, first-served basis for use inside the Aquarium.

Strollers for children and parents with disabilities are the only strollers permitted in the buildings. An Aquarium tag needs to be displayed while touring and can be obtained at the stroller check area.

## Service Animals

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Service animals are allowed in all public areas of the Aquarium.

## Guests Who Are Blind or Low Vision

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- Receivers and earpieces that enable guests to hear the audio described tour—which highlights the Aquarium’s exhibits and provides basic directional information—may be borrowed from the stroller check on the ground floor of the Glass Pavilion. An exchange of a photo identification is required.
- A “touch bag” of tactile items is available at the stroller check on the Glass Pavilion’s ground floor.
- Similar to the audio described tour, a Braille guidebook is available at the information desk for additional or alternative reference.

## Guests Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (HOH)

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- Scripts for public presentations are available at the information desk on Level 1.



- If you have T-switch capabilities, an assistive listening system is available in specially marked seating in *Dolphin Discovery*. Hearing aids not equipped with a T-switch may obtain a receiver from staff inside the exhibit.



- The 4D Immersion Theater is equipped with closed-captioning and assistive-listening systems. CC units and ALS headsets are available from theater attendants before entering the theater.



- An interpreter accompanying a guest who is deaf or hard of hearing is admitted to the Aquarium for free.



- Captioning is available on all narrated videos.



- Sign language interpreters are scheduled on two weekend days a year to interpret public presentations.

To request interpretation, please:

- Contact the accessibility liaison at 410-576-8745.
- Leave a message on our TTY: 410-727-3022.
- Visit [aqua.org/accessibility](https://aqua.org/accessibility).



# Guests on the Autism Spectrum

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- The Family Room next to the information desk on Level 1 of *Blue Wonders* is a calm, quiet space available for any guest who needs a private moment away from the crowds.

- Hand stamps are available at exit doors if you need to leave the building for a break and re-enter later in the day.



- Temperature, lighting and noise levels fluctuate from gallery to gallery—specifically in *Upland Tropical Rain Forest*, *Australia: Wild Extremes* and the 4D Immersion Theater. Staff can answer specific questions about stimulating elements in these environments.

- Virtual Reality (VR) experiences are immersive and include visual, auditory and haptic components that some may find overstimulating.

## **KultureCity**

The National Aquarium has been designated a certified Sensory Inclusive organization through KultureCity. This program is designed to provide the best guest experience for those with sensory needs, and includes a combination of staff training, sensory bags and special signage.

## Guest Relations Room

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A private space is available for all guests who need a quiet moment away from the crowds. The Guest Relations Room is located on Level 1 of *Blue Wonders*.

## Emergency Assistance

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The Aquarium's security staff is trained to assist you in the event of an emergency. In case of fire or other emergency, move toward the lit exit signs, where security staff will help you to safety.

## Accessibility Liaison

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The Aquarium employs an accessibility liaison to answer any questions you may have about accessibility at the Aquarium or to schedule individual tours. Interpreters, readers and guides are available on a limited basis through prior arrangement of at least two weeks. The accessibility liaison may be contacted at 410-576-8745 or by TTY at 410-727-3022.

For more information, visit [aqua.org/accessibility](https://aqua.org/accessibility).

## Groups

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Groups of 15 or more may obtain a reduced admission rate by contacting Central Reservations at 410-576-3833 at least three weeks in advance of the proposed visit. Groups should request special arrangements at the time of booking. We provide free admission to licensed caregivers for qualified groups.

# Key

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**Wheelchair**



**Entrance**



**Exit**



**Emergency Exit**



**Restrooms**



**Water Fountain**



**Elevator**



**Elevator A**



**Elevator B**



**Accessible Seating**



**AED (Automated External Defibrillator)**



**Closed Captioning**



**Assistive Listening System**



**Guest Services**

Stroller Check, Lockers, Family Restroom and Photo Pickup



**Guest Relations Room**



**First Aid**



**Suggested Route**



**Gift Shop**



**Food**



**Public Areas**



**Information**



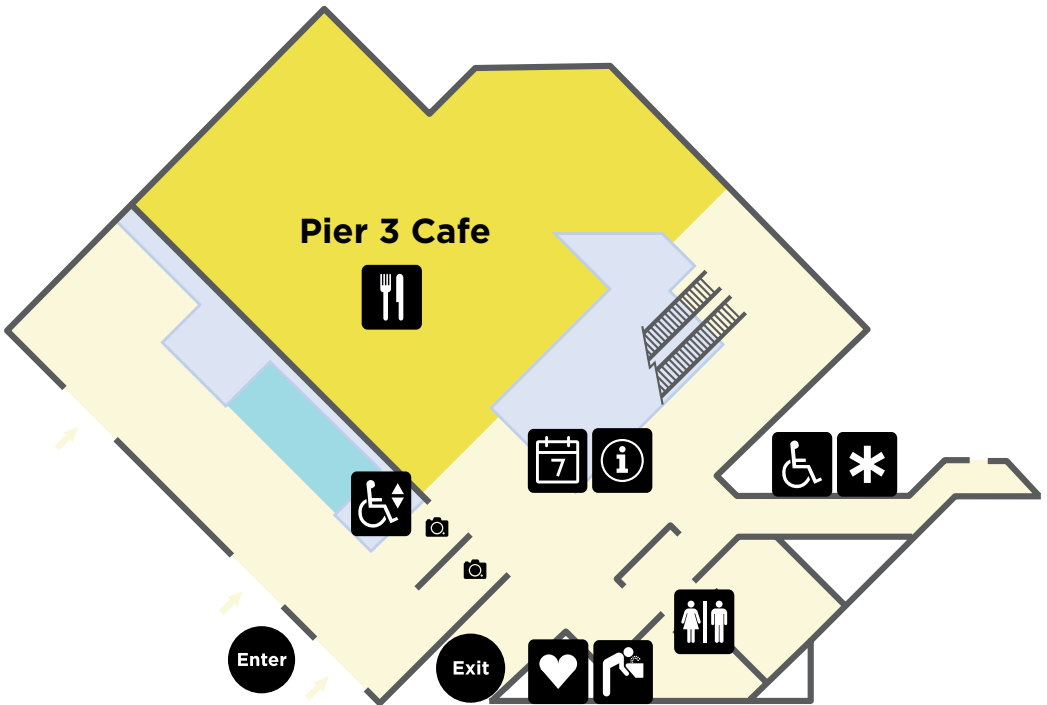
**Digital Monitor With Schedule**

## Glass Pavilion Ground Floor

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**Houses:** Main entrance and exit

**Amenities:** Complimentary wheelchairs, Pier 3 Cafe, guest services, restrooms and family restroom, water fountains, stroller check, photo pickup, digital monitor with schedule



**To reach the next level:**

Take the elevator to Level 1 to reach the National Aquarium Gift Shop, 4D Immersion Theater and Harbor Overlook leading to *Blue Wonders* and Pier 4.

**Elevator location:**

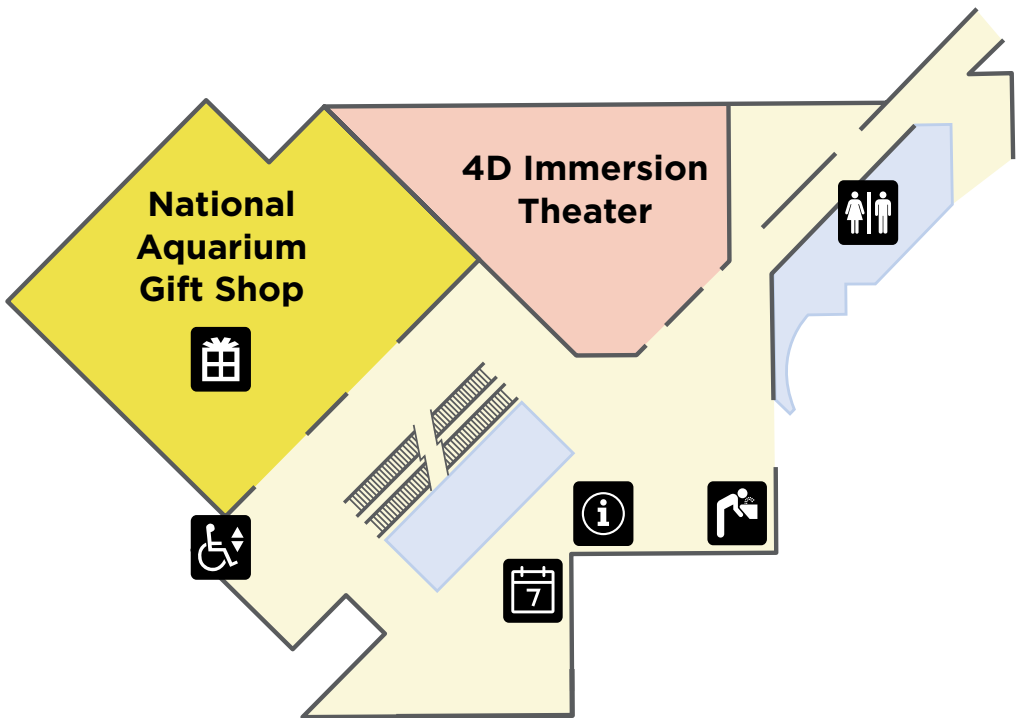
Next to the Pier 3 Cafe.

# Glass Pavilion Level 1

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**Houses:** Concourse to *Blue Wonders* and Pier 4, Harbor Overlook, 4D Immersion Theater

**Amenities:** National Aquarium Gift Shop, information desk



## 4D immersion film:



The 4D Immersion Theater is equipped with a closed-captioning system and an assistive-listening system. CC units and ALS headsets are available from theater attendants before entering the theater. Accessible seating is available. Speak to the attendants for express entry.

## Elevator location:

Next to the National Aquarium Gift Shop.

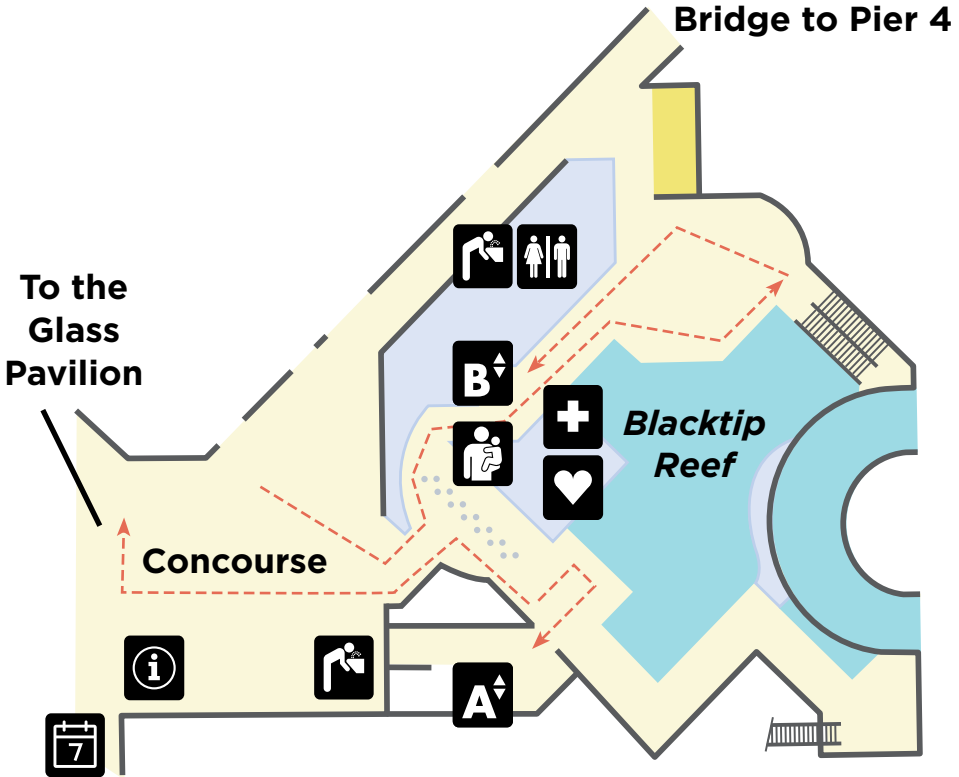


## Blue Wonders Level 1

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**Houses:** *Blacktip Reef*, Harbor Overlook, bridge to Pier 4

**Amenities:** Information desk, Guest Relations Room, restrooms, water fountains



### Elevator location:

- A** **Elevator A:** As you enter *Blacktip Reef*, turn right into the hallway.
- B** **Elevator B:** Near the bubble tubes.

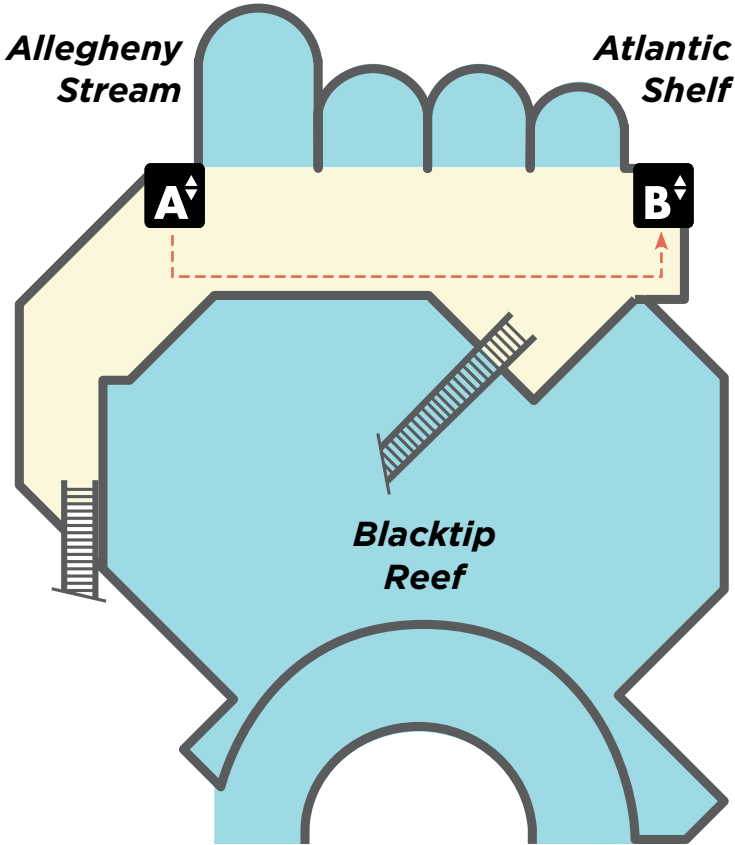
### To reach the next level:

You may take either elevator to Level 2.

## Blue Wonders Level 2

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**Houses:** *Maryland: Mountains to the Sea*



### Elevator locations:

- A** **Elevator A:** To the left of the *Allegheny Stream* exhibit.
- B** **Elevator B:** To the right of the *Atlantic Shelf* exhibit.

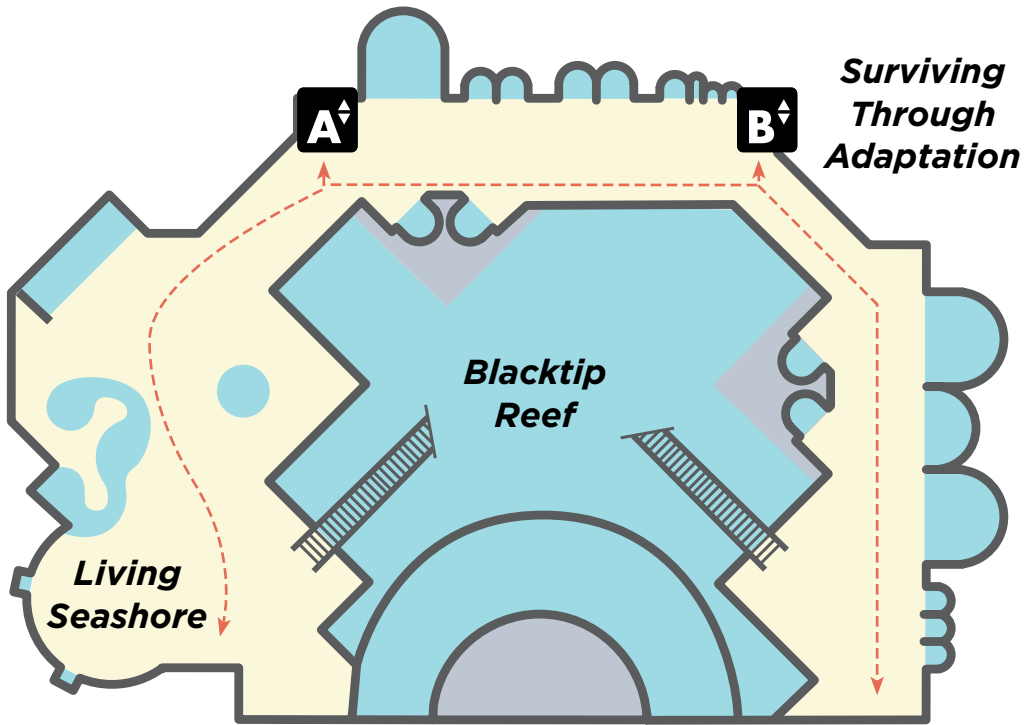
### To reach the next level:

Take either elevator to Level 3.



## Blue Wonders Level 3

**Houses:** *Surviving Through Adaptation, Living Seashore*



**A tactile bin with whelks is available upon request in *Living Seashore*.**

**A** **To continue your tour:**

We recommend proceeding directly to Level 5.

Take **Elevator A** to the *Upland Tropical Rain Forest* (Elevator B does not reach Level 5).

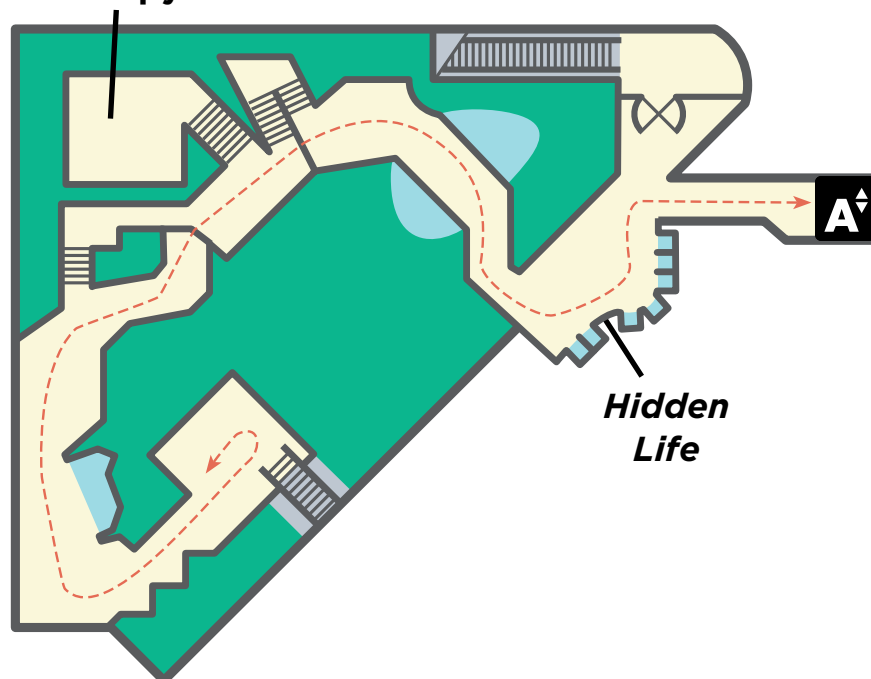
After touring Level 5, resume your journey by taking **Elevator A** to Level 4.

## Blue Wonders Level 5

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**Houses:** *Upland Tropical Rain Forest*, *Hidden Life*

### Upper Canopy Platform



Upon exiting Elevator A, you will be moving against the flow of traffic. The path is narrow, with some inclines; the atmosphere is warm and humid. You'll need to make a U-turn at the end of the path and retrace your route to exit.

Please note that the upper canopy platform is only accessible by stairs.

### Elevator location:

**Elevator A:** Down the hall (be alert—it's dark!) to the right after passing the *Hidden Life* exhibit.

### To reach the next level:

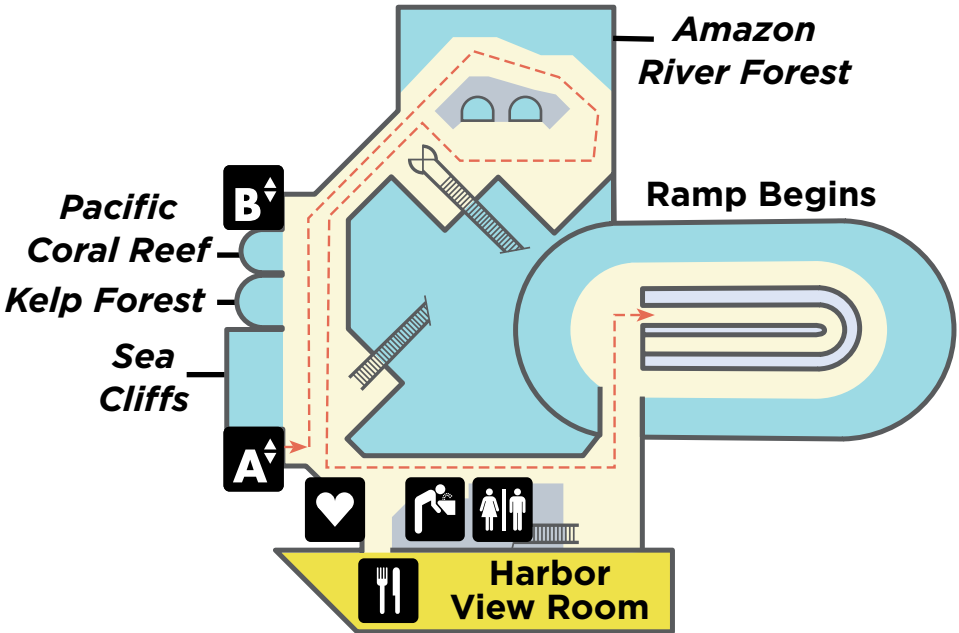
You must use **Elevator A** to reach the exhibits on Level 4 and the *Atlantic Coral Reef* and *Shark Alley* exhibits.

## Blue Wonders Level 4

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**Houses:** *Sea Cliffs, Kelp Forest, Pacific Coral Reef, Amazon River Forest*

**Amenities:** Restrooms, water fountains, Harbor View Room



While enjoying the *Atlantic Coral Reef* and *Shark Alley* exhibits, be cautious on the sloping ramps. There is a level landing at the end of each ramp. These ramps take you to Level M.

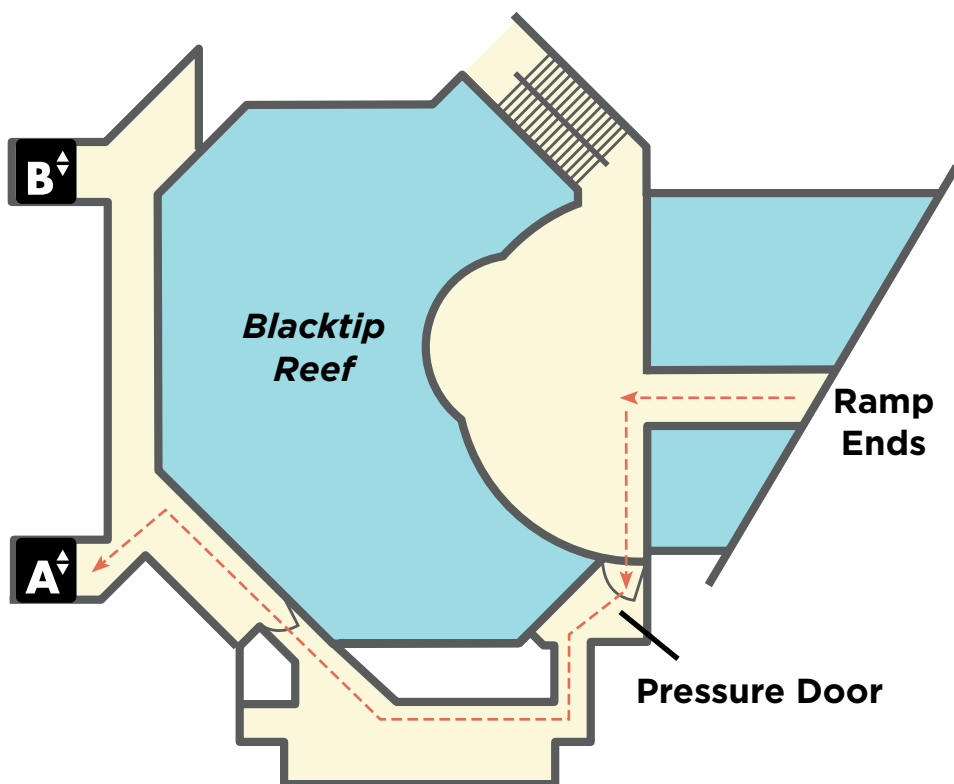
### Elevator locations:

- Elevator A:** To the left of *Sea Cliffs* (i.e., our puffin exhibit). If you haven't toured the *Upland Tropical Rain Forest* exhibit, take this elevator to Level 5. .
- Elevator B (DOWN ONLY):** To the right of *Pacific Coral Reef*.

## Blue Wonders Level M

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**Houses:** *Atlantic Coral Reef, Shark Alley, Blacktip Reef*  
underwater viewing area



### Elevator location:

**A** The wheelchair-accessible door is to your left as you exit the ramps. A pressure plate will open the door. Follow the signs through an office area to Elevator A.

### To reach the next level:

Take **Elevator A** to Level 1 to get to Harbor Overlook or to reach the indoor bridge to Pier 4.

### To exit the Aquarium:

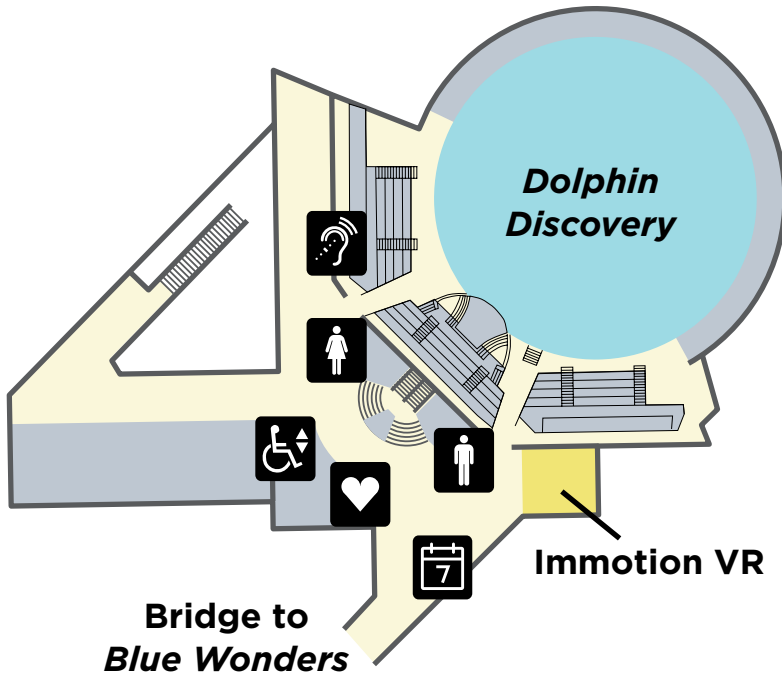
Take **Elevator A** to Level 1 and go through Harbor Overlook to the Glass Pavilion. Take the elevator to the ground floor. Exit through the far doors by guest services.

## Pier 4 Level 1


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**Houses:** *Dolphin Discovery*, bridge to *Blue Wonders*, Immotion Virtual Reality (VR)

**Amenities:** Restrooms, digital monitor with daily schedule



For the easiest wheelchair access and best view of *Dolphin Discovery*, take the elevator (on the left after you cross the indoor bridge) to Level 2 for direct entry to the amphitheater.

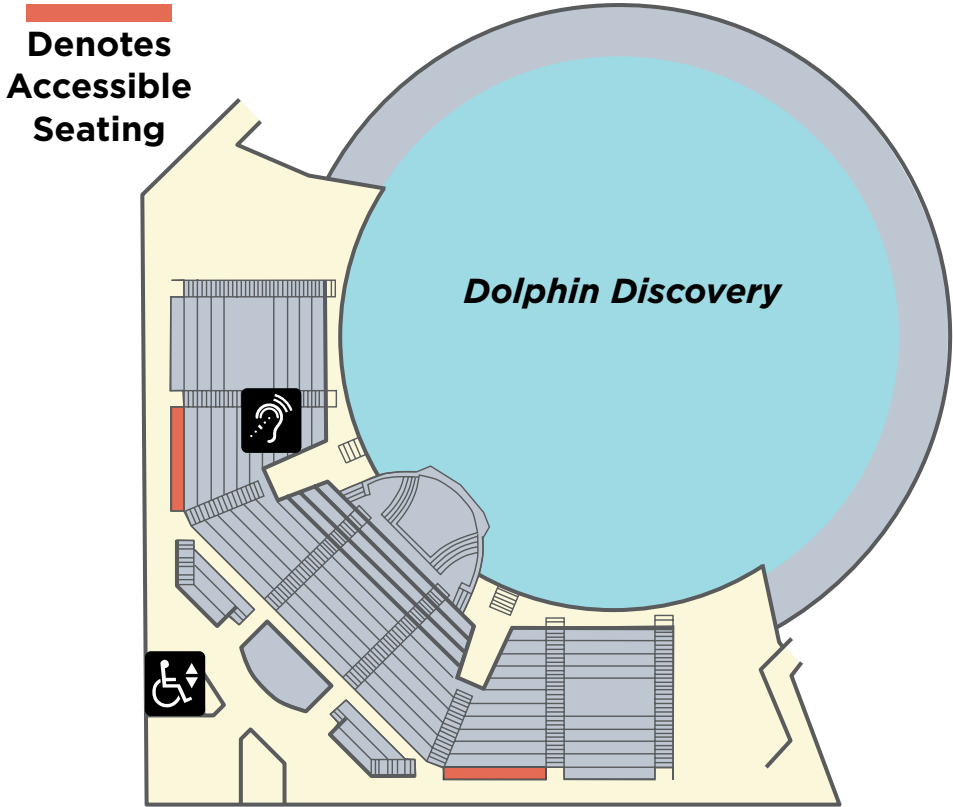
 An assistive-listening system is available in the designated area on Level 2 of the amphitheater. If you need a receiver, request one from staff inside *Dolphin Discovery*.

Virtual reality seating is accessed via small steps. If you cannot get into or out of the seats, staff can reroute a headset so you can enjoy the visual and auditory components while seated in a stationary chair or wheelchair.

## Pier 4 Level 2

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### Houses: *Dolphin Discovery* priority seating



#### Priority seating:

Accessible spaces are reserved along the top rows. Seating is available for family and friends.

#### To reach the next level:

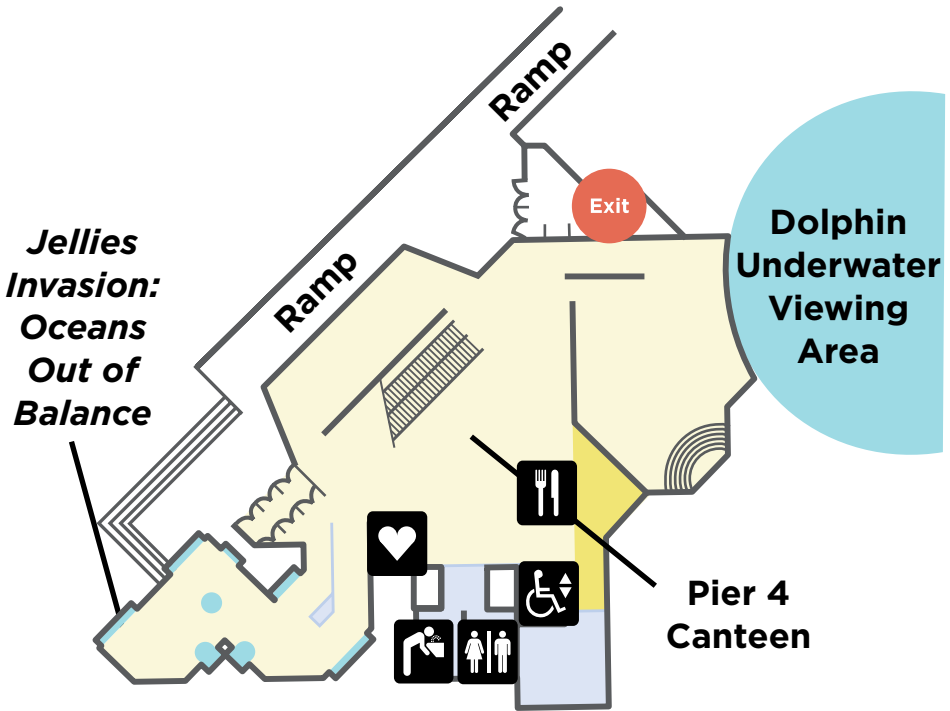
 Take the elevator to the ground floor to reach the dolphin underwater viewing area, *Jellies Invasion: Oceans Out of Balance* and the Pier 4 Canteen; or to Level 1 to proceed to *Blue Wonders*, the Glass Pavilion and the exit.

## Pier 4 Ground Level

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**Houses:** *Jellies Invasion: Oceans Out of Balance*, dolphin underwater viewing area, emergency exit

**Amenities:** Pier 4 Canteen, restrooms, water fountains



### Elevator location:

Near the food service area adjacent to the restrooms.

### To return to *Blue Wonders* and exit:

Take the elevator to Level 1; cross the bridge. Refer to the maps on pages 12 and 15 to reach *Blue Wonders*. Wheelchairs can be returned at the Glass Pavilion stroller check.



# NATIONAL AQUARIUM®

The National Aquarium is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to connect people with nature to inspire compassion and care for our ocean planet.

[aqua.org/accessibility](https://aqua.org/accessibility)

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