

NEWS RELEASE

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Why Does the Bird Have a Dog Toy?

(VIRGINIA BEACH, VA) – In the Marsh Pavilion, Tippy, one of our North American river otters, works diligently to remove a treat from a water bottle in his exhibit. At the same time in the Bay & Ocean Pavilion, Greenie, our green sea turtle, pulls leaf lettuce from a floating jolly ball dog toy. Later in the day, one of our birds will pull food out of a KONG Stuff-A-Ball toy, and our snakes will hide in a natural wooden hamster tunnel.

Our animals enjoy an incredible array of enrichment items and tactics, and these activities benefit the animals by keeping them physically and mentally active. Some of the tactics include manipulative enrichment, social enrichment, training sessions, sensory enrichment, food/foraging enrichment, and environmental/habitat enrichment.

Enrichment happens all across the Aquarium, and each one of our animals receives some form or another on a rotating schedule based on their natural history. Some animals even receive enrichment multiple times per day! Our animal care staff members also enjoy creating new experiences for our animals, like the ice sculptures that our marine mammal trainers build for special holidays and birthdays, or the environmental structures our amphibians enjoy from time to time.

We are always looking for new and exciting things that stimulate our animals' lives, and this year, guests can join in! For the first time, the Virginia Aquarium has an Amazon Wish List filled with treats and trinkets that we think our animals will love. Guests can log on to bit.ly/VAQWishList to find our Wish List or visit the Virginia Aquarium and pick an ornament off of our Giving Tree. More information is also available on our website at www.VirginiaAquarium.com/contribute/amazon-wish-list

The Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums. The Aquarium is also a member of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The Virginia Aquarium's mission is to inspire conservation of the marine environment through education, research and sustainable practices. It is located at 717 General Booth Boulevard, just south of Rudee Inlet in Virginia Beach.

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