

Blacktip Reef Fact Sheet

Beginning in summer 2013, guests will be able to enjoy *Blacktip Reef*, a breathtaking exhibit full of color, light and movement located in the heart of National Aquarium. This coral-filled exhibit, replicating Indo-Pacific reefs, is active with life that guests can experience from many vantage points of National Aquarium, including a new floor-to-ceiling pop-out viewing window that allows guests to virtually step inside the exhibit and come face-to-face with the animals. As National Aquarium guests enjoy the exhibit, they can feel their heart race as a pack of five-foot-long blacktip reef sharks speed toward them. They may take a deep breath as they witness the rise and fall of a five-foot-wide whiptail ray's massive fins beneath their feet. Explore deeper and they may spot an ornate wobbegong shark camouflaged against the reef bottom. New species will join some of National Aquarium's beloved animals including Calypso, the 400-pound green sea turtle, and zebra sharks Zeke and Zoe, in their new home, *Blacktip Reef*.

Quick facts:

- **Opening date:** Summer 2013
- **Location:** The centerpiece of National Aquarium, Baltimore, replacing *Wings in the Water*
- **Audience:** All ages
- **Number of corals:** Approximately 2,700 replicated coral pieces
- **Number of animals:** Will open with 15 species
- **Highlighted animals:**
 - o Blacktip reef sharks
 - o Reticulated whiptail rays
 - o Napoleon wrasse
 - o Ornate wobbegong sharks
 - o Tasselled wobbegong sharks
 - o Blotched fantail ray
 - o Green sea turtle (Calypso)
 - o Zebra sharks (Zeke/Zoe)
- **Blacktip reef shark facts:**
 - o Smaller shark species (max size is six feet long)
 - o Lives in shallow waters near Indo-Pacific reefs
 - o Beautiful, sleek body with distinctive black tips on its pectoral, dorsal, pelvic and caudal fins
 - o Active and fast moving
 - o Hunt cooperatively in groups
 - o Key animal to the success of a reef ecosystem
 - o Late to mature, has long gestation period (approximately 16 months) and often bears only a few young
 - o Survival is threatened by humans who capture them for shark fin soup
- **Habitat design:** Replicating a healthy reef in the Indo-Pacific region, a tropical area where the Indian Ocean connects with the western and central Pacific Ocean
- **Gallons of water in tank:** 260k gallons of salt water
- **Support System:** The renovations will double the size of the life support system serving the tank.
- **Square feet:** 13.5k total square feet (this includes the exhibit and all back-of-house pieces associated with it); top of tank is approximately 4,000 square feet
- **Building partners:** Whiting-Turner (contractor); Cambridge Seven Associates (architect); McLaren Engineering Group (structural engineer); Kovacs, Whitney & Associates Inc. (mechanical and electrical engineer); FLUX Studio (lighting consultant)

- **Cost of exhibit:** \$12.5 million
- **Additional guest benefits:**
 - Daily interactive diver presentations
 - Shark feedings will happen often
 - Computer touchscreens available above and in underwater viewing area to provide guests with more information on reef animals
 - Seating in underwater viewing area
 - An interactive wall where guests can take and share photos and thoughts on their experience
 - Additional access to interact with National Aquarium's iconic bubble tubes
- **Where *Wings in the Water* animals are going:**
 - Green sea turtle, zebra sharks – National Aquarium Animal Care Center until *Blacktip Reef* is completed
 - Bonnethead sharks, hogfish, tarpon – National Aquarium *Atlantic Coral Reef* exhibit
 - Cownose stingrays, southern stingrays, small roughtail stingray, barracuda – Georgia Aquarium
 - Tarpon – Ripley's Aquarium