Animal Health and Welfare at Georgia Aquarium
The health, care and welfare of the animals at Georgia Aquarium are the Aquarium’s foremost priority. Exceptional preventative medical care directly relates to excellent animal health and the prevention or early detection of illness, while expert husbandry practices are directly associated with the advanced level of animal welfare.

Correll Center for Aquatic Animal Health
Georgia Aquarium’s Correll Center for Aquatic Animal Health is a leading organization for aquatic animal care. The Aquarium’s state-of-the-art animal health facility, research and conservation activities, and the partnership with the University of Georgia Veterinary School are part of the programs hosted through the Correll Center for Aquatic Animal Health.

Centrally located within the Aquarium building, the Correll Center’s 10,500 square foot space incorporates a surgery suite with scrub room, pathology room, medical records room with technician office space, water quality lab, diagnostic lab and treatment space. The space was designed by world-class veterinary professionals and conservation organizations to provide the most superior care possible. Special features of the Correll Center space include digital radiography, digital ultrasound, digital endoscopy/laparoscopy, gas and water-borne
anesthesia systems, steam and gas instrument sterilization, compound and stereo microscopes with digital cameras and a digital medical records system. The Correll Center for Aquatic Animal Health can be viewed on behind-the-scenes tours at Georgia Aquarium.

**Aquatic Medicine**

Preventative medical assessments, including daily observations and data recording, routine weight monitoring, full physical examinations including blood and fecal testing, dental examinations, diet supplementation and vaccinations ensure that the health of the animals at Georgia Aquarium is of the highest quality. These assessments facilitate the early detection and treatment of illnesses and zoonotic diseases by well-trained animal experts and veterinarians.

All of the tens of thousands of animals at Georgia Aquarium receive the highest-quality care around the clock. Georgia Aquarium has full-service, seven-day medical coverage with 24-hour care, ensuring the highest-quality medical care possible. All medical/surgical and diagnostic equipment can be moved to most exhibits and behind-the-scenes areas.

**Georgia Aquarium’s Animal Health Residency Program**

Currently, Georgia Aquarium is the only organization with a program that integrates an aquarium and veterinarian teaching hospital in the specialty fields of wildlife medicine and veterinary pathology. This partnership with the University of Georgia allows the Aquarium to provide a complete aquatic animal pathology and clinical medicine program while training veterinary residents, interns and externs.
Hospital and Lab Facilities

- Veterinary Diagnostic and Water Quality Laboratory
  - Capabilities: Ability to analyze/evaluate blood, urine, fecal, bacterial and water samples
    - Over 5,000 water assays are performed each week at Georgia Aquarium

- Veterinary Pharmacy
  - Capabilities: Immediate access to all required animal medications in the large volumes we might require

- Ultra-Low Freezer Room
  - Capabilities: Long-term storage of biological samples (serum, plasma, water)

- Medical Records Room/Technician Offices
  - State-of-the-art, custom built Digital Medical Records software

- Treatment Room (Hospital)
  - Capabilities: Intensive care for sick fish, invertebrates, turtles, amphibians, birds and small mammals.

- Avian Intensive Care Room (Hospital)
  - Capabilities: Intensive care for penguins with Intensive Care Unit (ICU) enclosure

- Small Mammal Intensive Care Room (Hospital)
  - Capabilities: Intensive care for sea otters, Asian small-clawed otters

- Surgical Suite
  - Capabilities: All surgical procedures for animals living in the Aquarium

- Equipment Storage Room
- Capabilities: Supply/equipment storage
  - Necropsy Room
    - Capabilities: Gross and microscopic pathological examination of mortalities

**Animal Training and Enrichment**
Zoological Operations practices ensure that the physiological, biological, psychological and social needs of the animals cared for at Georgia Aquarium are prioritized. Animal training and enrichment are an important part of this process, allowing trainers to care for animals in a way that is safe, effective and stimulating.

At Georgia Aquarium, animals are trained using positive reinforcement to encourage desirable behavior in order to provide the most humane care possible. It is the process our staff uses with the animals on a daily basis to build and encourage a relationship of trust and teach behaviors that not only challenge and stimulate the animals, but most importantly, help us to take care of them. The animals are trained to present different parts of their bodies to staff for examination, allowing for animal care staff to obtain measurements and diagnostic samples, and remain calm for veterinary examinations. Whether animals are presenting tail flukes for a blood draw, holding still for an ultrasound or opening their mouths for dental care, these trained behaviors ensure they are receiving the best care possible every day.

Another important way our staff care for the animals is through a process called environmental enrichment. Enrichment can be a way of reinforcing the animals during training sessions, but it is also a way animal care staff can help the animals stay stimulated and engaged. Enrichment is any
activity or device that staff can introduce into the animals environment to stimulate and encourage behavior. It is a way to keep their environment changing and stimulating and allows the animals to be engaged in their environment. Enrichment can come in many forms. Staff can manipulate lights and sounds, do play sessions, change their feeding sessions, introduce different types of food, and also use environmental enrichment devices. Environmental enrichment devices are essentially toys that are placed into habitats that encourage the animals to explore, interact with and exhibit natural behaviors.

**Animal Diets and Nutrition**
Nutrition plays an integral role in the preventative medicine program at Georgia Aquarium. The nutrition operations are based in the Aquarium’s commissary and are carried out by a full time, on-staff nutritionist, nutrition technicians, biologists and volunteers. These operations ensure the best quality diets for the animals in our care, while maintaining the highest standard of food safety.

The comprehensive nutrition program within Georgia Aquarium provides
- Operations management
- Clinical nutrition
- Nutrition education
- Applied and basic nutrition research

Each day, the Georgia Aquarium team is learning something new to increase the capacity of the operation, make critical diet adjustments and/or discover something new about aquatic animal health.

Each year, the Georgia Aquarium commissary handles enormous amounts of seafood and fish-based seafood items including:
• 52,000 pounds (23,587 kilograms) of krill
• 109,000 pounds (49,442 kilograms) of capelin
• 9,000 pounds (4,082 kilograms) of pellets, flakes, gruels and gels

Each year at Georgia Aquarium:
• Beluga whales are offered 26,400 pounds (11,975 kilograms) of fish
• Whale sharks are offered 17,000 pounds (7,711 kilograms) of fish
• Penguins are offered 8,200 pounds (3,720 kilograms) of fish
• Sea dragons eat more than 7,000 grams of live mysis (small shrimp)

**Life Support Systems**
With more than 10 million gallons of water in more than 60 habitats, Georgia Aquarium possesses the largest and most technologically advanced pump and filtration system in an aquarium. The Aquarium’s life support equipment is highly automated and controlled by a state-of-the-art system that can make 150 million decisions per second through a network of 24 computers. Each minute, over 170,000 gallons of water are filtered at the Aquarium.

Life Support Systems staff are on the premises at Georgia Aquarium 24-hours-a-day to guarantee all systems run at peak performance around the clock. Aquarium laboratory staff test the water quality twice daily to ensure it at the safest standards possible for all the animals.

Ocean Voyager Built by The Home Depot operates as a stand-alone system, as are all exhibits at Georgia Aquarium. This means they are closed loop filtration systems and are not connected to each other or open to any other natural source of sea water. All water Ocean Voyager can be completely filtered within 60 minutes.