

# Galway Atlantaquaria

Ireland's largest native species aquarium



## Exhibit Guide



## Contents

Welcome to Galway Atlantaquaria, Ireland's largest native species aquarium .....	2
Floor maps .....	3
The splash tank .....	4
The Submarine .....	5
#OurOcean exhibit .....	6
The Ray Pool.....	7
Anemone Tanks.....	8
Clown fish and Seahorse display .....	9
Conger Eel Tank.....	10
The Wrasse Tank.....	11
The Harbour .....	12
The Ocean Tank (this can also be seen from the first floor).....	13
The Crawfish.....	14
The Kelp Tank.....	14
The Octopus Tank .....	16
Bearna Dugout Canoe .....	17
The Waterfall .....	18
The Weir Tank .....	19
The Stream Tank-Mill Pond.....	20
The Fin Whale .....	21
Biodiversity Zone.....	22
The Canal Tank.....	23
The Hy-Brasil Galway Hooker (the Promised Land) .....	24
The Audio Visual Room .....	25
The Nursery.....	26
The Estuary Tank and Seabirds exhibit .....	27
The Green Turtle Exhibit .....	27
The Trash Gnash Monster –interactive game.....	29
The Renewable Ocean Energy display .....	29
The Touch Pools-Tidal Pools .....	30
Moon Jellyfish Display.....	31
The Spiny Spider Crab .....	32
The Real Map of Ireland and Cold Water Coral display .....	33

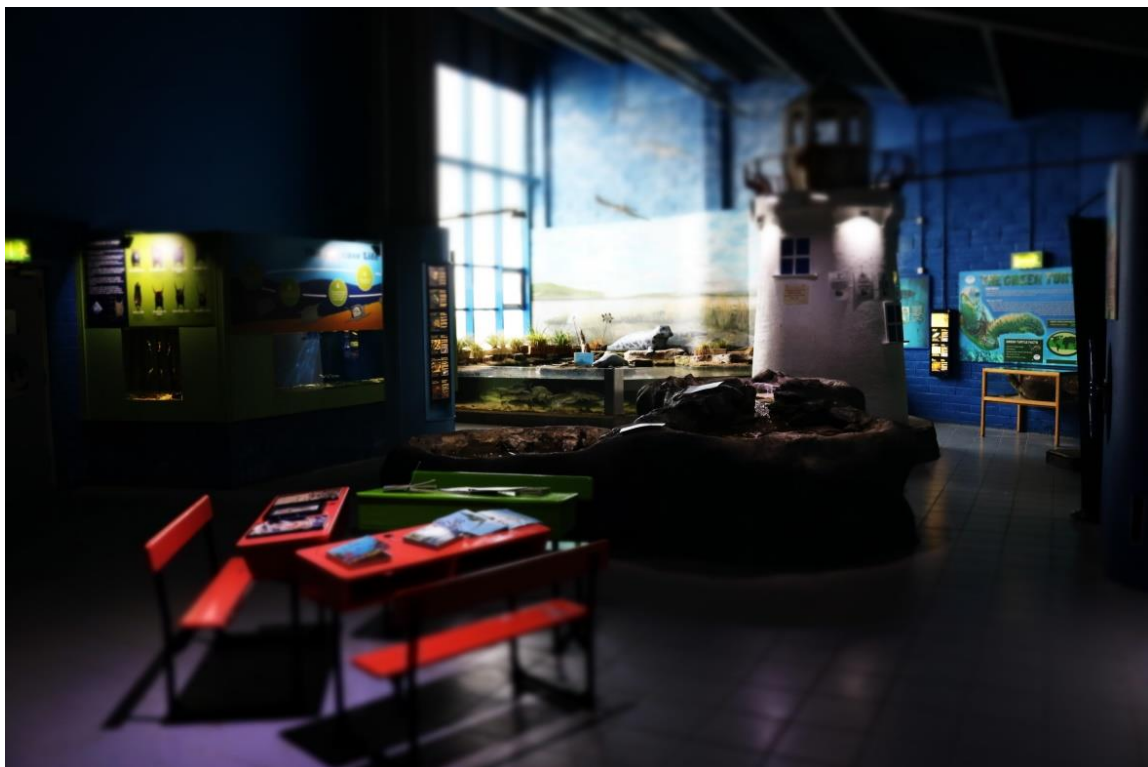
## Welcome to Galway Atlantaquaria, Ireland's largest native species aquarium

Is mian le Galway Atlantaquaria léargas cuimsitheach ar an saol faoi uisce a sholáthar i dtaispeántais atá soiléir agus suimiúil, le cúnamh foirne atá eolach cuiditheach agus beoléirithe spreagúla.

Galway Atlantaquaria, National Aquarium of Ireland seeks to present a comprehensive view of the world of water through clear and interesting displays, informed helpful staff and exciting live presentations and animal interaction sessions.

This is achieved through accurately displaying aquatic life in a manner that reflects their natural habitats, providing an enjoyable and educational environment to learn about the diverse marine ecosystem of Ireland.

As Ireland's largest aquarium we strive to ensure that a visit to the aquarium is original and full of wonder for visitors of all ages.



*Ocean literacy, environmental issues and community informs our ethos.*



## Floor maps





## The splash tank

The first time you venture through the entrance to the aquarium, we guarantee you'll jump! That's because our first exhibit is Ireland's largest "Splash" tank!

This tank is designed to be an imitation of the climate of the west coast of Ireland. It is home to our Bass, and also comes complete with one tonne of crashing salt water (every 45 seconds!).



## **The Submarine** - Deep Submergence Vehicle (DSV)

One of our most popular exhibits is our Submarine, based on the design of ALVIN (the submersible that explored the Titanic), Kids of all ages are able to step inside, imagine and explore the structure of this famous submarine.

The real version is able to reach depths of 4,500m, that's nearly 3 miles straight down! It carries two people to these great depths, cruising at a speed of half a knot!

To the right of the Submarine we have a small display of flat-fish. These fish are able to change colour depending on the environment.





## #OurOcean exhibit

Galway Atlantaquaria have partnered with down2earth materials to create this exhibition that highlights 'plastic pollution' and the need to convert to compostable materials.

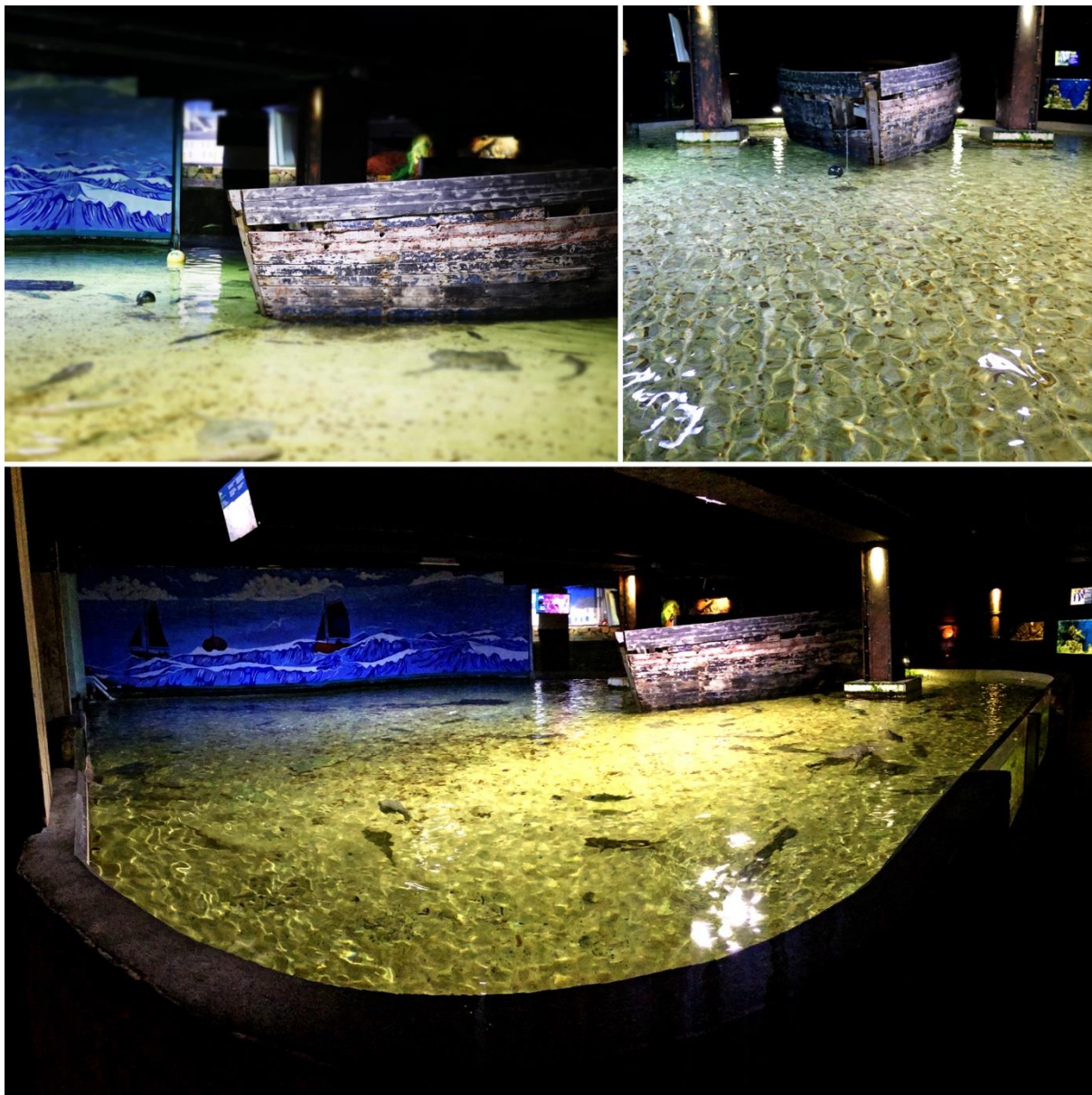
We hope you can share this message by using the hash tag #OurOcean and tell us what you think!





## The Ray Pool

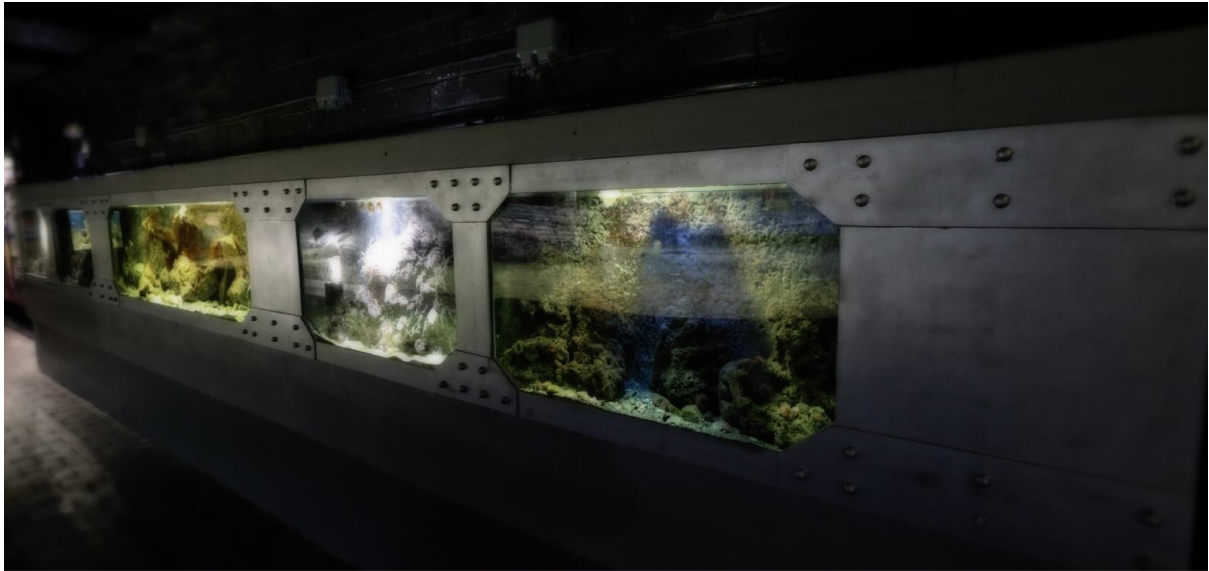
The Ray Pool covers the largest floor space of all our tanks. It is large, but shallow, and has been specially designed for the fish which like to have space to move around in; namely our Rays, Dogfish, Smooth hound Sharks and large flatfish such as Turbot. It is an open tank, allowing visitors to come literally face to face with the fish. We have five species of Ray in our Ray Pool: Thornback, Spotted, Blonde, Undulate and Painted Ray. These all react well to visitors, particularly the Thornback and Undulate Rays, and will often stick their noses out of the water to say “hello” when there are people around.



Small fish feeding tour starts here!

## Anemone Tanks

The Anemone Tanks host a variety of Anemones, including Beadlets and Snakelocks. These Anemones are beautiful to gaze at yet hide a 'dark' secret. Their tentacles hold toxic venom that can stun prey. These tentacles can also feed off the particles of food that flow around the Tank.





## Clown fish and Seahorse display

– No flash photography on Seahorse, Please obey the rules of the aquarium.

In the Atlantaquaria we have a Seahorse species found in warmer waters from Florida all the way down to Brazil. The Clownfish are very popular and if you are lucky you may see ‘Dory’ and ‘Jacque’ too!





## Conger Eel Tank

At Galway Atlantaquaria, you can get a glimpse of Conger Eels up to 30kg in weight from behind the thick, protective glass of our very own Wreck! And yes that is their tail poking out of the Display. Conger Eels have very sharp teeth and they can swim in reverse, pulling their prey to have a chat!



## The Wrasse Tank

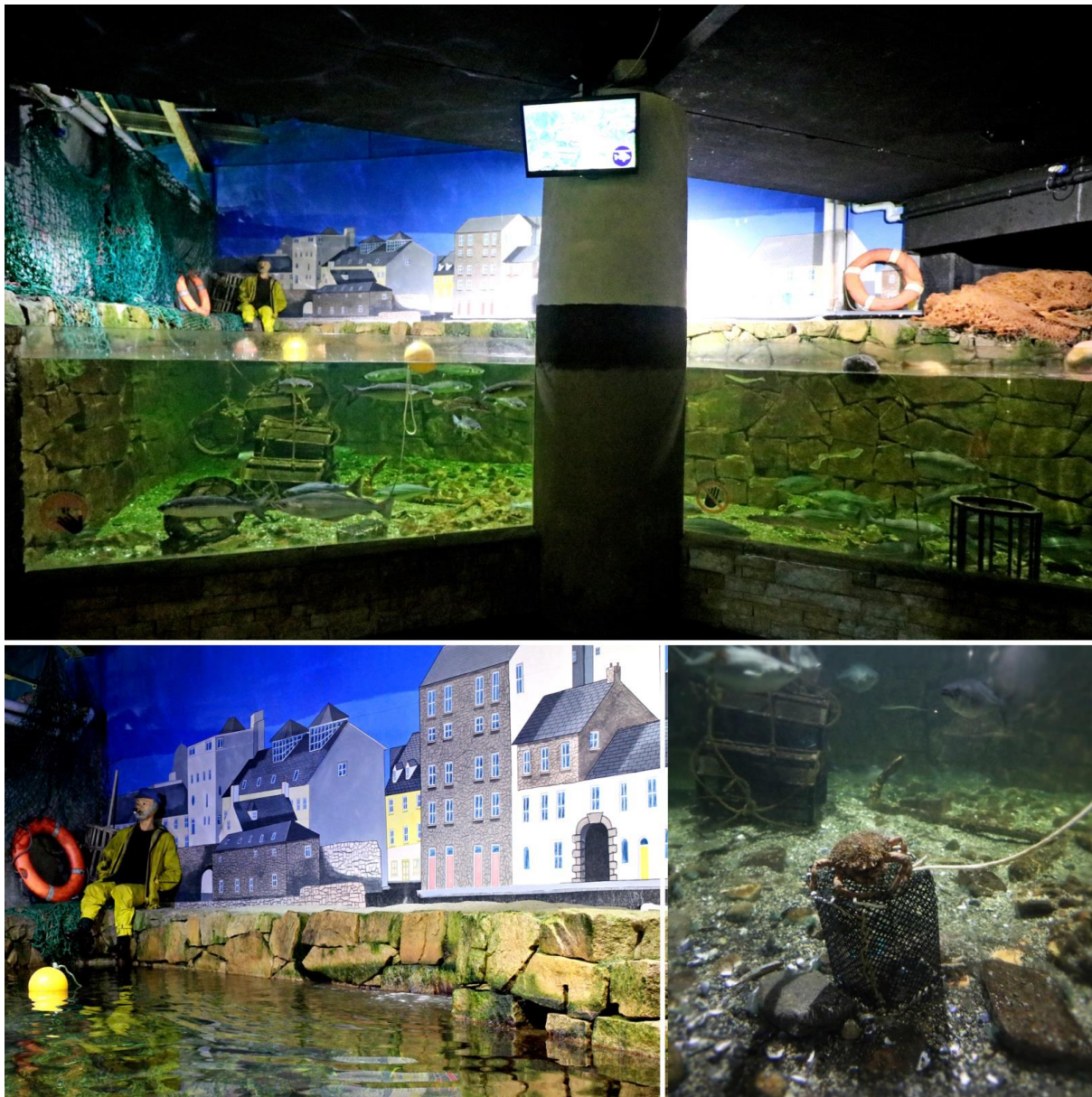
The males are the most colourful fish in Irish waters. Some wrasses are born as females, but they change sex and transform into males later in life. Many smaller wrasses follow the feeding trails of larger fish, picking up invertebrates disturbed by their passing. The word “Wrasse” comes from the Cornish word wragh, meaning old woman or hag!





## The Harbour

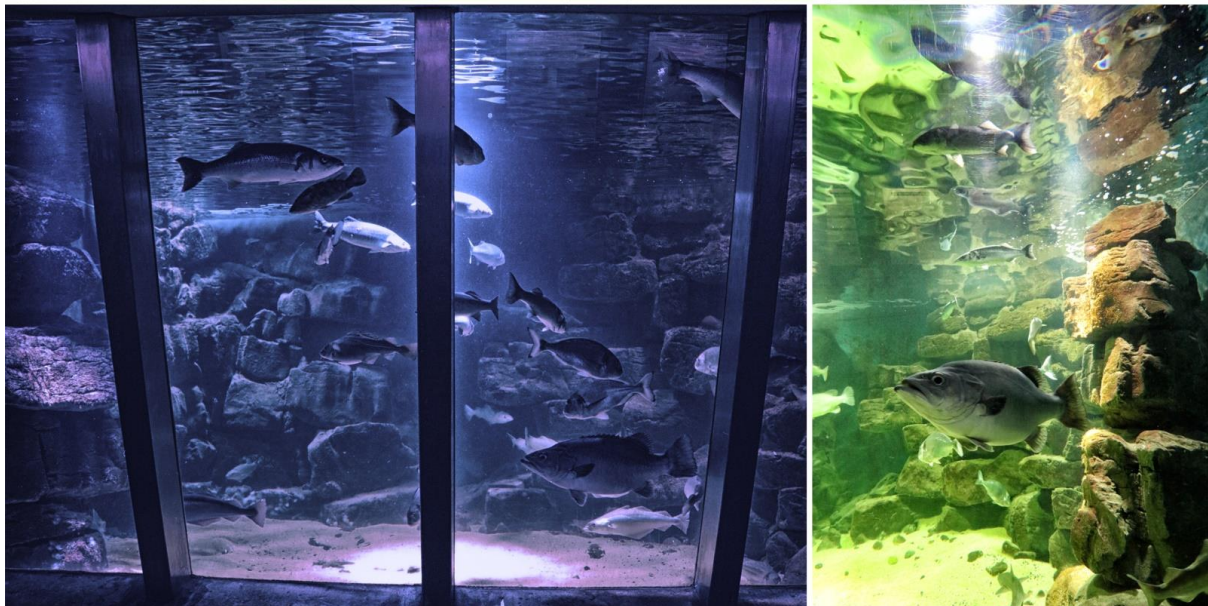
The Harbour, such as the Claddagh in Galway is as rich with marine life as anywhere else in Ireland. Swans and ducks live all year round in the Claddagh, both in the river and the coastline. Dozens of different species of fish such as Mullet, Whiting, Pipefish and Cod live around the Claddagh shores, Salmon, Sea Trout and Common Eels pass the Claddagh each year on their way to or from their home in the River Corrib.





## The Ocean Tank (this can also be seen from the first floor)

Our largest tank is the Ocean Tank, 4 metres deep and containing over 120 tonnes of sea water! It is home to some of our largest predatory fish, including our Bass, Pollack, Wreck Fish, Wrasse and small native Sharks.





## The Crawfish

Also known as the European Spiny Lobster! These can be found in the Eastern Atlantic Ocean living at depths of around 20-70 metres. The eggs develop while attached to the swimming legs of the female. A crawfish has walking legs and swimming legs. They only feed at night.



## The Kelp Tank

The Sea Kelp Tank mimics an underwater forest, and there are many fascinating secrets lurking in this plant that lives under the ocean waters. This fast-growing plant provides both

food and shelter to a large variety of marine organisms. We often blast a surge of water into this Tank to simulate waves. If you look carefully into this Tank you will see our Wrasse, these fish can change from Female to Male as they get older.





## The Octopus Tank

*The Octopus doesn't like camera flash, so please ensure it's turned off!*

The octopus can be hard to spot; they are great at hiding and can even fit inside small tubes.

Octopuses are considered the most intelligent of all invertebrates. Scientific studies are increasingly confirming that they are sentient creatures. As active predators they need to explore, understand and remember their environment and the behaviour of other animals. Studies have shown that octopuses learn easily, including learning by observation of another octopus. They are also clever problem solvers and are the first invertebrates to be seen using tools, such as using coconut shells to hide from potential predators, using rocks and jets of water in a way that could be classified as tool use!



*Welcome to the first floor*, we suggest you begin your journey by the Ocean tank!

## **Bearna Dugout Canoe**

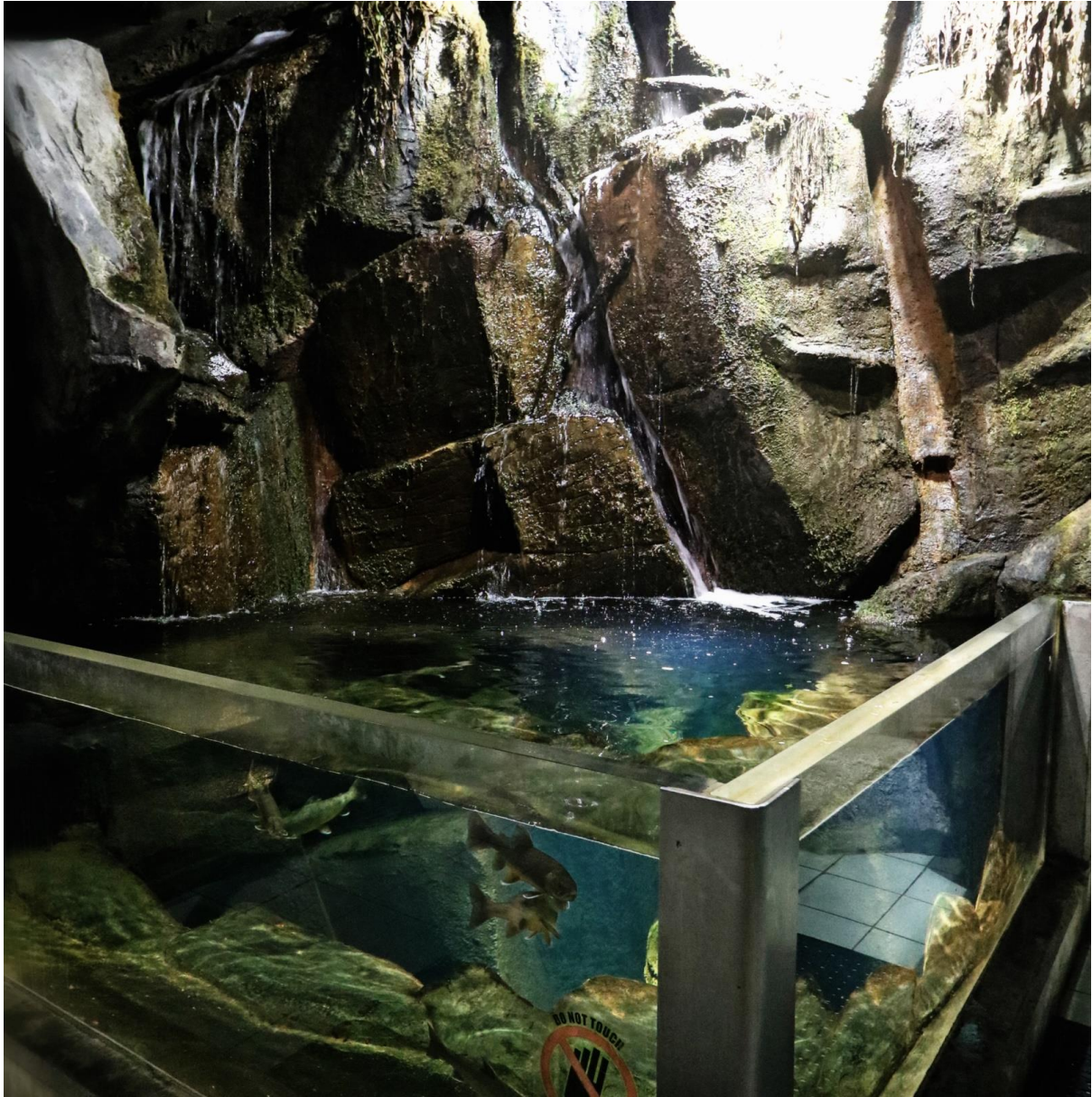
Our Bearna Dugout canoe, found locally is 5,500 years old and it is an important chapter in the long and unfolding story of interaction between Galway people and their landscape. If you look to your right you will see the Red Deer Antlers!





## The Waterfall

The waterfall is home to our Artic Charr, these fish are of the Salmonid Family and they have been in Ireland since the Ice Age. The males will begin to get red bellies, as they develop into Adults.





## The Weir Tank

The Weir Tank houses beautiful Brown Trout; a common native species found in the Corrib system. The Weir is our largest Fresh water tank, and is a replica of one of the Weirs on the River Corrib.



Fresh Water Fish feeding starts here!



## The Stream Tank-Mill Pond

In the Stream Tank we have a number of Carp (Mirror and King Species).

The fish found in Mill Ponds are generally slow moving coarse fish such as Carp, Roach and Bream. These are fish which spend their time rooting around plants and filtering through the mud at the bottom of the pond in search of small invertebrates to feed on; snails, worms, nymphs etc. Unless they share their pond with Pike, or very large Perch they are not really likely to be preyed upon, and so are able to swim casually around the breadth of their pond as they please. Even so, these fish are all instinctively shoaling fish.



## The Fin Whale

If you look above you, we have a Fin-Whale Skeleton. It is the second largest species of the whale family (the blue whale is the largest). It can grow up to 85 feet long.

Females are larger than the males by 5-10% and can weigh between 40 and 80 tons.





## Biodiversity Zone

Directly across from the stream or Carp tank you will find our Biodiversity area. We have a number of Tropical fish in this area. From left to right, we have African Cichlids, Dwarf Frogs, Piranhas and Tetras. In the centre tank we have an Mbuna Tetra fish display.





## The Canal Tank

The Canal Tank is home to our Pike, and these 'ambush predators' lie in wait for their prey. If you look into the Tank they are like statues, but if there were other fish or rats in the Tank, they would be eaten by these predators.





## The Hy-Brasil Galway Hooker (the Promised Land)

The first boat is the Galway Hooker. There are four “types” of these famous fishing and cargo boats.

“Bád Mór”, at 14m (45ft) long, is the largest. Next is “Leath Bhád” which is usually less than 10 metres (32 ft.) in length. The third biggest is the Hy-Brasil or “Gleoitheóg” which is what our boat is. Our Gleoitheóg is 7 metres (23 feet) long and sits, in perfect condition, on the first floor of the aquarium. The name Hy-Brasil comes from the mythological Island found off the west coast of Ireland. Apparently This Island appears every seven years! The smallest of the Hookers is the “Púcán”, which is usually around 6m (19 feet) long.





## The Audio Visual Room

The Audio Visual Room where we have wildlife films and stories playing throughout the day, have a pleasant break!





## The Nursery

The Nursery is home to our Skate and Ray eggs as well as our Dogfish/Shark eggs. If you look closely you will see tiny movements in the egg cases, these are the baby Dogfish moving around as they grow.



## **The Estuary Tank and Seabirds exhibit**

The Estuary Tank overlooks Galway Bay. It is home to a shoal of Mullet which can be fed by hand. One of the features of our Shoreline Display is our 4m (14 feet) high scale model of the famous Mutton Island Lighthouse. The display also highlights our wonderful Seabirds of Galway bird models, by the artist Helen Caird.



## **The Green Turtle Exhibit**

Green turtles are listed as an endangered species, and a subpopulation in the Mediterranean Sea is listed as critically endangered. Despite this, they are still killed for their meat and eggs.



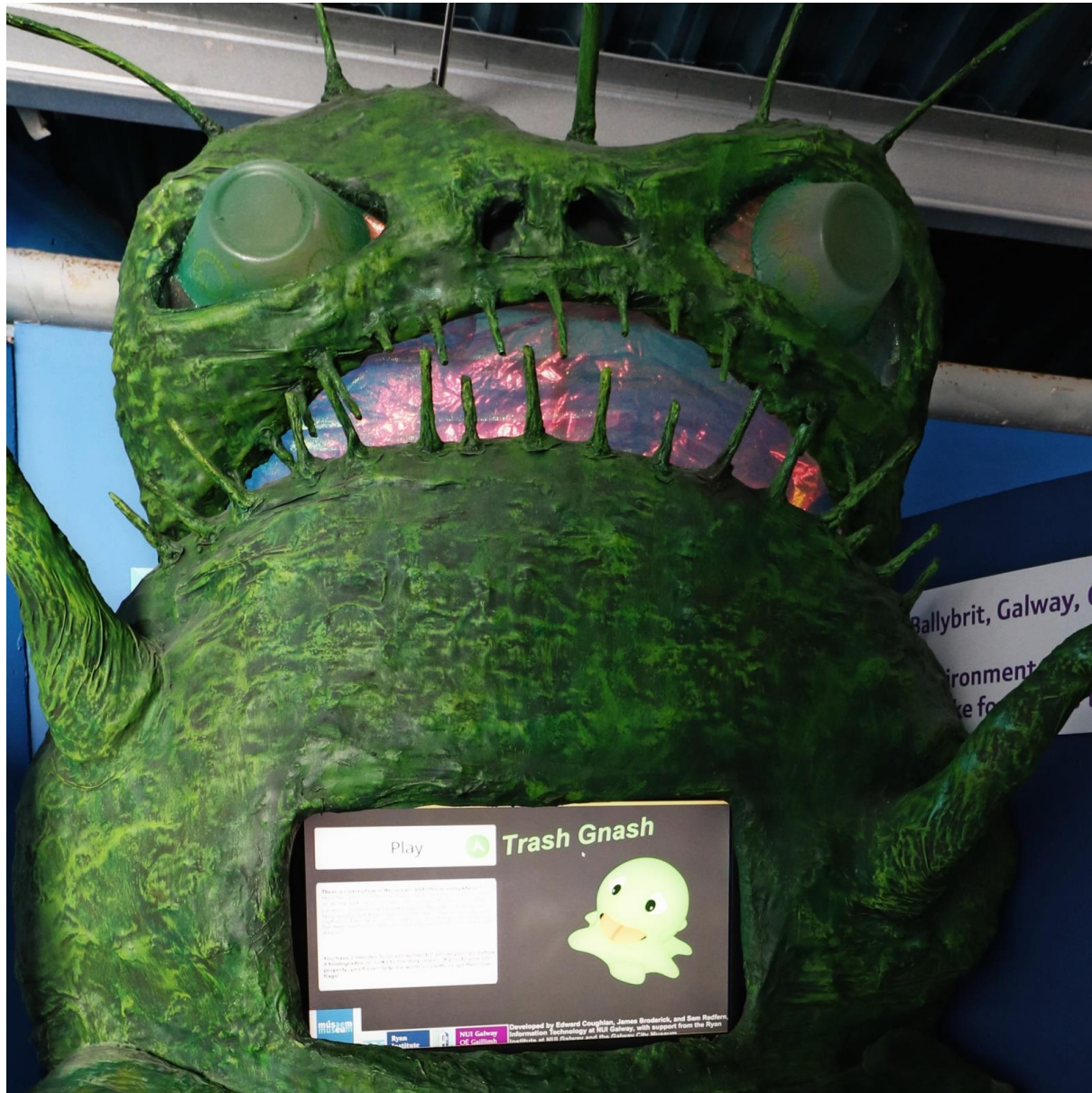
Their numbers are also reduced by boat propeller accidents, fishnet caused drowning, and the destruction of their nesting grounds by human encroachment.





## The Trash Gnash Monster –interactive game

Everyone is invited to play the game ‘Trash Gnasher’ which was donated by the Ryan Institute. People can take the “Trash Gnash” computer challenge to try their hand at cleaning up our oceans, best of luck!



## The Renewable Ocean Energy display

The ROE or Renewable Ocean Energy display was developed to show visitors how ‘energy’ can be harvested from ocean waves. Visitors are invited to turn the ‘large wheel’ and see the energy they create on a monitor.





## The Touch Pools-Tidal Pools

*Attention Parent and Guardians, Atlantaquaria staff guidance needed- as these are live animals, we ask all visitors to respect the Sea life in these Rock pools.*

Our three Touch Pools are in the shadow of our model of Mutton Island Lighthouse, and contain just about all the fish and invertebrates you could hope to find down on the sea shore.



Under the supervision of one of our expert aquarists, you can hold slow moving Starfish and secretive Hermit Crabs and search under the rocks and weed for Spider Crabs, Blennies and even Sea Scorpions! Everywhere you look you will be able to spot a new creature, where it has made its home in our cleverly crafted Touch Pool.

Touch Pool Tour starts here!

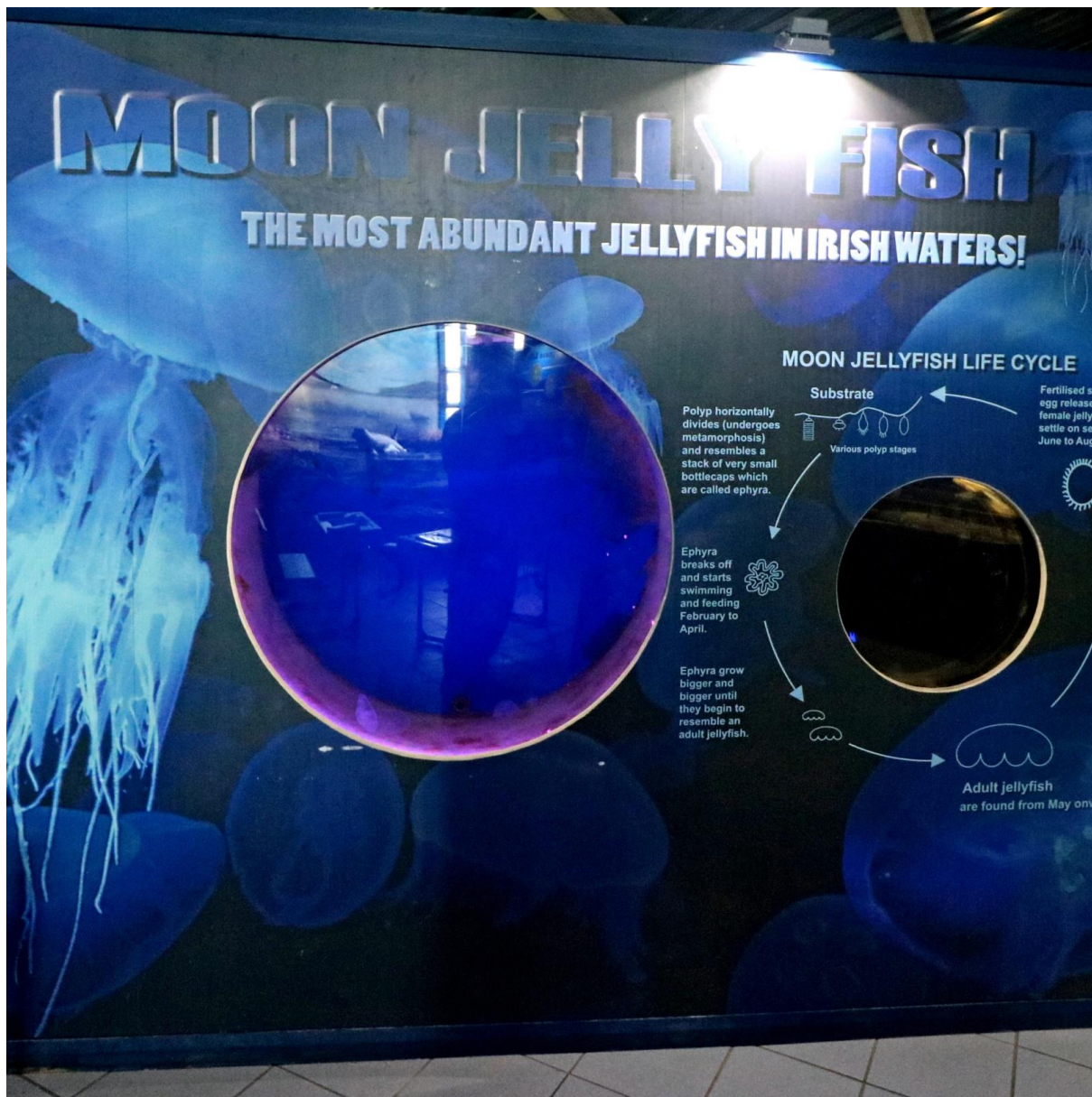


### **Moon Jellyfish Display**

The Moon Jellyfish are a fascinating sight to behold, the way they move through the water is mesmerising! It is hard to see these wonderful invertebrates. Jellies are found in water with temperatures ranging from 48° -66° F (but can with stand water temperatures between 21° - 88° F). These amazing invertebrates can even live in brackish water (a mixture of fresh and salt water); however, the bell will take on a flattened appearance when in areas of low salt



concentrations. Prey: The moon jelly is a carnivorous animal which preys on small planktons such as larval crabs, shrimps and fish eggs. Although movement is mostly dictated by the currents, a moon jelly can move into areas abundant with prey by 'pulsating' their bell.



## The Spiny Spider Crab

The Spiny Spider Crab is a Deepwater scavenger, a timid crab with a heavy armoured shell, long legs and three jointed claws (these claws can be used to place uneaten food on its back (or debris from the Sea for camouflage!)).

He can be held, but must be supervised by a member of staff.

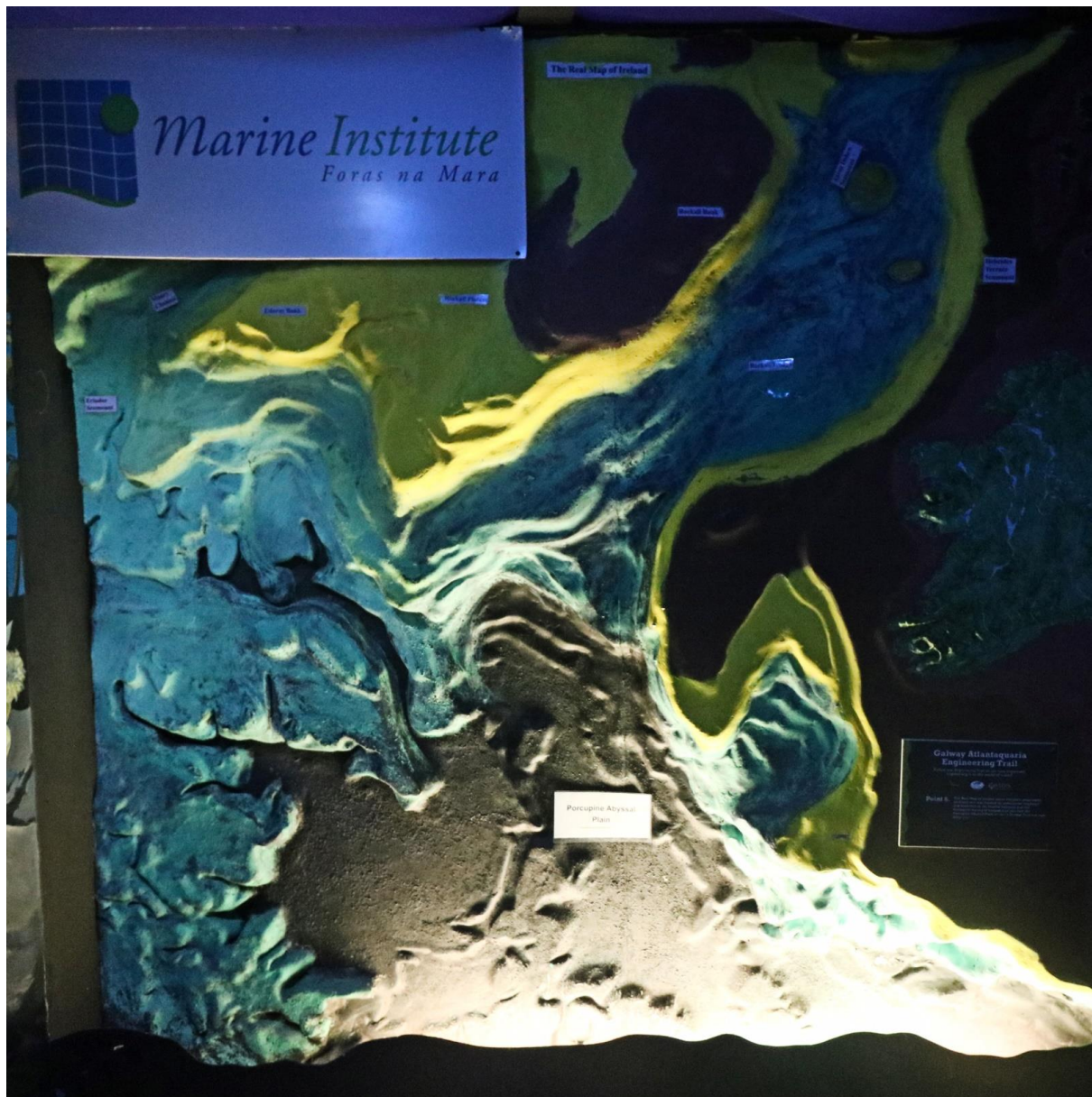




### **The Real Map of Ireland and Cold Water Coral display**

The real map of Ireland is a must see exhibit, people often walk by it without realising its significance. It is the sight of the largest underwater scoping exercise in the west of Ireland, and its secrets are only now being discussed. As you get deeper into the Atlantic many cures are being found and researched.





End of tour, we hop you enjoyed your visit please come back again.



**Contact us;**

**Galway Atlantaquaria,  
The Promenade,  
'Toft' park, Salthill,  
Galway, H91 T2FD**

**Call. 091 585 100**

**Email. [info@nationalaquarium.ie](mailto:info@nationalaquarium.ie)**

**Facebook: @GalwayAquarium**

**Twitter: GalwayAquarium**

**Instagram: galwayaquarium**

**[www.nationalaquarium.ie](http://www.nationalaquarium.ie)**