



June 19, 2024

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**New Touch Pool Focuses on East Coast Species**

**SIOUX FALLS:**

The Butterfly House & Aquarium (BHA) welcomes you to experience the aquatic wonders of America’s east coast – right here in Sioux Falls.

Eastern Shores is a new touch pool experience featuring diverse species like horseshoe crabs, sea stars, spider crabs, knobbed whelks, channeled whelks, purple urchins, sheepshead minnows, and killifish. Guests will have the opportunity to (gently) touch some of these animals, including the crab and whelk species under supervision from BHA staff.

**The grand opening for Eastern Shores is Thursday, June 20 at 10 am. Regular hours for the exhibit will be Thursday-Sunday from 10 am-1 pm.**

Eastern Shores has been a months-long renovation and retheming project by BHA staff – requiring a vast array of expertise, including exhibit design and décor, plumbing and water chemistry, and a deep understanding of aquatic animals and habitats.

The habitat shares the footprint of BHA’s former, decade-old Tidepool exhibit, but is rebuilt with accessibility and increased animal wellbeing in mind. Where it was once necessary to stand and step up to see the animals, the pool surface is now lower and accessible to guests of all ages and mobilities. For the animals, aquarists selected species that tend to coexist harmoniously. They also have more space to retreat, if they choose not to be touched.

“We are so excited that members of our community will get to see their local aquarium in a new way, meet some new animals, gain some new learning experiences, and build a stronger connection to marine life on the other side of the country while learning about how to preserve and protect these amazing places in the world,” said Aquarium & Conservatory Director Michelle Coley. “We want our community to know we are committed to providing opportunities for learning, exploration and connection – and that we are always working to strive for the best possible welfare for our animals.”

You can learn more about Eastern Shores and BHA at [ButterflyHouseAquarium.org](http://ButterflyHouseAquarium.org).