



Submitted photo

Catch sea creatures such as this octopus in Hatfield Marine Science Center's online Marine Science Day on Saturday.

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Normally, the event would be held live at Hatfield, but the coronavirus tsunami washed away those plans, according to Cinamon Moffett, research program manager at the Newport research and education institution.

"It has happened every year for many, many years, on the same weekend," Moffett said.

"Last year, we canceled it because COVID kind of took us off our game a little bit. And then this year we decided early on that we were going to switch it to a virtual event, just because we didn't want to lose another year."

The gulf between in-person and virtual events is perhaps not as wide as you'd think: The scope of Marine Science Day is ambitious, with five virtual "rooms" full of programs and activities, including the Main Stage, where researchers will be sharing their work on sharks, whales, sea stars and more.

Though the push to make Marine Science Day virtual began in the last few months, Moffett began paddling toward that goal early, enrolling in courses on how to put on a virtual conference just two weeks after last year's event was canceled.

The effort shows. Over in the Exhibit Hall, check out the dozens of interactive displays about marine mammals and fisheries, plus plankton, scientific

diving, seabirds and ocean technology. There's also the Kid Zone, with live animal interactions, lessons on how to draw like an octopus and information on careers in marine science. Another room is dedicated to virtual tours of the center's research and educational facilities, and, finally, there's a room devoted to seeing — and even sharing — art devoted to the event's theme, "The Beauty of Science." To attend or learn more, visit [hmsc.oregonstate.edu/marine-science-day](https://hmsc.oregonstate.edu/marine-science-day).

"It is a free event, so anybody can come. It is tailored to just about anyone," Moffett said, adding with a laugh, "That sounds weird, that it's tailored, but it is lifelong learners, it is K through 12 students, and it is our potential undergrads that are interested in what it means to go into marine science."

Moffett and other organizers expect Marine Science Day to hit those target audiences.

"This is a really asynchronous event, and in those five different rooms, there are events either on-your-own activities or prerecorded, or things you can download or engage with, or live events in each one of those different rooms, all happening at the same time."

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