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## **TWO BEACH PROGRAMS OFFER HANDS-ON EXPLORATION AND FUN THIS SUMMER**

*Tiptoe through the Tidepools and Explore the Shore provide oceans of learning about sea animals*



Tacoma, Wash. – Ever wonder what it's like to run a finger over the back of a prickly pink sea star? Or hold the tiniest of ocean crabs in a hand? Or stroll along the beach at low tide, learning about the animals there and helping catalog them for scientific research?

The Tacoma Nature Center and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium will show children, adults and families how to do all of those things this summer in two programs aimed at helping them learn more about Puget Sound's beaches and the creatures that live there.

The Nature Center's Tiptoe through the Tidepools events are scheduled May 7, June 5, July 5, and August 1 at Titlow Beach, 8425 Sixth Ave. The zoo's Explore the Shore programs are set for June 6, June 22, July 6, July 21, August 2, and August 18 at Owen Beach in Point Defiance Park.

All beach walks are timed to take best advantage of the low tides that reveal many of Puget Sound's most interesting shoreline creatures.

These programs are free and open to the public and reservations are not required. Bring sunscreen and wear shoes and clothing appropriate for walking on rough beach terrain.

Here's a rundown on the programs:

**Tiptoe through the Tidepools:** Family fun as Tacoma Nature Center naturalists help participants learn about life on the beach. There will be touch tanks and lots of opportunity to ponder the creatures that live on the shoreline.

- May 7, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- June 5, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

- July 5, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- Aug. 1, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

**Explore the Shore** (for ages 5 and up): Zoo naturalists accompany participants on low tide beach walks, where kids and adults will learn to identify tide pool animals and record their presence and location for scientific research. Participants will learn about the biological diversity of local beaches and better understand how to protect them.

Explore the Shore beach walks are designed to last about an hour and a half, though participants are welcome to stay and explore the beach for a longer time.

- June 6, meet at 11:45 a.m.
- June 22, meet at 12:15 p.m.
- July 6, meet at 12:15 p.m.
- July 21, meet at 11:45 a.m.
- Aug. 2, meet at 10:30 a.m.
- Aug. 18, meet at 10:45 a.m.

Both programs showcase the commitment of Metro Parks Tacoma, the Tacoma Nature Center and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium to provide residents with exercise, education and outdoor-based entertainment.

For more information about Tiptoe through the Tidepools, visit [www.metroparkstacoma.org](http://www.metroparkstacoma.org).

For more information about Explore the Shore, visit [www.pdza.org](http://www.pdza.org).