

Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of Natural History The Sant Ocean Hall Visitor Study

Prepared by
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The purpose of this study was to find out how visitors are **behaving in**, **reacting to**, and **learning from** the Sant Ocean Hall.

How data were collected

A multi-method approach was needed to answer the research questions; both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed:

- ◆ Timing and Tracking Observations (n = 88)
- ◆ Exit Interviews (n = 127)
- ◆ Focused studies (n = 406)

Recognition of Main Messages

The Ocean...

- ◆ is diverse (88%)
- ◆ is one big system (69%)
- ◆ has changed over time (68%)
- ◆ affects all life on planet (66%)
- ◆ remains unexplored (48%)
- ◆ and how it can be protected and conserved (41%)

“I never realized that...”

- ◆ Specific species (size, existence, biology)
- ◆ The ocean (how big, diverse, etc.)

“how deceiving size and scale of things are – things you thought were little are big and things you thought were big are microscopic.”

“the ocean is one big body of water.”

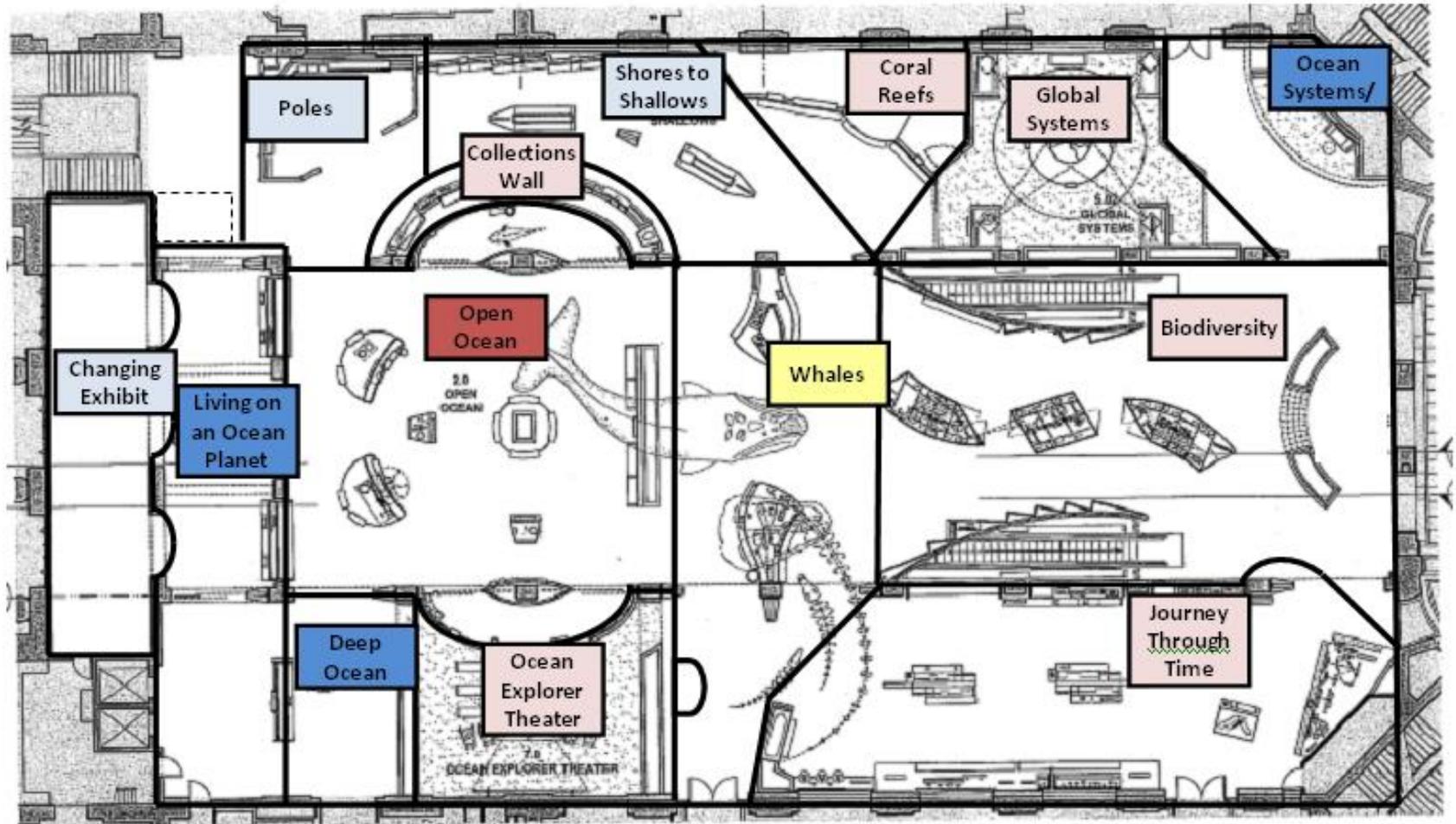
“It reminded me that...”

- ◆ Personal responsibility
- ◆ Personal connection
- ◆ The ocean (how big, diverse, etc.)

*“how important the ocean is,
how much we take it for granted.”*

*“we need to take better care of
our ocean.”*

What visitors did and where they spent their time



Low visitation and time spent

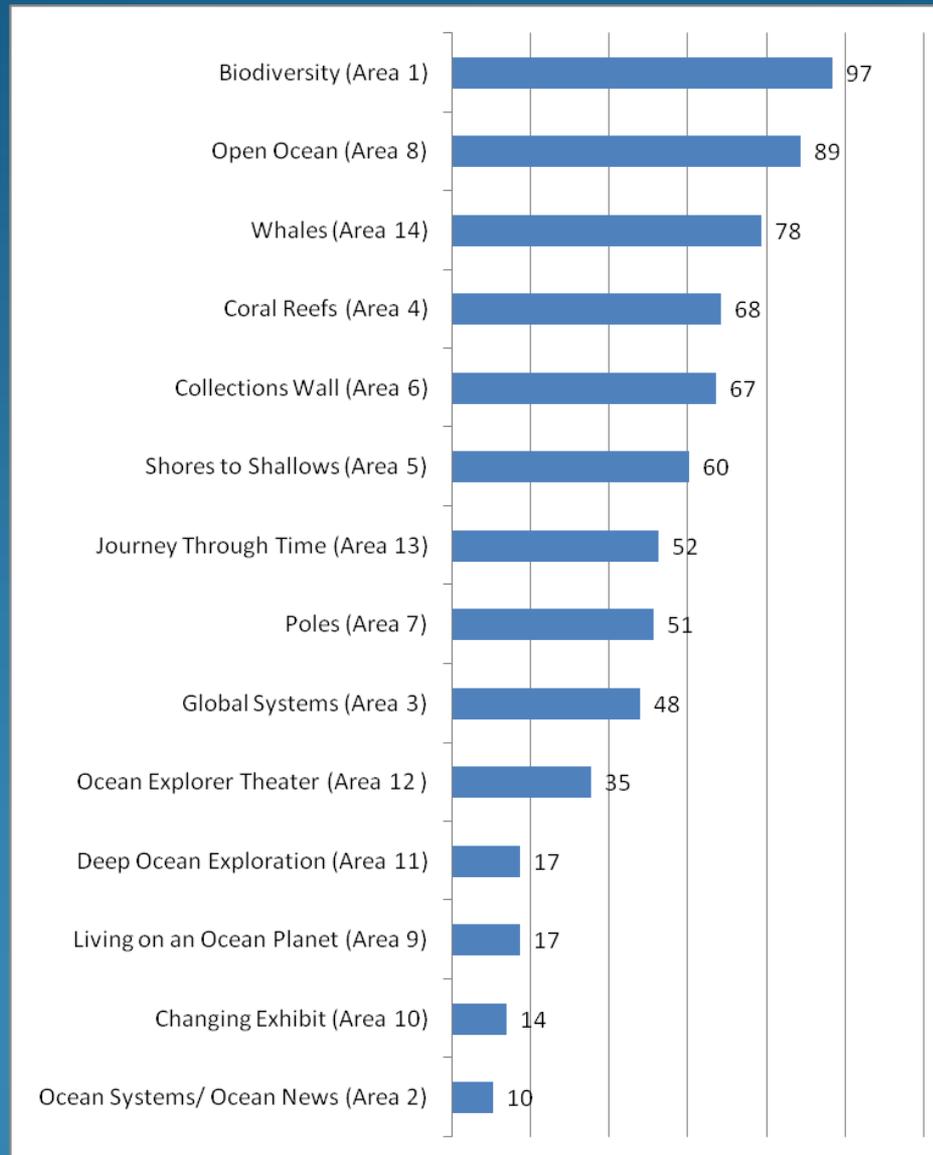
Low/moderate visitation and time spent

High visitation and little time spent

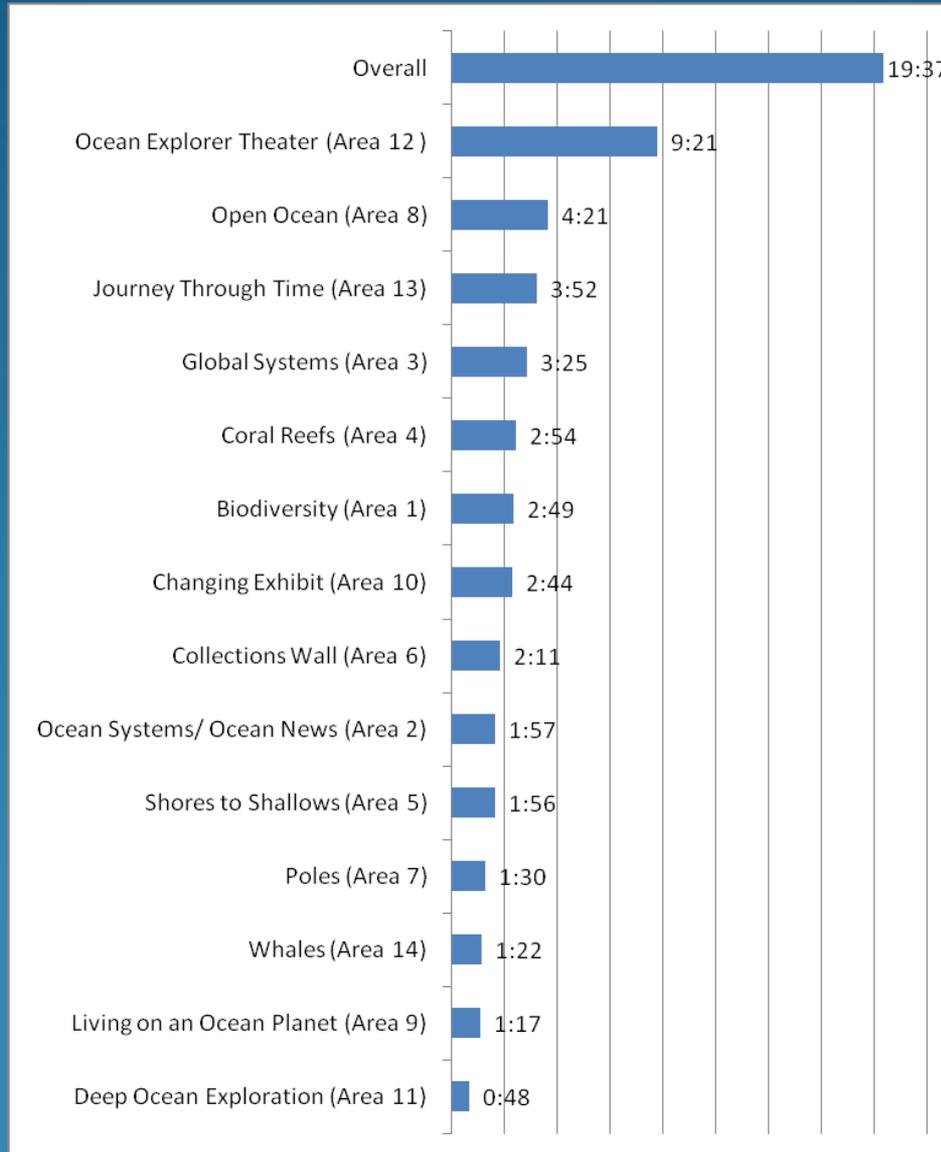
Moderate/high visitation and time spent

High visitation and time spent

Percentage who visited each area



Time spent in each area



Most enjoyable exhibits

- ◆ Coral reef aquarium
- ◆ Giant squid
- ◆ Specimens in jars
- ◆ Science on the Sphere
- ◆ Ocean Explorer Theater

Most common reasons included that they were unique, informative, beautiful and engaging.

Specific Behaviors, Whole Visit

- ◆ Conversations (93% of visitors)
- ◆ Pointing (82% of visitors)
- ◆ Watching a video (78% of visitors)
- ◆ Engaging with interactive (42% of visitors)
- ◆ Touching an object (38% of visitors)
- ◆ Talking to Navigator/docent (18% of visitors)

Conclusions

- ◆ Visitors found the Hall to be interesting, enjoyable and informative
- ◆ They entered the majority of areas, although some areas on the periphery were underutilized
- ◆ They remembered seeing many of the main messages, and could recall where they saw them
- ◆ Ocean stewardship messages not top-of-mind
- ◆ Some changes have already been made
- ◆ There are other opportunities to improve

Responses/Adjustments

- ◆ Conservation messages: Included conservation messaging in most recent Ocean Navigator training
- ◆ Ocean Today Kiosk: Working with NOAA to get listing of videos and changes to Kiosks to alert Ocean Navigators
 - ◆ Encouraging Navigators to send visitors to OTK for follow up information on their visit
- ◆ LOOP Gallery team is working on new design to entice visitors to the area and use interactives

Thank you

Questions:

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