

PRESS RELEASE



MEERESMUSEUM Stralsund

(Last updated: April 2017) The Meeresmuseum in Stralsund's old town has been housed since 1951 in the former Dominican monastery of St. Katharine and is thus the oldest site of the Stiftung Deutsches Meeresmuseum (Foundation of German Marine Museums). Before being used as a museum, Katharinenhalle served as an armory and a school, among other things. The monastery was founded in 1251, and is referenced in an inscription on the choir stalls of the former Dominican monastery in Roebel, which says "Sundensis 1251." In 1951, the Naturkundemuseum (Natural History Museum) that was founded by Otto Dibbelt moved into Katharinenhalle, which was completely refurbished from 1972 to 1974. During this process, the building's extraordinary mullions were built, resulting in three exhibit levels that enable the museum to install extensive exhibitions.

The ground floor, whose lighting is kept relatively low, contains some of the tropical aquariums, as well as exhibits about marine biology and oceanography. There's also a fascinating 200 million year old fossilized seabed and an original 1.4 meter long giant ammonite Pachydiscus. The ground floor is also devoted to the wondrous world of corals, via a nine meter high glass case that is probably the largest such case in any German museum and features a coral reef in 3D. The extensively and realistically restored reef pillars enable visitors to discover the complex ecosystem of coral reefs and all their various organisms and particularities. Plus every 20 minutes, visitors can experience the timeline of a coral reef via our sound and light installation.

What is for many observers the most magnificent space in the former St. Katharine monastery is located here: the former choir loft. The impressive skeleton of a finback "floats" beneath the vaulted ceiling; it measures 15 meters in length and weighs about 1000 kg. The skeleton is suspended from steel cables, which are practically invisible against the backdrop of the Gothic vaulted ceiling. Few visitors realize that the original treadwheel is located up above that the monks used to hoist heavy loads into their storage room.

The second floor is devoted to fisheries. This level of the museum also affords visitors a particularly good view of the historic of structure of the building. Along the Gothic columns, you can see that the exhibits' mullions are almost free standing, except for a handful of elements fastening the mullions to the walls. An authentic Strandboot (original fishing boat) is an impressive presence in the midst of the fisheries exhibit. If you look beyond the ship's rigged sail, your gaze is drawn to the magnificent Gothic vault above.

The third level, which is devoted to the theme of "Man and the Sea", contains what are probably the museum's most beautiful exhibits and specimens, all of which were made in the museum's own workshops. While there, you should also look up toward the ceiling, particularly when you come to the turtle display case. The next stop on the tour is the deep sea room, where you'll find the deep sea expedition exhibit featuring models of lantern fish, authentic deep sea fish specimens, and a three-times life-size replica of Vampire Hell – the only exhibit of its kind in Germany.

One museum – four locations:

MEERESMUSEUM

Katharinenberg 14–20
18439 Stralsund
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OZEANEUM

Hafenstraße 11
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Tel.: +49 3831 2650-610
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NAUTINEUM

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NATUREUM

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In April 2017, two rooms devoted to “Uses of the sea – from the deep sea to the polar regions” opened. These rooms feature rarely exhibited authentic specimens and fascinating models, including of a black smoker and a Beluga whale with calf. This exhibit was supported by Germany’s Ministry of Education and Research in connection with a program known as Science Years 2016*17 Seas and Oceans.

From the deep sea room, proceed to the geology room and its educational exhibits. Then go past the glass enclosed classroom to the basement aquarium. Here you’ll find denizens of the Mediterranean such as morays crayfish, wrasse, perches and rays, as well as Mediterranean tropical fish such as colorful coral fish, seahorses, and anemonefish also known as “Nemos”. Of particular interest is the 50,000 liter shark tank containing leopard sharks, butterfly fish, and triggerfish.

Not to be missed is the 350,000 liter aquarium, where three different species of sea turtles live. This massive MEERESMUSEUM tank, with its 25 square meter glass front, is an ideal place to watch the turtles being fed, and observe their behavior during their weekly dip in the water.

By: Deutsches Meeresmuseum

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