



PRESS RELEASE

Ocean Museum Germany

(Version: August 2026) In 1951, the rather small collection of Stralsund's Natural History Museum took residence in the premises of St. Catherine's monastery. The institution soon became an internationally renowned museum for oceanography and GDR fishery. With the travelling exhibition Sea and Museum, the most visited museum in East Germany (1981) gained attention beyond the country's borders – including in West Germany and Denmark.

Following reunification, the institution was transformed into a foundation in 1994 and, four years later, renamed Deutsches Meeresmuseum (Ocean Museum Germany). Its success has long rested on the synergy of marine research and the communication of knowledge to a wide audience. Today, the Ocean Museum Germany presents scientific exhibitions and aquaria in four locations as well as through its online channels. Recognised in the Federal Government's Blue Book as one of the cultural beacons of eastern Germany, it remains one of very few museums worldwide to dedicate solely and in such a comprehensive manner to the study and public presentation of the marine environment.

From the original MEERESMUSEUM located in Stralsund's historic old town, two further locations were established in the 1990s. The NATUREUM, located in the Western Pomerania Lagoon Area National Park at Darßer Ort, has showcased the region's landscapes and wildlife since 1991. The NAUTINEUM followed in 1999 on the island of Dänholm between Stralsund and Rügen, offering exhibitions on fisheries, marine research, hydrography and sea routes. Today this location serves exclusively as a collections centre, housing a laboratory for marine animal research and the museum's specialist preparation workshop.

A milestone came in 2008 with the opening of the state-of-the-art OZEANEUM on Stralsund's harbour island. Its exhibitions include the largest Baltic Sea display in Europe, alongside two extensive aquarium tours featuring the underwater worlds of the northern seas. In 2009, the Ocean Museum Germany welcomed more than 1.2 million visitors, ranking third among Germany's most visited museums. The following year, the OZEANEUM received the prestigious title of European Museum of the Year 2010.

One museum – four locations:

MEERESMUSEUM

Katharinenberg 14–20
18439 Stralsund
Tel.: +49 3831 2650-210
Fax: +49 3831 2650-209

OZEANEUM

Harald-Lastovka-Platz
(formerly Hafenstraße 11)
18439 Stralsund
Tel.: +49 3831 2650-610
Fax: +49 3831 2650-609

NATUREUM

Darßer Ort 1–3
18375 Born
Tel.: +49 38233 304
Fax: +49 38233 70448

NAUTINEUM

Kleiner Dänholm
18439 Stralsund
Tel.: +49 3831 2650-355

[deutsches-meeresmuseum.de/en](https://www.deutsches-meeresmuseum.de/en)

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Since 2020, the MEERESMUSEUM has undergone a comprehensive modernisation to bring its exhibitions and aquaria up to contemporary standards, ensuring full accessibility, energy efficiency and modern appeal. The museum reopened to visitors on 17 July 2024 with a new exhibition trail exploring the origins of life in the sea, the diversity of marine species, the complex interplay between humans and the oceans, and strategies for sustainable fisheries. On 5 May 2025, the new aquarium tour – comprising 31 tanks – was inaugurated, inviting guests to discover the habitats of tropical seas. Together, the MEERESMUSEUM and the OZEANEUM now provide a rich and complementary programme dedicated to the world's oceans.

In addition to exhibitions and aquaria, the museum's core responsibilities include collecting, conserving and conducting research. Curators and scientific staff work continuously on current projects, collections and object preservation. The museum's collection of skeletons documents native small whales and rare visitors in the Baltic Sea, while thousands of preserved fish, crustaceans, birds and molluscs serve as an essential foundation for research.

Until 1989, contributions to the collections primarily stemmed from the crews of the GDR's fishing and merchant fleets. Two collecting expeditions to the Red Sea in 1976 and 1979 alone yielded more than 6,000 samples, enabling the MEERESMUSEUM to present a unique reconstruction of a tropical coral reef. In recent decades, scientific expeditions have taken researchers to the Mediterranean Sea, Taiwan, Sudan, the Maldives, Antarctica and the deep-sea coral habitats off the Norwegian coast.

Since 1980, the Ocean Museum Germany has systematically recorded strandings of marine mammals, particularly harbour porpoises and gray seals, along the German Baltic Sea coast. These data provide invaluable insights into the distribution of marine mammals. In addition, reported sightings are documented, and the museum has taken a leading role in developing and deploying acoustic monitoring systems to track porpoises in the Baltic Sea. Together, these methods deliver essential baseline data for the protection of the region's endangered animals.

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The museum's long experience and commitment to scientifically accurate specimens underpin the creation of unique exhibits. Public engagement, rooted in research, is at the heart of its mission – extending far beyond exhibitions and aquaria to panel discussions, collaborations, and events for families, schools and adults. The Ocean Museum Germany is also active in numerous professional bodies, including the German Marine Research Consortium (KDM), the German Marine Research Alliance (DAM), the European Cetacean Society (ECS), the European Union of Aquarium Curators (EUAC), the German Museums Association and the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

Unlike most museums in Germany, the Ocean Museum Germany generates more than 80% of its funding independently. Support comes from the Hanseatic City of Stralsund, the federal state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, and the German Federal Government. The museum's founders are the Hanseatic City of Stralsund and the Friends of the Ocean Museum Germany Association (Förderverein Deutsches Meeresmuseum e. V. established in 1991).

For more information: www.deutsches-meeresmuseum.de/en

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