



Ft . Johnson Complex– James Island

Directions:

217 Ft. Johnson Rd. Charleston, SC 29422

[Google Map](#)

Each program lasts about 1 hr.

Discovery Vessel Program (Must be 10 years old+)

35 passenger capacity

Join us as we take an adventure out on our Education Vessel “Discovery” to collect water quality data and sample marine organisms that are collected using a trawl net during the program. We provide a hands on experience so students will get an up close look into each organisms’ form and function while we identify them along the way. Students learn about local conservation topics and benefits of the estuary while developing critical science investigation skills.

Salt Marsh Field Study (Grades K-12)

Come along on a muddy trek through the marsh to explore its importance and biodiversity. Students will use quadrats to replicate current research sampling methods while practicing species identification and data collection. Students will learn about adaptations of observed wildlife as well as how humans impact the salt marsh habitat.

***We advise NOT pairing this program with our “Marine Debris” program as similar topics will be covered and both explore the salt marsh**

Fish Dissection (Grades 5-12)

This lab includes a study of the adaptations of a common SC fish species. Students will learn about current research being done by fisheries scientists, including how to age a fish using its ear bones! Then we’ll dive into a dissection, examining the external and internal anatomy of bony fish. Join DNR staff as we discuss why we study and work to protect several important fish species.

Squid Dissection (Grades 5-12)

Did you know that oysters and squid are related? In this lab students will have the opportunity to examine connections between squid and some of their close marine relatives. Through a hands-on dissection, students will investigate some of the adaptations, defense mechanisms, and reproductive strategies of squid that have made them a successful species in waters around the world.



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Horseshoe Crabs and Shorebirds (Grades K-12)

Have you ever found horseshoe crabs lying on the beach? Or watched shorebirds shuffle along the waves? SCDNR Biologists spend their days (and nights) scouring our beaches looking for these amazing animals. Practice your investigation skills to learn how scientists study these species, and see how they are related to each other and us!

Marine Debris (Grades 5-12)

Marine debris is a growing global concern. But where does it come from, how does it get there, and why do we care? Through an assortment of estuary-based outdoor lessons and group activities, students will learn where marine debris originates, how it moves, how it affects our marine ecosystem, and prevention techniques. Be sure to wear clothes/shoes that can get muddy as this program is followed by a marsh clean up where we will explore how marine debris has an impact on our own backyard!

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Oyster Reef Community (Grades 5-12)

South Carolina oyster reefs provide essential habitat and food for many species living in the estuary. In this lesson, students will first learn the ins and outs of these astonishing bivalves and the importance of oyster reef communities along our coast. Next, we'll comb through reef samples to collect, organize and identify the many organisms living within the crevasses of oyster shells.

Planet Plankton (Grades 5-12)

Did you know that phytoplankton is responsible for producing more than 60% of the oxygen in the air we breathe? In this activity, students will collect, observe, and identify phytoplankton and zooplankton using microscopes and learn of their importance to not only estuarine and ocean life, but all life on Earth!

Sea Turtle Ecology (Grades K-12)

Come learn about our state reptile! In this lesson, students will become a sea turtle biologist, learning about sea turtle ecology, genetic tagging, nesting, and strandings. An introduction to sea turtles will be followed by activities including monitoring a mock nest while calculating the success rate and investigating a stranded sea turtle scenario. We will then dive into determining how human and natural threats to sea turtle survival can be mitigated.



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How to Read a Fish (Grades K-5)

Cast your fishing line and interest this way as we explore the exciting world of fish. Join us as we examine their body shape and behaviors that make them unique. Discover the ancient Asian method of documenting fish size, Gyotaku! We will use fish or fish stamps to make colorful prints of estuarine fish that each student gets to take home with them!

Fisheries Management (Grades 5-12)

Students will learn about how decisions are made in regard to local fish species, and work to develop a fishery management plan. To understand how to create a more sustainable fishery, our scientists' work helps us understand the population dynamics of this valuable resource and the way in which the fishery functions. This is the perfect program to inspire students to brainstorm ideas for protecting the fisheries we all depend on.

All About Sharks (Grades 5-12)

Come learn about the ways in which our DNR Biologists study, track, and protect sharks! We will explore the paths of these apex predators and discuss why they are an essential part of our estuarine and ocean ecosystems. Students will also examine fossilized teeth to determine identifying characteristics between shark species!