

NYSG Resumes Marine Camp Classes After COVID Hiatus

Summer is the ideal time to explore marine and coastal wildlife along New York's coast. However, students in low income and minority communities with less disposable income are particularly disadvantaged, and they seldom visit public parks.

Beginning in 2016, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) spearheaded a strategic partnership by organizing a summer camp to engage students from underserved communities in marine biology classes. Youth service organizations use this program to plan educational field trips in a fun, summer vacation setting. In 2022, NYSG and partners resumed regular programming by scheduling eight marine camp classes.

This cycle enabled 250 students from seven organizations to return to the classroom and the field at the Jones Beach Energy & Nature Center. These numbers included students from two organizations from Glen Cove and West Babylon who attended marine camp for the first time. As in previous years, all participants qualified for field trip grants under the New York State Parks Connect Kids Program, providing approximately \$3,500 in transportation cost.

The 2022 marine camp interactive lesson plans involved practicing seining to identify marine wildlife, nature trail hikes, Piping Plover conservation, and on-site interpretive displays describing coastal wildlife and green energy. Exciting and memorable moments from the 2022 summer camp included catching juvenile Northern Kingfish, which is very rare, and meeting a non-venomous Eastern Hognose snake.

Under NYSG's novel marine camp program, youth service organizations are able to bring their students on fun and educational field trips during the summer break at a modest cost.

Partners/Co-funders:

- Cornell Cooperative Extension Nassau County
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
- Jones Beach Energy & Nature Center



Catching Northern Kingfish was a highlight for NYSG Marine Camp participants in the summer of 2022.

Photo: Marissa DeBonis/NYS Parks

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development in New York.

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.
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