

Summer Science Fun with the Seashore Life Campers

What do you get when you combine shells, snails, and very sandy children? A great day at the Rachel Carson Reserve with the Seashore Life campers! On a morning visit to the Reserve, campers observed hermit crabs, mud snails, and even tasted some salty marsh grasses during a nature hike from Taylor's Creek to Bird Shoal.

The Seashore Life program is part of the Summer Science School administered by the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort. Through an educational partnership with the North Carolina Coastal Reserve, campers in the Seashore Life program are able to explore the Rachel Carson Reserve, and use the N.C. Coastal Reserve's classroom facility for laboratory activities and craft projects. The camp program focuses on the many unique adaptations of plants and animals found in estuary and coastal ecosystems.



Campers & staff at the Rachel Carson Reserve in Beaufort, NC.



A camper investigates periwinkle snails.

After meeting at the N.C. Maritime Museum, N.C. Coastal Reserve Education Coordinator Lori Davis led the campers through introductions and a reading of the children's book [A Day in the Salt Marsh](#) by Kevin Kurtz. The book's rhyming account of changing tides, predator-prey interactions, and salt-tolerant adaptations got everyone excited to get learn more during their nature hike around the Rachel Carson Reserve. Once they arrived at the Reserve, Ms. Davis stopped to show campers unique estuarine species such as hermit crabs, plume worms, mud snails, black needlerush, salt marsh cordgrass, and periwinkle snails. Campers

got to handle or observe each new animal, and brave campers also tasted pickleweed and sea lettuce plants. The hike continued through the maritime scrub found at the interior of the Reserve, until campers finally reached the beach at Bird Shoal, where they combed the beach for shells and cooled off near the water's edge.

Campers returning to the N.C. Maritime Museum in the afternoon were understandably excited by all the new creatures they encountered on their journey around the Rachel Carson Reserve. While sweaty and sandy campers waged friendly debates about whether skate egg cases or scallop shells were the most exciting discovery of the day, everyone agreed that the N.C.



Getting creative at Bird Shoal!

Coastal Reserve has something for everyone interested in coastal creatures!