

A Special Day for Homeschool Students at the N.C. Aquarium

Surrounded by stingrays, sea turtles, and sea bass, homeschool students from North Carolina and beyond were immersed in marine biodiversity during the annual “Science and You!” homeschool day event at the North Carolina Aquarium in Pine Knoll Shores. The event brings local scientists from institutions such as the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s Institute for Marine Sciences, and the North Carolina Coastal Reserve to share their research and educational activities with the next generation of coastal scientists and advocates.

The N.C. Coastal Reserve display featured several educational games for students of all ages. The “Estuary Matching Game” teaches participants about [mollusks](#) and [echinoderms](#) found in North Carolina by matching shells, egg cases, and [exoskeletons](#) to the proper estuarine animal. Students also could play the “Marsh



Homeschool students check out the “Marsh Mystery Box”



The “Estuary Matching Game” teaches students about estuary inhabitants

Mystery Box” game, which surprises students with interesting examples of marsh inhabitants and explains why marshes are important habitats for many coastal animals. For parents of homeschooled children, the N.C. Coastal Reserve reviewed the lesson plans and curriculum available on the Reserve’s Education website. Lesson plans for grades K-12 meet the N.C. Standard Course of Study.

In addition to learning about estuaries with the N.C. Coastal Reserve, homeschool students had the

opportunity to participate in behind-the-scenes tours of the Aquarium, talk with scuba divers during live underwater presentations, and view plankton under a microscope in the Aquarium classroom. At the end of the day, students and parents left the Aquarium with new knowledge, ideas, and appreciation for the marine and estuarine environment that makes North Carolina so unique.