

Summer Fun at Masonboro Island Reserve

Ever wonder why turtles nest on Masonboro Island? Or why some plants grow near the beach and others grow closer to the shallow creeks? This summer, staff and volunteers from the North Carolina Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve will be available to answer all of your coastal questions during outreach events at the Masonboro Island Reserve!

Saturday, July 12 marked the first outreach booth event of the summer. Staff set up a tent near “Third Beach” for an afternoon and interacted with visitors to the Masonboro Island Reserve, answering questions about Reserve programs and providing information about the plants and animals found in estuaries. For outreach events like this, Education Specialist Marie Davis prepares activities such as scavenger hunts and seashell and estuarine creature matching games that are fun for all ages. Visitors can even bring home stickers or a pledge magnet to remind them why estuaries are cool!

During the outreach event, the trail leading from the Third Beach access point along the Intracoastal Waterway to the beach side of the Reserve becomes an opportunity for an educational stroll, with signs highlighting the importance of various habitats along the way. Marshes, dunes, sandy beaches, and dredge spoil islands all play unique roles on Masonboro Island, and observing the habitat succession along the trail can help visitors understand the environmental forces that shape habitat distribution at the Reserve.

Outreach programs at the Masonboro Island Reserve will continue throughout the summer season. In addition to the outreach tent, Davis also has themed programs focusing on turtles, coastal wetlands, and barrier island flora & fauna planned for visitors to the Masonboro Island Reserve. The summer outreach programs are free and open to the public, and the full program [schedule](#) is available on the Reserve’s website. Although boat transportation is not provided to the Masonboro Island Reserve, ferry services departing from Wrightsville Beach provide reliable transportation to the Reserve. The Reserve’s dedicated education team hopes to see you and your family exploring the Masonboro Island Reserve this summer!



Reserve staff and volunteers at the outreach tent at the Masonboro Island Reserve

For more information about public education programs in the Wilmington area, including free outreach programs in Wrightsville Beach, click [here](#).