

# Young Estuarine Explorers Learn All About Hermit Crabs

“If you were a hermit crab, how would you decorate your shell?” The group of very young coastal enthusiasts attending Preschool Storytime briefly pondered this important question, and then unleashed their artistic talents to create their very own hermit crab shells decorated with marine life stickers and crayons.

Hermit crabs were the critter of the day for this month’s North Carolina Coastal Reserve Preschool Storytime, with stories, crafts, and games all focused on this cute crustacean. N.C. Coastal Reserve Education Coordinator Lori Davis led reading activities using Eric Karl’s [A House for Hermit Crab](#) and Katie Boyce’s [Hector the Hermit Crab](#). The first book highlighted generosity and sharing when a large hermit crab gives his carefully decorated shell home to a smaller crab. The story of Hector focuses on a shy hermit crab who figuratively “comes out of his shell” when a flower attached to his shell becomes a conversation starter among neighboring ocean animals. During the readings, attendees learned the names and shapes of a variety of marine life, and investigated why hermit crabs have to continuously find new shells to accommodate their growing bodies.



Following storytime, the intrepid preschoolers came face-to-face with their stories’ subjects, as Ms. Davis placed a tiny hermit crab in each student’s hand. Watching the hermit crabs emerge from their shells elicited squeals of delight, and everyone enjoyed using magnifying glasses to examine the crabs’ body structure. Once the hermit crabs were safely stowed in the classroom aquarium, attendees were able to decorate their own hermit crab shells using stickers and crayons. Each preschooler also colored their own hermit crab t-shirts with fabric markers to keep as a souvenir. The morning concluded with delicious popsicles and a fun ball-toss game with a crab-shaped beach ball where each student shared a fun fact they learned about hermit crabs.



The N.C. Coastal Reserve is committed to providing quality educational

experiences for a variety of age groups to increase awareness and understanding of the importance of estuarine systems. Teaching young people about the fascinating creatures found in North Carolina’s estuaries can inspire curiosity and respect for estuaries and the ecosystem services they provide for coastal communities. Hopefully these young explorers will continue learning about estuaries with the N.C. Coastal Reserve!



To learn more about [Preschool Storytime](#) and [Summer Science School](#), please contact N.C. Coastal Reserve Education Coordinator [Lori Davis](#) at 252-838-0883.