

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SCHOOL FIELD WALKS & CRUISES

1. What makes Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary a good place to take a school group?

Our sanctuary encompasses several different rare habitats. The pine forest, field, heathland, fresh water pond, salt marsh, and tidal flats are all a relatively short walk from our brand new LEED certified green nature center. Our naturalists are experts who help groups experience, hands-on, the habitats and the organisms they support.

2. What programs would you recommend?

Our most popular programs are our Salt Marsh and Tidal Flats Walks, Marine Life Cruises, and seasonal Turtle Tracking.

3. Do you have any pre & post trip information you can send?

Yes! Once you register for a program you will receive a packet that includes key terms and concepts, pre-trip activity suggestions, common species seen, and fact sheets depending on which program you sign up for. After your visit with us you will receive a list of post-trip activity suggestions.

4. Are your trails wheelchair accessible? Is the boat for the Marine Life Cruise wheelchair accessible?

Yes! We have a newly completed all-persons trail and wheelchairs are welcome. We are also able to make accommodations to people in wheelchairs in order to get them onboard our boat, the *Naviator*.

5. What should we wear on our program?

For hikes and walks on the sanctuary comfortable clothes and shoes are a must. Keep in mind that if you are walking to the marsh or tidal flats, rubber boots, tevas, keenes, or any other water shoe may be a good idea. If your group is joining us onboard the *Naviator*, please remember that it can be cooler and windier out on the water. Please encourage your students not to wear their very best clothing, a little dirt is a part of the experience!

6. Do you have any other types of programs for school groups?

We have a variety of other programs that we can offer your group such as Freshwater Ponding, Dune Hikes, Owl Prowls, Night Prowls, Sea Turtle Stranding programs, Green Building tours, day or evening presentations (on or off site), and much more. We offer many in-school programs and labs and are also happy to customize a program to meet your specific needs and goals.

SPECIFIC PROGRAM QUESTIONS

Salt Marsh Tidal Flats Walk

7. What will we see and do during this program?

This walk allows your group to follow a path past a fresh water pond out to the salt marsh where they will set minnow traps to discover what kinds of fish the various birds are

feeding on. Continuing on to a marsh creek the group will use dip nets to collect shrimp, fish, crabs, and maybe even an eel as they learn the significance of the marsh as a nursery and the importance of peat. The group will continue on to the tidal flats, checking out the fiddler crabs along the way. Here they will explore a variety of different animals and animal signs (crabs, shellfish, worms, birds, etc), learning how these animals have adapted for survival in such a changing environment. This walk is 1.5 hours for salt marsh only and 2 hours for both salt marsh and tidal flats.

8. What ages is this program appropriate for?

We are able to tailor this program to any age group from pre-school to college.

9. What Massachusetts State Standards will be covered?

Life Science	Earth and Space Science	Technology and Engineering	History and Geography
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification of Organisms • Systems in Living Things • Reproduction and Heredity • Evolution and Biodiversity • Living Things and their Environment • Energy and Living Things • Changes in Ecosystems Over Time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat Transfer in the Earth System • Earth's History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials, Tools, and Machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use geographic terms correctly. (6th grade) • Distinguish intended from unintended consequences. (8th grade) • Distinguish historical fact from opinion. (8th grade)

Marine Life Cruise

10. What will we see and do during this program?

The Marine Life Cruise is a terrific way for students to closely examine and even touch organisms found in the Cape Cod Bay. We'll cruise aboard the *Naviator*, a commercial fishing vessel, out of Wellfleet Harbor into Cape Cod Bay. Naturalists will use an otter trawl net and a bay scallop drag that are used in commercial fishing, a plankton tow, and a fish trap to bring up organisms such as spider crabs, flounder, oyster drills, scallops, horseshoe crabs, skates, and squid. Depending on the time of year, participants may even have an opportunity to observe gray seals hauled out on the beaches around Wellfleet Harbor. Each cruise is 2½ hours long (1½ hours if we exclude the otter trawl) and is limited to 45 participants (Coast Guard regulation).

11. What ages is this program appropriate for?

The Marine Life Cruise is geared towards middle and high school classes, although an advanced elementary group may be considered.

12. What Massachusetts State Standards will be covered?

Life Science	Earth and Space Science	Technology and Engineering	History and Geography
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification of Organisms • Systems in Living Things • Reproduction and Heredity • Evolution and Biodiversity • Living Things and their Environment • Energy and Living Things • Changes in Ecosystems Over Time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat Transfer in the Earth System • Earth's History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials, Tools, and Machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use map and globe skills (6th grade) • Interpret geographic information from a graph or chart (6th grade) • Use geographic terms correctly. (6th grade) • Distinguish intended from unintended consequences. (8th grade) • Distinguish historical fact from opinion. (8th grade)

13. What kind of boat is used for the Marine Life Cruise?

A 55-foot commercial fishing vessel.

14. What experience does the captain have?

Our Captain Rick Merrill has been the captain of the *Naviator* in Wellfleet Harbor for over 20 years, and he has been leading Marine Life Cruises for Mass Audubon for nearly as long. In addition he runs rod and reel fishing charters and is a licensed commercial shellfisherman. He has extensive familiarity with the waters surrounding the town of Wellfleet.

15. Will students be required to wear PFDs (lifejackets)?

No. We have PFDs available for everyone onboard, however you are not required to wear them unless the Captain instructs you otherwise.

Turtle Tracking

16. What will we see and do during this program?

In this seasonal program, offered Spring through early Fall, your group will participate in on-going research on the eastern box turtle, a state species of special concern. Students will learn about its natural history, use radio telemetry equipment, and discuss the benefits of research.

17. What ages is this program appropriate for?

This program is geared towards middle and high school classes, although an advanced elementary group may be considered.

STAFF

18. What background or experience do the naturalists have?

Our naturalists come to us with a variety of different backgrounds and experiences. All of them participate in a week-long seasonal training session that brings everyone onto the same page for Audubon programs. All have proven themselves strong in their knowledge of natural history, as well as their rapport with children of various ages.

19. What is the ratio of students to naturalist?

We maintain a ratio of 1 staff to no more than 20 students.

HEALTH & SAFETY

20. Who is responsible for the safety of the group?

We all are. While our Naturalists are responsible for leading your group safely through our sanctuary or on our boat trip, they require the help of teachers and chaperones to provide first aid (band aids, etc), and make sure all students are participating in a safe manner. Ultimately, you know the children better than we do, and together we can make sure that everyone has a fun and safe experience.

21. How can students best protect themselves from ticks?

Stay on the path. Make sure to help each other check for ticks immediately after taking a walk or hike. (Socks and long pants help, but if you are going near the water you may choose to forgo this precaution).

REGISTRATION

22. How & when can I register for a program?

You can register over the phone Tuesday–Sunday from 8:30 AM–5 PM, 508-349-2615, or you can e-mail Amy Ferreira at aferreira@massaudubon.org