

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We are excited that you are thinking about sending your child to our camp. Here are some answers to the most commonly asked questions.

CAMP PROGRAM

1. What makes Mass Audubon's Natural History Day Camp in Chatham different than other camps?

Our Day Camp is all about nature. Each week we explore a different nature theme from mammals and marine habitats to insects and freshwater ponds. Younger campers will spend their day exploring forests and fields around the Chatham Middle School campus, and older campers (ages 7 and up) go on field trips to natural areas in Chatham, Harwich, and Orleans. Activities, projects, games, crafts, and stories are all incorporated into the camp day. Older campers will have opportunities to go on boat cruises, kayak, snorkel, and take part in on-going research projects.

2. What is Chatham Middle School like?

The Chatham Middle School is located on Crowell Road in Chatham, very close to Frost Fish Creek and Pleasant Bay. The school will provide each camp group with multiple restrooms, lab classroom space, as well as many natural areas around the school, including fields, forest, and Frost Fish Creek. We are very happy to be able to use this wonderful building as our home base for our satellite camp.

3. When does camp start? End?

Each camp session is one week long, Monday - Friday. The first session begins on July 9 and the last one ends on August 17. Half-day sessions begin at 9 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m.; full-day sessions begin at 9 a.m. and end at 2:30 p.m.

4. How old does my child need to be in order to attend?

Campers must be within the group age range by April 1 of the camp year. For our Peeps group, you must be age 4 by April 1; for our Seals group, you must be age 7 by April 1; for our Sharks group, you must be age 10 by April 1. There are no exceptions to this policy.

5. Are most children who attend from Cape Cod?

Our campers origins are diverse. Some live here year-round, while others may be on vacation for just a week or for the whole summer. We've had campers from Wellfleet, Boston, New York City, California, and many other places around the U.S. and the world! We offer a Cape Cod resident discount to those campers who can show proof of enrollment in a Cape Cod school.

6. How many weeks do most children sign up for?

Most sign up for one or two weeks. We have had camper sign up for multiple weeks, and even the whole summer!

7. Do you have camp on July 4?

Yes, we do (unless it is a Saturday or Sunday).

8. How do you determine what group my child will be in?

Campers are placed into groups according to what age they are as of April 1, 2012

9. What do the campers do throughout the day?

Campers will spend most of the day exploring the outdoors. Instructors will help campers collect aquatic insects with nets, follow mammal tracks, look for owl pellets and other signs of animals, catch butterflies and grasshoppers in nets, hold a box turtle, and much more. Older campers (ages 7 and up) will also go off-site in 7, 8- and 12-passenger vans, driven by the instructors. Each field trip is unique and is described in the brochure and in a letter you will receive in May.

10. Will I have a chance to participate or to see my child in camp?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We encourage you to check out our camp blog, which features photos and short journal entries about camp activities; our camp blog is updated almost daily in the summer. You will get the address and password on the first day of camp.

STAFF

11. What background or experience do the camp instructors have?

Our staff members are chosen for their enthusiasm, experience, knowledge, and ability to work with children in the outdoors. The staff are college graduates or current undergraduates in an environmental and/or educational field. Each participates in a week-long pre-camp training and is certified in First Aid and CPR..

12. What background or experience does the Day Camp Director have?

Emily Wolfe, Day Camp Director, has been involved with the Wellfleet Bay Natural History Day Camp since 2007 when she started as a Day Camp Instructor. She taught camp for two years and became the Assistant Director in 2009. This will be her sixth summer with the camp, and second year as the Day Camp Director. She has a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies. She is certified in Wilderness First Aid, CPR for the Professional Rescuer. During the school year, she teaches school, group, and family programs.

Matt Darcy, Assistant Day Camp Director, has been involved with the Wellfleet Bay Natural History Day Camp since 2008. He has taught camp for four years. This will be his fifth summer with the camp. He has a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy. He is a certified Wilderness First Responder and as an EMT. He also is certified in CPR and AED for the professional rescuer.

13. What do you cover during camp training?

Our 64-hour staff training covers everything from first aid and safety, camp operating procedures (e.g. thunderstorms, missing child policy, and camper sign-in), best practices for working with children (communication and management), and natural history.

14. What is the ratio of campers to camp instructor?

The ratio depends on the camper's age. We follow Massachusetts and American Camping Association regulations. For campers 6 and under there is a 5:1 ratio of campers to instructor. For campers ages 7 and older there is a 7:1 or 8:1 ratio.

HEALTH & SAFETY

15. What safety precautions does the camp take?

Safety is our main concern at camp. All of our staff must be certified in First Aid and CPR. All staff must carry a radio at all times so there can be communication between the groups, the director, and nature center. All groups carry first aid kits at all times. Any time a group travels off-site they must carry a cell phone and take along a larger travel first aid kit. Day Camp Instructors review each camper's health form the week prior to camp in case there are any allergies or other issues to be aware of. All of these practices help to ensure the safety and well-being of every camp group.

16. How does the camp handle food allergies?

We do not allow children to share their food. If your child has a nut allergy, you would need to notify the Day Camp Director in advance. We would then notify the parents of the other campers in your child's group via email prior to camp and again with a letter on the first day. We will ask them to pack snacks and lunches that are nut-free.

17. How can I best protect my child from ticks?

The best way to protect from ticks is to wear insect repellent and long pants tucked into socks. However, most summer days are very hot and long pants are not recommended. Unfortunately we can't avoid ticks, but we do

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

conduct tick checks throughout the day. Our camp staff ask the children check themselves for ticks, and we recommend that you perform a daily tick check at home.

OFF-SITE TRAVEL

18. What kind of vehicles will the campers travel in? Who will drive them?

Older campers (age 7 and up) will be transported in either a 7-, 8-, or 12-passenger vans. The Day Camp Instructors are the drivers. Prior to camp, each instructor is required to take a driving test in the van with the Day Camp Director and have their license history reviewed by Mass Audubon headquarters.

19. Where will older campers (entering grades 6 & up) snorkel? Canoe/Kayak?

Locations for snorkeling, canoeing, & kayaking vary. In 2011 camp groups went to Pleasant Bay in Orleans and Chatham.

20. Who leads the canoe and/or kayak trips for the older campers (entering grades 6 & up)?

Our canoeing trips are led by MAS Teacher/Naturalist, Dennis Murley. He has been leading canoe trips on Cape Cod for over 25 years. Our kayaking trips are led by Dick Hilmer of Explore Cape Cod (www.explorecapecod.com).

REGISTRATION

21. How and when can I register for camp?

Camp registration begins on January 3, 2012. All registrations will be accepted by mail or in person through May 4 and will be stamped with the date of receipt and will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. For identity safety assurances, fax and email submissions are not accepted. Registration must be accompanied by a credit card number or a check for 50% of the cost of camp. The camp fee includes a \$50 non-refundable and non-transferable enrollment fee per session per child. The balance of the camp fee is due by May 4. If payment is not received by May 4 then you will lose your spot and your \$50 enrollment fee. We will accept registrations through mail, in person, or by phone after May 4. If registering after May 4 your registration must be accompanied by a credit card number or check for the full amount of camp.

22. What information do I need to complete in order for my child to attend camp?

We need a completed registration form, full payment by May 4 (50% at time of registration), three signed waivers, a completed health form (supplied by MAS), and a doctor-signed immunization record in order for your child to attend camp.

23. Is there any financial assistance?

Yes, we are excited to be able to offer the following assistance programs:

Cape Cod Resident Discount

You may receive a \$20 discount for half day or \$40 discount for full day per week per child with proof of enrollment in a Cape Cod school district. A copy of a report card, progress report, or letter from the school will all suffice as proof of enrollment.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available for those who may need it. Please call the sanctuary to request a financial assistance application. All financial assistance applications are due by May 9, 2012. All applicants must supply verification of income or documentation that financial assistance is needed.

Please note: To qualify for the Cape Cod Resident Discount and/or Financial Assistance, you must be a current Mass Audubon member at the Family level or above and be the parent, grandparent, or legal guardian of the camper being enrolled. To check your membership status, please call Member Services at 781-259-9500.

