



Stony Brook Nature Camp

2026 Camp Handbook

Table of Contents

Camp Mission.....	2
Camp License & Accreditation.....	2
Contact Info.....	2
Camp Staff	2
Camp Leadership.....	2
Payment Deadlines, Deposits and Refund Policy	3
Coming to Camp	3
What to Pack?.....	3
Camp Schedule and Things to Know.....	4
Camp Schedule	5
Arrival and Departure	5
Camper Feedback	6
Health and Emergency Policies.....	7
Accommodations for Campers and One-to-One Aides.....	8
Behavior Expectations	9
Proactive Behavior Guidance Strategies.....	10
Camp Policy Requests.....	12
Stony Brook Craft Stock Up	12

We are happy you have chosen our camp for your child. We expect your camper will learn a great deal about nature, have lots of fun, and be safe throughout the camp week. If you have any questions after reading this handbook or just want to talk, please contact us.

Camp Mission

Camp at Stony Brook is an exciting outdoor adventure for children. We strive to educate children about ecology so they will be motivated and empowered to maintain a healthy environment for generations to come. Activities are carefully planned to meet these goals and, at the same time, create fun and memorable experiences.

Camp License & Accreditation

Our camp complies with the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (105 CMR 430) and is licensed by our local Board of Health. We are accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA).

Contact Info

For registration questions, camp session openings, payment plans and billing questions, contact the Stony Brook Registrar at 781-259-2253.

For any other specific camp questions please contact Camp Director Marla Cohen at 508-507-6822 or stonybrookcamp@massaudubon.org.

Camp Staff

Our caring, well-prepared camp staff are actively engaged in teaching and playing with campers. Camp staff bring their enthusiasm for outdoor exploration, a desire to facilitate learning, and a compassionate heart for children. This specialized team works to foster a sense of community among campers and individual connections with nature. Summer staff are carefully selected based on their enthusiasm, teaching experience, natural history knowledge, and deep commitment to engaging campers with nature. All staff undergo background checks, are certified in CPR and first aid, and receive training in health and safety procedures, child development, natural history, and environmental education best practices.

Camp Leadership

Camp Director, Marla Cohen, joined the Mass Audubon family in 1997. In 2001, she became Stony Brook Wildlife Sanctuary's Camp Director and education coordinator. Marla holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology from Ohio University. Outside of camp, she spends her time teaching and coordinating school, scout, and public programs for children and families.

Payment Deadlines, Deposits and Refund Policy

To find your balance, and to pay, visit massaudubon.org/payments

Full payment for camp and all forms (including health forms and immunization records to CampDoc) are due on or before May 1 unless a payment plan has been set up with the Camp Director or Operations Manager. A late fee of \$25 per camper will apply if any forms or payments are late or incomplete. No camper is allowed to attend camp unless all forms, waivers, and payments are complete.

Deposits

- A **non-refundable deposit of \$75 per session** is required at the time of registration.
- Deposits cannot be transferred to another camper, session, family, or camp location.
- Please review your calendar for any scheduling conflicts before registering.

Refunds

- **On or before May 1:** You will receive a refund for any payments made excluding the \$75 non-refundable deposit per session.
- **After May 1:** No refunds will be issued.

Please note: If we cancel a session, you will receive a full refund, including the deposit. Refunds are not available for participant dismissal, failure to attend, absences, or sick days.

Coming to Camp

What to Pack?

Make sure to dress for exploring outdoors and playing games outside. Be prepared for any weather - we will be outdoors so rain gear and something warm may come in handy! Any clothing should be ok to get muddy, wet, or dirty since our camps are hands-on in nature.

Please make sure that your child's name is on everything! We cannot be held responsible for lost items. We will keep a Camp Lost and Found until October 1st.

What to Wear:

- Shorts and T-shirt; some families prefer long pants and long shirts to protect against the sun and against ticks or poison ivy.
 - Closed-toe shoes like sneakers or hiking shoes - For safety reasons, no sandals please.
 - Socks (to protect against blisters and poison ivy)
 - A wide-brimmed hat protects them from sun and insects.
- What to Bring:
- Backpack large enough to carry the lunch bag and water bottle.
 - Leak-proof water bottle (8 oz. or larger)

- Towel
- Lunch
- Snack- If your camper is staying for after-care feel free to send a second snack
- Non aerosol sunblock
- Non aerosol bug spray
- Sweatshirt or lightweight jacket
- Rainy day gear light-weight poncho or raincoat,
- A bag with a complete change of clothes

Food Notes:

- Non-perishable foods or ice packs are required. We do not refrigerate lunches.
- Carry in/carry out policy: any trash and uneaten food that cannot go into our compost will be packed into the child's lunch box and returned home. This policy results in fewer yellow jackets in the camp area.
- Food allergies: Stony Brook is not peanut free. We provide "allergy free picnic cloths" for use on designated tables.

Please leave these items at home:

- Flip-flops, or open "slip on" sandals
- All electronic devices - and hand-held video games (if campers have cellphones they will remain in the camper's backpacks)
- Personal treasures, collectable cards, and items of value
- ABSOLUTELY NO Pocketknives, matches, firearms and ammunition, or other potentially dangerous items

Additional Notes:

- Mass Audubon is not responsible for articles lost or damaged at camp
- Pocketknives, matches, firearms and ammunition, or other potentially dangerous items are prohibited, and are grounds for dismissal from the program
- The possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and weapons is prohibited
- No pets are allowed in camp

Camp Schedule and Things to Know

Circle Times start and end each day:

At Circle Time we sing songs together and may act a little silly. We ask that all campers try to participate. Please speak to the Camp Director if your child may need to sit out from these large group activities.

Water Games:

On hot days we cool off by playing "Drip, Drip, Drop." This is a fun game similar to "Duck, Duck, Goose" but with a wet sponge. Campers may be in a damp-to-wet condition as well as dirty at pickup time. Parents should inform the staff if you wish to limit how wet your child gets.

Camp Patches:

are given out on Friday afternoons. One per camper per season.

Think & Act Green is a goal for Stony Brook Camp, and we hope that campers continue these actions at home. Examples are using only one paper towel to dry your hands, composting any fruits and vegetables, using less packaging, and recycling.

Camp Schedule

8:00-8:50 am	Optional Before Camp program
8:50-9:15 am	Camper drop-off & Choice Time
9:15-9:30 am	Opening Circle and songs
9:30 am-12:00 p.m.	Activities, exploration, and hikes
12:00-12:45 p.m.	Lunch and Free Play
12:45-1:45 p.m.	Camper's Choice
1:45-3:15 p.m.	Explorations, hikes, and games
3:15-3:30 p.m.	Closing Circle and songs
3:30 p.m.	Camper pick-up
3:30-5:00 p.m.	Optional After Camp program

Arrival and Departure

Please drive slowly and stay alert for kids, wildlife, and vehicles. The parking lot is one-way. Park, turn off, and lock your vehicle. Have your child wait in front of your car until you can escort them through the parking lot.

Arrival (8:50-9:20 am)

Please escort your camper(s) to the Attendance Counselor where your camper will check them in. Campers 7 and up do not have to be escorted but must check in with the Attendance counselor.

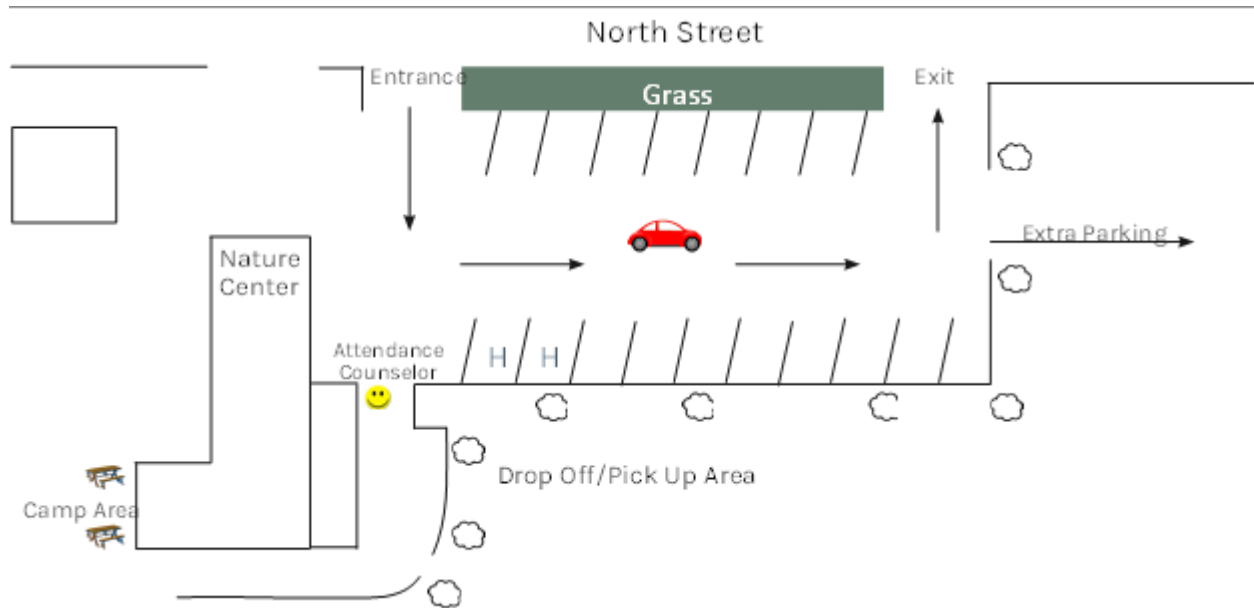
If your camper may have difficulty separating from you, please let us know in advance. We have had lots of experience and have tips to make transitioning into camp easier for both you and your child.

Pick Up (3:30-3:45 p.m.)

Campers are released only to those people listed on the Release Form and a photo ID must be shown. Please bring your ID every day as our sign out staff may vary! Guardians may modify the release list by providing a signed note. Once you have shown your ID to the Attendance Counselor, you may pick up your camper(s) from the Drop Off/Pick Up Area.

Early Pick-up: Please notify your counselor or the Attendance Counselor at least one day in advance of any schedule changes. Group explorations cannot be interrupted due to your schedule change, but your child will be supervised at the Nature Center until pick up.

Late Pick-up: Call us if you are going to be late. Those not registered for After Camp will be charged for that program after 4:10 pm (see details on page 5.) Payment is expected by the next day.



Camper Feedback

We are excited to learn directly from Mass Audubon campers about their experience. This summer, some campers may have the opportunity to participate in a brief, internal group survey to help us learn about and improve the camp experience. These surveys are optional; campers have the choice of participating or not. Trained camp staff will make audio recordings, which we will share with the Director of Evaluation to transcribe and analyze. Quotes and data from these surveys may be published, however campers will not be identified. Campers will be chosen at random, and only campers with prior authorization (media release) signed by their parents/guardians may participate in the camper survey.

Health and Emergency Policies

Our complete healthcare policy is available upon request.

Sick Campers: If your camper is sick, please keep them home until they feel better. If a camper starts to feel sick while at camp, we will have them rest in a designated area until they can be picked up. A staff member will stay with them during this time. If a camper has a fever, they need to be fever free (without the use of medication) for 24 hours before they can return to camp.

Medications: Medication must be sent in the original container with the pharmacy label attached. Medication must be handed to the Camp Director or Assistant Camp Director upon arrival. No medication, whether prescription or over the counter, may be administered to a child without it being listed in CampDoc. Be sure that any inhalers have the prescription label attached or bring along the box with the label attached. All over the counter medications should be in their original container with the camper's name and date of birth written on the container along with instructions for administration.

Weather: Campers will spend time outdoors, rain or shine. Please be sure to send sunscreen and a hat with your child every day. We also request that you apply sunscreen to your child, prior to arriving at camp. Counselors will assist campers in reapplying sunscreen if campers need help at lunchtime and during/after sprinkler time.

Hot Days & Sun: On hot days we cool off by playing water games and we may visit the sprinkler, so please send your child with either a bathing suit or extra clothes, as well as towel, and water shoes. We do try to keep children out of direct sunlight as much as possible. Campers are encouraged to wear a hat (to keep them cooler and protect their skin and eyes). Drinking water is important; please remember to send a water bottle every day.

Cool Days: Please send your camper with warm clothes and a raincoat for cool, rainy days. During thunder or lightning all campers move to safe and secure indoor locations.

Bathroom Needs: Campers will have opportunities to use the bathroom throughout the camp day. While we know some of our younger campers may be new to going to the bathroom on their own-- please reinforce potty training before the start of camp. Our staff do not provide one on one assistance during toileting and campers are expected to be able to fully use the toilet and clean up after themselves. While far from facilities, if needed, we will provide campers with support if they need to use the bathroom outdoors in a safe, private and hygienic manner.

If an accident occurs, cleaning up and changing clothes is handled by the Camp Director and another trained member of camp leadership in a matter-of-fact way that does not shame, humiliate, or embarrass the child. Soiled clothes will be bagged and returned to the family at pick-up. If you have any concerns about bathrooming, please contact the Camp Director.

Bugs: Insects are a part of the great outdoors. To make your child's camp experience more comfortable, we request that you apply insect repellent to your child, prior to arriving at camp, and pack insect repellent in their backpack.

Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Prevention: There are potential health risks associated with ticks. Please take an active role in protecting your camper by checking each evening for ticks. Visual checks for ticks on campers' arms, legs, and clothing are a regular part of camp. Learn more at Mass Department of Public Health webpage: <http://www.mass.gov/tick-borne-diseases>

In the event of injury or first aid: Families will be notified, indicating the injury's nature, what was provided, and by whom All camp staff are first aid and CPR certified.

In case of emergency: First aid will be administered at the level of training. We will work with you to coordinate further care, pick-up, or transportation of the child. When appropriate, local emergency response personnel will be called. If a camper needs transportation, it will be provided by a parent/guardian or ambulance service. If unable to reach the camper's primary contacts, we will call emergency contacts from the health form.

MASS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION COVID-19 Information

<https://www.mass.gov/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees

Campers are not considered to have increased risk of Meningococcal Disease, but the Department of Public Health requires us to provide you the information below. Please read the document "Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees: Commonly Asked Questions." You do not need to print or return a signed waiver to us.

<https://www.mass.gov/lists/meningitis-vaccination-requirements#information-for-students,camp-attendees,-and-daycare-attendees->

Required Vaccines

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/required-immunizations-for-children-attending-camp-and-camp-staff-2025-0>

Mandated Reporters

Massachusetts law requires professionals who work with children to notify the Department of Children and Families (DCF) if they suspect that a child is being abused, neglected, or both.

Accommodations for Campers and One-to-One Aides

Accommodations

Due to the outdoor and exploratory nature of our camp programs, campers move on uneven terrain throughout the day. The terrain varies from hard-packed, gently sloped paths to steeper, uneven trails that may have exposed rocks, tree roots, and other obstacles. Weather could affect our trail conditions. We encourage all families to visit the camp's sanctuary prior to enrolling to understand its unique terrain.

If your child requires accommodation, please contact the camp's director as soon as possible; a delay in request could have the unintended consequence of disrupting your child's Mass Audubon camp experience.

One-to-one Aides

Mass Audubon camps do not provide one-to-one support; however, we do welcome one-to-one aides to support campers when they are provided by the family. Aides must follow Mass Audubon's Child Protection Standards, including obtaining a CORI/SORI and background check prior to their time participating within our programs.

More information and training may be required prior to the aide starting within the program. If your child requires an aide in school, please contact the camp's director as soon as possible to discuss how Mass Audubon can best support your child. Family members are not permitted to be aides.

Behavior Expectations

Our staff establishes expectations and offers guidance throughout each day. Mass Audubon sanctuaries are open to the public and camp groups may spend time in areas that have visitors, vehicles, varied terrain, water, and wild animals. In order for everyone to have a safe and positive experience, campers are expected to follow Mass Audubon's Camper Code of Conduct with minimal support from staff.

Mass Audubon's Camper Code of Conduct

Respect Yourself

- Take care of yourself and your body and ask for help.
- Apply sunscreen and bug spray.
- If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, talk with an adult.
- Respect Nature
- Carry-in/carry-out: Take trash and recycling with you or put in an appropriate bin.
- Leave animals, plants, and other parts of nature where you found them.
- Observe wild animals from a distance. Use your eyes not your hands, unless it is permitted by camp staff.

Respect Others

- Listen and follow instructions given by camp staff.
- Stay with your group at all times.
- Use caring and kind language.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Respect other people's physical space and objects.
- Listen to all ideas and be inclusive; allow others to join/play with you.
- Treat others the way they want to be treated and celebrate each other's individuality. Use pronouns and names people introduce themselves with.

Proactive Behavior Guidance Strategies

Before coming to camp, family members provide information about camper’s needs to camp staff and/or the Camp Director. Camp staff may contact a family to discuss best strategies to meet camper’s needs during their session. Any previously known behavior issues that may affect a camper’s participation should be shared with the camp before the session begins. Failure to disclose information may result in grounds for termination.

Camp staff are trained to proactively manage behaviors within each group. Some strategies staff use include:

- Reinforce positive behavior through praise
- Provide ample warning to campers prior to transitions
- Clearly state behavior expectations through group agreements and visual tools
- Provide daily schedules through group check ins and visual tools

When campers struggle with the behavior expectations set for them in the Camper Code of Conduct, camp staff will follow one or more of the steps below, depending on the situation. Camp staff may try a step multiple times.

	Leader Response	Consequences for Camper
1st step	Reminders of the Rule. *	Reminders of the rule, discussion of why behavior was inappropriate, and possible options.
2nd step	Reminders of the rule, plus short break. Take notes on a behavior incident report. Camp Director or designee may have a brief check-in with family in person or via a call.	Take a break for up to 15 minutes. Reminders of the rule, discussion of why behavior was inappropriate, and possible options.
3rd step	Discussion with the camper about the rules of camp. Update the Camp Director or Assistant Director on the steps taken so far. Supervise camper during longer break. Add to incident report. Camp Director or designee updates family.	Camper will take a longer break which may include an entire activity. Reminders of the rule, discussion of why behavior was inappropriate, and possible options.

4th step	Camper will be brought to the Camp Director or Assistant Director for a discussion. The Camp Director or Assistant Director will speak with the family about behavior contract.	The camper will be asked to reflect on the discussions about behavior and begin a behavior contract.
5th step	The Camp Director and other Leadership staff (Director of Camps, Education Manager, Regional Director) will discuss possible dismissal of participant from the camp and speak with family.	The family will be called. Behavior contract is reviewed. Possible dismissal.

*If a camper intentionally hurts another person themselves, or runs away from the group or staff member, they will immediately be brought to the Camp Director, Assistant Camp Director and/or Behavior Specialist.

After steps 1 through 4, if there is no mutually agreeable resolution of the behavior issues, the Camp Director may issue a written notice of termination. Refunds will not be provided for behavior-based dismissals.

Prohibitions when Managing Behavior

In accordance with the State of Massachusetts Minimum Standards for Recreational Camps for Children:

1. Corporal punishment, including spanking, is prohibited.
2. No camper shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse.
3. No camper shall be denied food, water or shelter; and
4. No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.

All families and campers review and sign off on Mass Audubon's Behavior Expectations and Camper Code of Conduct before attending camp. In addition, visit our website to view Mass Audubon's camp goals and inclusion practices.

Camp Policy Requests

Our background check, health care, and behavior and discipline policies as well as the grievance procedures are available upon request.

Stony Brook Craft Stock Up

Please help us stock up our recycled craft supplies for camp by donating any of these items:

Clean, dry milk cartons

Styrofoam trays

Film canisters

2 Liter soda bottles

Paper towel tubes

Buttons

16 oz. water bottles

Paper grocery bags

Tuna fish cans

Gallon water jugs

Socks

Dish pans

Velcro straps from lettuce

Newspaper

Starbuck's Frappuccino bottles with lids (or ones of similar size)

Thank you for being part of the Stony Brook Nature Camp community. Together, we create a space where children can explore, learn, and grow in the natural world. We look forward to an exciting summer of discovery and adventure with your family!