

## Nassau County Youths Learn About Marine Wildlife and Ecology

Youths in Nassau County live in urban coastal communities where their access to programs featuring “hands on” interaction with nature is limited for various reasons, especially affordability. There are organizations that address low income households and minority communities that traditionally do not visit the coast or participate in outdoor activities that are synonymous with a coastal lifestyle.

In 2018, a partnership involving New York Sea Grant (NYSG) and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County (CCE-NC) was established to provide access to marine mini day camp classes for youths in low income, minority communities and in social programs in Nassau County. The partnership followed a NYSG-developed model that has been successfully conducted with youths in Suffolk County.

NYSG and CCE-NC engaged the Town of Hempstead and New York State Parks to accommodate classes. Delivering this marine-focused youth educational opportunity helped to sustain organizations involved with youth and other family services in Nassau County.

This project also helped CCE-NC to rebuild the marine education programming for Nassau County constituencies in ways to ensure educational enrichment.

Some 170 students from eight family and youth services participated in marine mini day camp in the summer of 2018. Several students and their counselors experienced marine-related resources for the first time.

This marine mini day camp program helped to rebuild relations between CCE-NC and Nassau County constituencies. More importantly, camp was the only occasion for these youths to have a beach day during their summer break.

As an added bonus, the students were immersed in marine coastal wildlife and ecology through art and other field activities, and exposed to another career option to build STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) education.



*Three marine day campers enjoy time at Jones Beach.  
Photo: CCE-NC, Gregory Sandor*

### Partners:

- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County
- Town of Hempstead Nature Study Area
- Theodore Roosevelt Learning Center, Jones Beach State Park
- US Coast Guard Station Jones Beach

### *The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Environmental Literacy & Workforce Development in New York*

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.

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