

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Cindy Zipf, COA Executive Director: 732-996-4613 (cell)
Catie Tobin, COA Marine Science Education Coordinator 201-965-1285 (cell)

STUDENTS EXPERIENCE A DAY OF SCIENCE AT THE BEACH

Clean Ocean Action's Student Summit Brings Learning Beyond the Classroom

Seaside Park, NJ – On October 9th, Clean Ocean Action (COA) brought together hundreds of middle school students and teachers for the **26th Annual Fall Student Summit**. The event was held at Island Beach State Park, Seaside Park, Bathing Pavilion #1 from 9a.m.-12:30p.m.

Nearly 400 middle school students from 12 schools experienced hands-on marine environmental education by participating in six environmental roundtables and six interactive fieldtrips.

“The Student Summit provides an opportunity for students to take a closer look at the environment and connect the dots between pollution and marine life,” said **Cindy Zipf, Executive Director of Clean Ocean Action (COA)**. “From holding a horseshoe crab to water sampling, kids get an up-close look at their coastal world and their critical role to ensure it is protected,” Zipf continued.

Some of the environmental learning activities included seashell identification, invertebrate identification, an interactive terrapin demonstration, and activities to identify and propose solutions for pollution sources. Students were instructed on the proper handling of horseshoe crabs and explored the impact on debris on marine life. Students from the Ocean County Technical and Vocational School's **Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Studies (MATES)** High School served as peer teachers at workstations and on field trips.

"We're really fortunate to be a part of this," said **Dr. John Wnek, Supervisor of Science at MATES and Clean Ocean Action Board Member**. "Our school and our students, especially seniors, love being a part of the student summit because they get to share what they learn about the environment. It is great to see hands on learning; there isn't enough of this in the schools now-a-days."

In addition, local naturalists and other marine education professionals led students in six field activities throughout the park. Summit participants went birding, got their feet wet in Barnegat Bay as they used seine nets to collect and identify common aquatic species, swept the beach of debris and learned of the harmful effects of litter on marine life, tested the water quality of Barnegat Bay, explored the beach on a scavenger hunt, and traversed the trails of Island Beach State Park.

Clean Ocean Action's summits have expanded learning beyond the classroom for thousands of middle school students in New Jersey for 26 years.

"COA's Student Summit builds upon the in-the-classroom ideals of marine science education programs by providing hands-on learning activities," said **Catie Tobin, COA Marine Science Education Coordinator**. "The program promotes environmental stewardship to all those who participate and encourages teachers to take what the students learned back to the classroom to continue the conversation," Tobin added.

The Fall Student Summit was made possible by the assistance from the staff at **Island Beach State Park, Jenkinson's Aquarium**, and the **Marine Academy of Technology & Environmental Science (MATES)**.

For information on other COA educational programs or events, visit www.CleanOceanAction.org or call COA's Main Office at (732) 872-0111.

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