

Pre-Visit/Post-Visit Guide

Lesson Name: A Muddy Mess! Interdependent Relationships of the Salt Marsh Ecosystem

Summary of Lesson:

Dive into the wonders of the salt marsh and discover the vital role that it plays in the health of our coastline as students explore the interdependent nature of this fascinating ecosystem and create habitats from pluff mud, spartina grass and live fiddler crabs.

South Carolina Science Standards: 5.L.4A

Pre-Visit Resources

- **Teacher/Chaperone Expectations:** Please help us by letting us know of any special accommodations for your children prior to the lesson. Your assistance with classroom management and distribution of materials will also be greatly appreciated.
- **Instruction for Teachers:**
 - Please report to the Harrison Hall of Science for this lesson. Students will work in small groups to rotate through stations. Students will have time to wash their hands at the end of the lesson.
- **Key Vocabulary:** salt marsh ecosystem, biotic factor, abiotic factor, coastal wetland, brackish water, salinity, habitat, behavior, predator, prey, producer, consumer, decomposer
- **Key Questions Addressed in Lesson:** What are some of the biotic and abiotic factors of the salt marsh ecosystem? What role does the salt marsh serve in the health of our coast?
- **Content Preview Video:**
 - Coastal Studies Institute presents Estuarine Ecology (4:37) <https://youtu.be/h01JBiZt6rg>

Post-Visit Resources

- **Writing Prompt:** A developer wants to purchase a large plot of salt marsh land in South Carolina. Write a persuasive essay pleading with the developer about why the salt marsh should be preserved and not developed.
- **Possible Lesson Link:**
 - Crab Ecology https://gacoast.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/CrabEcology_Curriculum.pdf
- **Video Link:**
 - Biointeractive presents "Trophic Cascades in Salt Marsh Ecosystems" (10:01) <https://youtu.be/b9xVEeYAs3w>
- **Career Connections:**
 - A Career in Ecology (5:41) <https://youtu.be/jH40BQxlzhA>