

**Free Program**



**Northern NJ Middle Schools (Grades 5-8)**

**Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>**

**or**

**Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Sandy Hook, NJ**

**9:00 AM - 12:30 PM**



**Application Deadline:**

**April 15, 2026**

**Science Can Be a Day at the Beach**

# A Seaside Symposium: Spring Student Summit Activities

## Student Activities Overview

### Introduction to *Limulus*

The Summit begins with a brief discussion about one of NJ's unique and ancient marine animals, the horseshoe crab (*Limulus*). Students learn about the life history of this species that pre-dates the dinosaurs, the myths about this animal, its role in the ecosystem, the biomedical and economic importance to humans, and how we have impacted the species. Students will be shown the proper way to handle the horseshoe crab so that they can get a closer look at this valuable species.



### Activity Roundtable: Environmental Extravaganza!

The roundtable portion of the Student Summit includes a series of interactive work stations with a variety of hands-on activities for students to learn about the environment. Some of the topics covered **may** include marine invertebrate identification and nonpoint source pollution.

### Field Workshops

**Schools and classes will be divided** and students will participate in **one** of the field activities. The goal is that each school will have students who have attended all field workshops. **Examples** of workshops include:

### **Marine Water Quality Monitoring**

Monitoring of surface water quality is an important source of information used by scientists and environmental managers to characterize water resources, identify water quality problems and trends, and develop water quality management strategies. Participating students will learn about the water quality approach to aquatic resource assessment by collecting and analyzing water samples.

### **Birds of the New Jersey Shore**

New Jersey is within the Atlantic Flyway, providing a diverse viewing of coastal birds throughout the year. Students will join local birding experts in a survey and identification of coastal birds as part of their workshop.



### **Seining and Marine Animal Identification**

New Jersey's estuaries offer a variety of habitats as important breeding, feeding, and nursery grounds for a diversity of fish and invertebrate species. Many of these species spend only a part of the year in area waters, while other species reside year-round within certain coastal habitats. Students will use seine nets and sieves to collect fish and invertebrates to capture, observe, and identify common marine animals found in the local bays.



### **Understanding Marine Debris**

Marine debris includes trash and other objects that get into the marine environment as a result of careless handling and disposal. The problem of marine debris has emerged as a critical environmental issue worldwide. Debris in the marine environment is not only aesthetically unpleasant, but it can harm marine life and litter the shore. Students will learn about the types, quantities, and sources of marine debris plaguing our coastal region and participate in a cleanup.

### **Barrier Beach Profiling**

Waves, wind, and currents shape New Jersey's barrier beaches. As a result of these forces, beaches are dynamic, ever-changing environments. By making a beach profile, students will understand sand distribution, beach zones, and tidal water levels. Graphing their results allows students to understand beach topography, the importance of the natural environment, and the impacts of Sandy on the NJ coastline.



### About the Summit:

The Student Summit expands learning beyond the classroom. It is designed to provide middle school (Grades 5-8) students who come from different areas of the state with an opportunity to experience hands-on, marine environmental education at the Jersey Shore. The activities included in the Summit have been selected to present students with an interdisciplinary marine and environmental education experience.

#### Who can apply:

##### **Schools located in Northern NJ Counties**

Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon, Mercer, Monmouth, Middlesex, Somerset, Union, Essex, Hudson, Bergen, Passaic and Morris

#### Summit Location:

Gateway National Park—Sandy Hook, NJ.

### How To Apply — *Three Easy Steps*

#### Step 1: Agree to Terms of Participation

Carefully review the terms listed in this brochure. They work to ensure all participants have a productive day. Please send a signed copy with your application.

#### Step 2: Complete Application Form

Answer all questions on the form. Review answers prior to sending to ensure accuracy. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

#### Step 3: Send Application

Send Application by April 15, 2026 to: [Education@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:Education@CleanOceanAction.org) or by mail to Clean Ocean Action, "Student Summit," 49 Avenel Blvd. Long Branch, NJ 07740. You will be advised about participation shortly after the deadline. Total Summit space is limited to 250 students. Schools may apply for a maximum of 30 students to attend. **Acceptance is NOT on a first-come, first-serve basis.** In the meantime, we suggest you make bus reservations and arrangements, and receive the necessary approval from your school.

#### Costs/Refund:

The program and all materials are **free**. To ensure a commitment from your school, a refundable deposit of \$100 is required with your application. **The deposit will be returned upon your completion of the post-Summit evaluations.** **Transportation and lunch must be provided by participants.**

#### Dress Requirements:

Coastal locations are usually cold and windy. Advise the students to dress according to the weather, bring additional layers of clothes, and wear sneakers or hiking shoes. COA reserves the right to exclude or limit participation to anyone whose dress is inappropriate.

#### Weather Advisory - No Rain Date

Appropriate outerwear is mandatory; noncompliance may result in the student's participation being restricted by staff. In the case of *extreme and dangerous* weather, the event will be cancelled. Otherwise, **the event is held rain or shine.**



*"I absolutely love bringing my students to this event. It is a great way to introduce them to marine science, field work and future educational opportunities!"*

- a Student Summit teacher participant

**Clean Ocean Action's  
Spring Student Summit**

**Terms of Participation:**

The program is **free** to all participants. However, ***schools must provide their own transportation and lunches.*** To ensure a commitment from your school, a **refundable deposit of \$100** must be sent with the application. The deposit will be returned upon your completion of the post-Summit evaluations. **Space is limited.** Therefore, COA has established the following guidelines. In submitting this application, you understand and agree to the terms of participation.

**Please initial each bullet below to confirm that you have read, understand, and agree to each item.  
Return with the application by April 15th.**

- ◆ Students, teachers, and chaperones may be photographed or filmed by COA during the Summit. Teachers must notify COA before the Summit if any student(s) cannot be photographed. Students who cannot be photographed must complete a Non-Permission Release Form, and the teacher must present it to COA staff on the day of Summit. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- ◆ Maximum number of students from each school is **30**. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- ◆ Students, teachers, and chaperones are **assigned** to workshops in the Summit. **Students and chaperones will be separated and divided among all field trips so that each school will have students who have attended all activities. Students will be mixed with other schools. No changes will be allowed.** \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- ◆ **Arrival time is by 8:45 am sharp. Departure time is any time after 12:30 PM. If schools are unable to arrive promptly at 8:45 am, schools should not apply.** \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- ◆ Schools are responsible for their own transportation to and from the Summit. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- ◆ All students, teachers, and chaperones must bring their own lunch. Facilities to buy lunch are **not** available. A snack of fruit and water will be provided by COA midway through the program. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- ◆ Schools must bring **1** chaperone/teacher per **10** students. Chaperones will be required to assist in monitoring students from all schools during the Summit. Teachers, please pass along these terms to other chaperones! \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- ◆ COA reserves the right to exclude or limit participation to anyone whose behavior or dress (*see below*) is inappropriate or disruptive to other students' learning experiences. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- ◆ Teachers and students must demonstrate a desire to learn about the marine environment (*see application*). \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- ◆ Participation is limited to a total of **350** students each day. Acceptance into the program is **NOT** on a first-come, first-serve basis. Notice of acceptance will go out via email shortly after the deadline. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- ◆ Students must bring their own pencils and clipboards. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- ◆ COA will provide schools with bags for their trash (black) and recyclables (white). Schools must bring their garbage bags out of the park and back to school for proper disposal. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- ◆ On the date of the Student Summit, teachers and students must comply with all applicable COVID measures recommended by the CDC and all such requirements imposed by the State of NJ. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

**About the Summit:**

The Student Summit expands learning beyond the classroom. It is designed to provide middle school (Grades 5-8) students who come from different areas of the state with an opportunity to experience hands-on, marine environmental education at the Jersey Shore. The activities included in the Summit have been selected to present students with an interdisciplinary marine and environmental education experience.

**Summit Location:**

Gateway National Park- Sandy Hook (Lot E)  
Applications accepted through **April 15, 2026**

**Costs/Refund:**

- ◆ The program and all materials are **free**. To ensure a commitment from your school, a refundable deposit of \$100 is required with your application. **The deposit will be returned upon your completion of the post-Summit evaluations.** Transportation and lunch must be provided by participants. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

**Dress Requirements:**

- ◆ Coastal locations are usually cold and windy. Advise the students to dress according to the weather, bring additional layers of clothes, and wear sneakers or hiking shoes. COA reserves the right to exclude or limit participation to anyone whose dress is inappropriate. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

**Weather Advisory - No Rain Date**

- ◆ Advise students to dress for the weather. Appropriate outerwear is mandatory; noncompliance may result in the student's participation being restricted by staff. In the case of *extreme and dangerous* weather, the event will be cancelled. Otherwise, **the event is rain or shine.** \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

**School name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher Name: (please print)** \_\_\_\_\_

- **I understand and have initialed the Terms of Participation.**

**Teacher Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return this initialed Terms of Participation with your application and retain a copy for your records.*

**CLEAN OCEAN ACTION 2026 SPRING STUDENT SUMMIT APPLICATION**

**Wednesday, May 27th or Thursday, May 28th**

Teacher/Advisor Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

School # \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Advisor Cell Phone # (Day of Summit) \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Advisor Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Students (30 maximum)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Grade Level(s) \_\_\_\_\_**

**Total Number of Teachers *and* Chaperones (1 per 10 students) \_\_\_\_\_**

**Preferred Day – Please Circle: **Wednesday** or **Thursday****

**■ If the Summit is held only one day, are you able to attend *either* date? \_\_\_\_\_**

***Space for the Summit is limited. Acceptance into the program is determined by the answers to these important questions — NOT by how early the application arrives. Acceptance is NOT on a first-come, first-serve basis, but all applications must be submitted by April 15, 2025 for consideration. Feel free to attach more pages if necessary. Acceptance into the program will be sent via email shortly after the April 15th deadline.***

Describe how you integrate environmental education into your curriculum.

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If environmental education is not a component of your curriculum, briefly discuss how the Student Summit could assist your educational needs.

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What will you do with lessons learned at the Student Summit?

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I have reviewed and agree with the Terms of Participation.

**Please complete and return this application and signed Terms of Participation by April 15th by emailing COA's Education Director, Kristen Grazioso at: [Education@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:Education@CleanOceanAction.org) OR by mailing to Clean Ocean Action at: 49 Avenel Blvd. Long Branch, NJ 07740  
Please send the \$100 refundable deposit to the above address.**