

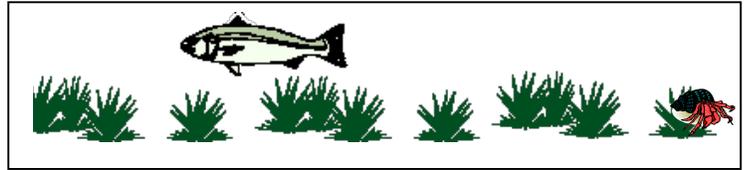
Sarasota Bay Habitats

Grade Level: 6th through 12th

Subject: Science

Duration: 45 Minutes

Materials: 7 sets of Inhabitants Flash Cards, Habitats Information Sheet, Habitats and Inhabitants Worksheet



Next Generation Sunshine State Standards: SC.6.N.1.4 SC.6.N.1.5 SC.6.L.15.1 SC.7.N.1, SC.7.L.17.1, SC.8.N.1.6, SC.912, L.17.2, SC.912, L.17.3, SC.912, L.17.6. SC.912, L.17.7. SC.912, L.17.9 SC.912, L.17.19, SC.912, L.17.20 LACC.1112.RST.1.1

Common Core Standards: LACC.68.RST.1.1, LACC.68.RST.1.2, LACC.1112.RST.1.1, LACC.1112.RST.1.2.

Objectives: Students will understand that an estuary is the "nursery of the sea", where many creatures begin their life cycles. They will learn about the various habitats found near the estuary and learn about the creatures found in these habitats.

Background: Estuaries are bodies of water usually found where rivers meet the sea. They are the home to unique plant and animal communities that have adapted to brackish water, which is a mixture of the freshwater that drains from the land and the salty seawater of the ocean. Estuaries are one of the most productive ecosystems in the world. Many different habitats may be found in and around estuaries. Many animals rely on estuaries for food, places to breed, and migration stopovers. Three-quarters of the sport and commercial fish species in the Gulf of Mexico depend on estuaries at some point in their lives. In addition to providing valuable habitat, estuaries improve water quality by filtering out pollutants and sediment from the water. Human communities also rely on estuaries for food, recreation, jobs, and coastal protection. Florida coastal counties are growing three times faster than other counties in the nation. Unfortunately, this increasing density of people upsets the natural balance of estuarine ecosystems. Natural resources, including estuaries, face increased pressure and threats to their integrity. What happens on the land affects the water quality thus the health of the organisms that live in an estuary.

Procedure:

1. Show the following 6 minute video entitled "What's An Estuary".
<http://estuaries.noaa.gov/Teachers/MiddleSchool.aspx>
2. Divide students into small groups. Pass out the "Estuary Habitats" information sheet. Allow students time to read through the information and discuss the characteristics of each habitat.

Habitats and Inhabitants

3. Give each group a set of "Estuary Flash Cards". Students can take turns to choose a card and determine in which habitat or habitats it might be found. Continue until all the cards have been used.

Assessment:

- Using the Estuary Flash Cards: have students construct as many food chains or food webs as they can.
- Determine any limiting factors that might affect these food chains.

Resources:

"Wild and Wonderful Tampa Bay", Tampa Bay Estuary Program, 2000

Sarasota Bay Roamers Guide - will be available in 2014