

Saltmarsh Exploration with the South Carolina Aquarium

Join us in an exploration of our Saltmarsh Habitat at the South Carolina Aquarium! We'll meet some of our marsh animal inhabitants, like terrapins and pelicans, and learn how they are adapted to living in a constantly changing environment. Discover why this habitat is so important and find out how the South Carolina Aquarium is helping the SC Department of Natural Resources restore saltmarshes in the wild.

Key Terms:

- Habitat – a home for living things. A habitat includes the four things an organism needs to survive: air, food, water, shelter.
- Adaptation – a physical or behavioral trait that helps an animal to survive
- Brackish - slightly salty, as is the mixture of river water and seawater in estuaries
- Tides - the alternate rising and falling of the sea, usually twice in each lunar day at a particular place, due to the attraction of the moon and sun.
- Keystone Species - a species on which other species in an ecosystem depend on

Discussion Questions:

1. The oyster is a keystone species in the saltmarsh habitat. Can you think of a different habitat and what its keystone species is?
2. How is the saltmarsh cordgrass able to survive in brackish water?
3. Why do larger species of fish use the saltmarsh as their nursery?

Activity:

We learned that saltmarshes play an important role in protecting our communities from the effects of Climate Change and rising sea levels. How will your home be impacted by sea level rise? Brainstorm with your group about how sea level rise could affect your community and think of ways to protect it and keep people safe. If you live in South Carolina, you can use our new Sea Rise app to find out. This app is a part of the South Carolina Aquarium's Resilience Initiative for Coastal Education (RICE) program. This program provides information to better plan for the future and keep families and communities safe.