



Education and Exhibits Update: April 24, 2019

1. This month, Director of Education Dr. Zack Jud led a **site visit for the Frances Langford Fund grant selection committee** in support of our request for \$22,374 to create the “Coastal Classroom Explorers” program. These funds will allow us to develop and deliver free educational classroom lessons, activities, and presentations to elementary schools and after school programs in Martin County. We are currently finalists in the grant selection process.
2. Florida Oceanographic Society’s **8th Annual Game Fish and Fish Games Youth Fishing Clinic** was held on March 31st. This year, 60 boys and girls, age 8-14, gathered at the Coastal Center to learn a basic set of skills that will hopefully kick start a lifelong passion for fishing and the outdoors. The children rotated through 7 educational stations staffed primarily by volunteers from the Stuart Rod and Reel Club and the Stuart Flyrodders. Participants learned how to cast, tie knots, fillet a fish, throw a cast net, select lures and tackle, handle and unhook fish safely and ethically, all while building a respect for the fragile ecosystems that gamefish rely on. At the end of the clinic, all participants received a free fishing rod, reel, tackle box, and goody bag. This completely free event was supported by a grant from Fish Florida and donations from local fishing tackle shops. All Game Fish and Fish Games attendees are now invited to participate in the 3-month-long **Florida Oceanographic Society Youth Fishing Tournament**. Participants will use a smartphone app developed by our partners at the Snook and Gamefish Foundation to digitally log and submit all of their catches between now and June. Last year, more than 500 fish were caught by tournament participants. In the last 3 weeks, young anglers have already logged more than 100 fish.



3. This month, the Education Department led **4 field trips and 10 Virtual Field Trips**, in addition to daily educational programming at the Coastal Center. Unfortunately, we also had 5 last-minute field trip cancellations.



4. Education Specialist Yasmeen Fadlallah developed and implemented a hands-on, **interactive science lesson for Coastal Center guests** to help celebrate our “Earth Month” theme. Guests had the opportunity to try out an activity that demonstrated the effects of runoff and sedimentation on water quality. They also learned how to use fertilizer responsibly. Yasmeen will facilitate this activity on two Saturdays during the month of April.
5. The Education Department conducted a **FLOORED (Florida Oceanographic Oyster Restoration Education and Discovery) field trip program** for a group of 29 8th graders from St. Lucie County. This full-day field trip, led by Yasmeen, Zack, and Research Associate Katie Tiling, included an educational lecture, hands-on classroom activities, a shellfish hatchery tour, oyster bagging, oyster reef deployment, and biological sampling at a one-year-old reef. FLOORED is Florida Oceanographic’s most immersive (and highest priced) field trip offering.
6. Education Specialist Nicole Harper teamed up with Community Outreach Coordinator Michelle Byriel to run a shark and ray-themed educational outreach table at **Oxbow Eco-Center’s Earth Day Celebration**. Over the course of the day, Nicole and Michelle directly interacted with several hundred children and adults.
7. Currently, 89% of the available spaces in **Florida Oceanographic’s marine science summer camp program** have been filled. Six of our eight camp sessions are completely filled to capacity. We are in the process of hiring two temporary, full-time summer camp counselors to help Camp Director Shannon Dack with camp operations.
8. Online registration for our 2019 **sea turtle nesting walk program** will begin on May 1st. Walks will be held on Monday and Thursday nights (except July 4th) from May 30th through August 1st.
9. The Education Department worked with the Sierra Club to schedule a **special discounted visit to the Coastal Center for children enrolled in BRIDGES**, a program of the Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County.
10. Zack gave a **lecture about Florida’s water issues to approximately 150 members of the Daughters of the American Revolution**, Halpatiokee Chapter. The chapter presented Florida Oceanographic with an honorarium check, as well as an American flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol Building.
11. Zack appeared on the **TV fishing show “Florida Sportsman Watermen”** speaking about the health of the Indian River Lagoon, and the **TV fishing show “Unfathomed”** speaking about snook biology. He also appeared on **Spectrum News 13 Orlando’s “Florida on a Tankful” segment**, promoting a visit to the Coastal Center.
12. After 15 months of outstanding service to Florida Oceanographic Society, it saddens us to let you know that **Education Specialist Nicole Harper will be leaving the Florida Oceanographic family**. Nicole has loved every second of her time at the Coastal Center, but she wants to be closer to her actual family in Massachusetts. Nicole’s passion and dedication were infectious, and the new field trip and classroom outreach curricula she created while at FOS will remain a lasting part of our educational programming. Nicole has been a tremendous asset to the Education Department and our organization as a whole, and we will greatly miss her. Her last day will be Sunday, April 28th. Please join us in wishing Nicole the best as she moves forward with her next adventure. We are working to refill the open position as soon as possible.