

Awesome Oyster

Lesson Summary

Learning Outcomes

- Oysters are a keystone species.
- Oysters are food for other organisms, filter the water, and form habitat.
- Oysters can be observed and measured to monitor their health.

Vocabulary

Keystone Species - an organism that is essential to maintaining the function or structure of an ecosystem

Filter Feeder - an animal that obtains its food by filtering water that passes through it

Life Cycle - the process by which a living thing grows and changes from the start of its life until it reproduces

Larvae - early, immature form of an animal that does not resemble its parent

Spat - the stage of an oysters' lifecycle after larvae once they have attached to a surface

Juvenile - young individual resembling an adult except in size and reproductive ability

Plankton - organisms that are unable to swim against the current

Sessile - an organism that is unable to move on its own

Motile - an organism that is able to move on its own

Summary of Trip Activities

Trip activities may occur in a different order and/or the class may be shortened if your group is late. The educators may also change elements based on their assessment of students' needs.

Introduction to Oysters

While seated at picnic tables, we will learn about oysters and why they are important.

Oyster Life Cycle Matching

Students will work in small groups to arrange photos and labels of the oyster life cycle in their proper order.

Oyster Reef Food Web

Standing near the picnic tables, as a full class or in two groups depending on class size, we will build a web of reciprocity to demonstrate the interdependence of species in oyster habitats. Students will each wear an organism card on a lanyard and pass a ball of yarn between them to build the web.

Oyster Monitoring and Observation

In small groups at the picnic tables, students will wear thick rubber gloves and measure oysters using calipers. Students will also be able to observe other organisms pulled up in the oyster cages.