

PIGEON KEY FOUNDATION & MARINE SCIENCE CENTER

CORE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

MARINE HABITATS OF THE FLORIDA KEYS

Marine Habitats of the Florida Keys focuses on four main habitats found around Pigeon Key and throughout the Florida Keys: Mangroves, Seagrass Beds, Shallow Hardbottom, and Coral Reefs.

Recommended as the first program for visiting education groups, this presentation explores the common ecosystems students will be exposed to during their time on Pigeon Key. Throughout the program students learn about each ecosystem, the benefits and threats to each, as well as how they can help! The program ends with a bridge walk on the Old Seven Mile Bridge to get an aerial view of the four habitats and look for marine creatures.



REEF FISH IDENTIFICATION

Reef Fish Identification is a fun and interactive program that highlights numerous fishes that students will see while snorkeling. Every group's itinerary includes a trip to Sombrero Reef and Pigeon Key Staff believe that the more fish students are able to identify while visiting our local coral reef, the more memorable the trip! Students are introduced to fish behaviors, life strategies, and how those factors relate to morphological characteristics. Optionally, students can use their new knowledge to identify fish species on our 50-foot long marine ecosystems mural that depicts fish in their natural habitats and play other memory based card games.



INVERTEBRATE BIODIVERSITY

Our shoreline is the laboratory for this flagship program! After a brief classroom presentation that teaches students about the unique characteristics of the seven most common invertebrate phyla in our waters, students search the surrounding waters for specimens. Whether they are found via snorkeling or tide-pooling, all the invertebrates are taken to our wet labs where everyone is encouraged to participate in a hands-on session to identify and gently examine each organism. After careful exploration, all of the specimens are returned to their original habitats. You will be amazed at the variety of life that your students find!



SHARK BIOLOGY AND DISSECTION

Discover the science behind the world's most feared and misunderstood fish! This program is a student favorite, delving into the life history of sharks and their importance to the marine world. No fact is left unexplored: from the first shark in existence, to the most common shark eaten today, students learn the truth behind many of the common shark myths. After gaining an understanding of shark morphology, students explore a dissected shark while reiterating the importance and function of each physical characteristic. They also participate in a shark feeding in our enclosed saltwater pool.



OCEAN POLLUTION AND MARINE DEBRIS

One of the most important issues in the coming years for our oceans, Ocean Pollution and Marine Debris examines the overwhelming presence of unnatural items or trash in our oceans. It was recently stated there is now more trash in our oceans than fish! This issue is something Pigeon Key sees first hand as different items wash up on our shore. Students are taught about the different types of marine debris and ocean pollution, common causes of it, and most importantly what they can do to help! Afterwards, students are asked to perform an island stewardship activity by participating in a beach cleanup. It is amazing what students find from old boots, to fishing buoys, to even baby clothes! Pigeon Key staff turn it into a competition to see which group can collect the most trash and most unique piece.



3-day/ 2-night trips starting at \$540



QUESTIONS?
CONTACT EDUCATION DIRECTOR
JILL HAYDEN
jill@pigeonkey.net