



Live Internet Broadcast Brings Students & Scientists to NYC's Jamaica Bay Marshes

In September 2006, thousands of students in classrooms across the U.S. joined New York Sea Grant (NYSG) for an interactive virtual tour of the dynamic urban estuary in the heart of metropolitan New York City. The real-time EstuaryLive program, hosted by New York and New Jersey Sea Grant, was broadcast via the Internet from the edge of Jamaica Bay's Big Egg Marsh in Queens, NY. The web-based field trip was sponsored by the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program and involved broad participation from many partners, including students, teachers, scientists, park rangers, educators, agency personnel, and local community leaders.

After many months of planning, the two Sea Grant programs welcomed more than forty middle and high school students from New York and New Jersey to the shores of Jamaica Bay. As the students worked with scientists and educators to seine for marine life, test water quality, examine plant adaptations and model sediment movement, they presented their findings to their on-line peers. The goal of the broadcast was to highlight the functions of coastal wetlands, the fragile nature of Jamaica Bay's marshes, and the roles we all can play as stewards of the estuary.

More than 250 schools from 35 states, representing at least 15,000 students, signed up to participate in EstuaryLive



Laura Bartovics, NYSG's NY-NJ Estuary Outreach Coordinator, holds the microphone as a local high school student shares her thoughts on stewardship during the 2006 EstuaryLive broadcast from Jamaica Bay in Queens, NY. Photo: Dany Doiron, NPS/SCA

from Jamaica Bay. During the hour-long broadcast, participating students submitted more than 300 email questions to the on-site field trip leaders. With help from a crew behind the scenes, a number of these questions were answered live on the air. On-line viewers spanned grade levels 3 to 12, showing that the program appeals to a broad audience.

This national program, sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, kicked off a series of events celebrating National Estuaries Day. Jamaica Bay was one of only four sites across the U.S. selected to host an EstuaryLive field trip for the 2006 program.

New York Sea Grant is a cooperative program of the State University of New York and Cornell University.

Sea Grant Extension administration is located at 112 Rice Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

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