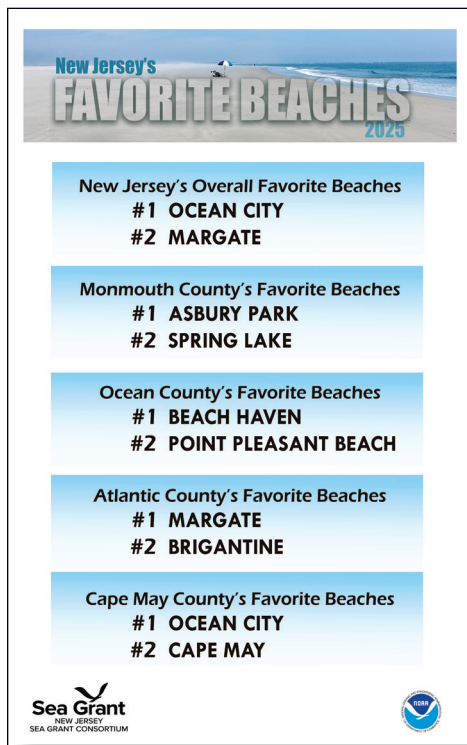




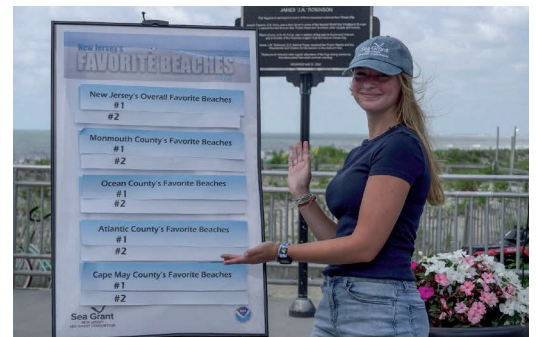
SUMMER 2025

New Jersey's Favorite Beaches announced in Ocean City



On July 17, the winners of the 2025 Favorite Beaches Contest were announced at the Music Pier in Ocean City, recognizing the shorelines and communities that stood out this year. The ceremony brought together local leaders, staff, and beachgoers to honor the hard work that makes our beaches special. It wasn't just about a plaque; it was about acknowledging collective effort and dedication. Ocean City was again the overall winner.

Above right, Michael Allegretto - Aide to Ocean City's Mayor welcomed the crowd. At right Communications Intern Abby Hesterhagen revealed each winner as it was called.



The Ocean City boardwalk is always fun. Director of Communications Samantha Kreisler and Director of Research and Grants Administration Julie Shaw encounter some strange crustaceans.

Jersey Shore Photo Contest showcased the talent of local photographers and the beauty of the Shore

After a public vote, twelve captivating images were selected as the winners of the 2025 Jersey Shore Photo Contest. Hundreds of submissions captured breathtaking moments from Sandy Hook to Cape May. The winning

photos will be featured in the 2026 printed Jersey Shore Photo Calendar and also on NJSGC's website as downloadable calendars.



Daybreak, Edward Volpe



Our Beautiful Winter Visitors, Maria Zdroik



I love you Momma!, Lorraine Holcombe



The Beach Beneath The Lights, Taylor Warwick

To view them all click here: <https://njseagrant.org/photo-contest-2025-winners/>.

NJSGC Education Department holds the 2025 Apprenticeship In Shellfish Aquaculture Program

The Apprenticeship in Shellfish Aquaculture Program (ASAP) returned for the summer. The cohort of New Jersey high school students wrapped up their time at their assigned local shellfish farms, where they have been engaged in hands-on work.

ASAP is a collaboration between the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium, Rutgers Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory, and industry partners such as the Barnegat Oyster Collective. Project partners Diana Burich, Michael Acquafredda, Jenny Shinn, and Lisa Calvo spent a week preparing them for the paid summer apprenticeships on local New Jersey shellfish farms.



Dr. Mike Acquafredda holds class for the apprentices.



Over eight weeks, apprentices worked alongside professional growers, participated in team check-ins with program facilitators, and ultimately earned a Shellfish Farming Practice Certificate. With mentorship, peer support, and a balance of science and practice, ASAP continues to open doors for the next generation of aquaculture professionals while strengthening New Jersey's coastal economy.

Photos: Apprentices learning the ins and outs of shellfish aquaculture.



NJSGC In Your Community

NJSGC's Rose Higgins helps Junior Rangers learn about diamondback terrapins

On August 4, the National Park Service Junior Rangers got up close and personal with diamondback terrapins during a special program led by Park Rangers Sara Rodrigues and Calvin Grigal. Even students from the

Sandy Hook Child Care Center joined the fun: learning, coloring, and meeting some NJSGC superstars thanks to its College and Special Programs Coordinator, Rose Higgins!



Native Plant Identification project completed by Girl Scout Nyla Martin

Nyla Martin, Girl Scout and Bronze and Silver Award recipient, designed a project in which signs which identify native plant species with common and botanical names are posted on a trail throughout Sandy Hook. Nyla has been a Scout since kindergarten. She embarked on this project towards attaining the Gold Award.



Nyla's team ready to post signs.

Nyla Martin and Jennifer Cox, Supervisory Park Ranger at the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area.

NJSGC In Your Community



NJSGC Scout Program Coordinator Jody Sackett was recently featured in The Two Rivers Times for an article she wrote entitled 'Fall For Butterflies and Help Them Thrive.' Fun fact, Jody is a member of the Rumson Environmental Commission.



The American Society of Civil Engineers has named Dr. Dibs Sarkar, Professor in the Department of Civil, Environmental and Ocean Engineering at Stevens Institute of Technology and NJSGC Researcher, its Educator of the Year for 2025!

Lisa Calvo, former NJSGC Aquaculture Program Coordinator and Shellfish Specialist featured on CBS

Lisa Calvo, former NJSGC Aquaculture Program Coordinator and Shellfish Specialist, whose three-decade career as a marine biologist specializing in shellfish ecology evolved into a full-time passion for oyster farming. Today, she owns Sweet Amalia Oyster Farm (named after her daughter) and co-founded the Sweet Amalia Market & Kitchen, a must-visit culinary destination located in the South Jersey. In 2022, Esquire Magazine named it among the top 40 restaurants in the country. And in 2024, Sweet Amalia Market & Kitchen made the NY Times Restaurant List as one of the 50 best restaurants in the country.

Recently featured on CBS Saturday Morning's "The Dish" segment, Lisa showcases how her science-based roots and entrepreneurial spirit have created a tide-to-table success story. As the Aquaculture Program Coordinator, Lisa and Diana, NJSGC Director of Education, developed the Apprenticeship in Shellfish Aquaculture Program (ASAP). Their goal: to introduce high school students to the shellfish industry. Despite retiring from NJSGC, Lisa remains involved with NJSGC by incorporating her farm in the ASAP program for students to learn and work on. High school students involved in the Apprenticeship in Shellfish Aquaculture Program have a chance to learn from the best.

A graphic titled "spotlight on NJSGC PARTNERS" featuring a photo of Lisa Calvo in a field. The text reads: "LISA CALVO Former Aquaculture Program Coordinator. Former NJSGC Aquaculture Program Coordinator, now thrives as the owner of Sweet Amalia Oyster Farm and co-founder of Sweet Amalia Market & Kitchen, where science meets culinary innovation. Recently featured on CBS Saturday Morning, Lisa's journey from research to restaurant captures the heart of local foodways and sustainable aquaculture. Lisa remains involved with NJSGC by incorporating her farm into NJSGC's ASAP program." At the bottom left is the "Sea Grant NEW JERSEY SEA GRANT CONSORTIUM" logo, and at the bottom right is a blue button that says "LEARN MORE >>>".

NJSGC In Your Community

NJSGC's Communications team visited Beach Haven to deliver the award for Favorite Beach in Ocean County



Beach Haven Mayor Colleen Lambert gathered her staff in appreciation for their efforts in making Beach Haven the winner that it is. From left, Nick Gazillo (Beach Patrol), Chris Esibill (Beach Patrol), Peyton Miller (Beach Patrol), Kam Davis (Beach Patrol), Remi Clark (Beach Patrol), Eric Eisenbeis (Public Works, Assistant Supervisor), Steve Letts (Public Works, Supervisor), Colleen Lambert (Mayor), and Mike McCaffrey (Council Member). NJSGC Director of Communications Samantha Kreisler is at center holding the award.

NJ Teachers Dive Into Climate Science at Sandy Hook

This August, the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium hosted hands-on workshops as part of the Monmouth University Climate Change Learning Collaborative (MU CCLC). This project is funded by the NJ Department of Education. It is designed to help educators build confidence in teaching climate science. K-12 public school educators can participate in any of the four collaboratives' activities for free. These sessions brought teachers from across the state to NJSGC's headquarters at Sandy Hook for a week of learning, exploring, and fun.

Throughout the week, teachers traded classrooms for coastal ecosystems, participating in activities such as seining, crafty games, and outdoor studies that brought science to life. Each day had a different focus. Some workshops introduced K–5 teachers to life science and human impacts, others guided middle and high school educators through global climate systems, resilience, and the costs of climate change. By combining research-based frameworks with immersive, hands-on experiences, MU CCLC prepares teachers to engage their students in climate education across all grade levels.

These NJ teachers got to “be kids again” while exploring the salt marsh, collecting data, and connecting with peers who share their passion for science education.



NJSGC is in year two of the MU CCLC until March 2026.

New Jersey Coastal Resilience Collaborative (NJCRC) held the 2025 Coastal Ecological Restoration Technical Workshop

The Coastal Ecological Restoration Technical Workshop was held on September 11 at the Rutgers EcoComplex (Bordentown, NJ). The NJCRC is led by Tom Herrington, Urban Coast Institute at Monmouth University and Coastal Community Resilience Specialist, New Jersey

Sea Grant Consortium and Laura Kerr, Coastal Engineering Research Group at Stevens Institute of Technology and Coastal Resilience Specialist, New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium.



Scenes from the 2025 Coastal Ecological Restoration Technical Workshop

Research Spotlight

Using eDNA to Detect Invasive Species in Barnegat Bay



A student intern collects samples for DNA extraction from a man-made structure in Barnegat Bay.

This summer, eight undergraduate interns, Rylee Allen, Tova Holloway, Lauren Hutson, Emily Koziej, Briana Machigua, Cindy Matias, Luis Rivera Rosa, and Sarahi Romero, are working alongside Montclair State University Drs. Kirsten Monsen-Collar, Paul Bologna, and Robert Meredith. They're learning how to use environmental DNA (eDNA) to identify invasive species in Barnegat Bay, NJ. Environmental DNA (eDNA) is the genetic material organisms leave behind as they move through their surroundings. eDNA can be a powerful tool for identifying rare, elusive, and invasive species.

The Montclair team is particularly interested in invasive jellyfish that may be settling on manmade structures within Barnegat Bay. The project doubles as both scientific research and workforce training. Interns are gaining hands-on experience with every stage of eDNA research, from field collections to laboratory analysis and bioinformatics analysis. Already, they have collected dozens of samples and successfully sequenced DNA from 12, with more results expected later this fall.

This work is supported by the NJSGC Omnibus research funding and Montclair State University.

NJSGC Extension Intern Brady Sheaffer conducted surveys of marinas and boat ramps

NJSGC's 2025 Extension Intern, Brady Sheaffer, is a rising senior at the University of Delaware studying Marine Science with a minor in Spanish. This summer he conducted field surveys of marinas with pumpout facilities to determine operational status along with calling and visiting public boat ramps for an update to the New Jersey Boater's Ramp Guide under the guidance of Michael Danko, Director of Extension and Marine Recreation Agent: Fisheries and Boating. This is Brady's third year with NJSGC; he had been a field instructor in the Marine Education Program for the past two years. Being an avid runner and surfer along with growing up going to beaches and marine science camps, Brady has a passion for being outdoors and protecting the environment.

The field surveys for the pumpouts took place from June to July on behalf of the New Jersey Clean Vessel Act Program (NJCVAP). Seventy-seven marinas were selected to be visited. The 2025 boat ramp guide survey took place in August, and was completed to provide an updated list of public boat ramps for boaters to use. The information gathered from the boat ramp survey will be used to update the 2008 version of the printed copy of all ramps open to the public and will be distributed to boaters at boat shows and other events along with being listed on our website NJBoating.org.



Brady Sheaffer presenting to middle school students



Brady Sheaffer working with students

The majority of the marinas successfully surveyed were found to have working boat sewage pumpout units (51 of the 57 marinas open for business). Of the 57 marinas successfully surveyed, 6 marinas were identified with pumpout units that were not operational. 5 marinas were interested in replacing their pumpouts. Of the 77 total marinas, 12 did not have staff on site to discuss the operation of the pumpout facility and an effort to contact them via faxes, calls, and emails will be continued outside of the field survey effort. The survey found that the majority (90%) of the marinas visited had boat sewage pumpout units available throughout the 2025 boat season and there was an adequate supply of sewage disposal facilities to meet the needs of recreational boaters. It was noted that the sewage pumpout boats operated by Monmouth County and Ocean County provide an important service for both the larger as well as the smaller marinas with and without pumpout units. The availability of pumpout facilities at marinas and the county operated pumpout boats provides a vital service to recreational boaters to ensure they have a means of properly disposing sewage generated onboard boats. Through the efforts of reaching out to marinas regarding funding from the New Jersey Clean Vessel Act Program, it is projected that there will be more marinas with working pumpouts in the near future once repairs and grant applications are approved.