



FALL WINTER 2026

# See you in May at Ocean Fun Days!



Join us on May 16 and May 17, 2026 when we will celebrate 23 years of ocean discovery and environmental stewardship with fun activities, games, eco tours, and so much more!

Along with event co-sponsors: Gateway National Park/National Park Service, New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry/Island Beach State Park, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and NOAA's James J. Howard Marine Sciences Lab at Sandy Hook, New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium is excited to continue this family-friendly, free weekend of fun!

At the 2026 Ocean Fun Days, guests can learn from marine scientists, researchers and environmentalists about how to preserve the Jersey

Shore's natural resources so we can all continue to enjoy them for years to come. Each year's festivities include new exhibitors, hands-on environmental programs and demonstrations. The Sandy Hook lighthouse will be open for tours.

**May 16, 2026 – Island Beach State Park**  
**May 17, 2026 – Sandy Hook, NJ Sea Grant Consortium Building**  
**11 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Rain or Shine)**  
**Free admission and parking!**

Mark your calendars now for family-friendly fun, animal touch-tanks, workshops, crafts and so much more. There's something for everyone!

Don't miss out on the excitement at [OceanFunDays.org](https://www.oceanfunday.org). You'll have oceans of fun!



# Knauss Fellow Reveal: Teemer Barry

We're excited to share that New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium's applicant, Teemer Barry, has been selected as a 2026 Sea Grant Knauss Marine Policy Fellow!

Teemer is one of 48 finalists chosen nationwide for this highly competitive fellowship, which places early-career professionals in legislative or executive branch offices in Washington, D.C., where they contribute scientific and technical expertise to federal policymaking on marine, coastal, and Great Lakes issues. Finalists' placements are still being determined. Teemer will officially begin the fellowship in June 2026 as part of Sea Grant's 47th Knauss Fellowship class.

Congratulations, Teemer! We're proud to support you and look forward to following your journey!

## 1. Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I am a geoscientist studying at Rutgers University - New Brunswick, having previously graduated from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Most of my life prior to the beginning of my academic career had been spent in Durham, North Carolina, where my father's incredible interest in permaculture, alongside my mother's involvement with North Carolina's legislative and socioeconomic proceedings, developed within me a great love for the promotion of appropriate land use practices and stewardship.

## 2. What inspired you to apply for the Knauss Fellowship?

My motivation for participating in the Knauss Fellowship stems from a deep-seated drive towards environmental stewardship and justice. Long before my career aspirations had so firmly consolidated, I had wanted to participate in community, state, and federal-level organizations that promote the appropriate care and use of the environment in ways that can sustain humanity into the far future. I see



the Knauss fellowship as perhaps the most direct pathway to apply a strong research background, like the one I have developed, directly into the national stage.

There was no singular event or mentor that urged my participation in the Knauss fellowship program as much as a cumulative series of discussions with all of the mentors that I hold most dear and who urged me to consider not specifically, the world I wanted to serve as much the world that I wanted to create. I have always had comfort mediating debates and speaking to diverse audiences, perhaps even more than the comfort I have with my own research, and so with the looming timeline of graduation and uncertainty in the future I chose to aim for the Knauss fellowship.

## 3. How did your academic and research experience prepare you for this opportunity? Are there any specific projects, skills, or lessons that proved especially valuable during the application process?

My academic career, especially within the last 5 years, has done exceptionally to prepare me for this opportunity (in my opinion). Since the beginning of my academic career, I have worked to position myself as a two-fold biogeochemist, developing the ability to discern the causes of systemic shifts in gradients as well as how those shifts lead to further cascades, and as a bulk-data analyst, honing my use of data work to visualize those trends for broad audience digestion. I would spend functionally each year between 2020 and 2025 working on several projects hand in hand with state and federal agencies on a bevy of topics from plankton population dynamics and historical range changes within species of interest, to developing a climatology of coastal water quality.

Each fellowship, internship, and project over these years has served to inform me of how research is performed throughout academic and governmental circles, how research at various levels is directly applied to legislative practice, and how the choices made at these levels cascade down into the lives of everyday individuals. My time within the Office of Protected Resources and the



Protected Species Division line offices within the Northeast Fisheries Science Center will likely be the most valuable to participation within the Knauss fellowship as both directly involved my participation within regular strategy meetings, the frequent review of federal regulatory documents, and a direction of my efforts towards lasting documents as opposed to smaller iterative reports.



**4. How are you getting ready for this next step? Have you done anything to prepare for your year as a Knauss Fellow?**

Preparations for this experience have largely centered around wrapping up my thesis, paying close attention to the direction of legislation to ensure I am well informed, and reviewing the last several state and federal reports that have been critical to my research efforts. It is my hope to become far more familiar with the grants and project management side of executive work as well as congressional committee structures and proceedings through the fellowship opportunity but there has so far been no news as to how the cohort will be split. Until then, preparations have resembled a lot of report and transcript annotating.

**5. What are you most excited (or maybe nervous) about as you start the fellowship? What do you hope to learn or experience?**

I am most nervous about making the most of this opportunity. I am the type of person who thrives when given a desk, a stack of information to review, and the freedom to proverbially “dig in.” I think that the fact that this is a program that lasts for a single year, while also being extremely competitive, nurtures split desires within me. For one, I want to prove myself. I want to use this opportunity to demonstrate that I can not only perform exemplary research on the national stage, but also that I can present outstanding

arguments that can be recognized across political aisles for their virtue. In my head, this looks like an unflinching commitment to work as hard as I can every day and night to develop such an esteemed reputation. On the flip side, the program only lasts for a single year. Many opportunities for professional development, exploration, and even just simple personal enjoyment are likely to appear and I have worries that I may be too eager to let them pass me by in favor of a relentless commitment to what work is directly in front of me.

**6. Looking ahead, where do you see this experience taking you? Do you have any goals or aspirations for after your fellowship year ends?**

I see two major benefits that may stem from my participation in the Knauss fellowship program. Firstly, I see the simple benefit of seeing how the legal sausage is made. I will be present at the nexus of decision-making and enforcement proceedings for the ways that the environment is used across our nation. This is an experience that I feel is almost necessary for anyone in my position or who carries my mindset of wanting to play an active role in how the place they live in executes on such negotiations.

Secondly, I see the development of my mediating and negotiating muscles as an extreme benefit. Within my academic career, the justification of research as important or novel is performed through the extensive presentation of facts and associated logic that is tempered by colleagues and advisors into a finished and largely accepted product.

I have little to no experience directly proposing my own work over someone else’s or prioritizing a particular line of questioning over another. While I am naturally prone to negotiation, I have no occupational experience where the quality of my work is measured in the decisive adoption of one practice over another. This extends into my hopes to learn more about the grants management lifecycle, as it is a line of work that has a great deal of influence over decisions that improve the day-to-day lives of others.



# Research Spotlight

## Listening In: Acoustic Monitoring for Improved Management and Protection in NJ Tidal Marshes

Tidal marshes are some of New Jersey's most valuable coastal ecosystems, providing critical habitat for wildlife while delivering essential services such as flood protection and carbon storage. Yet these vital landscapes face increasing pressure from coastal development and accelerating sea level rise. To better understand how marshes are responding to these challenges, and how they can be more effectively protected, Dr. LeeAnn Haaf, Estuary Science Director at Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, is turning to an innovative tool: sound.

Her research explores the acoustic ecology of tidal marshes across an urban-to-rural gradient in New Jersey, using soundscapes to assess ecosystem health, biodiversity, and human disturbance. Acoustic ecology examines how living organisms interact with their environment through sound, offering insights that traditional field surveys can miss. From bird songs and insect calls to the hum of nearby roads, these soundscapes provide insight into patterns of biological activity and environmental stress.

To capture these dynamics, autonomous recording units (ARUs) were deployed at 11 tidal marsh sites: nine within the Delaware Estuary and two near Stone Harbor. These locations consisting of freshwater to saline marshes in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Preliminary findings reveal that even the most rural marshes contain detectable levels of anthropogenic noise, while marshes closer to busy roadways experience the highest levels. Encouragingly, many of these sites still support rich biological soundscapes, driven largely by bird activity.

By integrating ecoacoustics with landscape ecology, Dr. Haaf's research demonstrates how sound can serve as a valuable proxy for ecological conditions. These findings can help inform more targeted, data-driven strategies for marsh restoration and protection, ensuring that New Jersey's tidal marshes remain resilient, functioning ecosystems for generations to come.



Checking sound equipment in the marsh environment.



# Extension Update

## NJSGC's Coastal Processes Specialist is honored by American Society of Civil Engineers

Dr. Jon Miller, NJSGC's Extension team's Coastal Processes Specialist, was recently recognized by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) for his outstanding contributions to civil and ocean engineering research. A Research Professor in the Department of Civil, Environmental, and Ocean Engineering



Ian Walczak, ASCE Central Jersey Branch President, Dr. Jon Miller, and Zachary Marinelli, ASCE Central Jersey Branch Immediate Past President.



Diana Miller and honoree Dr. Jon Miller.

at Stevens Institute of Technology, he has spent more than 20 years mentoring dozens of graduate and undergraduate students and disseminating his work through peer-reviewed publications, technical presentations, and applied guidance. In his roles as Director of the New Jersey Coastal Protection Technical Assistance Service and as NJSGC's Coastal Processes Specialist, Dr. Miller works closely with the State of New Jersey and local communities to advance science-based solutions that support safer, more resilient coastlines.

*NJSGC Extension team's Coastal Community Resilience Specialist, Dr. Thomas Herrington, and Coastal Processes Specialist, Dr. Jon Miller, recently joined a roundtable discussion with Jersey Shore Partnership and South Jersey Forward focused on the importance of beach nourishment along the Jersey Shore. The conversation highlighted how science, policy, and community partnerships work together to strengthen coastal resilience, drawing on the expertise of both specialists. Watch the full discussion here:*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwSR0\\_JLqP8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwSR0_JLqP8).



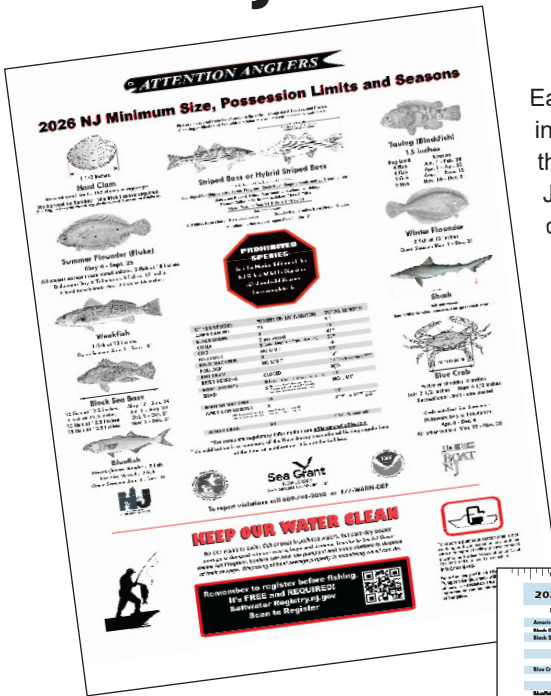
### BEACH REPLENISHMENT: A TRUE JERSEY SHORE PARTNERSHIP

A virtual roundtable streaming live on [southjerseyforward.org](https://southjerseyforward.org) and all SJF social media platforms.

 <p><b>GRACE HANLON</b> Executive Director Jersey Shore Partnership</p>	 <p><b>DR. JON MILLER</b> Director Stevens Coastal Engineering Research</p>	 <p><b>DR. TOM HERRINGTON</b> Associate Director Urban Coast Institute Monmouth University</p>	 <p><b>MIKE SULEIMAN</b> Founder South Jersey Forward</p>
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Wednesday, October 1 5:00 PM

# NJSGC prepared annual posters and cards to share NJ Fish and Wildlife fishing regulations

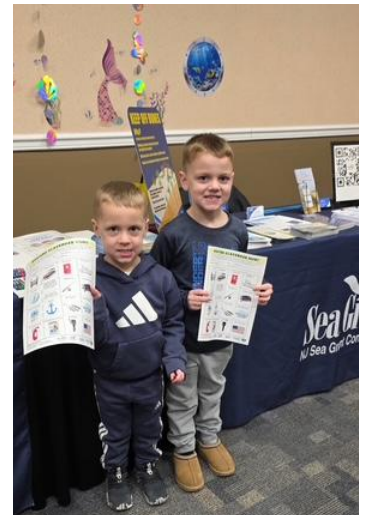


Each year, New Jersey anglers are provided with readily available cards and posters informing them of the regulations on recreational fishing. NJSGC has partnered over the years with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the New Jersey Department of Fish and Wildlife to produce waterproof laminated cards which can be easily packed in with fishing gear. The cards list most species of fish found in coastal waters along with the regulations for allowable season, size and number of fish for each species. The cards also include a handy ruler for measuring the catch. The cards are distributed at many fishing-related businesses and municipal buildings at no charge to the public. NJSGC's Extension also distributes posters to bait shops, party boats, marinas, and other fishing related businesses. The posters also include the regulations on season, size, and catch allowable for New Jersey's common species of fish.

SPECIES	OPEN SEASON	MINIMUM SIZE	POSSESSION LIMIT
American Eel	No Closed Season	3 1/2'	25
Black Sea Bass	May 15-June 30	12 1/2" min. tail measurement	10
Bluefish	April 15-August 31	12 1/2" min. tail measurement	10
Bluefish (Hybrid)	November 1-December 31	12 1/2" min. tail measurement	10
Bluefish (Hybrid)	March 15-June 1, October 1-December 31	12 1/2" min. tail measurement	10
Atlantic Croaker	March 15-September 30	10"	10
Atlantic Silverside	March 15-September 30	10"	10
Atlantic Striped Bass	March 15-September 30	10"	10
Atlantic Tomcod	March 15-September 30	10"	10
Head Clam	No Closed Season	3 1/2"	25
Weakfish	May 15-September 30	12 1/2" min. tail measurement	10
Winter Flounder	January 1-May 31 and September 1-December 31	12 1/2" min. tail measurement	10
Summer Flounder (Fluke)	May 15-September 30	12 1/2" min. tail measurement	10

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## Education and Extension brought lots of fun to kids at the NJ Boat Show and Expo



On February 14-15, 2026, at the New Jersey Boat Sale and Expo, the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium's Education and Extension Programs, along with the show producer Marine Trades Association of New Jersey, teamed to provide a Kids Cove at the show and an I Spy Scavenger Hunt. The Scavenger Hunt provided the kids with an opportunity to walk

around the show, while their parents looked at boats and located various fishing and boating-related items. Kids could return their completed scavenger hunts to the Kids Cove for a marine science-related craft. In addition, NJSGC had an exhibit in the Kids Cove and provided information to attendees on rip currents, dune protection, and other important coastal topics.

# Education Department Opportunities

## Professional Conferences

To meet the needs of NJSGC's evolving scout program as well as to provide resources for educators as part of Monmouth University's [Climate Change Learning Collaborative](#), Education staff developed a program this fall that could be adapted for both audiences.

The Co-Evolution of Native Plants and Pollinators was presented in a workshop for formal and non-formal educators at [Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Education's](#) (ANJEE) Autumn Conference in September at [YMCA of the Pines/Camp Matollionequay](#) in Medford.

Participants learned the basics of both native plant and pollinator morphology and engaged in a number of activities designed to encourage learning in youth. Pollinators are essential for ecosystem health and global food security, facilitating reproduction of over 75% of the world's flowering plants and 80% of food crops. Native plants are essential to pollinators since they are hardy and have adapted well over the centuries to the local weather, soil and rainfall of their environment. They can thrive despite challenging conditions like droughts, heat waves, and floods, but still need to be pollinated for reproduction. Pollinators such as butterflies and bees need plant resources like nectar to survive, so they have co-evolved with native plants to ensure each provides the necessary resources at the proper time. The plants

provide shelter and nectar for the pollinators as well; and in return, the insects spread flower pollen around, ensuring seeds will be produced for the next generation. Plant anatomy has even evolved to match pollinator morphology, maximizing attraction to ensure effective pollination. Purple coneflowers use UV patterning and broad, flat landing leaves to attract bees; orange butterfly weed offers bright colors and extra-rich nectar to lure summer butterflies; and the tubular red cardinal flower bloom is perfectly shaped for hummingbird bills. But climate change disrupts this mutually-beneficial dance and can cause timing mismatches that threaten both plant and pollinator survival. Warm weather arriving unusually early or late may cause flowers to produce their nectar before or after butterflies and bees have emerged, while heat stress may reduce pollinator populations resulting in fewer flowers. Folks can help protect native populations by avoiding pesticides and herbicides, and planting more native flowers and trees in their yards and patio pots to ensure ecological success for their region.

Visit for more information: [Pollinators Need You, You Need Pollinators, 2026, Pollinator Partnership](#)

<https://www.pollinator.org/pollinators>

## Building New Jersey's Next Generation of Aquaculture Professionals

Shellfish farming is one of New Jersey's fastest-growing coastal industries, generating more than \$11.78 million in farm-gate harvest sales and contributing an estimated \$70.68 million annually to the state's economy. While this growth supports coastal communities, sustainable seafood production, and local jobs, a shortage of trained workers threatens to slow progress.

The [Apprenticeship in Shellfish Aquaculture Program \(ASAP\)](#) addresses this challenge through a partnership among the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium, Rutgers University's [Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory](#), shellfish growers, and community partners. ASAP prepares New Jersey high school students for careers in aquaculture through classroom learning, hands-on training, and paid apprenticeships with local shellfish farms, advancing workforce goals outlined in [NOAA's Aquaculture Strategic Plan \(2023–2028\)](#) and [New Jersey's Aquaculture Development Plan \(2021–2026\)](#).

The program engages students from high schools across six coastal counties, with a focus on high-need districts, beginning with in-class aquaculture literacy lessons. Selected students participate in a week-long summer training program at Rutgers University's [Cape Shore Laboratory](#) and the [New Jersey Aquaculture Innovation](#)

[Center](#), followed by eight-week paid apprenticeships with local farms such as [Sweet Amalia Oyster Farm](#), South Bay Shellfish Company, and members of the [Barnegat Oyster Collective](#). Apprentices receive hands-on experience, professional mentorship, and ongoing support through biweekly virtual cohort meetings and career development workshops.

Since its launch, ASAP has reached 1,506 students through classroom programming and trained 33 high school students through bootcamps and paid apprenticeships. In 2025, 100% of participants were offered part-time farm employment upon completion, with 64% continuing work through the summer and 43% planning to return for the 2026 season. Alumni outcomes include participants pursuing undergraduate aquaculture studies and continuing employment with partner farms to grow local businesses.

By strengthening workforce readiness and creating clear career pathways for coastal youth, ASAP offers a scalable model for workforce development in New Jersey's blue economy. Application period for consideration runs through March 27, 2026 so [visit our website](#) for more information.



# Education's Rosemary Higgins begins her well-earned retirement

After nearly 30 years with NJSGC, Rosemary Higgins retired at the end of 2025. Her creativity, generosity, and passion for learning shaped our education programs and touched countless lives. From Oceans To Go! to Ocean Fun Days, her legacy of mentorship and kindness will be felt for years to come.

Thank you Rose! Wishing you a joyful, well-earned retirement!



NJSGC's staff joined to wish Rose well on her retirement.

## Coffee and Peterson's February and March events featured Consortium's educators on Marine Mammals and the Importance of Pollinators



*The first 2026 meeting of the Coffee and Peterson's lecture event featured a presentation by Samantha Maxwell-Kowal, K-12 Program Coordinator at the Consortium. The topic was Marine Mammals of the Jersey Shore. Low tide on January 14th was at 10:5 eals cooperated.*

*The March Coffee and Petersons presentation was led by Jodi Sackett, NJSGC's Scout Coordinator. She explained the vital importance of pollinators to ecosystems.*



# An Education Department Opportunity - K-12 Field Trips

Are you an educator looking for a field trip that gets students outside, engaged, and excited about science? Bring your class to [Gateway National Recreation Area](#) on Sandy Hook for an unforgettable outdoor learning experience! Our experiential [field trips](#) are designed for Pre-K through 12th grade and feature hands-on, grade-appropriate marine science lessons in a dynamic coastal setting.

We offer both full- and half-day programs from April through November, making it easy to fit meaningful outdoor learning into your school year. Educators with 3rd, 4th or 5th grade classes should also ask about free programs sponsored by the National Park Foundation's [Every Kid Outdoors](#) initiative that encourages in-park cultural and environmental learning. We'd love to welcome you and your students to the beach for a day of discovery!

## NJSGC Communications

### The Communications Department will be joined by Montclair University Students this Spring

Hawk Communications is a student-led strategic communications agency that works with local nonprofits and local businesses to give students real-world experiences in public relations, media relations, writing, event planning, and so much more! This course at Montclair State University provides students with many opportunities to expand their resumes, networks, and creative skills. This Spring 2026 Semester, New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium joined Hawk Communications! Two students, Julie Mantari and Mia Savidge, will be working with NJSGC to grow their skills while helping out our Communications team. Here's a little bit about them:



**Julie Mantari**

"My name is Julie Mantari, and I am a Senior at Montclair State University, majoring in Social Media and Public Relations. My involvement throughout campus has helped me with my professional and personal growth, which I will continue to use once I complete my degree in May. Some of my involvement includes the Latin American Student Organization, Montclair State University PRSSA, and the Office of Commuter Life. I have a huge passion for traveling and a deep desire to continue learning, exploring, and experiencing new cultures around the world after studying abroad in my fall semester with Semester at Sea. I am very excited to be working with New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium as an Account Coordinator during my spring semester to build my creative skills with content creation, outreach, and media planning."

"My name is Mia Savidge, and I am a Junior at Montclair State University, majoring in Social Media and Public Relations. My involvement in on-campus organizations has given me the space and tools necessary for this field. These organizations include the 90.3 WMSC Radio Station, Montclair State University Players, and the Montclair State University PRSSA. I have a huge passion for planning and organizing events and experiences, and would love to explore opportunities in that area. I am also incredibly passionate about environmental education, conservation, and action. I am thrilled to be able to work as an Account Coordinator for the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium and be able to assist with content creation, social media planning, community outreach, and more within the organization."



**Mia Savidge**

Together, Julie and Mia bring creativity and enthusiasm to the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium's Communications team. Their diverse campus experiences, shared passion for storytelling, and interest in community engagement will help support NJSGC's mission while allowing them to gain meaningful, hands-on professional experience. We're excited to have them on board this spring and look forward to the fresh ideas, energy, and perspectives they'll bring to our work.



**New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium**  
**22 Magruder Road Fort Hancock, NJ 07732**  
**732-872-1300 [njseagrant.org](http://njseagrant.org)**

This publication is the result of work, research sponsored by the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium (NJSGC) with funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Sea Grant, U.S. Department of Commerce, under NOAA grant number NA24OARX417C0154-T1-01 and the NJSGC. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NJSGC or the U.S. Department of Commerce. NJSG-26-1036



