



# PRESS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Ocean Fun Days Opens New Doors for Family Oriented Fun and Coastal Activities**

(Sandy Hook, NJ)..... If you're looking for a shore way to enjoy the beach and local marine environment without shelling out a lot of clams mark you calendar for Ocean Fun Days, May 22 and 23. This free two-day education-oriented event is sponsored by New Jersey Natural Gas, in partnership with the NJ Marine Sciences Consortium/NJ Sea Grant (NJMSC/NJSG), the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the New Jersey Department of Transportation Office of Maritime Resources and offers dozens of learning and hands-on activities focused on our marine and coastal environment. Ocean Fun Days will be held on Saturday May 22 at Island Beach State Park, Seaside Park, NJ and Sunday May 23 at the NJMSC/NJSG Headquarters at 22 Magruder Road in Sandy Hook, NJ. Admission to both events, including park entrance fees and on site parking is free. Both days will feature plenty of coastal activities for children, nature tours, educational displays and lots more. Event hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., rain or shine.

Now in its seventh year, Ocean Fun Days has become one of the Jersey Shore's most popular spring ecotourism events. Visitors can enjoy hands-on marine and environmental programs and exhibits, eco-tours and activities all about the beaches and bays of New Jersey and learn firsthand from New Jersey scientists and researchers and environmental experts about the state's coastline and how to protect it for future generations.

This year, Ocean Fun Days at Island Beach State Park will feature the biggest student science fair competition ever. Nearly two dozen 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade student teams from Ocean County will exhibit their displays as part of the Annual Ocean Fun Days Science Fair with science and conservation-

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based projects that focus on the Jersey Shore. The teams compete for ribbons, trophies and a free marine science field trip for their class from NJMSC/NJSG.

On Sunday May 23, The National Park Service (NPS) will also host Coastal Defense Day at Sandy Hook, when most of its Historic Sites, including the Parade Ground, Battery Gunnison and History House will be open from noon to 4 p.m. with tours conducted courtesy of the NPS. The NOAA James J. Howard Marine Laboratory will be opening its doors for the day as well, with the public invited to visit their facility to learn more about their fisheries research.

All the favorite Ocean Fun Day special programs and activities will be back again at both locations this year. Grab a fishing rod and join the youth fishing and casting clinic, learn to use a seine net to catch native marine animals, go on a hike with a shorebird expert, comb the beaches for natural treasures with an environmentalist or get the latest buzz on the role insects play in our ecosystem. And, don't miss the famous fiddler crab races. There will be free giveaways, free souvenir photos with costumed mascots Marit the Monkey and the Energy Hog and plenty of excitement throughout the day. It's oceans of free fun for the whole family.

NJMSC/NJSG is an affiliation of colleges, universities and other groups dedicated to advancing knowledge and stewardship of New Jersey's marine and coastal environment. It meets its mission through its innovative research, education and outreach programs. For more information about NJMSC/NJ Sea Grant, visit [njmsc.org](http://njmsc.org)

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**Photo Captions:** #1 Fiddler Crab races are a popular favorite event at Ocean Fun Days

#2 Ocean Fun Days features Marine Life Touch Tanks

#3 Ocean Fun Day mascots Energy Hog and Pearl the Puffer Fish

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