

Parent Handbook



Table of Contents

2	Introduction	7-11	FAQs
3-14	Before Camp	12	Camp Rules
3	Finish Registering!!	13	Daily Packing List
4	Directions to Camp	14	General Camp Itinerary
5	Check-in & Pick-up Information	15	During Camp
6	Preparing your Camper	16	After Camp

INTRODUCTION



Welcome to Sea Stars Marine Camp!

Each day of Sea Stars Marine Camp is packed with hands-on activities, outdoor games, exciting arts & crafts and fun educational lessons about the environment!

Whether your child is passionate about marine biology or just wants to know more about Long Island’s fascinating marine wildlife, this camp is the perfect experience.

Week-long sessions are designed to immerse campers into the world of marine science through hands-on learning experiences!

At the Camp Center, campers will observe and handle live marine animals and freshwater pond-life while learning about marine biology and environmental ecology. Every session is unique and will provide your camper with different marine or freshwater topics.

Contact Information:

Have a question?:
Preferred method of contact:
Email: ams838@cornell.edu

For Urgent Matters:
Call or text: 631-466-5039



BEFORE CAMP

IMPORTANT!

- **REQUIRED - CAMPER'S IMMUNIZATION RECORD:**

Camp forms, along with a copy of your child's most recent immunizations form stamped or signed by their pediatrician, must be uploaded to UltraCamp. Your camper's **Immunization Record must be submitted in UltraCamp on or before June 1st - anyone who does not submit their forms on time will forfeit their spot without a refund!**

Your child will not be allowed to attend camp without uploading their current immunization record. The Department of Health requires us to possess a complete health profile on every camper. All required camp forms can be found on the UltraCamp portal.



Sea Stars Marine Camp

REGISTRATION CHECKLIST

- Register for sessions on UltraCamp
- Fill out and electronically sign 3 forms per camper
- Upload child's immunization record to account
- Review Parent Handbook
- Leading up to your camp session, check email (and spam) for details and information



ALL FORMS AND IMMUNIZATION RECORDS SHOULD BE UPLOADED TO ULTRACAMP ON OR BEFORE JUNE 1ST.

Anyone with incomplete paperwork will forfeit their spot without a refund.

DIRECTIONS TO SEA STARS MARINE CAMP

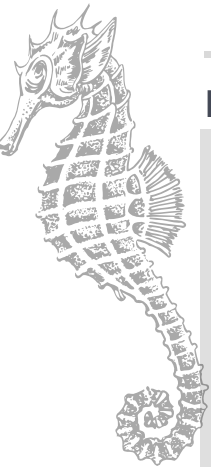
Camp is held at: *Cranberry Hill Environmental Center at Fuchs Pond Preserve*
21 Norwood Road
Northport, NY 11768

- From Smithtown and points east: Take Route 25A west through Kings Park. After Makamah Park and Elijah Churchill's Pub make a right at the light onto Norwood Road. Continue about 1 mile, once you pass Norwood Ave. Elementary School, the dirt driveway (#21) will be on your right.
- From Sagtikos Parkway: Take Sagtikos Parkway north to the last exit (25A West) before the toll booths to Sunken Meadow State Park. Then, follow the directions above.
- From Huntington and points west: Via Route 25A: Take 25A East through Centerport and Northport. Make left onto Waterside Drive at TD Bank. Continue about 1 mile then turn right on Norwood Road. Continue 0.2 mile and the dirt driveway (#21) will be on your left immediately before Norwood Ave School.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP PROCEDURE

PLEASE READ:

- Drop-off and pick-up will be conducted directly at Cranberry Hill Environmental Center at Fuchs Pond Preserve, Northport.
- Cars can slowly drive up the preserve driveway to drop their children off.
- Parents/guardians will utilize the roundabout for drop off/pick ups.
- To maintain an efficient flow, only the camper will exit the vehicle upon arrival at camp.
- We will also be utilizing a digital form for signing campers out each day.
- *Please drive up slowly and proceed with caution! The entrance and exit into the Preserve is a one lane road.*



CHECK-IN & PICK-UP INFORMATION

Daily DROP-OFF/CHECK-IN: 9AM

- Location: Cranberry Hill Environmental Center at Fuchs Pond Preserve.
 - It is important that you arrive on time every day.
- If you are running late, you must call/text Camp Coordinator as soon as possible: 631-466-5039.
- If your child is not coming to camp that day, please call/text the Camp Coordinator to alert of absence before 9AM: 631-466-5039.

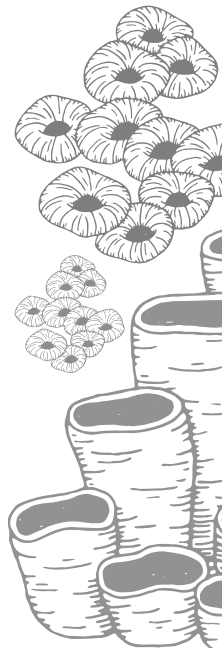
Daily PICK-UP/SIGN OUT: 2PM*

- ***EXCEPT- pick-up will be at 3:00 PM** for the following session dates ONLY:
 - Session 1 - SEA TREKKERS & AQUATIC INVESTIGATORS: *June 29th*
 - Session 2 - SEA TREKKERS: *July 6th*

If you are **more than 15 minutes late to pick-up your child**, you will be **charged a minimum mandatory fee (\$50)**, due to the extension of our camp staff hours.

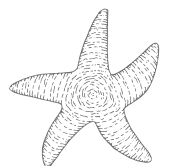
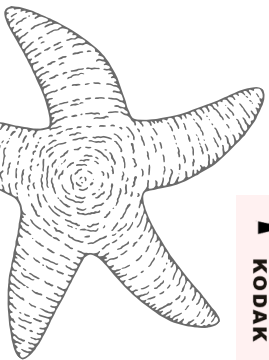
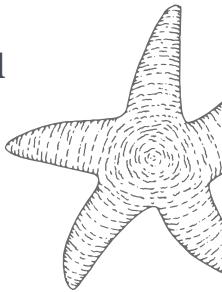
- Parents/guardians will utilize the roundabout for drop off/pick ups, rather than parking in the field and walking campers over.
- Please note, only the camper will be allowed to exit the vehicle upon arrival at camp. Parents/guardians will utilize the roundabout during drop off and pick up.
- We will also be utilizing a *digital form* for **signing campers out each day**. The survey will be emailed to you prior to the first day of camp for your camper.
 - Each camper must have their own individual form completed during check-out. Your camper can not leave camp grounds until this form is completed.
 - If someone other than yourself is picking up your child, we must have written permission from the parent/guardian of the child.

We recommend allowing extra time on your first day to camp to ensure you arrive to our location on time .



PREPARING YOUR CAMPER

- Children will most likely miss something about home while at camp, especially on their first day. Homesick feelings are normal and there are many things parents/guardians can do to help prevent strong homesickness and help your child successfully transition to camp. Here's a list of encouraging things to discuss with your child that we have found helpful:
 - *“Try new things.”* Camp has a lot of stuff you can't do at home or school...it's a place to discover a whole new thing you're good at or enjoy.
 - *“Be patient with yourself.”* It may take time getting into a new routine and meeting new people.
 - *“Help out.”* At camp it's typical that your child will be asked to clean-up, set-up, help out, etc. Explain to your child that they're going to be a part of a group. You expect them to cooperate and help out however they can.
 - *“Ask for help if you have a problem or need something.”* Talk to your child about what to do if they have a problem (i.e. someone not being nice, etc.)...talk to their counselor. Even go to the Camp Director.
 - *“Remember your strengths.”* What are you good at? Trying new things? Making Friends? Doing crafts? Learning new things? Supporting others?
 - *“Practice being grateful.”* There are a lot of people at camp who work very hard to make sure that your child will have a great experience. Remind your child to express gratitude and to treat others as they would like to be treated.



FAQs

What should my child wear to camp every day?

It's inevitable that kids may get dirty at camp. We suggest your child not wear anything you wouldn't want stained. We recommend sending campers with a change of clothing and socks in case they get wet. Bathing suits are welcomed and can be worn underneath. Campers should also wear shoes that they can run in and get wet every day. Campers are allowed to wade in the pond during nature walks while at camp, and will wear shoes into any water they enter.



What kind of food and drink should I pack?

Please pack a SNACK and LUNCH in an INSULATED lunch bag. Your child will also need plenty of water. Please pack a large LABELED and INSULATED water bottle. Plastic water bottles can get warm, get misplaced and become unidentifiable. We can refill water bottles throughout the day. Speak to your child about the importance of drinking plenty of water on hot days. *Please try not to pack any food items containing nuts as we often get campers with severe nut allergies.*

Can my child bring a cell phone?

We strongly suggest that campers leave cell phones at home. Cell phones, like many other modern technologies, are expensive possessions that can easily be lost or damaged during camp. Additionally, camp is an exciting opportunity for children to build a sense of independence and we encourage them to focus on their camp experience.



Do all sessions have field trips?

All sessions offer either a field trip via bus or a special guest/activity. More specifics can be found in the session's description when registering your camper.

If my camper's session offers a field trip, what should they bring?

Please pack a lunch, water, and a snack. A hat and sunscreen is always advised. Please have your campers wear sneakers. There is no need for a towel or extra clothes. *Any more specific information for the field trip will be provided during the week of your camper's session.*

FAQs continued...

Can I come on the Yankee III with my child?

Tickets for adults who wish to attend the fishing trip are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. The cost is \$50/adult. Payment via UltraCamp will secure your spot. If you are coming on the trip with us, you will need to pay the vehicle use fee of \$8 to park and make sure to arrive at Captree PROMPTLY at 9:45am with your child. Upon arriving please meet us at the Gazebo where you must sign-in your child. You will need to sign-out your child after the trip is completed. Directions for parents attending the fishing trip will be provided.



What if the Yankee III trip is canceled due to unsafe weather or marine conditions?

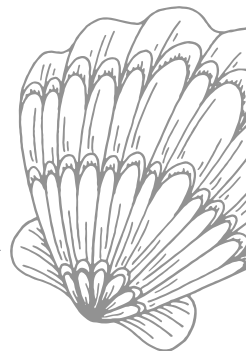
If conditions are deemed unsafe by Yankee III staff, campers will remain at Fuchs Pond Preserve for a day full of interesting programming, activities and crafts.

Do you accommodate special needs?

If your child requires any sort of special accommodation (i.e. medication dispensation, physical adaptation, verbal or otherwise), please contact the camp office as soon as possible. We do our best to make accommodations when given a reasonable amount of notice and if the accommodation is within our scope of practice.

What kind of child is this camp geared towards?

All types! We try to maintain a good balance of activities throughout the day between crafts, educational programs and more active components such as outdoor games, nature walks, etc. All of our activities are hands-on and interactive to keep children with varied interests and skills engaged as well as excited.



Is there a multi-child discount?

No. As a not-for-profit organization we cover camp operation costs by the funds we bring in through camp fees. With the amount of families that send more than one child to camp, we would not be able to continue offering camp at the current price.

FAQs continued...

Are there scholarship spots for families in need?

In the past we have been given generous donations from local entities that are to be used for scholarships for families in need. You will have to contact the Camp Director to inquire. If we have scholarship spots available, you will need to complete an application with The Family Service League of Long Island who will be able to evaluate financial need.

What if my child does not turn 6 until the end of summer?

Age requirements are set by the New York State Department of Health who conduct a preseason inspection as well as impromptu random inspections of our camp. Age requirements are set to protect the children. Inspectors check all paperwork, including immunizations. If we have campers younger than 6, inspectors can shut our camp down.

I have concerns about water safety:

This camp does not offer swimming as an activity. On days involving water activities, campers will participate in seining activities, naturalist adventures, scavenger hunts and more. All campers, according to Health Department requirements, will be allowed to wade in water up to their belly buttons. This is to ensure optimal safety while near the water.



FAQs continued...

Can a younger child be placed in an older group with a friend or family member and vice versa?

Due to registration restrictions based on grade, we typically do not allow campers to be placed in sessions other than those available for their grade. We strive to maintain these grade groupings due to camper safety, age appropriate lectures, and maturity.

Can I make sure that my child is placed in the same group as their friend/relative?

Such requests can be made during the online registration process. If you have any concerns or questions, you may call or email ahead of time. Also, please note that even though your campers may be in separate “groups”, there are still plenty of activities that allow both groups to interact throughout the day. We have found that the separation can be a good opportunity for siblings to develop independence from one another and allow them to better develop new friends!

What are some environmental considerations?

Ticks: On days that we spend at The Fuchs Pond Preserve, campers are led on guided walks through the preserve. We have not had a problem with ticks in the past, but it is always a possibility. Camp staff does a basic check with campers after our walks. However, we highly suggest doing a thorough scan at home, especially of your child’s scalp.

Poison Ivy: Our trails do contain poison ivy. We educate campers prior to our walks so that they are able to identify poison ivy. Our staff does a great job making campers aware of its locations, keeping them at a safe distance. There is a possibility that campers may come into contact with the oils accidentally. We recommend that hands are washed with dish soap and cold water after removing and putting on shoes and clothing worn during the nature walk.

Bug Bites: Please pack bug spray with your child every day. For information on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents and tips, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dvbd/about/prevent-bites.html>

FAQs continued...

Can we visit/early dismiss our child?

We believe camp provides an opportunity for youth to acquire self-reliance, and confidence through achievement in a new environment. We ask that parents/guardians refrain from visiting campers during the camp day, unless there is an emergency. Any person visiting the camp, for any reason, must contact the Camp Director prior. If family plans require you to pick up your child early, contact the Camp Director in advance to make the necessary pick-up arrangements.



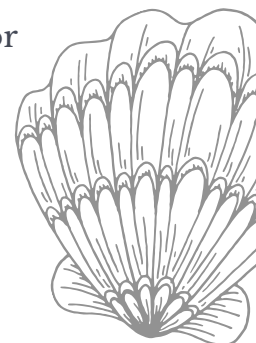
Can I contact you if I am worried about how my child is doing?

It is important for the safety of all campers that our phone line remain available for incoming and outgoing calls. For this reason, we ask that you refrain from calling camp unless you need to change his/her pick-up time or there is an emergency.

What payment methods can we use?

Payment is made in full during the Online registration process.

All Credit Cards are ACCEPTED.

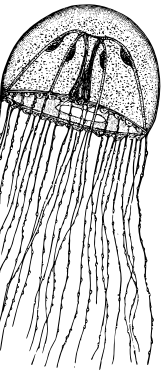


What is the refund policy?

Camp tuition is non-refundable. There will be no pro-rating or reduction of fees based on missed days due to illness or any other absence. Consideration for medical refund requests and extenuating circumstances will be reviewed at the discretion of the CCE Marine Program Director. Medical refund requests must be made by email to: ams838@cornell.edu and must include a doctor's note dated within 5 days of the illness that prevented your child from attending camp. Any refunds will not include credit card processing fees incurred. *We reserve the right to suspend or remove a child from camp due to dangerous or extremely disruptive behavior. Refunds will not be given wherein this decision is necessary.*

What is the cancellation policy?

Requests for a non-transferable refund of 50% may be given **60 days prior** to your registered camp session. This request must be made by email containing the date and time to: ams838@cornell.edu *(Strictly enforced!)*.



CAMP RULES

We ask that you review the camp rules with your child before coming to camp. We have 3 simple rules to create a healthy and happy community:

1. *Be Safe*
2. *Be Respectful*
3. *Have Fun!*

Being safe and respectful means different things to different people. Here are some consequences for specific violations of these rules:

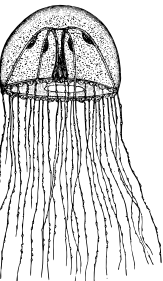
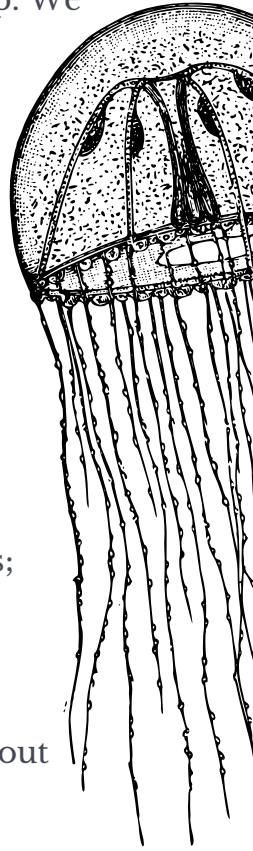
A CAMPER WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE CAMP FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Providing false identification, including falsification of camper's age;
- Possession and/or use of cigarettes, cigars and other tobacco products, and controlled substances;
- Possession and/or use of matches, lighters, candles, and other combustibles;
- Possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages;
- Possession and/or use of a dangerous device, including but not limited to: pocket knife, folding knife, slingshot, firearm, paintball gun;
- Leaving camp property; running away; being in restricted camp areas without permission;
- Sexual, racial, religious or any other form of harassment;
- Theft, vandalism; damaging, destroying or defacing personal or camp property;
- Fighting, bullying, threatening and other forms of violence and aggressive behavior

A PARENT/GUARDIAN WILL BE PHONED and CAMPER MAY BE ASKED TO LEAVE CAMP FOR THE FOLLOWING:

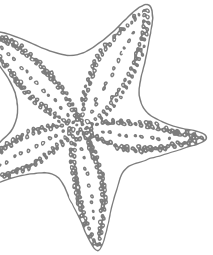
- Non-compliant behavior; failure to comply with camp rules and the reasonable direction of camp staff or failure to adjust to camp routines;
- Non-participation (refusing to participate in programs and activities)
- Disruptive behavior;
- Profanity, obscene gestures, indecent conduct

In the event that a camper is asked to leave camp, the appropriate staff will notify the parents/guardians immediately. The parent MUST provide transportation home for the child. Our goal is to ensure that no camper is injured or adversely affected by the actions of another camper. We will therefore apply camp rules fairly and consistently. Refunds will not be offered to campers who are sent home for violating camp rules.

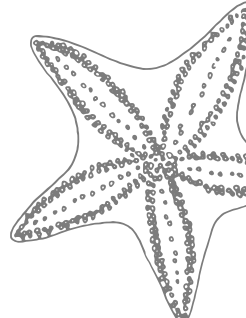


DAILY PACKING LIST

Items to bring to camp everyday:

- 
1. **INSULATED** and **LABELED** water bottle (plastic bottles can be mixed up/lost)
 2. **Snack and lunch** in an insulated bag (we do not have a refrigerator)
 3. **Towel** (for everyday use - like for sitting on during snack and lunch)
 4. **Extra sunscreen** (applied before camp as well)
 5. **Shoes that can get wet** (preferably *not* flip-flops & Crocs, they are difficult to play in)
 6. **Bug Spray** (See FAQs: page 10).

We recommend that campers also bring:

1. **Hat and sunglasses**
 2. **Sneakers and socks**
 3. **Extra change of clothing and a bag to put wet bathing suit in**
- 

We recommend that campers **DO NOT** bring:

1. **Cell phone**
2. **Expensive items** such as a camera
3. **Games**
4. **Sentimentally valued items or jewelry**



GENERAL CAMP ITINERARY

All activities will be based on a different aquatic science/biology topic. Campers will be grouped by grades. Each group will follow their designated itinerary separately, with learning level appropriate material and activities. Groups will periodically combine during activities which do not require separation (i.e. lunch and snack). To view itineraries for specialty weeks, please visit: cornellmarinecamps.com.

PLEASE NOTE: Some of the outdoor activities and field trips are weather dependent and therefore, the itinerary is subject to change on days when the weather is bad or questionable.

Example of a General Itinerary

Typical Daily Schedule

9:00: Check-in at Fuchs
Pond Preserve

9:30-10:00: Outdoor Games
& Activities with group

10:00-10:15: Morning snack

10:15-11:00: Educational
Lesson/Hands-on
Experience

11:00-12:00: Craft

12:00-12:30: Lunch

12:30-1:00: Outdoor Games

1:00-1:45: Nature Walk

1:45-2:00: Pick-up

Weekly Breakdown:

Monday - Welcome Day!

Campers will meet their groups and counselors, meet local marine animals in a hands-on lesson, and will learn about and explore Fuchs Pond Preserve.

Tuesday - Special Guest Craft!

Campers will learn about the ocean in a lesson in our saltwater classroom and will do a mindful craft with our special guest.

Wednesday - Seining Adventure!

Campers will venture outside Fuchs Pond Preserve and learn about the local marine animals that inhabit our coastal waters. Campers will get a chance to seine and collect specimens that they will later learn about.

Thursday - Field Trip or Guest Speaker

Campers will go on an educational field trip or will have a guest speaker visit Fuchs to teach them more about local wildlife.

Friday - Jeopardy

Campers will team up and play Jeopardy with questions about their weekly activities. Campers will make a picture frame craft to remember their week!

DURING CAMP

Partnering with Your Child's Counselors

Developing a relationship with your camper's counselors can lead to a better camp experience for your child. Not only that, but your child will interact with his or her counselors differently than you or their teachers, so there's an opportunity to gain insight into your child's personal development. There are 2 simple questions we encourage you to think about and be prepared to discuss with your child's counselors:

1. *What are my hopes for my child?*
2. *What are my fears for my child?*

Those two simple questions will give our counselors valuable guidance in how they can support your child. We encourage you to take the time to speak with your child's counselors or the Camp Director. Rest assured, our staff are here to support the development of your unique child.

Lost & Found Policy

Please label your child's items, especially water bottles and towels. If your child does lose something, we keep found items in a central location and try our best to reunite them with their owners throughout the day. **Camp will keep these items for no longer than two weeks from the end of the session**, after which, these items will be donated or discarded. Please note that these items will be held at the discretion of camp staff. Items that are soiled, damaged, or otherwise deemed not able to be safely stored will be disposed of.

Foul Weather Policy

Camp will be held rain or shine. During thunderstorms or heavy rain, we will move inside the camp building until the storm passes. Indoors we will continue lessons, play games, do crafts and other activities. Seining activities **may be cancelled due to heavy rain or bacterial events** wherein campers and staff will remain out of the water or return to Fuchs Pond Preserve to continue with a normal camp schedule. Back-up activities and lessons are planned for times such as these. **We are not able to switch field trip days due to bus scheduling and camp permits.** In case of extreme/severe weather or events forecasted for the immediate future (hurricanes, tornadoes, etc.) camp will be cancelled and parents will be notified as soon as the decision is made. If a weather event, such as flooding, worsens throughout the day, parents will be contacted to pick up their children early to prevent unsafe travel.

AFTER CAMP

Questions to Ask Your Camper

Asking your child questions about their camp experience can help them to understand the experience better than if they were left alone. We've provided a list of directed questions to support parents' support their children. We hope this will create a discussion that allows families to analyze their camper's experiences.

- *What new things have you learned about yourself?*
- *Have you learned any skills that you want to continue to develop?*
- *Was there anything that pushed you outside your comfort zone?*
- *Is there anything you would do differently?*
- *Describe an incident or activity at camp that had a special meaning for you.*
- *If you could change one thing about camp, what would it be?*
- *What is your favorite memory from camp?*
- *How can experiences at camp be applied to life and school?*
- *How did you like the campers and leaders?*
- *What can you teach me that you learned at camp?*
- *Finish the sentence, "If I come back to Sea Stars Marine Camp, I will..."*

Stay in Touch

Encourage your camper to write to us or their Sea Stars Marine Camp friends. You can also stay in touch through our Facebook page ([@seastarsmarinecamp](https://www.facebook.com/seastarsmarinecamp)) or Instagram ([@ccemarineprogram](https://www.instagram.com/ccemarineprogram))!

Feedback- Voice Your and Your Camper's Opinions

We want to know how we're doing! Please email the Camp Coordinator, ams838@cornell.edu, with feedback. Your opinions, suggestions and concerns are valued!

