

Boat Ride/ Boardwalk Trip

What You Can Expect

A boat ride field trip to the estuary can easily be incorporated into your curriculum as many North Carolina curricular objectives in science, social studies, and language arts are addressed.

After leaving the dock, the boat ride begins with a discussion about the Rachel Carson Reserve, Rachel Carson and estuary basics. As the boat travels down Taylor's Creek, students will have a waterside view of Town Marsh and a couple of the Reserve's habitats starting with a salt panne, where the water comes in on the high tide and is trapped as the tide recedes. The salt marsh begins at the edge of the panne and includes plants such as salt marsh cordgrass, sea ox-eye, sea lavender, glasswort and black needle rush.



The excursion continues down Taylor's Creek giving students an opportunity to observe some of the birds that make the Rachel Carson Reserve their home. More than 200 species of birds have been observed at this site, which is located within the Atlantic flyway. Twenty-three species are considered rare or decreasing in number. Participants might even get lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the feral horses or bottle-nosed dolphin.

After stepping onto the boardwalk, students will experience marsh and successional dredge spoil habitats, along with a diverse array of plant and wildlife species with minimal impact to the site. Informational displays along the way will highlight interesting facts about the surrounding flora and fauna.

The trip will continue with a boat ride back up Taylor's Creek or along the south side of the island depending on the weather and the tide.

After completing the field experience, students should be able to:

- Describe an estuary.
- Compare and contrast three different estuarine habitats.
- Compare and contrast three different coastal fish habitats.
- Describe the ecological sensitivity of an estuarine system.
- Debate the roles of the horse population on the island.
- Be familiar with Rachel Carson and her influence on the environment.

Our staff looks forward to helping your group have a successful, memorable and educational field experience at the Rachel Carson Reserve.

Please call or email Education Coordinator [Lori Davis](#) at 252-838-0883 with any questions about Guided Nature Hike trips.