



University of New Hampshire

# NEW HAMPSHIRE SEA GRANT Marine Docent Program



The UNH Marine Docents provide a lens through which the marine and associated environments can be viewed, understood and appreciated by people of all ages.

The UNH Marine Docents are a volunteer driven marine education outreach program sponsored by N.H. Sea Grant and UNH Cooperative Extension. Powered by over 230 members, it operates throughout the state of N.H. as well as in the coastal regions of portions of Maine and Mass.

Docents teach, guide tours and lead workshops in small teams to help educate the public on various aspects of marine science at schools, in nature centers and marine labs, aboard boats and in many outdoor venues. Their offerings range from a classroom introduction to tide pool creatures to a family boat-building weekend and from a Discovery Cruise aboard an academic research vessel to a day-long total marine immersion for an entire school.

The docent program has three key components: learning, teaching and community.

**Learning** — Docents-in-training embark on an eight-month series of classes, lectures and other educational experiences. Their teachers include UNH faculty and guest lectures. The subject matter includes a wide range of marine

topics as well as opportunities to learn about the best ways to share what they've learned. As a final project, the new docents team up to develop a complete marine education program about a local marine organism.

**Teaching** — The goal of all the training is to become a confident marine educator. Docents work in teams to teach various programs in an unscripted environment. Their solid background in marine science basics supports significant dialogue between the docents and students, resulting in deeper understanding of the concepts being presented.



Programming opportunities abound, and the available topics vary as widely as the target audiences. SeaTrek Programs are 45-60 minute sessions that showcase an aspect of marine science, such as sandy beaches, octopuses or plate tectonics. Docents also serve as guides at coastal science facilities such as the Seacoast Science Center at Ordiorne Point in Rye, N.H., or the Great Bay Discovery Center on Great Bay in Greenland, N.H.

**Community** — The docents are a community of people who enjoy learning and teaching about the marine world and sharing their passion for it. Members of the program are eager to share their experiences with adults and kids alike. Many of the existing programs were initially created by docents and are constantly refined and supplemented by those same docents.

For more information on the UNH Marine Docents, contact Mark Wiley (mark.wiley@unh.edu, 603.862.6702) or Dari Ward (dari.ward@unh.edu, 603.862.6701).

[www.seagrant.unh.edu/marinedocents](http://www.seagrant.unh.edu/marinedocents)



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