



Marine Advisory Service  
Delaware Sea Grant College Program  
University of Delaware  
Hugh R. Sharp Campus  
700 Pilottown Road  
Lewes, DE 19958



August 18, 2021

Dear Fifth-Grade Teachers and Parents:

On behalf of the Delaware Sea Grant College Program and the University of Delaware's College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment, I am pleased to extend an invitation to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to participate in the Coast Day 2021 essay contest. Coast Day offers students and teachers a unique opportunity to learn more about ocean and coastal environments. This year, Coast Day will be conducted in a hybrid format with activities online and in-person on October 2 & 3, 2021.

The theme of Coast Day 2021 is Storytelling and Science and to go along with this theme, this year's essay is a creative writing assignment. We are asking students to choose an aquatic animal native to Delaware. This can be an animal that lives in the ocean, pond, lake, river or stream. Students will then write a short story about what it's like to be this animal. **Students should think about the habitat the animal lives in, what the animal may eat or what it does to survive, and any challenges the animal might face.** Stories will be judged based on accuracy, creativity, and story development.

The enclosed materials are designed to help guide classroom and dinner table discussions of the topic. Our intent is to create awareness of Delaware's aquatic habitats and native aquatic animals. Student essays must be submitted by mail or email from a teacher, parent, or guardian. The essays must be emailed or postmarked by 5:00 pm on **Friday, October 1, 2021** to David Christopher, Delaware Sea Grant, 700 Pilottown Rd., Lewes, DE 19958 or [dmchrist@udel.edu](mailto:dmchrist@udel.edu).

Awards will be presented to the winning students and their teachers in a special online ceremony in late October, and the winners will be recognized in press releases issued to the media.

While this essay topic does require some thought, the judges also will be looking for accurate descriptions that show students have researched the topic. A reminder that because this is a contest measuring students' aptitude for writing, parents should provide only limited help/guidance. A copy of the judges' scoring sheet is included in this packet, so you can see how different areas are weighted. If you have any questions, please contact me by e-mail at [dmchrist@udel.edu](mailto:dmchrist@udel.edu). Visit [www.decoastday.org](http://www.decoastday.org) for more information.

Sincerely,

David Christopher  
Marine Education Specialist



## Coast Day 2021

**Theme:** Storytelling and Science

This year's Coast Day Theme is Storytelling and Science and to go along with this theme, this year's essay is a creative writing assignment. We are asking students to choose an aquatic animal native to Delaware. This can be an animal that lives in the ocean, pond, lake, river or stream. Students will then write a short story about what it's like to be this animal. Stories will be judged based on accuracy, creativity, and story development.

### **Students should include in their story**

- **A description of the animal**
- **Information on the habitat the animal lives in**
- **What the animal may eat or what it does to survive**
- **Any challenges the animal might face**

**\*Note:** Please include student's name, teacher's name, school name, and word count on each entry.

**Word Count:** Up to 600 words. Please include the word count at the bottom of the essay.

**Deadline:** Submission must be postmarked or emailed by 5:00 pm on Friday, October 1, 2021.

Submissions may be mailed or emailed to:

David Christopher  
Delaware Sea Grant  
700 Pilottown Rd.  
Lewes, DE 19958  
[dmchrist@udel.edu](mailto:dmchrist@udel.edu)

### **Prizes will be awarded to the winning essayists:**

First prize: \$100 bookstore gift card

Second prize: \$75 bookstore gift card

Third prize: \$50 bookstore gift card

Essay writers receiving honorable mention and teachers of winning students will also be recognized!

**Questions?** Contact David Christopher at [dmchrist@UDel.edu](mailto:dmchrist@UDel.edu)

## Teacher's Aids:

The books and websites below are a great starting point for both teachers and students.

This contest can also be used to meet Delaware State Science, Social Studies, and English/Language Arts standards. A few examples of standards related to this essay theme are highlighted below.

### Sample Vocabulary

adaptation, biome, brackish, climate, community, conservation, cooperation, ecosystem, energy, environment, erosion, estuary, freshwater, habitat, marine, nutrients, predator, prey, runoff, saltwater, scavenger, water quality, watershed

### Web Resources

#### Cape May – Lewes Ferry

<https://www.cmlf.com/sea-life-seen-ferry>

#### DNREC

<https://www.delawarewatersheds.org/>

<https://perspectives.dnrec.delaware.gov/stories/s/The-Horseshoe-Crab-A-Keystone-Species/v3f5-m3tj/>

#### US Fish & Wildlife Service

<https://www.fws.gov/delawarebay/>

#### Chesapeake Bay Foundation

<https://www.cbf.org/about-the-bay/more-than-just-the-bay/chesapeake-wildlife/index.html>

#### NOAA

<https://www.chesapeakebay.net/discover/field-guide>

### Books

- Life in the Chesapeake Bay by Alice Lipson & Robert Lipson. ISBN: 978-0801883385
- Delaware Wildlife: A Folding Pocket Guide to Familiar Animals by James Kavanagh. ISBN: 978-1583556252
- Birds of Maryland & Delaware Field Guide: Includes Washington, D.C. & Chesapeake Bay by Stan Tekiela. ISBN: 978-1591931201

## Delaware/Next Generation Science Standards & Common Core Content Standards

Reprinted in part from: <http://www.nextgenscience.org> and <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/commoncore/ela/teachertoolkit/geninfo.shtml>.

### Next Generation Science Standards

*5-LS2 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics*

- **LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems**
- **LS2.B: Cycles of Matter and Energy Transfer in Ecosystems**

*5-ESS3-1 Earth and Human Activity*

- **ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems**

### Common Core English Language Arts Standards – Writing – Grade 5

*Text Types and Purposes*

- CC.5.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CC.5.W.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

*Production and Distribution of Writing*

- CC.5.W.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CC.5.W.5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

*Research to Build and Present Knowledge*

- CC.5.W.7. Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- CC.5.W.8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.

### Common Core English Language Arts Standards – Language – Grade 5

*Conventions of Standard English*

- CC.5.L.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- CC.5.L.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

*Knowledge of Language*

- CC.5.L.3.a. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

*Vocabulary Acquisition and Use*

- CC.5.L.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (e.g., *however, although, nevertheless, similarly, moreover, in addition*).



## Coast Day 2021 Delaware Student Essay Contest

**Name:**

**School:**

**Teacher:**

**5 = Excellent**  
**2 = Below average**

**4 = Above average**  
**1 = Poor**

**3 = Average**  
**0 = Did not attempt/show**

### **Content (20 points)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Essay shows overall understanding of subject matter and clearly and accurately addresses the topic. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student has met and followed requirements and criteria of the writing prompt. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student has included information from suggested/relevant resources and sample vocabulary. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Essay includes only factual, accurate information—scientific, historic, etc. (5)

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

### **Originality & Creativity (20 points)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Student creates a meaningful connection to the reader. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student uses imagery and word choice to create an engaging story. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student takes fresh approach to subject, addressing topic in a creative way. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student uses interesting organization or storytelling techniques to present the story in an original manner. (5)

### **Organization (15 points)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Essay has a strong beginning that draws the reader into the text. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paragraphs are focused, and transition smoothly, connecting ideas and creating a sense of flow. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Essay has a logical order and leads the reader through the text, including a clear beginning, middle, and end. (5)

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

### **Grammar and Spelling (10 points)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Essay demonstrates correct use of sentence structure and punctuation. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student uses correct spelling and capitalization. (5)

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

\_\_\_\_\_ **Final Score (65 points possible)**