

Fish Identification Program

Grade Level: All

Summary: The fish identification program is a part of MarineLab's core curriculum. Students will learn the best field marks to use to identify a fish, behavioral characteristics of specific family, and learn how to identify fish species that we commonly see on Key Largo's reefs. The students are then taken out into the water to put what they learned into practice! All boats are equipped with fish identification cards. Level 1(grades 5-8) and Level 2 (grades 9-12) curriculum used accordingly (same concepts, varied classroom teaching methodology).

**** two service learning options available (Both options includes data collection and are best suited for advanced students.)**

**** advanced options utilizing research techniques are available**

Program Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify some of the more common coral reef fish species in the Florida Keys. **Elementary version focuses more on ID of fish families.**
- Students will be able to use the proper field marks to discuss fish with marine biologist staff or look up fish species using ID cards kept on the boat.

Concepts Covered:

- Identification of fish by field marks
- Basic external anatomy of a fish
- Associating behaviors and habitats with body shapes
- Distinguishing shape and behavior of common fish families
- Identifying characteristics and adaptations of specific families and/or species

Vocabulary: field mark, caudal fin, dorsal, ventral, operculum, lateral line, anal fin, square/lunate/forked caudal fins, carnivore/omnivore/herbivore, ambush predator, opportunistic feeder, hydrodynamic, territoriality, mimicry, sexual dimorphism

Procedures: Students have a one hour long discussion with MarineLab staff which includes methods to ID fish, characteristics and behaviors to look for, and a slideshow with pictures and videos to help students ID fish when in the field. **Elementary students will cover the same core material but a hands on portion is incorporated and fewer fish families and species are covered.**

Extensions: we have two service learning options available, parrotfish feeding data collected by students is available via our in house database

Resources: www.reef.org, <http://www.fishid.com/>, <http://www.fishbase.org/search.php>



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