

# BroadneckPatch

## Horseshoe Crabs Day at Sandy Point State Park

By Laura Tayman | May 26, 2011

The Harbour School and Broadneck Elementary are among the schools participating in culminating event with DNR.



On a beautiful beach of [Sandy Point State Park](#) all week, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is hosting *Raising Horseshoe Crabs in the Classroom* field days for students of schools participating in a special program about this important species.

These students have been involved in a year-long partnership program with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that teaches Maryland students about horseshoe crabs management. At the end of the day, students release their own horseshoe crabs into the Chesapeake Bay, culminating their year of learning.

“This is a great opportunity for the students to celebrate what they have learned, release horseshoe crabs they have raised, and participate in a host of hands-on activities,” said Stacy Epperson, DNR education specialist.

The program leads teachers and students through the scientific process of raising horseshoe crabs where they continuously collect valuable scientific information. The DNR provides participating teachers with the equipment, an activity guide, and the horseshoe crab eggs to support “the learning of ecological, medical and historical importance of the species.”

Local schools participating include [The Harbour School](#) and [Broadneck Elementary](#).

The program required participating teachers to attend a six-hour training workshop where they learned about the life history, management, and development of both eggs and

juvenile horseshoe crabs. They also received horseshoe crab eggs collected by DNR biologists, and learned how to set up and maintain an aquarium and review lesson plans. The program accepts 30 new teachers each year.

“The field day included visiting several stations where students learn about the horseshoe crab’s life history, the ecological relationship between the crabs and migratory shorebirds, and horseshoe crab and shorebird adaptations for survival,” said Epperson.

Volunteer Teal Dimitrie of Towson University led the “adaptation” station, quizzing students on what they had learned during the year about the physical adaptations of shorebirds.

“Environmental education is my passion,” said Dimitrie. “I love to get kids thinking about these issues.”

Sheila Eyler of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed participants real live crabs, and emphasized crab anatomy and life history.

“For the most part, the kids are coming well-prepared,” she observed. “It looks like many of them have learned a lot of great things.”