

# Mission-Aransas Research Reserve

## Education is Change on the Ground



2022

### Connect



186,189 acres of coastal habitat  
5,583 visitors to the reserve Wetland Education Center in Port Aransas and Bay Education Center in Rockport



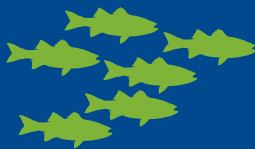
### Prepare

13 teachers trained  
3,531 students engaged  
7,675 contact hours

### Improve



395 hours of volunteer engagement



*"I enjoyed this workshop and look forward to using these ideas, materials, and information."*

Jenny Vander Pluym

*"Great workshop! I am taking away a lot of information I had no knowledge of. Thanks!"*

Elizabeth Johnson

## Visitor Connections

The Bay Education Center is open and welcoming visitors from all over the country. Situated in the small town of Rockport, the Bay Education Center informs visitors on the local estuarine habitat with a variety of informational graphics and hands-on exhibits. The gem of the Center is the Science on a Sphere. Programs invite visitors to watch a short video or observe real-time datasets. This popular educational attraction allows staff to engage with visitors while presenting short snapshots of information. The stimulating content always leads to conversations between the audience and the presenter.

## Education Programs on the Rise

The University of Texas Marine Science Institute campus fully recovers from the damage caused by hurricane Harvey! This means that the Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) education team has indoor spaces to provide exploration and hands-on experiences. The Patton Center for Marine Science Education opened to the public in October 2022. This building is the main space for education programs including field trips, public programs, and visitor space. The indoor aquatic tanks represent the estuarine habitats that can be visited in the outdoor space at the Wetlands Education Center, which provides a real time example of the importance of estuaries and wetlands. The number of schools visiting is expected to increase as local teachers are excited to bring their students for this indoor and outdoor adventure. Increased public visitation has the education team excited for a busy summer season.



## Helping Hands

The Volunteer program consists of 55 volunteers that help with daily tasks. This last year, the Education staff worked hard to rebuild this program by engaging existing volunteers and recruiting new ones. With education programs ramping up and a staff of three, volunteers allow the reserve to engage more students at both Rockport and Port Aransas facilities. The Education staff could not handle the large number of students without volunteer assistance. As public programs continue to grow and new ones developed, volunteers will be the backbone that supports the Mission-Aransas NERR goals and initiatives.

Texas's Mission-Aransas Reserve is one of 30 sites in the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. Each site is a state federal partnership that combines research, monitoring, and education to advance the understanding and management of estuarine environments.



# National Estuarine Research Reserve Education Change on the Ground in 2022

## Connects

People to Estuaries

**1 million+  
ACRES**

of natural classrooms & living laboratories with



**26 INTERPRETIVE  
CENTERS**



*Hello to the  
Connecticut  
Reserve,  
designated  
in 2022!*



**296,131  
VISITORS**

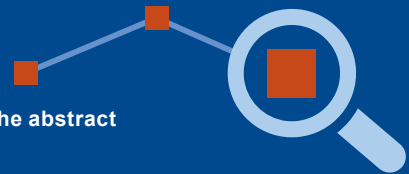
learn about estuaries through Research Reserve outreach & education

## Prepares

the Next Generation

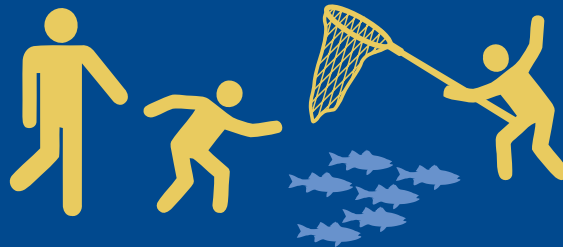
**54,773  
STUDENTS**

take learning out of the abstract & into the outdoors



**4,347  
TEACHERS**

are trained in the estuary & supported in the classroom



### SKILLS BUILT

- ✓ Observation
- ✓ Asking research questions
- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Data driven decision making

ESTUARY SCIENCE

LOCAL DATA

LAB WORK

FIELD INVESTIGATION

## Improves

the Environment

**10,570  
CITIZENS**

are trained & inspired to protect their coasts & estuaries



### VOLUNTEER ACTIONS

- ✓ Protect wildlife
- ✓ Monitor water quality
- ✓ Plant native species
- ✓ Clean up the coasts

**30 RESEARCH RESERVE  
EDUCATORS**

lead programs that foster coastal stewardship in communities in 25 states



Creating value through education  
37,371 volunteer hours = \$1,119,261\*