

Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Join Us for a Discovery Lab!

Discovery Labs are provided every month by the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (CBNERR). These labs provide fun, family-friendly opportunities to learn about the Chesapeake Bay and our local environment. Each lab focuses on a different topic and includes exhibits, demonstrations, and hands-on activities for kids and adults. Most labs also include a short presentation by an expert on the topic. CBNERR Discovery Labs are located at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in Gloucester Point.

Discovery Lab
Web page:



Labs take place from 6:00-8:00 pm.
The speaker presentation occurs from 6:30-7:00 pm.

While the labs are free, registration is required.
Register at: http://www.vims.edu/cbnerr/education/public_programs/index.php

2014 Schedule!

January 21 – Rays

Speaker: Bob Fisher, VIMS

Rays—disc-shaped cousins of sharks and skates—are common inhabitants of Chesapeake Bay. Join Bob Fisher, a fisheries and seafood technology specialist at VIMS, as he describes the importance of rays in the Bay ecosystem and explores whether a ray fishery might help reduce their reported consumption of farmed shellfish. The lab will offer a ray tasting, a look at the distribution of rays around the world, information about the dangers of ray “stingers,” and activities to distinguish rays from skates. The lab will focus on the Cownose Ray.



February 18 – Deep Sea

Speaker: Sarah Huber, VIMS

Despite cold water, a lack of light, and intense pressure, deep-sea canyons are home to a remarkable variety of crabs, shrimps, corals, and fishes. Sarah Huber, collection manager for the VIMS Ichthyology Collection, will use specimens from this renowned “fish library” to introduce some of the common residents of deep-sea canyons and to show what it takes to live in this unique environment.



March 18 – Wetlands

Speaker: Scott Lerberg, CBNERR

Wetlands—areas of change between land and water—provide critical habitat for hundreds of species of fish, birds, mammals, and invertebrates. Join CBNERR Stewardship Coordinator Scott Lerberg as he explores the diversity of wetlands in Virginia with a focus on how sea-level rise will affect the tidal wetlands that fringe large areas of Chesapeake Bay. Join us for this family-friendly, hands-on lab.



April 15 – Antarctica

Speaker: Brandon Conroy, VIMS

Do you love playing in the snow? Have you ever wanted to visit Antarctica? Then this lab is for you! Join Brandon Conroy, a VIMS graduate student who has spent time at Antarctica's Palmer Station for his research, to explore a fascinating world of penguins, plankton, and icebergs. Participants will see a snow-covered lab and even make their own snow! Microscopes, games, and kid's crafts will all be a part of the evening's fun.



June 10 – Horseshoe Crabs

Speaker: Chris Petrone, Delaware Sea Grant

Horseshoe crabs are among Earth's oldest and most remarkable creatures. These living fossils have inhabited our waters for more than 300 million years—appearing millions of years before the dinosaurs—and have changed little during that time. Join us to observe live specimens, learn about research involving horseshoe crabs, and engage in a fun-filled evening of children's activities.



July 15 - Turtles

Speaker: Diane Tulipani, VIMS Graduate

Chesapeake Bay is home to many kinds of turtles, including both fresh and saltwater species. Join recent VIMS graduate Diane Tulipani for an introduction to turtle biology and ecology, with a focus on the diamondback terrapins she studies. Observe turtle specimens—including the leatherback, green, Atlantic Ridley, and loggerhead sea turtles that visit Chesapeake Bay—and gain information on research involving all types of turtles common to our area.



August 19 – Scallops

Speaker: Mark Luckenbach, VIMS

Bay scallops, once an important part of Virginia's seafood industry, nearly went extinct in the early 1930s due to disease and an intense hurricane. Join Mark Luckenbach, Associate Dean of Research and Advisory Services at VIMS, as he describes the life history of scallops and explores efforts to re-establish a population of bay scallops to the seaside bays of Virginia's Eastern Shore. Observe live specimens, test scallop vision, make scallop crafts, and more!



October 21 – Mad Lab

Explore the wonders of dry ice, slime, and things that glow in the dark! This Halloween-themed lab will have many hands-on activities to help you explore the creepy, yucky, and slimy parts of science. We encourage you to dress up for this event as your trick-or-treat your way around the lab. Brave the dark and you may win prizes for the best marine-themed costume or most creative costume. There will be no speaker for this lab.

