

Sunday, March 8, 2009

## Biscayne Nature Center Seagrass Adventure

On March 8, I participated at the Seagrass adventure event at the Biscayne Nature Center. Before going out into the water, we went over a few rules on how to behave and how to catch fish. The instructor taught us how to walk, how to hold the net, and what to expect. As a big group, we caught many different types of sea life and the instructors talked to us a little bit about each one. It was a very interesting learning experience.

Seagrass literally looks like like leaves in shallow waters. They because it is food and provides other sea creatures depend their not taken care of, then many important to not pollute or



grass in the sea. They are long ribbon- are very important to the ecosystem shelter for marine life. Many fish and lives on the seagrass. If the seagrass is species could die. That is why it is very damage the environment.

Before going into the water, the instructor taught us how to walk and catch things with our nets. She taught us good techniques and tips on getting fast fish. We had to walk dragging our feet without



lifting them because sometimes there are stingrays and we could get stung if we frighten them. By dragging our feet on the sand, we send vibrations throughout warning the stingrays to move away because they like sleeping under the sand. We also had to walk with the nets by our side or in front of us because if we walk in front of the nets, we will scare all the fish and we will never catch anything. Like mentioned, there is a lot of

sea life in between the seagrass and in order to know what kind of creatures live within, we need to catch them.

The most commonly caught fish was the pipe fish. This is the only fish that I caught as well. As the name says it all, it is a long fish that looks like a pipe. There were many of these in between the seagrass. They are very good at camouflaging. The one that I caught was yellowish, but as the instructor put all



the pipe fish in one tank for us to see, there were browns as well. When I caught it, I thought it was a seahorse at first glance. They are related to sea horses and look just like them but straight instead of curved. Just like the sea horse, the pipe fish females lay their eggs in the males pouch for it to carry until they hatch.

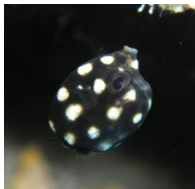




The puffer fish was a tiny fish that puffs up to 2 to 3 times its size when it is frightened. The porcupine fish have sharp spines. They are not able to swim fast since their fins are so small but that is why they blow up for protection since they can't run

away.

We also caught a round ball of spines which I right away knew as a sea urchin. There are many different colored sea urchins but the one we caught was a dark red color. Sea urchins do not have any eyes or legs and I thought that they could not move or swim but I learned that they are capable of moving freely on surfaces with their adhesive tube feet. In Japan, we eat sea urchin raw as sushi, and it just made me think of whether you can just grab any wild sea urchin or if some of them are poisonous. Fortunately, I do not like sea urchin so I had no desire to eat it.



There was one person who found a small black marble in their net. They didn't know what it was and when they went to the instructor, apparently it was a baby trunkfish! We had two of those, and an adult trunkfish as well. It was surprising the big difference

between the baby and the adult! They grow so big compared to how small they are when they are born. The adult trunkfish was a beautiful yellow. They are also known as boxfish. They have a box-like shaped body and this prevents them from being able to swim fast.



There were a few more sea creatures that we had caught such as a shrimp and a crab. Our instructor mentioned that these were a few of the many types of sea life in the seagrass. She told us that the seagrass is very important for many lives. She did mention a few of the other animals that could be lurking in between.

Fish is not the only type of sea life found in the seagrass. There are also different types of algae such as the green algae and the sargassum. The green algae seemed very common, something you can find at any beach. There are over 6,000 types of algae and today we found 2 types. The other type was brown algae named sargassum. They were very different from other algae because they seemed to have small bubbles that looked like berries.



After participating at this event, I got to know more about the ecosystem and its importance. I didn't even know anything about the seagrass or that it even existed so this was a very interesting learning experience. Even after this day, I see some sargassum at a regular beach and it reminded me of this activity that we did. Knowing that there are many sea creatures in every part of the ocean, I will not do anything to harm them or their environment.