VIRTUAL EXPLORATION OF GEORGIA'S COASTAL WETLANDS

Teacher Guide

Lesson 1: Welcome to the Wetland

Welcome to a virtual exploration of Georgia's coastal wetlands!

A series of five lessons will introduce students to the salt marsh ecosystem and the monitoring protocols scientists and managers use to evaluate, protect and conserve natural resources.

A set of **pre-video questions** are provided below for you to ask students as you begin the series.

A set of **post-video questions** and some **interesting facts** are provided to engage students in a discussion after the introductory video, 'Welcome to the Wetland.'

PRE-VIDEO QUESTIONS:

1. **How many miles of coastline does Georgia have?**
   Answer: 100 miles

2. **How many acres of salt marsh does Georgia have?**
   Answer: 378,000 acres

3. **How many barrier islands are there along the coast of Georgia?**
   Answer: 14

4. **Why is the salt marsh important?**
   Answer: There are many reasons salt marsh ecosystems are important. They provide food and habitat, protect surrounding areas from pollution and flooding, support coastal economies, provide opportunities for recreation, and much more!

POST-VIDEO QUESTIONS

1. **What are some features of coastal wetlands?**
   Answer: Salt-tolerant grasses, salty or brackish water, invertebrates like fiddler crabs and periwinkle snails.

2. **What are some current and future threats to coastal wetlands?**
   Answer: Pollution, development, sea level rise and climate change

3. **What are some ways you can help protect coastal wetlands?**
   Answer: Monitoring, picking up trash, and avoiding the use of harsh chemicals

FACTS ABOUT GEORGIA'S SALT MARSH:

- Georgia has one-third of the remaining salt marsh on the eastern seaboard.
- The salt marsh acts like a sponge, protecting coastal communities from storm surge, flooding and pollution.
- Georgia marshlands and tidal creeks were created as a result of melting glaciers.
- The salt marsh provides a nursery for juvenile fish, crabs, turtles and more.
- Scientists believe Georgia's salt marshes will adapt to sea level rise by migrating slowly inland.
- Georgia's salt marshes support a thriving seafood industry that supplies shrimp, blue crab, fish and jellyfish to many parts of the world, including the northeastern United States and parts of Asia.
- Right whales, turtles, and other threatened species benefit from the highly-productive salt marsh.

References

1. *https://gacoast.uga.edu/about/georgia-coast/salt-marsh-ecology/*
2. *https://georgiawildlife.com/salt-marsh*