



Students at the North Carolina Aquarium take a look at marshes that surround the Fort Fisher facility.

What lives in an estuary?

Estuaries are coastal areas where sea water mixes with fresh water, primarily from rivers. Nutrients carried downstream are trapped in the estuary, creating fertile ground for the growth of a wide variety of diverse plant life. This, in turn, supports the habitats of many different animals. Because estuaries are protected from the wave action of the open sea, they are also perfect nursery grounds for a large variety of important shellfish and finfish.

North Carolina has more square

miles of estuarine waters than any state on the East Coast. Our estuaries vary considerably -- from broad, shallow sounds like the Albemarle and the Pamlico, to narrow bodies of water, such as Currituck Sound. Different water levels, types of basins, tidal patterns, salt levels, temperature and types of sediment make each estuary unique and define the types of habitats and organisms found there.

The coastal marsh is just one habitat found in North Carolina's estuar-

ine system. Coastal marshes are valuable, productive wetlands that are sometimes flooded, depending on the tides. There are four kinds of coastal marsh habitats in our estuaries: Low salt marshes, high salt marshes, brackish marshes and freshwater marshes.

The low salt marsh is the foundation of the estuarine food web and as such is relied upon in some way by most living things in the estuary. Salt marsh cordgrass is one of the most important plant species in this habitat. Cordgrass is especially suited to the drastically changing salinities, temperatures and water levels in the low salt marsh. It stabilizes the fine particles of clay and silt that are deposited by the estuary's slow current by creating a network of roots and stems that hold the soft soil together. Cordgrass also protects the mainland from erosion by slowing down the force from incoming waves and tides.

Cordgrass is important to the animals in the low salt marsh as well. It is one of the most important producers in the estuarine food web. When the plant dies back each fall and is washed into the estuary, its tissues are broken down by bacteria into detritus. Detritus is a primary food source for many aquatic animals.

Several types of snails live among the cordgrass, including marsh periwinkles. They eat algae that grows on its stalks, and they use the stalks as an escape from the rising tide. Ribbed mussels, oysters and fiddler crabs are found in the low salt marsh habitat. Bird and mammals also forage in the low salt marsh. Egrets, herons, willets and osprey are just a few of the birds that rely on the low salt marsh for food. Raccoons, meadow mice and even bats venture into the marsh for a meal.

Fewer animals use the high salt marsh for food. High salt marshes are the areas where daily tidal flooding in the low salt marsh has created a build-up of fine sediment. Soil elevation increases and shrubs gradually move into the upland edge of these zones. Salt meadow cordgrass, salt grass, sea ox-eye, black needlerush and glasswort become more common. Marsh elder and wax myrtle are among the shrubs that are prevalent in this area. Insect-eating birds like the red-winged blackbird, meadowlark and seaside sparrow nest in the high marsh. Other common animals here include the sandfiddler crab, marsh crab and meadow marsh.

Send your questions to Ask the Aquarium, North Carolina Aquariums, 417 North Blount Street, Raleigh, NC 27601.

Now introducing LP GAS

Get ready for the fall season...



featuring... MAJESTIC

MANSFIELD BROTHERS

Heating & A/C, Inc.
(910) 457-4409

4510 Long Beach Road SE
Southport, NC 28461
457-4775 (fax)

LP Gas, Inc.
(910) 457-6003

Room to do Nothing.

Best of Times Weekend

Time with family. Time with friends. Time for yourself.



Introducing the Best of Times Weekend from Sumner Suites.

A weekend designed to give you more of what matters most -- time. You'll have a roomy living area with a comfy sofa sleeper. Wet bar. Coffee maker. Under-the-counter refrigerator. Plus a cozy separate sleep area. And complimentary, expanded continental breakfast buffet. Splash in our swimming pool. Work out in our fitness center. Or just do nothing at all. Whatever you like. The weekend is yours. Call about our special Best of Times Weekend rate.*

SUMNER SUITES
MORE ROOM FOR FUN

Sumner Suites • Charlotte Coliseum
4119 South Stream Blvd. • Charlotte, NC 28217
704-357-8555 • Fax: 704-357-1488

*Subject to availability.

CALL 1-800-74-SUITE FOR RESERVATIONS
www.sumnersuites.com



Clipper Coach Mobile Pet Grooming

A complete grooming shop on wheels
All cats & dogs under 50 pounds pampered in your driveway

Call 523-0206(mobile#) for an appointment today

JONES Ford

QUALITY • VALUE • SAFETY

'99 Taurus

America's Family Car
★★★★★
Five Star Safety Rating



1.9%
or
\$500

4.9%



'99 Crown Victoria

V-8, rear wheel drive, full size, 6 passenger, luxury, power everything

★★★★★
Five Star Safety Rating

'99 Ranger

1.9% or \$500



'99 Explorer

1.9%



Standard 4 doors
4.9% '99 F-150s



'99 F-250s
Turbo Diesel, Automatic, Loaded

Get Both Low Interest and Rebate!!!

'98 Escorts



You Get Both 0.9% & \$1000

'98 Contours



You Get Both 0.9% & \$1000

'98 Mustangs



You Get Both 0.9% or \$1000

'98 E150 CARGO VAN



\$2000 OR \$1000 & 3.9%

'98 Explorers



0.9%/48 mos. & \$500*
3.9%/60 mos. & \$500*

'98 EXPEDITION Eddie Bauer 4X4



\$1000 REBATE

QUALITY PROGRAM DEALS

'97 TOWN CAR



leather, V-8, ABS, front wheel drive, power everything, P716
\$26,995

'97 EXPLORER XLT



4 dr., V-6, auto, air, cruise, power everything, 5302A
\$22,995

'97 Taurus GL



Auto, V-6, A/C, cassette, cruise, ABS, power everything, P889
\$15,997 \$14,997
SALE PRICE \$13,997

'96 VILLAGER 7 passenger, V-6, automatic, dual air, fully loaded, 27K, P733	\$17,995
'98 MUSTANG Automatic, air, V-6, cass., cruise, power everything, P723	\$17,995
'95 THUNDERBIRD LX V-8, automatic, air, cass., cruise, power everything, 31K, 6042A	\$12,995
'97 EXPLORER SPORT 4X4 2 door, leather, chrome wheels, cass., cruise, power everything, P751	\$23,500
'98 ESCORT SE automatic, A/C, AM/FM cass., P748	NEW \$14,010 \$11,995
'98 TRACER LS Automatic, A/C, AM/FM cass., P754	\$11,995
'96 CONTINENTAL V-8, 23-c, leather, AM/FM cass., P755	NEW \$43,725 \$21,995
'97 EXPEDITION 4LT 4X4 V-8, dual A/C, third seat, leather, only 14K P744	\$30,995
'96 EXPLORER SPORT 4X4 2 door, V-6, automatic, cass., cruise, 26K P747	NEW \$28,560 \$21,500
'97 CONTINENTAL V-8, leather, power moonroof, fully loaded, AM/FM cass. & CD, power everything P756	NEW \$42,350 \$23,995
'96 WINDSTAR V-6, dual A/C, 7 passenger, 29K, cass., cruise, power everything, ABS, P743	\$17,995
'96 WINDSTAR V-6, dual air, 7 passenger, cass., cruise, power everything, ABS, 22K P741	\$17,995
'98 CLUB WAGON XLT 15 passenger, dual air, V-10, power everything P732	\$22,990
'98 PROG. MERCURY SABLE V-6, auto, air, cass., cruise, pwr. everything, ABS, P718	\$16,995 \$15,990
'97 PROGRAM TAURUS LX V-6, ABS, auto, air, cass., cruise, all pwr. P706	\$15,995
'98 MUSTANG GT 10k, AM/FM, cass., CD, cruise, power everything, P744	\$19,995
'97 PROG. COUGAR XR7 auto, air, cass., cruise, power windows & locks, 13k, P690	\$14,995 \$13,995
'97 PROGRAM SABLE GS V-6, auto, air, cass., cruise, ABS, all pwr. P711	\$16,995 \$13,990
'97 TAURUS SHO V-8, auto, air, cassette w/CD, cruise, power everything, power moonroof, P720	\$20,995
'97 CROWN VICTORIA LX 13K, V-8, rear wheel drive, ABS, power everything, P745	\$19,995
'98 PROG. MYSTIQUE Auto, air, cassette, cruise, power everything, P726	\$14,995 \$13,995
'98 PROG. WINDSTAR GL 7-Pass, ABS, 200 hp, V-6, cruise, dual air, power everything, P724	\$19,995
'97 CONTOUR GL PROGRAM Automatic, air, cass., cruise, power everything U777	Was \$21,000 \$10,995
'98 CONTOUR GL Automatic, air, cass., cruise, ABS, power everything P729	Was \$22,000 \$12,880
'94 LINCOLN MARK VIII 280 hp, V-8, leather, 49K, power everything, 5479B	\$14,995

QUALITY PRE-OWNED DEALS

'98 LINCOLN TOWN CAR



V-8, rear wheel drive, leather, 10K, warranty to 50K, light blue, U411
\$31,995

'93 VOLVO 240



Auto, air, cassette, power everything, 63k, extra clean, 5365A
\$11,995
\$10,995

'97 F-250 XLT SUPERCAB 4X4



Auto, V-8, cassette, cruise, loaded, trailer tow, #6010
\$21,995

'96 MUSTANG Automatic, V-6, air, cass., cruise, 36K, power everything, one owner, local trade 5465A	\$12,995
'98 F-150 air, AM/FM cass., 4K miles, sport pkg., chrome wheels, 2-tone paint 5444A	\$16,995
'92 GRAND MARQUIS LS V-8, rear wheel drive, leather, cruise, cass., power everything #5225A	\$8,995

EASY TO DEAL WITH
Thank you for shopping at Jones Ford.
WE do not add for administrative fee, dealer prep or other padded charges.

24-HOUR ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

JONES Ford

Hwy. 17 N., Shallotte • 754-4341 • 1-800-832-5328
SALES: Mon.-Fri. 8-7, Sat. 9-4 • SERVICE: Mon.-Fri. 7:30-5:30