

Get to Know Long Island Sound: Maritime Aquarium's 'Marine Life Encounter' Cruises Start in May

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Get a deeper new appreciation for Long Island Sound when you meet some of its resident fish, crabs and other creatures, brought up wriggling and wet right out of the water right before your eyes, during a Marine Life Encounter Cruise offered by The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk.

— an announcement from the [Maritime Aquarium](#)

These fun and memorable outings will be offered on most Saturdays and Sundays in May and June, with departures at 1:15 p.m. (There is no cruise on May 11.) Beginning June 25, 2019 they'll run daily Tuesdays through Sundays through the summer.

The 2.5-hour cruises give participants close-up, often hands-on introductions to a variety of fish, crabs, mollusks and other animals brought up onto the Aquarium's research vessel.

“Any boat ride is fun, but the Aquarium's cruises offer the exciting bonus of giving participants an amazing window into what's below the waves,” said Aquarium spokesman Dave Sigworth.

The Marine Life Encounter Cruises bring up animals from different levels of the Sound's depths. A video microscope hooked up to a giant-screen monitor provides a magnified look at wriggly plankton gathered at the sunlit surface.

Sponges, mollusks, worms and tiny crabs are revealed to be hiding in a sample from the muddy bottom. And

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everyone inspects the trawl net's bounty: varieties of fish, crabs, mollusks and always a few surprises; maybe squid; maybe even a small shark!

Maritime Aquarium educators involve participants in the processes, including sorting through samples, logging data, helping to pull in the trawl net and returning animals to the water.

“Every cruise is different depending on what animals come up onto the boat,” Sigworth said. “And it is the thrill of witnessing first-hand how alive Long Island Sound is — even within sight of Manhattan — that will best inspire stewardship on behalf of the Sound.”

Besides being fun and eye-opening, Marine Life Encounter Cruises also contribute to local scientific research. Water-chemistry and weather readings are taken. And details about the animals brought onboard are entered into the Aquarium’s Long Island Sound Biodiversity Project, a database of physical and biological features available online to teachers and researchers.

Cruises take place aboard R/V Spirit of the Sound, the first research vessel in the country with quiet and “green” hybrid-electric propulsion.

Through June 30, cost of a Marine Life Encounter Cruise is \$29.95 per person (\$24.95 for Maritime Aquarium members).

The Maritime Aquarium’s cruises are perfect for family fun. However, all passengers must be at least 42 inches tall. Participants under age 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Capacity is limited so reservations are strongly recommended. Walk-up tickets will be sold space permitting.

Cruises depart from the dock near the Aquarium's IMAX Theater entrance.

Marine Life Encounter Cruises also are available by charter for schools, camps, Scouts and other groups.

To reserve your spot or for more details, go to this Web page on [the Maritime Aquarium website](#) or call (203) 852-0700, ext. 2206.