

Dimensions of living

Turtle time at school...

Scientist shares knowledge with community's teens

Smithtown students got a shell of a lesson about turtles when the Science Department of Smithtown High School and the Smithtown middle schools welcomed research scientist Mariana Fuentes to present the assembly "Sea Turtles: Habits, Habitats, and Human Impact" to each of the secondary schools.

At the high schools, attending students came from various classes, such as Oceans, Marine Ecology, AP Environmental Science and Science Research. Ms. Fuentes spoke about sea turtle characteristics, human impact on sea turtle populations, and her research on turtle feeding selectivity. Highlights included her descriptions of turtle rodeo, a method used by scientists to gather turtles using boats. Video clips of nesting mothers and emerging baby turtles also stirred

interest among the students.

At the middle schools, Ms. Fuentes presented the eighth grade assembly with a power point slide show. Students learned about turtle features, nesting habits, and related human impact. The presentation concluded with an interactive skit in which students played the roles of baby turtles, crabs, hotel developers, and beach goers, while a teacher played the role of the nesting mother turtle. The skit was an entertaining and effective means for students to understand the threats to turtles highlighted in the presentation.

Ms. Fuentes reflected on various aspects of the New York State standards in her presentation. She was also a wonderful role model for students interested in the field of marine science or scientific research.



TURTLE TALK: Research scientist Mariana Fuentes, who recently presented an assembly on sea turtles at Smithtown School District secondary schools, with a juvenile hawksbill turtle off the shores of Barbados.