

Biomes demonstration puts Hopkins Hill students up close to sea creatures

NK-based marine education center hits the road for lessons



Kendra Leigh Miller • Daily Times

Jessika Hanlon and Emmy Battista learn to hold and observe a horseshoe crab.

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COVENTRY — Students at Hopkins Hill Elementary School had a rare opportunity Friday to see marine life up close and personal when a representative from Biomes in North Kingstown showed off sea creatures, some common and others not-so-common.

Angelina Morrison explained how marine life — including a sand crab, horseshoe crab, seahorse, minnow and puffer fish — survive in the ocean.

The Biomes Center is New England's only private marine education facility and the most hands-on aquarium in the region. Located in North Kingstown, the center has been providing interactive marine biology programs for schools and families since 1989.

Morrison has the opportunity to travel to schools for in-school and after school programs.

She explained to the students how the horseshoe crab

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uses its tail to turn himself over and how the crab actually swims on its shell.

"They can grow pretty large because it's hard for predators to get past their shell and they look scary, but they're actually harmless," she said.

She went on to explain how because a seahorse lacks a tailfin, so they tend to get very tired quickly and swim very slowly, while a minnow swims very fast and can usually be found in a school of fish. She also explained how different marine life can be discerned to be male or female.

"With some sea animals, it's easy to tell the difference between a male and female because of their size or color variation while with others, it's not as obvious," she said. "A minnow has various shades so he can camouflage himself on the seafloor."

Angelina Morrison of Biomes explains one of the handful of sea creatures she brought to Hopkins Hill Elementary School last Friday to students.

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