CLASSROOM VISITS

Ocean Connectors focuses on a different “case study” animal in each grade; sea turtles (grade 4), whales (grade 5), birds (grade 6), and sharks (grade 7). Each animal is used as a vehicle to convey a core stewardship message. Ocean Connectors instructors visit classrooms twice per year to deliver interactive presentations using marine life phenomena, videos, and conservation-themed prizes. Instructors use the classroom computer, projector, and internet to access the online presentation software Prezi.

- Presentations are scheduled at the start of the school year (usually August through September) and at the end of the school year (usually April through May).
- Prior to the first presentation, students complete an online “pre” survey to assess initial knowledge of marine science. Following the field trip, students complete an online “post” survey and the teacher submits an anonymous Program Evaluation Form to provide important feedback.
- During their first year of Ocean Connectors, students receive waterproof science journals. Students will continuously use the journals for notetaking in subsequent years of Ocean Connectors. They are not permitted to take the journals home until they have completed all the Ocean Connectors programs.
- Presentations engage students in inquiry-based learning and support Next Generation Science Standards in Ecosystems & Biodiversity, Earth’s Systems, Earth & Human Impacts, and Ecology.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

After the first presentation, Ocean Connectors students communicate with students in Nayarit, Mexico about the migratory marine life we share across the Pacific Ocean. An Ocean Connectors “knowledge exchange” consists of scientific communications between students in the U.S. and Mexico using artwork, letters, and videos to share information about protecting marine life. Students communicate in English and Spanish to build dual language skills. This peer-to-peer binational discussion fosters stewardship and builds core academic skills in both groups.

- The knowledge exchange contributes to academic objectives by allowing children to practice Reading, Writing, Technical Subjects, Speaking & Listening, and Language skills. This activity supports California Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards in Earth’s Systems and Life Science.

FIELD TRIP

Field trips expose students to diverse aspects of their local environment through outdoor experiential learning. Students are led by Ocean Connectors instructors on unique trips that place them in direct contact with marine life and coastal habitats. Students think and act like scientists by employing critical thinking skills and practicing observation, identification, and reflection. This experience expands their knowledge of broader aspects of science and builds skills that help students become equipped to transfer their learning to the real-world and careers.

- 4th grade students observe sea turtles firsthand during trips to Living Coast Discovery Center and Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. In Mexico, 4th grade students visit sea turtle camps.
- 5th grade students attend whale watching excursions off the coast of San Diego with Flagship Cruises & Events. In Mexico, 5th grade students attend whale watching field trips off the coast of Nayarit.
- 6th grade students attend bird watching and habitat restoration outings at the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge under mentorship from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service park rangers. In Mexico, 6th grade students visit local estuaries and beaches to observe birds and pick up litter.
- 7th grade students learn about sharks during educational field trips to SeaWorld San Diego.
- Field trips support student development in Reading, Writing, and Speaking & Listening, and support Next Generation Science Standards in Ecosystems & Biodiversity, Earth & Human Impacts, and Ecology.