



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2017 Volume II: Watershed Science

Lobster Die-off in the Long Island Sound

Guide for Curriculum Unit 17.02.05
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This unit will allow students to investigate the 1999 die-off of lobsters in the Long Island Sound. Students will understand the changes in the Long Island ecosystems over the years. They will also gain a deeper understanding of how systems are connected, particularly land and sea ecosystems, and the types of environmental influences that can influence the lobster population. This will allow students to gain a deeper understanding about the environment around them, develop scientific inquiry skills, and enhance their problem-solving skills.

This curriculum unit will allow students will learn about the role a variety of factors play in a watershed by examining the lobster die-off in the Long Island Sound. Students will become experts on the six major factors that scientists believe may have contributed to the lobster die-off including: bacterial infections that cause the breakdown of the exoskeleton, a parasite that attacks the nervous system, higher than normal water temperatures, environmental effects of pesticide and insecticide use, pollution, and changes in dissolved oxygen levels.

After learning about the various potential causes of the lobster die-off students will develop their own explanation citing evidence in order to defend what they believe caused this die-off.

(Developed for General Science, grade 5; recommended for General Science, grades 4-7)

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