

## **Junior Shorekeepers: Canadian youth stewards of their marine environment**

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Fisheries and Oceans Canada, has a mandate to promote “the understanding of oceans, ocean processes, marine resources and marine ecosystems to foster the sustainable development of the oceans and their resources”. One of the important audiences for this message is youth. The Department has developed several stewardship programs for young students one of which is Junior Shorekeepers.

Junior Shorekeepers has been developed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada in partnership with local schools. It fosters intertidal awareness among students and produces scientifically defensible data, which can be used by Fisheries and Oceans research scientists to monitor changes in the local marine environment over the long term.

The Junior Shorekeepers program is aimed at students from ages 10-12. The program begins with a presentation entitled One Ocean. One Ocean is an interactive multi-media presentation that takes students on an ocean adventure covering topics such as food chains, food webs, marine protection and the connectivity of the world’s oceans. The rest of the program is focused on the local marine environment. The students learn throughout the school year about different local habitats, intertidal species and physical measuring techniques. They are then taught how to conduct an intertidal survey on a local beach. On the actual survey day the students rotate around three stations where they perform physical measurements (slope and elevation), conduct intertidal quadrat studies and explore the marine environment. Through the intertidal quadrat study, the students are providing scientists with current information on ecosystem health and contributing to a provincial database available to Fisheries and Oceans scientists and the public.

This project demonstrates how the youth, government, scientists and the schools can all work together to help monitor our oceans.