Eco-Explorers Virtual Field Trip

Aquatic Resources Education Center, 2520 Lighthouse Road, Smyrna, DE 19977

Name: _____Date: _____

ECO-RIDDLES

Each of these riddles provides clues to important plants, animals, and characteristics associated with the tidal salt marsh. Use the list of names below to answer each riddle.

Fiddler Crab	Water	Great Blue Heron
Tidal Salt Marsh	Detritus	Muskrat
Salt Marsh Cordgrass	Tide	

Clue #1

1. I am sometimes covered by water.
2. I support many plants, but few, if any, trees.
3. I am one of the most productive ecosystems on earth.
4. I provide food and habitat for lots of wildlife.
5. If you try to walk on me, you'll sink in the mud.

What am I? _____**Tidal Salt Marsh**_____

Clue #2

1. I am sometimes salty, sometimes fresh, and sometimes brackish.
2. I carry nutrients and wastes in and out of the marsh.
3. When it is time for the tide to rise, I move slowly into the low marsh, then up into the high marsh.
4. At the high tide point, I will stop and rest a minute, then turn in place and move slowly back out to sea.
5. Many waterfowl visit the salt marsh to eat the food that I help support.

What am I? _____**Water**_____

Clue #3

1. I stand very still in the water waiting for small fish to swim by me.
2. My long legs and long sharp beak allow me to be a very good fisherman.
3. My diet might consist of fish, frogs, shrimp, insects, and crabs.
4. I fly over from Pea Patch Island to eat in the local marshes.
5. When I fly, my neck has an "S" shape.

What am I? _____**Great Blue Heron**_____

Clue #4

1. I change twice a day.
2. Sometimes I am high, other times I am low.
3. I bring steady supply of salty water into to the tidal salt marsh every day.

What am I? _____**Tide**_____

Clue #5

1. I am made mostly of decaying plant material.
2. Microscopic organisms abound in me.
3. I am full of nutrients but very little oxygen.
4. People think that smell yucky but fiddler crabs love to eat me.
5. I am an important part of the food chain for marsh creatures.

What am I? _____**Detritus**_____

Clue #6

1. I am a major food source that feeds the marsh.
2. I grow in the lower, wetter parts of the salt marsh.
3. I can tolerate salt water, because I have a special gland to get rid of extra salt. If you look closely, you can see salt crystals on my leaf surfaces.
4. Marsh snails live on my leaves and stem.
5. In the winter, I decay and become detritus

What am I? _____**Saltmarsh Cordgrass**_____

Clue #7

1. I am often called the "earthworm of the marsh" because I aerate the soil.
2. You can see my burrows in the mud along tidal guts.
3. I use my large claw to attract females and defend my home
4. My favorite food is marsh soup, also known as detritus.
5. I seal the entrance of my home with a ball of mud when high tide comes.

What am I? _____**Fiddler crab**_____

Clue #8

1. I am an important marsh mammal.
2. I build my lodge right above the high tide line. They are made of cattails and other marsh plants.
3. Humans enjoy eating my meat and sometimes use my fur as coats.
4. Look for the tunnels and paths that I use to get to the tidal streams.
5. What am I? _____**Muskrat**_____