

Maria Mitchell Association Summer Programs 2009



About MMA

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association was founded in 1902 to preserve the legacy of Nantucket native astronomer, naturalist, librarian, and, above all, educator Maria Mitchell. Maria Mitchell rose to international fame after discovering a telescopic comet and becoming the first American professional female astronomer.

Maria Mitchell believed in learning by doing. Today, the organization bearing her name strives to continue her legacy through preservation of her birthplace and papers, astronomical and natural science research, and interactive, hands-on educational programs for all ages.

For more about Maria Mitchell, see back cover



Join Us

There's something for everyone at MMA this summer: adult workshops, children's classes, hikes, lectures, and family adventures. Join us in celebrating the Year of Science and the International Year of Astronomy.



Natural Science & Aquarium4 - 5
Meet a seahorse, spy an osprey feeding its young, take a walk on the wild side.

Astronomy6 - 7
Tour the constellations, peer at the landscape of the Moon and the rings of Saturn, learn to navigate using the stars.



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Embark on a whale watch, explore the Coskata-Coatue wildlife refuge, plan your special event.

Visit Us

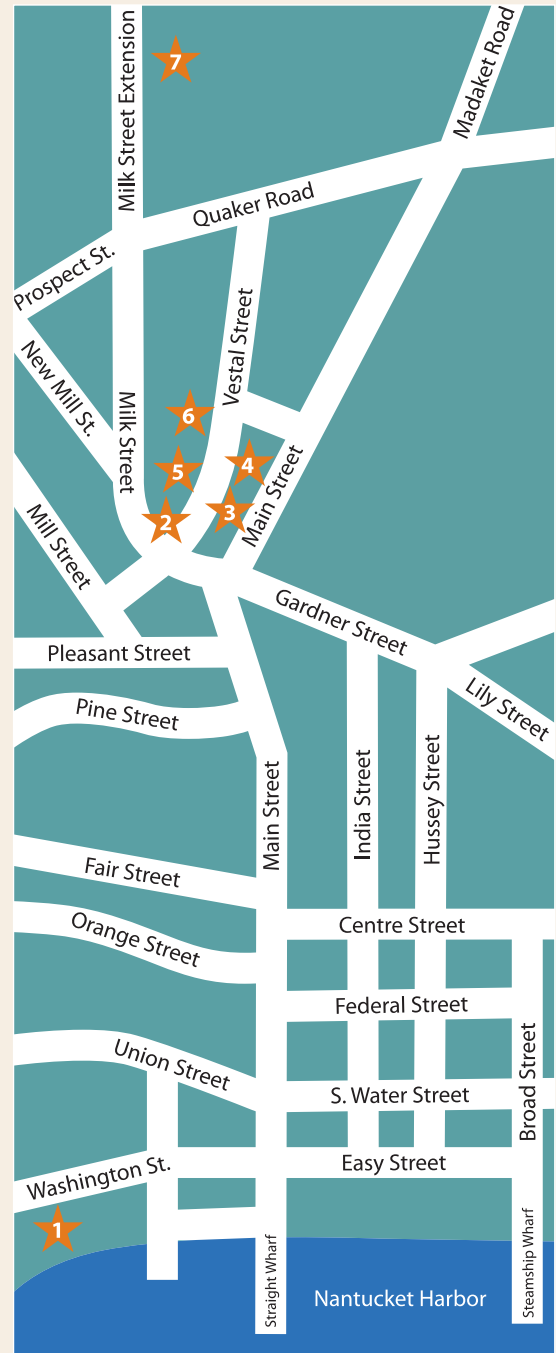
Opening Day

Vestal Street Properties May 23 (weekends only; Call for details)
 Summer schedule begins June 5 for all properties

Members admitted to all locations FREE!
 See details on back cover of this brochure.

Pass available. Includes Aquarium, Vestal Street Observatory, Historic Mitchell House, and Natural Science Museum at Hinchman House.
 Adult \$15 Child \$10

- 1. Aquarium & Shop** (508) 228-538728
 Washington Street
 Mon.-Sat. 10am-4pm; \$6 adult/\$4 child
- 2. Natural Science Museum at Hinchman House & Museum Shop** (508) 228-0898
 Corner of Milk & Vestal Streets
 Mon.-Sat. 10am-4pm; \$5 adult/\$4 child
- 3. Historic Mitchell House** (508) 228-2896
 1 Vestal Street
 Mon.-Sat. 10am-4pm; \$5 adult/\$4 child
- 4. Vestal Street Observatory** (508) 228-9273
 3 Vestal Street
 Tours Mon.-Sat. at 11am; \$5 adult/\$4 child
- 5. Library, Archives, & Special Collections**
 2 Vestal Street (508) 228-9219
 By appointment
- 6. Administrative Offices** (508) 228-9198
 4 Vestal Street
 Mon.-Fri. 9am-5pm
- 7. Loines Observatory** (508) 228-9273
 59 Milk Street Ext.
 See page 9 for Open Night schedule/info





Natural Science

The Natural Science Museum at Hinchman House

Take a tour or guide yourself through rooms filled with wonderful things from the natural world: an ocean room, bird collection, rocks, plants, and even live animals! Whether you're watching a black widow spin a web or touching a whale vertebra, you'll get a first-hand look at what makes nature on Nantucket so special.

NEW "Carnivorous Critters"

@ 9:30am Tue. & Thurs. Before the museum opens to the public, join us for a unique experience. Observe the feeding habits of the turtles, frogs, fish, snakes and more! \$5 members, \$10 non-members. Limit 12, call (508) 228-0890 to reserve space.

Museum Shop in Hinchman House

Whether you're looking for high-quality binoculars, an adorable stuffed turtle, a butterfly net, or a fish identification book, the Museum Shop has many unique items perfect for gifts, mementos, and exploring the outdoors. Members receive a 10% discount.



"The staff at your museums are fantastic. They are kind, informative, and so patient with children. My kids always leave having learned a little bit more about Nantucket and its natural world."

– Survey Response

"The MMA Birding and Marine Ecology Walks are terrific! Our entire family really enjoyed ourselves while exercising those little grey cells. When was the last time you watched an osprey fledgling being banded or fed an octopus? Our daughters are huge fans of the MMA. We have one budding astronomer (11), an enthusiastic ornithologist, and a marine biologist (4). Thank you for continuing and inspiring their love of learning."

– Kathleen, New York.





For Everyone

Our walks are designed for all ages and experience levels. No pre-registration necessary. All walks meet in the Science Library Courtyard, 2 Vestal Street.

Bird and Garden Walk

Tuesdays, 8am

Take a stroll through the Historic District of Nantucket to view gardens and to identify the birds that live in them.

Free for members; non-members \$15 adult/\$10child.

Wild Nantucket Walk

Thursdays, 3pm

From plants to spiders, explore Nantucket's Historic District through the eyes of MMA's expert naturalists. For weekly topics go to www.mmo.org.

Free for members; non-members \$15 adult/\$10child.

Birding Tour

Fridays, May 29-Sept. 11 @ 8am

Join our professional birding staff on a tour of the "birding hotspots" on Nantucket. Weekly destinations vary. Sites include Eel Point, Harbor Flats, Madaket, the State Forest, Squam Farm, and more. Visit www.mmo.org for weekly destinations. Binoculars available for loan.

Members \$15 adults/\$10 child; non-members \$20 adult/\$10 child.

Incredible Insects

Wednesdays June 17, July 22, Aug 26 @ 9am

Join the MMA Insect Discovery Team as we go on an expedition to collect, identify, and observe insects of every size and color! Wear tennis shoes for our short walk to one of the nearby parks where we will use nets, magnifying glasses, and ingenuity to catch insects.

Free for members; non-members \$15 adult/\$10child.

Spectacular Spiders

Wednesdays July 8, Aug 12 @ 9am

No need to be afraid, eight-legged creepy crawlies are not what they seem! Come learn how spiders cleverly make their living on Nantucket and learn how to identify common species. We will use nets and other equipment to catch spiders and observe them up close.

Free for members; non-members \$15 adult/\$10child.

American Burying Beetle Field Expedition

Wednesday, June 24 @ 7:30AM
(Rain Date, Monday, June 29)

Join MMA Museum staff and staff from the Roger Williams Park Zoo of Providence Rhode Island as we continue our effort to reintroduce the federally endangered American Burying Beetle to Nantucket. One of the rarest beetles in North America, Nantucket is one of the few places the beetle exists east of the Mississippi River. Participants will learn about the beetle's life cycle while helping with field work to monitor and boost the natural population. Our destination will be the Sesachacha Heathlands Wildlife Sanctuary.

Members: Adult \$15/Child \$10
Non Members: Adult \$20/Child \$15
Limit 12, call (508) 228-0898 to reserve space.





For Kids & Families

TIP: Our walks in the “For Everyone” category are also great for families! Also, check out the great programs offered by the Aquarium on page 7 (opposite).

Family programs require pre-registration at www.mmo.org.
Members: \$25 per adult/child pair; non-members \$35. \$10 extra child.
Meet at 4 Vestal Street.

Nocturnal Nuts

Tuesdays, June 16-Aug. 11 @ 8pm

Investigate Nantucket at night! We will go for a leisurely walk through one of Nantucket’s unique habitats while learning all about nocturnal animals. We’ll explore how and why these animals spend their waking hours in the dark through experiments and an active search.

Family Fun Fridays

Fridays, June 19-Aug. 14 @ 3:30pm

Be prepared to get dirty and have fun while learning with your kids! Each week we will visit a Nantucket natural area and focus our exploration with themes such as: vernal pools, dragonflies, and tide pools.

For Adults

TIP: Our walks in the “For Everyone” category are excellent for both the novice and the experienced naturalist.

Our adult workshops are designed with a hands-on learning approach of natural science topics.

Members \$50, non-members \$60.

Pre-register online at www.mmo.org. Meet at 2 Vestal Street.

Field Ornithology

Wednesdays, June 24, July 15, & Aug. 12 8am-12pm

Join Dr. Bob Kennedy for an understanding of birding basics, an introduction to ornithology, and a unique field trip to remote research sites that may include Coatue for gulls and shorebirds, Ram Pasture for Ospreys, and Polpis Harbor for Barn Owls. Binoculars available for loan.

Field Geology

Wednesdays, June 17, July 8, & Aug. 5 8am-12pm

How old is Nantucket? What came first, Nantucket or Cape Cod? Join Dr. Bob Kennedy to explore the glacial origins of Nantucket, from Altar rock to Sankaty Cliffs, and learn what geologic forces are changing the island today.



Aquarium



MMA Aquarium

Located on the shoreline of Nantucket Harbor, the Aquarium has been a favorite destination for locals and visitors alike since it was converted from a ticket office for the now-gone Nantucket Railroad. Locally collected specimens on display are always changing and include anything from seahorses to octopuses to sharks! Get a “feel” for the local ecosystem at our touch tank, home to crabs, clams, baby horseshoe crabs, and more.

NEW “Feeding Frenzy” @ 9:30am Mon.-Sat. Join Aquarium staff as they feed 50+ species of fish and other marine life at the Aquarium before it opens to the public! \$5 members, \$10 non-members. Limit 12, call (508) 228-5387 to register.



For Everyone

For all Aquarium programs, call (508) 228-5387 to register.
Members \$15 adult, \$10 child.
Non-members \$20 adult, \$15 child.

“The Aquarium is just the best thing on-island for kids and adults. The displays of species collected locally are so interesting, and we love the touch tank!”
– Survey Response



Marine Ecology Walks

Mon.-Sat., 10am

Everyone becomes a scientist in this educational discovery program! Get a first-hand look at unique sea creatures found on Nantucket as you help collect and identify fish, crabs, shrimp, and other marine life as part of the Aquarium’s biodiversity study of Nantucket’s Harbors. Meet at Washington Street Ext. parking lot.



Beachcombing Walks

Tuesdays, 2pm

How long have you been collecting shells on Nantucket? Would you like to be able to identify shells and other sea creatures that wash up on our beaches? Then join us and soon you and your family will become expert beachcombers. Meet at Washington Street Ext. parking lot.



NEW! Night Marine Ecology Walks

Mon., Wed., Fri., @ 8pm

Nantucket Harbor teems with marine life at night. Join our Aquarium staff to document the fish, squid, crabs, and more that come out to feed at night as a part of the Aquarium’s nocturnal biodiversity study. Meet @ MMA Aquarium, 28 Washington Street.



In Search of the Horseshoe Crab

Sun., June 7 Time TBA

Join the MMA and The Trustees of Reservations for an interactive search for spawning horseshoe crabs. Learn about these ancient creatures and why they are essential to human health!

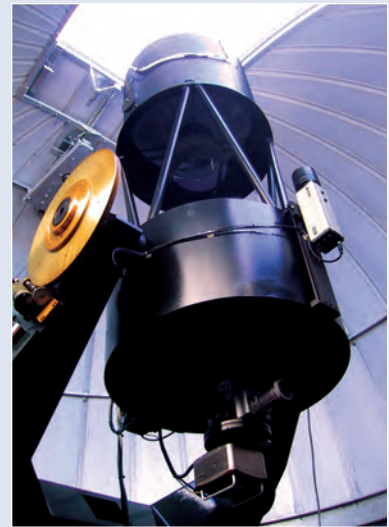
\$15 adult, \$5 child.

See Aquarium description for **“Feeding Frenzy”**

Astronomy

The Loines Observatory

Built in 1968 and 1998, the two domes of this facility house a beautifully refurbished antique 8-inch Clarke telescope and a new state-of-the-art 24-inch research telescope. It serves as both an active research observatory and venue for public astronomical programs.



The Vestal Street Observatory

Built in 1908, this newly-restored dome has been the site of research, lectures, and other programs for a century. View an outdoor scale model of the solar system, learn how to operate a sundial, and maybe observe some sunspots. Learn more about modern astronomy touring a permanent indoor exhibit.





For Everyone

Open Nights @ Loines Observatory

Each Mon., Wed., Fri. June 5-Sept. 1 @ 9pm

Join our astronomers view the Moon, planets, nebulae, galaxies and more. In case of poor weather, a slide presentation will be offered. No pre-registration necessary.

Members admitted FREE, adults \$15/children \$10.

"The best part of our summer stay in Nantucket was our nights at the Loines Observatory, with Vladimir as our most expert guide to the stars!"

– Survey Response

For Adults

Celestial Navigation for Sailors

Fri., July 10, 2-5pm

Learn the basics! This workshop will discuss the history and present-day use of celestial navigation so you can use it yourself. Pre-registration required at www.mmo.org.

Members \$50, non-members \$60.



Lectures

Visiting scientists and Maria Mitchell Observatory staff are offering public lectures in the framework of the International Year of Astronomy. Previous topics have included comets and asteroids, solar and extra-solar planets, stars, galactic nebulae, galaxies, and the Universe itself. Check the website at www.mmo.org for lecture topics and details



Does the Universe Have a Goal? (From the Big Bang to the Big Brain)

Wednesday, July 1, 7pm

In celebration of the Year of Science and the International Year of Astronomy, the Maria Mitchell Association and the Nantucket Atheneum present this special lecture given by Dr. Vladimir Strelnitski, the MMA Director of Astronomy. Lecture held at the Nantucket Atheneum. Free.



For Kids & Families

TIP: Open Nights are a great family activity!

Astronomy Kids' Night: The Celestial Zoo

Ages 6-10

Tuesdays, July 9, 16, 23, & 30; Aug. 6 & 13 @ 8:30pm

Come and discover what creatures are found in the night sky! Learn to identify stars and constellations. Hear the legends and myths behind the beings in the Celestial Zoo. Pre-registration required at www.mmo.org.

Members \$25 adult/child pair; non-members \$35. Extra child \$10.





History

The Mitchell House

Take a trip back in time to 1800s Nantucket. Built in 1790, this typical Quaker house was acquired by the Mitchell family in 1818. The house contains many stunning artifacts from the Mitchells' daily life in the 19th century, and many of Maria's personal items such as beer mugs, opera glasses, and her Dolland telescope. The house is especially known for the remarkably preserved example of faux-wood grain painting in the kitchen from the 1850s.



For Kids and Families

All programs require pre-registration at www.mmo.org

Family Sailors' Valentines

For ages 6+ with guardian

June 30, July 28, & Aug. 18 from 10-11:45am

Create something special together! Join the curator of the Mitchell House and make your own version of a Sailor's valentine with real shells to take home.

Supplies included; you provide the imagination and creativity! Members \$50 adult/child pair, non-members \$60.

TIP: Check page 18 of this brochure for special private family programs.

"Mitchell House is one of the greatest iconic treasures of American architecture and domestic life."

HRS, Strafford, PA

Junior Historians

Ages 7-10. Wednesdays 10-11:45am.

\$40 members, \$50 non-members. Must pre-register at www.mmo.org. Meets at Science Library Courtyard, 2 Vestal Street.

Games of Long Ago

July 1

What kinds of games did children play in the 19th century? Come learn exciting parlor tricks to share with your family and create and play some of the games of children long ago.

Mystery History Tour

July 8

Take a walk through the streets of town as we hunt for different and unusual architectural features. We'll create sketches of our finds and hear spooky stories of the ghosts who haunt these homes.



SPECIAL 2-Day Class: Doll-Making

Tuesday, July 14 and Wednesday, July 15, 10am-12pm

Limited to Five Students

\$80 Member / \$100 Non-Member

Join us as we create our own dolls similar to those of young children in the nineteenth century. On the first day, we will make our doll and on the second we will create the clothes to dress her or him.

Creating Your Own Homemade Scrapbook

July 22

Maria Mitchell collected autographs from famous people, sketches, letters, and mementos from her travels into scrapbooks- a very popular thing to do in Maria's time. Come make your own book that will hold all of your summer memories.

"We especially need imagination in science. It is not all mathematics, nor all logic, but it is somewhat beauty and poetry."

-Maria Mitchell

Sailors' Valentines for Kids

August 5

After hard work whaling, sailors would relax while creating beautiful works of art for their far-away loved ones. Discuss the Mitchell family's role in whaling and whaling history while making your own scrimshaw and sailors' valentine for someone you love.

Keep the Lights Burning

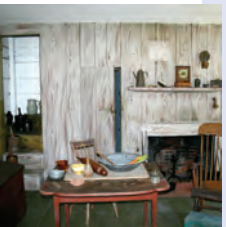
August 12

Join us as we learn about life before electricity. We will learn about different lamps and candles used and about the craft of tinsmithing and then make our own candle and lantern to take home.

Dinnertime with the Mitchells

August 19

Cooking for a family of twelve in the 1800s was not easy, but the Mitchells managed! Come find out how. We'll collect ingredients from the garden and make a delicious dish for ourselves.



For Adults

Creating Art on Vestal Street:

Two-Day Classes for Adults

Join Nantucket's award-winning watercolorist, Edwin Rudd, and the curator of the Mitchell House for a unique look at the architecture of the MMA's Vestal Street campus and the artifacts found in its collections. Students will spend two classes learning from Rudd about the art of watercolors or drawing and at the same time will be given a unique insight into the collections or buildings they are capturing in their work. Rudd has taught at the Artists Association of Nantucket where he is a member and has received several awards, including the C. Robert Perrin Award for Excellence in watercolor.

Rudd is also known and has received many accolades in New Zealand where he lived for many years, working as both a teacher of watercolors and a practicing artist. His works can be seen at numerous island galleries. For a fee, the MMA can supply you with the materials necessary, or contact the MMA for a list of necessary supplies.



Watercolors on Vestal Street

Two 2-hour classes offered Sunday, May 17 and Sunday, May 24, 1-3 PM

\$100 for Members/ \$130 for Non-Members, Materials Fee (if not bringing own supplies): \$75

Pencil Studies of Historic Artifacts

Two 2-hour classes offered Saturday, June 6 and Saturday, June 13, 10AM-Noon

\$100 for Members/\$130 for Non-members, Materials Fee (if not bringing own supplies): \$15



Discovery Classes

Nantucket Resident Discount

Nantucket full-time residents can receive a discount of "Buy One Get One 50% OFF" with a MMA family Membership.

All programs require pre-registration online at www.mmo.org.

Details regarding classes, class registration, meeting locations and other information is also found online.

NEW: Would you like to customize a Discovery Class to suit your precise programming and scheduling needs? See page 18 for details.

"I loved the hands-on exploring utilizing many different areas of the island & definitely the enthusiasm of the friendly staff!"
– Parent of a Wee Explorer

Wee Explorers

Ages 4-6

The Wee Explorers program provides your child with their first peek at Nantucket's natural world. Each Discovery Class balances play, art, sensory exploration and hands-on learning. Wee Explorers will create art, play nature games, hear stories and explore in the local habitats. We offer full week, 3 day and 2 day programs to fit your schedule and your child's interest.

Monday – Friday, 8:50AM to 1:00PM

\$250 members, \$325 non-members

Wonderful Wetlands:

Explore mudflats, marshes, vernal pools, ponds and bogs to meet the animals and plants that inhabit these places. (June 22-26; July 20 -24)

Growing Up Wild:

What's life like for other animals? Some start by hatching from an egg, some have hundreds of brothers and sisters, some gain 200 pounds a day! This week, we'll find out what it's like to grow up wild. (June 29-July 3; July 27-31)

Who's That You're Wearing?:

Come and meet nature's top fashion designers. From feathers to shells, we will explore the different "outfits" that Nantucket animals use to protect themselves from the outside world. (July 6-10; August 3-7)

It's a Small World:

Sometimes it's easy to forget the little guys! We'll explore the smaller members of Nantucket's ecosystem and use magnifying glasses and microscopes to see what our eyes might miss. (July 13-17; August 10-14)





Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 8:50AM to 1:00PM

\$180 members, \$255 non-members

Color Me Curious:

Why is the sky blue? What makes a leaf green? Explore nature in search of the answersto these and other colorful questions. (June 22-26; July 20 -24)

Slimy Skins and Scales:

Investigate reptiles, amphibians and fish! Learn what makes these animals unique, where they live and what eats them! (June 29-July 3; July 27-31)

Common Sense:

Children will feel, touch, see, smell and taste their way around Nantucket's habitats. We will even learn about how other animals use their unique senses to survive. (July 6-10; August 3-7)

Crafty Critters:

Discover the artistry of animals large and small. Explore the ways they build their homes, catch food and the signs they leave behind. (July 13-17; August 10-14)

Tuesday and Thursday 2PM- 4PM

\$80 member, \$100 non-member

Imaginary Menagerie:

Create your own miniature zoo using natural materials. (June 22-26; July 20 -24)
Natural Art: We'll use the environment for our inspiration and create beautiful art out of natural materials. (June 29-July 3; July 27-31)

Art & Oceans:

Using aquatic materials we will make beautiful art while learning about the creatures found in the ocean. (July 6-10; August 3-7)

Young Astros:

Explore the universe through games, art and the making of a planetarium.(July 13-17; August 10-14)

Habitat Hoppers

Ages 7-9

Habitat Hoppers will discover the unique habitats of Nantucket and the interesting creatures that inhabit them. Hands-on activities, games, projects and active observation will keep your child excited and interested! They will gain an understanding and appreciation of the natural world around them.

Monday – Friday, 8:50AM-3PM

\$350* members, \$425* non-members

*Animals & Art, add \$25 per child.



Habitat Trackers:

Explore a variety of habitats found on Nantucket, from bogs and mudflats to moors and grasslands. Get up close and personal with the plants and animals and understand how these creatures interact with their habitat. (July 13-17; August 3-7)

*Animals and Art:

Join the Maria Mitchell Association and the Artists Association of Nantucket for this action-packed week of exploration and creative expression! Wildlife and art come together through guided discovery paired with in-depth art projects such as drawing, printmaking, watercolors, and more at the Artist Association's studio. (July 20-24)

Wild Survival:

Could you survive in the wilderness? Come and learn how to use a map and compass, track animals, collect or catch your food, build a shelter and fire and even first aid. (July 27-31; August 10-14)

Monday – Friday, 8:50AM to 1:00PM

\$250 members, \$325 non-members

Nature Detectives:

Put on your detectives hat and grab your magnifying glass to solve some natural mysteries. Each day a new mystery will be uncovered! (June 22-26)

No Bones About It:

Don't ignore the creatures without bones! We'll search for and try and understand the lives of insects, squid, jellyfish and other skeleton free creatures! (June 29-July 3)

Nature's Pantry:

What treats can nature offer us? Come and learn about the animals and plants that produce our food. We'll make our own snacks, visit a bee hive, and dissect fruit. (July 6-10)

Eco-Investigators

Ages 10-12

Eco-Investigators will experience local ecological research through active participation. They will be introduced to environmental stewardship, and discover ways to help with local issues.

Monday – Friday, 8:50AM-3PM

\$375* members, \$450* non-members

*Animals & Art, add \$25 per child

"The staff was friendly and I liked the variety of locations Daniel explored... great flexibility on the part of the staff for the benefit of the kids."

– Parent of a Habitat Hopper





***Animals and Art:**

Join the Maria Mitchell Association and the Artists Association of Nantucket for this action-packed week of exploration and creative expression! Wildlife and art come together through guided discovery paired with in-depth art projects such as drawing, printmaking, watercolors, and more at the Artist Association's studio. (June 29-July 3)

Ocean Explorers:

Snorkel the bay, seine for fish, collect sea creatures, sail on a seal searching cruise, kayak the harbor, fish for blues and create an aquarium display for MMA's Aquarium in this intense exploration of marine ecology. (July 6-10; July 20-24; August 10-14)



Wildlife Wonders:

Investigate the unique wildlife found on Nantucket. Learn wildlife research techniques by snorkeling the bay, searching for seals, catching birds, kayaking the harbor and radio tracking a turtle. (July 13-17; July 27-31; August 3-7)

"I loved the variety of locations; seal cruise was a huge bonus and the scallop trip. My twins said it was the best camp they have ever been to."
– Parent of an Eco Investigator

For Teens

Naturalists-In-Training (N.I.T.s)

This program is for young adults ages 13-17 who love the outdoors, working with children and have a sincere interest in the Maria Mitchell Association. N.I.T.s work with MMA Environmental Educators helping teach children about Nantucket's unique environment while learning the skills to be a naturalist. This is a great opportunity for young adults to develop leadership skills, experience the workplace and cultivate personal growth. This program requires N.I.T.s to participate for a minimum of one week. The program cost is \$30 per week. Applications are available online at www.mmo.org.





Other Programs

Shearwater Excursions and Maria Mitchell Association Programs
Call Shearwater Excursions (508) 228-7037 for pricing and to reserve space.

Whale Watching

June 28, July 5, July 19, August 2, August 16 & September 6

Sunday morning, Departure. time varies. Check with Shearwater for Schedule.

Join Dr. Bob Kennedy and Captain Blair Perkins of Shearwater Excursions for a trip of a lifetime and guarantee to see whales, seabirds and other ocean life.



Seal Cruises to Muskeget Island

June 29 - September 7

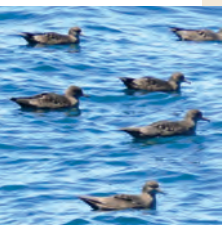
Mondays, Departure time varies - Check with Shearwater for Schedule.

Join Dr. Bob Kennedy and Captain Blair Perkins of Shearwater Excursions for a trip to Nantucket's smallest and most remote island, Muskeget to see our local Gray Seal population



Science Discovery Thursdays with the Trustees of Reservations and Maria Mitchell Association

The Maria Mitchell Association and the Trustees of Reservations have partnered to offer the public a unique opportunity for a first hand look at the wildlife found on Coskata-Coatue Wildlife Refuge by offering fishing tours for children and marine walks for families.



Marine Ecology Walk

June 11-September 3

Thursdays, 9:30am \$35 adults, \$25 child

To register call 508-228-5387

Meet at the Wauwinet Gate house

Fishing for Kids

June 5-August 13

Thursdays, 1:30pm

Ages 10-17; \$45 per child

Register online at www.mmo.org or call (508) 228-9198.

Meet at the Wauwinet Gate house





Private Programs

For more information, to book or to see a list of programs offered please visit our website at www.mmo.org or call (508) 228-9198

Birthday Parties

Looking for a fun, educational, and unique birthday party! Look no further MMA offers birthday parties for ages 4-10. Birthday parties are held at our Natural Science Museum and Aquarium and include fun themes such as Meet the Animals, Fish Printing and Aliens!

Private Programs

Perfect for wedding parties, family reunions, group outings, anniversaries, corporate retreats, college alumni groups or families wanting that personal touch. The Maria Mitchell Association offers high quality private programs, walks and tours designed for groups to explore and enjoy Nantucket's natural world, history, and skies. All programs can be designed for your needs and interests.

Private Summer Discovery Classes

Looking for your children to get a personalized, educational, and fun nature program? Our Private Discovery Classes are structured to work with your schedule, interests, and special needs. We can accommodate one child or a group of children! Call today to learn more about this great summer opportunity for your children to learn and have fun while experiencing everything Nantucket's natural world has to offer.

Rentals

Dreaming of dinner under the stars at our Observatory? How about cocktails by the shore at the Aquarium? Delight your guests with a private rental available for dinner and cocktail parties at the world-renowned Loines Observatory or MMA waterfront Aquarium.

Membership

Become a part of everything that happens at the MMA! Joining as a member supports our museums, research, and educational efforts while also providing the following benefits:

General Membership Benefits:

- Unlimited free admission to MMA's museums and aquarium
- Free admission to Open Nights, select nature walks, and more!
- Online newsletter, the E-Comet; copy of Annual Report
- Discounts on field trips, workshops, lectures, and other programs
- 10% Discount at MMA Museum Shops

For membership levels, more information, or to join, you can:

- Visit any MMA location
- Go online to www.mmo.org or email info@mmo.org
- Call the Administrative Offices at (508) 228-9198

Giving to the MMA

In addition to membership, special events receipts, program and admission fees, the Maria Mitchell Association relies upon your generous contributions to sustain its education and research activities. Your gifts help us to continue to serve our mission – “the promotion of the legacy of Maria Mitchell and exploration, education and enjoyment of Nantucket’s land, waters and skies beyond.”

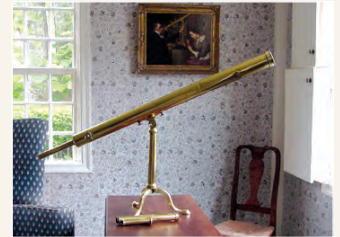
There are many ways to give to MMA. Please consider the MMA in your estate plans with a bequest; a gift of stock, mutual funds, securities, IRAs or other retirement plans; or with a gift of cash, a gift-in-kind, or a matching gift from your business/employer. You may choose to support a specific program or department or give an unrestricted gift which can be directed to where it is most needed. We are happy to discuss the options with you. Simply contact us at (508) 228-9198.





Who Was Maria Mitchell?

Maria Mitchell was an astronomer, librarian, naturalist, and above all, educator. She discovered a comet through a telescope, for which she was awarded a gold medal by the King of Denmark. She was then thrust into the international spotlight and became America's first professional female astronomer.



Born to Quaker parents William and Lydia Mitchell on Nantucket in 1818, she was an avid learner. Maria, like other Quaker women, was given an education. Her father was a great influence on her life; Maria developed her love of astronomy from his instruction on surveying and navigation. At age 12, she helped her father calculate the position of their home by observing a solar eclipse. By 14, sailors trusted her to do vital navigational computations for their long whaling journeys. Maria pursued her love of learning as a young woman, becoming the Nantucket Atheneum's first librarian. She and her father continued to acquire astronomical equipment and conduct observations.

On October 1st, 1847, Maria was sweeping the sky from the roof of the Pacific National Bank on Main Street, where her father was a cashier. She spotted a small blurry object that did not appear on her charts. She had discovered a comet! After achieving her fame, Maria was widely sought after and went on to achieve many great things. She resigned her post at the Atheneum in 1856 to travel throughout the US and Europe. In 1862, she became Professor of Astronomy at the newly-founded Vassar College.



Maria was an inspiration to her students. It was Vassar College that Maria felt was truly her home. She believed in learning by doing, and in the capacity of women to achieve what their male counterparts could. "Miss Mitchell" was beloved by her students whom she taught until her retirement in 1888, due to failing health. She died in 1889, and was buried next to her father in Nantucket's Prospect Hill Cemetery.



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