



County high school students, from left, Veronica Martínez and Evelyn Cupil-García learn the art of ocean filmmaking from María de Oca, a Ph.D. student at Duke Marine Lab on Pivers Island. (Cheryl Burke photo)

# Students study marine science through filmmaking

BY CHERYL BURKE  
NEWS-TIMES

**BEAUFORT** — A project funded by Duke Marine Lab on Pivers Island has helped bilingual students from two county high schools improve their proficiency in marine science and English this summer.

María de Oca, a marine lab Ph.D. student, launched the six-week Ocean Filmmaking Camp in June in collaboration with Sarah Noll, coordinator of the English as a Second Language program at West Carteret High School.

Ms. de Oca said the idea for the camp came from conversations she had with Ms. Noll while serving last year as a volunteer biology tutor for ESL students at WCHS.

"We wanted to teach the students filmmaking and marry that with marine science conservation," said Ms. de Oca of the camp, which ended Thursday. "We also wanted to help them continue to improve their English skills."

The six students, ranging from ethnic backgrounds of Mexico, China and Japan, have worked in teams to create two conservation films that will be used by two of the institutes partnering with Duke on the project.

One film, which will go to the N.C. Aquarium in Pine Knoll Shores, focuses on ocean conservation to provide safe habitat for sea turtles.

The second film will serve as a promotional piece for

Marshallberg Farms, a fish and cattle farm in Marshallberg that serves as N.C. State University's Marine Aquaculture Research Center.

A screening of both films was held Thursday at Duke Marine Lab for those involved in the projects.

Students, from West Carteret and Croatan High schools, had to apply to attend the camp, with only six selected for the first one.

"We wanted to keep the numbers low so we could provide more one-on-one attention," she said. "We may increase the numbers slightly next year."

The camp was offered free of charge to the students thanks to financial support from the marine lab, as well as donations

of time, resources and expertise from numerous volunteers at other county institutions, including N.C. State University, UNC-Institute of Marine Sciences, the N.C. Aquarium, Rachel Carson Estuary and others.

The six students taking part were: Evelyn Cupil-García, Akina Obata, Zhuying Zhang, Aurelio García and Ana Paola Rodríguez from WCHS; and Veronica Martínez from Croatan High School.

Mr. Zhang, a rising sophomore, said he enjoyed the camp.

"I like science and photography and want to be a scientist working with physics," he said as students filmed part of their series on cleaning up the oceans Tuesday at Atlantic Beach. "I have enjoyed

learning how to use digital cameras and setting up lights."

Ms. Cupil-García, a rising sophomore at WCHS, said she, too, enjoyed the camp.

"I wanted to know about filmmaking and I love science," she said. "I've enjoyed filming and learning how to set up the lights and tripods."

During the first half of the camp, students toured sites around the county and met with marine biologists, conservationists and other scientists to learn about the region's coastal species and ecosystems and the natural and human forces that affect them.

Students also learned basic video, editing and scriptwriting skills from Ms. de Oca, a native of Spain with a background in filmmaking.

During the second half of the camp, students split into two teams to create the videos.

In addition to learning about marine science and filmmaking, the students were required to blog about their experiences in English. Those blogs can be seen at <https://sites.nicholas.duke.edu/ofc-duml>.

To learn more about the Ocean Filmmaking Camp, go to its Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/OceanFilmmakingCamp](http://www.facebook.com/OceanFilmmakingCamp).

*Shell Landing Open House*

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