Welcome to the Piscataqua region, home of the Great Bay Estuary! This estuarine system is special to all kinds of people – history buffs, bird watchers, art lovers, lobstermen, business owners, scientists and boaters just to name a few. It’s also important to the plants, animals and microbes that call this environment home. As you explore the Great Bay, notice how interdependent natural and human systems are. Let the wonder grow!

For more information about education programs related to the Great Bay and the Gulf of Maine, contact New Hampshire Sea Grant at 603.749.1565 or visit us on the web at www.seagrant.unh.edu.

- The Great Bay Estuary is a refuge for 23 species of threatened or endangered animals and plants, including the bald eagle, common tern, common loon, prolific knotweed, dwarf glasswort and marsh elder.

- High and low tides within the Estuary vary by almost two-and-a-half hours from the mouth of the Piscataqua River in Portsmouth to the furthest end of the Bay in Stratham.

- The deepest channel in the Estuary is almost 70’ deep, but at low tide more than 50% of the Bay becomes exposed as mudflats. The average tidal range is six to eight feet.

- Tidal currents within the Estuary are swift and can reach up to 6.6 ft./second (2 m/second).

- The tidal shoreline is over 200 miles from the mouth to the tributary rivers at high tide.

- The Estuary was formed when the last major glacier in the region retreated some 14,000 years ago, leaving a depression in the earth that flooded.

- Commercial lobster fishing in New Hampshire's coastal waters generates approximately $14 million annually in landed value.

What can you do to protect water quality?

- Stop erosion and filter contaminants by keeping native plants along shorelines. Wider streamside buffers of shrubs and trees will offer more protection for water and wildlife.

- Avoid putting unnecessary fertilizers and pesticides around your property. When it rains or when landscapes are overirrigated, these products can wash off into storm drains and waterways and harm aquatic and marine life. They can also leach into groundwater with excessive watering.

- If you have a septic tank, have it pumped out every three to five years. That helps prevent bacterial contamination of waterways and helps protect the lifespan of your septic system.

- Conserve water at home. Conservation protects water quantity and quality and also saves money.