



DARLING MARINE CENTER

Facilities | Research | Education



Darling Marine Center was established in 1965 as the University of Maine's marine laboratory. In keeping with UMaine's statewide mission, this unique facility delivers distinctive research, education, and community and industry engagement programs, transforming knowledge into solutions to meet the needs of coastal communities in Maine and beyond.

The Darling Marine Center is an internationally recognized hub of marine science and aquaculture research, led by world-class faculty. Their collaborative work contributes to understanding of the Gulf of Maine and ocean ecosystems worldwide. Our scientists work in Maine and around the globe; teach the next generation of researchers, industry professionals and decision makers; and engage local communities in active exploration of coastal and ocean environments.

For decades, UMaine graduate students based at the Darling Marine Center have conducted research in collaboration with Maine's leading marine experts. Those graduate students and faculty — who hail from fields as diverse as ecology, engineering, food science, oceanography and policy — also mentor undergraduates in residence at the center.

Through UMaine School of Marine Sciences programs undergraduate students have opportunities to conduct independent research and to immerse themselves in hands on education year round at the Walpole campus. The Darling Marine Center also hosts programs for visiting college students and groups from throughout the world, and has a long tradition of informal education programs for the public and local K-12 students.

As engaged community partners, Darling Marine Center faculty, staff and students work with fishermen, aquaculture entrepreneurs and citizen scientists to advance workforce development and education through fundamental and applied research, product development and commercialization, and business incubation.

These active partnerships include close collaborations with marine-dependent businesses throughout Maine, including the aquaculture startups in residence at the center. The Darling Marine Center is dedicated to ensuring that Maine seafood, fishing and aquaculture industries, and the natural and innovation ecosystems they depend on, benefit Maine's people and communities.



Facilities

The Darling Marine Center occupies 182 acres on the Damariscotta River and functions year round to support UMaine faculty and students, as well as visiting investigators from around the world.

Whether you are looking for a field station, a sabbatical retreat or a conference venue, we have the right mix of facilities, personnel, and marine habitats. The DMC is located halfway between the open waters of the Gulf of Maine and the upper reaches of the Damariscotta River estuary. Local intertidal environments include rocky shores, sandy beaches, mud flats, and eelgrass beds. DMC staff can provide assistance with specimen collection, equipment use, classroom/lab setup, onsite lodging and meal service.

Research & Teaching Resources

- Research vessels
- CTD, ROV, otter trawl, dredge, plankton nets
- AAUS certified dive program
- Flowing seawater classrooms and laboratories
- Cold rooms
- Louis Dean library
- Aquaculture facilities (hatchery, algal culture, lease sites)
- Dissecting, compound and fluorescent microscopes
- Housing for researchers, families and students

Conference Services

The Darling Marine Center welcomes a wide range of scientific society meetings, educational conferences, retreats and meetings. For larger meetings breakout space can be provided in our classrooms. Comfortable on-site housing, delicious meals highlighting the famous flavors of Maine, and other logistics are handled by our support staff.

Brooke Hall

Beautifully situated on a forested hillside overlooking the Damariscotta River, Brooke Hall is a pleasant and relaxed setting for meetings and retreats. The spacious meeting and dining area is graced by a large stone fireplace, picture windows and a shady deck for casual outdoor seating. The room can accommodate groups of 60 people for a single day event, but for longer meetings a group size of 30-40 people is more comfortable.

Louise Dean Library

For smaller groups we recommend the Louise Dean Library meeting space. Located on our upper campus among the historic farm buildings, it is best suited for groups of up to about 25 people. This space also support hosting meetings that require remote participation.

Housing

With an ability to sleep up to 100 participants on campus, you are sure to find accommodation to meet your needs. Attached to Brooke Hall overlooking the Damariscotta River our modern dormitory style housing sleeps up to 64 or 32 double occupancy. In addition to our dormitory housing we also have rustic cabins, historic farm houses and apartments suit your visit.

Research

The pristine waters of the Damariscotta River estuary, the productive waters of the Gulf of Maine and state-of-the-art research facilities draw marine scientists from around the world to the DMC. Researchers of intertidal ecology, fisheries science, or physical oceanography, all find the DMC a perfect venue to conduct field work, write papers, or explore new directions while on sabbatical.

Spending time at the DMC provides ample opportunities for researchers to connect and collaborate with resident faculty and students. Competitive rates, state-of-the-art research facilities, and a knowledgeable support staff ensure a productive research experience.

Scientific Diving

If research takes you underwater, you'll be happy to know UMaine is a member of the American Academy for Underwater Sciences (AAUS). Our Diving Safety Officer will ensure your dive team meets AAUS standards. Diver training, certification and support are all available on site. Training courses include CPR/ First Aid, Oxygen Administration, Dive Rescue Techniques, Dry Suit, Enriched Air (NITROX) and Introduction to Research Diving.

Research Vessels

Much of the research conducted out of the DMC takes place on the water. The Darling Marine Center has a fleet of boats available for charter which range in size from 16' skiffs to the 42' R/V Ira C. A full-time Captain operates the largest vessels and oversees all vessel operations to ensure safety and trains users of the smaller boats on boat handling and water safety. An 18' jib crane capable of lifting 2000 pounds is available for loading heavy oceanographic sampling gear.

Business Incubation

The Darling Marine Center has facilities for:

- Shellfish hatchery production facilities for larval care, setting, and post settlement and juvenile rearing
- Algal production facilities
- Experimental aquaculture leases with space to grow shellfish and seaweed

Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center (MAIC) coordinates business incubator space and provides:

- Assistance with business planning and entrepreneurship training
- Grants for equipment and business development
- Technical support and training

Maine Sea Grant offers expertise in:

- Collaborative research
- Networking with producers, service providers, and professional resources
- Technical support and training in the areas of site selection, equipment requirements, animal husbandry, permitting and licensing, biosecurity, and product marketing

Education

Darling Marine Center hosts a vibrant community of scientists, students and staff year-around. We connect people of all ages to the ocean through UMaine courses, professional and citizen science workshops, and K-12 and informal education programs. Nine faculty from UMaine's School of Marine Sciences are in residence, along with affiliates of the Lobster and Aquaculture Research Institutes and Maine Sea Grant.

Graduate students studying anthropology, biology, chemistry, conservation science, ecology, policy, and other marine-related fields are in residence year-around, and we welcome undergraduates to campus through our internship and Semester By the Sea programs.

UMaine's Semester By the Sea

Established in 1993, UMaine's Semester by the Sea is total immersion in the marine realm for undergraduate juniors and seniors from UMaine and other academic institutions. Students spend the fall semester in residence at the Darling Marine Center taking field-oriented courses that prepare them for careers or advanced degrees in marine science. Semester By the Sea courses are unique. They meet once a week, most for the whole day, with lectures, labs, and field trips scheduled around the tides. Ready access to marine environments, flowing seawater laboratories, and faculty mentors makes the Darling Marine Center a perfect venue for capstone and honors projects.

Summer Workshops & Courses

During the spring and summer months the Darling Marine Center offers UMaine Summer University courses through the Division of Lifelong Learning as well as a variety of workshops.

University Field Trip Program

The DMC makes it easy for instructors of marine science courses to add a hands-on field component to a regular classroom syllabus. UMaine faculty as well as those from outside institutions are encouraged to bring students for an amazing field based experience. A typical weekend trip to the center includes a sampling cruise aboard the R/V Ira C., a visit to the mud flats or rocky intertidal at low tide, and time identifying organisms in a flowing seawater classroom.

Previous Workshops & Courses

UMaine's Semester By the Sea

- Biology of Marine Invertebrates
- Estuarine Oceanography
- Introduction to Research Diving
- Marine Ecology
- Marine Fisheries Ecology
- Microbial Ecology
- Seminar in Engaged Scholarship & Communication

Summer Workshops & Courses

- Algal Culture Techniques
- Diving into Shellfish Aquaculture
- Ecology of Marine Sediments
- Interdisciplinary Methods for Social-Ecological Systems Science
- Introduction to Ocean and Coastal Mapping
- Natural Science Illustration
- Teaching Developmental Biology

193 Clarks Cove Road
Walpole, ME 04573
207.563.3144
dmc.umaine.edu
dmc@maine.edu



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