NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE SYSTEM

What lives in the Chesapeake Bay?

Piers, Rocks, and Jetties

Serving as substrate for sessile organisms and food and protection for resident and transient fish. Can be a stressful environment, with each organism fighting for space and food with others around them.

Photo Courtesy: http://www.calpoly.edu/~rfield/TideStory.htm

Sea Squirt

Photo Courtesy: http://www.chesapeakebay.net/

Red Beard Sponge

Photo Courtesy: http://www.chesapeakebay.net

Ghost Anemone

Photo Courtesy: http://www.chesapeakebay.net/

Intertidal Flats

Places where the land is both covered and exposed by tides. Provides feeding grounds for shore birds at low tide, and habitat for shallow water marine organisms at high tide, including fish and invertebrates.

Fiddler Crab

Photo Courtesy: http://www.chesapeakebay.net/

Photo Courtesy: CBNERRVA

Razor Clam

Summer Flounder

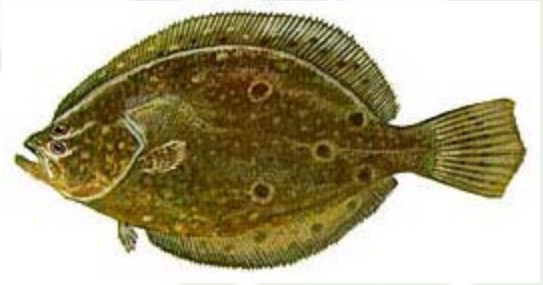


Photo Courtesy: http://www.chesapeakebay.net/

Wetlands

Includes salt marshes, tidal freshwater marshes, and forested wetlands. From periwinkles attaching to marsh cord grass to ribbed mussels burrowing in the mud, each habitat supports a unique community of animals.

Photo Courtesy: CBNERRVA

Periwinkle

Photo Courtesy: http://www.chesapeakebay.net

Marsh Cord Grass

Photo Courtesy: CBNERRVA

Ribbed Mussel

Photo Courtesy: http://www.chesapeakebay.net

Sea grass Meadows

Aquatic plants such as eelgrass provide protection and food for invertebrates and fish. The plants are also used as substrates for sessile organisms or for protection from predators. Beds are sometimes exposed during low tides. Species often found in these meadows include the blue crab, pipefish, and seahorses.

Eelgrass

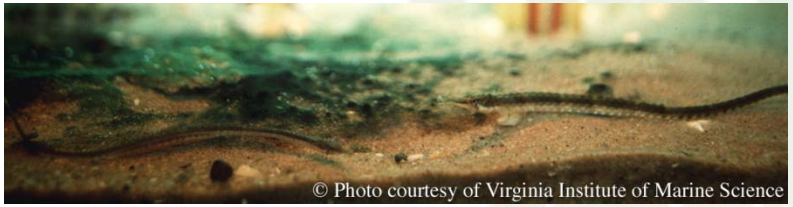
Photo Courtesy: Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Photo Courtesy: Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Lined Seahorse

Photo Courtesy: Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Pipefish



Oyster Bars

Extend throughout mid to lower Chesapeake Bay and provide a place for sessile organisms to attach. Reefs provide habitat for many organisms to hide, feed, and lay eggs. Examples of species found in oyster beds include oyster toadfish, blennies, and mud crabs.

Photo Courtesy: http://www.chesapeakebay.net

Photo Courtesy: CBNERRVA

Photo Courtesy: http://www.chesapeakebay.net

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Deep, Open Water

In deeper waters, past the shoreline and shallow waters, habitat changes considerably; finer sediments, lower oxygen conditions, and lower amounts of light penetrating. Schools of fish such as bluefish and striped bass swim throughout this habitat which is also full of plankton.

Plankton

Photo Courtesy: Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Bluefish

Photo Courtesy: www.fishbase.org

Photo Courtesy: www.chesapeakebay.net

Striped Bass

Photo Courtesy: www.fishbase.org