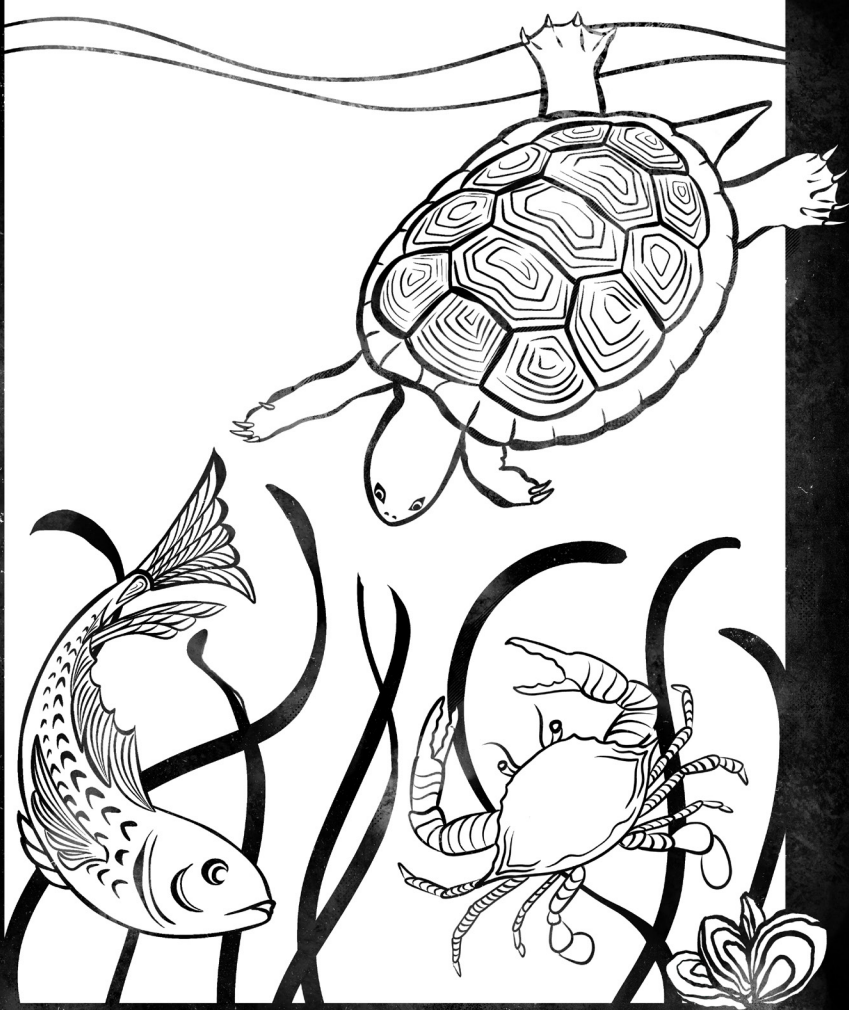


# CHESAPEAKE BAY REPORT CARD

# 1925



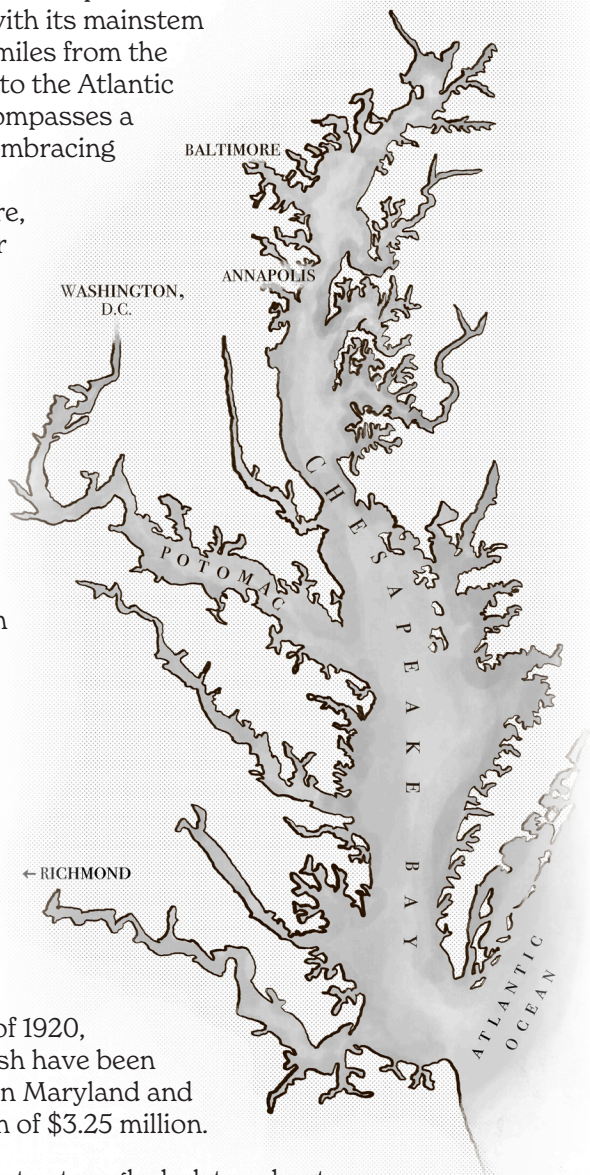
# CHESAPEAKE BAY IN 1925

**T**HE CHESAPEAKE BAY, a grand and shallow estuary born from a submerged river valley, is nothing short of colossal—comparable in size to the state of Connecticut, with its mainstem stretching two hundred nautical miles from the mouth of the Susquehanna River to the Atlantic Ocean. The Bay's watershed encompasses a staggering 64,000 square miles, embracing six states—Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, and West Virginia—as well as our fair capital, Washington, D.C. Roughly six million souls call this verdant watershed home.

The watershed nurtures agriculture, fisheries, and the economic engine. Since 1880, commercial farming has been on the upswing, driving fertilizer use higher; we must be cautious, as this may pose a threat to nitrogen and phosphorus levels in the Bay's waters.

As for the fisheries, while oyster yields are dwindling, the catch of crabs is on the rise. Sadly, the diamondback terrapin, overfished to be placed on our tables as a delicacy, faces dire straits. Striped bass, American shad, Atlantic menhaden, alewife herring, and American croaker remain reliable staple foods for people living around the Bay. As of 1920, more than 60 million pounds of fish have been harvested from Chesapeake Bay in Maryland and Virginia, yielding a handsome sum of \$3.25 million.

The economic pulse of the Bay beats strongly, bolstered not just by agriculture and fisheries but also through shipping, manufacturing, tourism, and merriment. The deepwater harbors in Baltimore, Norfolk, and Newport News stand as crucial hubs of activity for these varied enterprises.



# CHESAPEAKE BAY IN GOOD CONDITION



**I**N THIS YEAR OF 1925, the Chesapeake Bay has earned a respectable B grade in assessment of the Bay’s water, habitat, and fisheries.

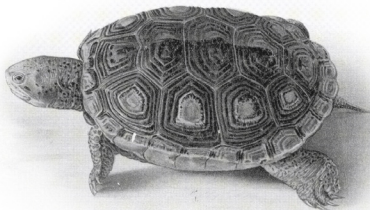
Water quality was, by all accounts, quite good. Nutrient pollution—that is, harmful excesses of nitrogen and phosphorus—was minimal, leading to little algae, enjoyably clear water, and suitable levels of dissolved oxygen. Some of the depths of the Bay encountered a drop in dissolved oxygen during the summer months, but were largely untroubled by dead zones, which choke out such aquatic creatures as crabs and oysters.

Habitat indicators were shipshape this year. Aquatic grasses flourished, creating splendid nursery grounds for young fish and crabs alike. As for those small benthic creatures that live in the silt and mud, such as snails, worms, and insects, they were happy as clams.

Fisheries, on the other hand, were in more of a mixed state. Crabs and oysters have been afflicted by the heavy hand of fishing. Conversely, striped bass and shad were in plentiful supply, with schools of shad in the Bay large enough to create their own wake. Alas, the diamondback terrapin received the poorest marks of the bunch. Their numbers are dwindling due to rampant overharvesting.

All in all, the Bay was in splendid shape, offering a wealth of resources.

Indicators	Scores
WATER	
Nitrogen	A
Phosphorus	A
Water Clarity	B
Dissolved Oxygen	B
Chlorophyll a	A
HABITAT	
Aquatic Grasses	A
Benthic Community	A
FISHERIES	
Crabs	C+
Oysters	C+
Striped Bass	A
Shad	A
Diamondback Terrapins	D
Overall	B



See here the DIAMONDBACK TERRAPIN, which is so terribly depleted by our appetites. We urge readers to forgo the terrapin stew and its expensive main ingredient.



# A NEW RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR THE BAY

**H**ARK! WE ARE THRILLED to announce the unveiling of the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory on Solomons Island, nestled at the southernmost tip of Calvert County, Maryland, at the mouth of the Patuxent River. This new institution, led by Reginald Truitt, will embark on the noble pursuit of researching the local ecology and championing conservation through rigorous scientific inquiry. A tip of the hat is in order to the Episcopal Church of Solomons for graciously offering its Parish House for our esteemed scientists to dive into the mysteries of oysters and the Bay.



Laboratory founder Reginald Truitt, in boots, teaching a hands-on class.

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## NEXT YEAR IN THE WATERSHED...

**S**ISTERS Elizabeth Carr Smith and Florence Carr Sparrow plan to turn their 180-acre waterfront property in Anne Arundel County into a haven for African American beachgoers. Carr's Beach will open next year for Black families to enjoy music, picnics, community, and relaxation in the sun at their leisure.

**T**HE Claiborne-Annapolis Ferry Company has a new ferry that will begin operation next year. The purchase and modification of a ship built in 1883 renamed "Governor Albert C. Ritchie" will be able to carry as many as 1,200 passengers and 80 motor vehicles across the Bay.

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THIS REPORT CARD IS NEITHER TIMELY NOR TRANSPARENT, NOR QUITE DEFENSIBLE, OWING TO THE DEARTH OF SCIENTIFIC DATA AT OUR DISPOSAL IN 1925. NEVERTHELESS, A SMATTERING OF DATA AND THE BEST OF PROFESSIONAL OPINIONS WERE EMPLOYED TO ASCERTAIN THE SCORES AND CONDITIONS. THESE SCORES, MIND YOU, ARE NOT ROOTED IN EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE BUT RATHER IN CONJECTURE AND BROAD GENERALIZATIONS. A ROUND OF APPLAUSE IS DUE TO THE ESTEEMED RESEARCHERS WHOSE SAVVY INSIGHTS CRAFTED THIS DOCUMENT: BILL DENNISON, WALTER BOYNTON, DON BOESCH, GRACE BRUSH, AND ROBERT GRUMET. CONTENT WAS ARTFULLY DEVELOPED BY THE TALENTED ANN FOO, LILI BADRI, CONOR KEITZER, ALEXANDRA FRIES, HEATH KELSEY, AND DAVE NEMAZIE. REFERENCES CAN BE ACCESSED AT [CHESAPEAKEBAYREPORTCARD.ORG](http://CHESAPEAKEBAYREPORTCARD.ORG)