

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide includes a chart of the northern coastal bays which depicts channels, inlets, marinas, water control facilities, navigation markers, boat information, routes, and destinations. The brochure includes charts and safety boating tips, safety and water quality information, suggested water organizations, important phone numbers, and fishing tips.

This guide is written and produced by the Maryland Coastal Bays Program in association with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Part of the National Estuary Program, the Coastal Bays Program is a consortium of Baltimore County, Anne Arundel, and a host of state and federal agencies which are working together to implement management actions for the protection of the coastal bays. Input from local residents and representatives from the public, government, private, business, and environmental and commercial fishing industries, serve as the driving force behind the plan.



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State Office Building  
One Taylor Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
1-877-620-0888  
Habits of Service Extension 8200  
[dnr.maryland.gov](http://dnr.maryland.gov)



[www.delmarvalite.org](http://www.delmarvalite.org)

Great Books for the Environment (for their contributions to this guide)  
BIO PRAE, INC., 1993; T. R. GAY, GARY HALL, L. S. AND C. J. DAVIS, JR., 1993;  
THE CROWN, 1993; KODAK, 1993; KODAK, 1993; KODAK, 1993; KODAK, 1993; KODAK, 1993;

**THIS GUIDE SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR NAVIGATION**

# BOATER'S GUIDE to MARYLAND'S COASTAL BAYS



MARYLAND COASTAL BAYS PROGRAM

## BE A NATURE-FRIENDLY SKIPPER

Without clean water, you can't enjoy fishing, boating, sailing, or waterskiing. But the health of the bays are up to you. You can make your trip safer, more enjoyable, and better for the bays by doing your best to stick to the following:

- Be especially careful with plastics, trash, cigarette butts, and fishing line which kill marine mammals, turtles, and birds. Half of dolphin and turtle strandings are from ingestion of these products.
- Don't top-off your gas tank when refueling. Small amounts of oil or gas can pollute hundreds of gallons of water.
- Slow down to reduce boat wake within 150 feet of shore. Wake creates turbulences and disturbs wildlife.
- Keep your prop out of seagrass beds and do not rapidly accelerate in shallow areas. This kills sea grasses which are vital to juvenile fish, clams, and crabs.
- Clean your boat with as little detergent as possible. Use phosphate-free, biodegradable and non-toxic cleaners. Avoid rinsing directly into the bays.



## Water Quality

Generally speaking, St. Mary's and Chincoteague bays are healthier than Assawoman and Cape of Virginia bays where runoff from developed shorelines has lowered water quality with nutrients and chemicals. Watch out for the problems listed below.

### BROWN TIDE

In the past several years, the coastal bays have seen increasing water quality problems. Brown tide has been found at modest levels in all major coastal bays and tributaries, except St. Mary's. Significant levels have been observed in St. Martin River, Bishopville River, Ocean Place, Trappe, Assawoman, and Tangier creeks, Sinepuxent Bay and Chincoteague Bay near Tipton Island, Taylor Landing and Green Bay Bay. All the high cell counts were recorded in mid-May through mid-June. This algal bloom is not harmful to humans but kills oysters and the fish. Please call 1-888-584-3110 if you note unusual areas of chocolate-brown water coloration.

### PIESTERIA

Recently pfiesteria species have been found in Marshall, Trappe and Ryan creeks in the coastal bays. Although not at toxic levels, these areas bear watching. Many fish in the coastal bays, especially rockfish, croakers and sheepshead will show signs of dementia as the stomach which can be mentioned for pfiesteria lesions. However, if you see fisherman which appear to have lesions, please call 410-974-3238 (day) or 410-243-8700 (nights and weekends).

- Discharge tank waste at pump-out stations only or use retrofits on shore (if you can hold it).
- Do not throw fish waste into marina wastes. Dispose organic waste in the trash.
- Report suspicious or illegal activity to the DNR Natural Resources Police at 410-548-7070.
- Place a biogas pillow (an oil-absorbing sponge) in your bilge to remove oil and place drip pan under engine and fuel lines whenever possible.
- Avoid debarking in quiet, enclosed areas. They are the only place left for wildlife to seek refuge. Never jettison in less than 10 inches of water.
- Please obey fishing and crabbing regulations. There are 3500 laws for protected specimens.
- Birds of Assateague, never walk on bay islands, especially Skinner Island just north of the Route 30 bridge. Most popular bay Islands are nesting colonies for gulls, egrets, herons, and spoonbills, pelicans, and other cormorants. Just one step on the island will force many of these species to permanently abandon their nests. Seagulls will also eat their young when off the nest for only a few seconds.
- Do not fill portable tanks on vessel.

### PATHOGENS

Shellfish closure areas exist throughout the entire St. Martin River, Herring and Tawes creeks, Assawoman Bay, and Sinepuxent Bay near the Assawoman Island wastewater treatment outfall on the west side of the Venetian Bridge. Existing closures of waters to shellfish harvesting are precautionary and have been implemented because of the proximity of known or potential sources of fecal contamination.

### NO DISCHARGE ZONES

The northern bays have been declared a No Discharge Zone by the state of Maryland and United States Environmental Protection Agency. This means discharging of boat sewage north of the Ocean City inlet is illegal. Please use pumpout stations located at Advanced Marine on 8th Street, Harbour Island Marina on 14th Street, Ocean City Fishing Center at Shadytown, Ocean Pines Marina just south of Route 30, Sunset Marina on Sunset Avenue in West Ocean City, Towers of Hatteras II across from Hatteras Marina, or Hatteras Marina just south of Ocean Pines Marina.



# Welcome to the Coastal Bays...

Maryland's coastal bays make up one of the eastern seaboard's richest estuaries. To these freshwater bays, about 75 percent of the ocean's fish, crab, and shellfish species spend some part of their critical life stage. The bays and their watershed behind Ocean City and Assateague are also home to more than 200 migratory bird species, including pelicans, egrets, herons and ibis, which for hundreds of thousands of years have been using the bays as refueling areas on their annual migration north and south.

What attracts wildlife attracts people too. On weekends in July and August, some 350,000 people flock to the coastal bays to fish, swim, and sightsee. In the past 10 years, the population in the coastal bays watershed which runs roughly east of US 223, has increased 50 percent.



This has led to overfishing on the bays and much more pressure on the resource people come here to enjoy. You can help ease those pressures by being a thoughtful skipper. Showing courtesy to other people and other living things will enhance both the quality of your trip and the safety and beauty which give it that quality. Be good to the bays and they will return the favor.



## BOATING SAFETY

### SAFETY TIPS

- If you were born on or after July 1, 1972 and are a Maryland resident, you must attend a MD-certified boating safety course and possess accompanying certificate to operate a vessel. PWC users also. For information call 1-800-236-8042.
- A never be a navigation aid. It is illegal and fines are expensive.
- If you are less than 7 years old you must be wearing a life preserver.
- Use extra caution around the Route 30 bridge where strong tides and congested cruise boating hazardous. Boaters must use the East Channel only!
- Obey speed and no-wake zones.
- All of the coastal bays are sheltered (15 feet) outside channels. Drive slowly and carefully when not in channels.
- Don't leave port without understanding navigation markers and channels.
- Don't drink and boat. One beer in an hour will impair you on the water and is enough to leave you impaired.
- Bring sunglasses. Glass reflects vision and can cause crippling headaches.
- When anchoring, the amount of anchor line left out should be the water depth times 7. Never anchor too far to the stern which could cause you to capsize.
- Head bow of boat into waves at a 45 degree angle.
- You must stay 100 feet away from all Coast Guard vessels.



Show you're a good skipper by making sure you have checked the following:

- Vessel numbering and registration (mandatory)
- Life jackets (mandatory)
- VHF radio and cell phone
- Fuse extinguisher (mandatory)
- Ventilation (mandatory)
- Backfire flame arrester (mandatory)
- Navigation lights
- Sound-producing device
- Visual distress signals
- Fuel system
- Anchor with line
- Paddle or oar
- Manual pump or bilge
- Electrical installation
- Bell or whistle (mandatory)

## MARYLAND PWC REGULATIONS

- Must be at least 16 years old to operate.
- Must wear a US Coast Guard-approved life jacket.
- Must maintain 6 knots or slower within 200 feet of vessel, shore, piers, pilings, buoys, or structures.
- Must display PWC regulation sticker.
- Must have fire extinguisher.
- Must have sound-producing device.

### YOU MAY NOT:

- Operate between sunset and sunrise.
- Jump or attempt jumping the wake of another vessel within 200 feet of the vessel.
- Operate within 300 feet of people in the water or surf fishing in the Atlantic.
- Disturb waterfowl or wildlife.
- Operate in a reckless or negligent manner.

### DISTRESS SIGNALS

What you see is what you get—distress signals are universal.

Channel 16 (VHF/FRS)

Solid red (MF/HF)

Channel 8 (MF/HF)

Orange (MF/HF)

White (MF/HF)

## GET A FREE BOAT INSPECTION

The Coast Guard Auxiliary, Power Squadron and Natural Resources Police offer free boat inspections which help you and your on-the-water officers that you're a responsible captain.

Inspections take place at all major boat ramps, Front Street, and at the National Seashore. Call 410-289-4407 to learn inspection times or request an inspection. Inspectors will not inspect boats with inadequate equipment.

## Popular Sport Fish

OF MARYLAND'S COASTAL BAYS



BLACK SEA BASS



ROCKFISH



BLUEFISH



SEATROUT (WEAKFISH)



CRAPPIE



SUMMER FLUNDER



TAUTOG

Please consult the annual recreational fishing and boating regulations brochure found at your local tackle shop or marina.

We'll catch crabs in shallow water but can be caught in deeper water and around the outer reefs or rocky reefs just east of Ocean City. Light fishing is best. Larger fish are more numerous on outgoing tides. A 10' casting net with either monofilament or braided line is good. Between or near reefs, static traps, gill nets, or spearguns may be best at any given time. And some bottom trawls are good at your near or further.

But mostly at night for this active fish to feed and search the sandbars near the main 50 acre reef just west of Ocean City. Best to go out at night and catch them on any tide. They can be caught on any type of bottom or bottom trawl or drift net. Between reefs, static traps, gill nets, or spearguns may be best at any given time. And some bottom trawls are good at your near or further.

And bottom structures such as wrecks or pilings, rocky reefs, or artificial reefs are good for bottom trawling. Catch any size Maryland rockfish, striped bass, or weakfish, or even a tautog.

Remember the one fish you release safely today may catch the fish tomorrow. When releasing fish, keep them in the water whenever possible and only touch them to take measurements. Touching fish can injure them, causing stress and the release of stress hormones. If you must touch the fish back into the water, do it gently and quickly. Please do not touch the fish back into the water. Do not touch the fish more than 25 seconds. Remember, just because the fish comes along doesn't mean it will return.

### SUNRISE-SUNSET TABLE

MONTH	SUNRISE	SUNSET
January 01	7:45 a.m.	5:04 p.m.
February 01	6:54 a.m.	5:56 p.m.
March 01	6:07 a.m.	6:43 p.m.
April 01	5:48 a.m.	7:01 p.m.
May 01	5:00 a.m.	8:00 p.m.
June 01	4:06 a.m.	8:56 p.m.
July 01	3:07 a.m.	9:02 p.m.
August 01	2:08 a.m.	9:04 p.m.
September 01	1:09 a.m.	9:06 p.m.
October 01	1:00 a.m.	9:06 p.m.
November 01	0:41 a.m.	9:06 p.m.
December 01	7:49 a.m.	4:41 p.m.

### HYPOTHERMIA CHART-BAYS

MONTH	REG. TEMP. F	REG. TEMP. F	Hypothermia threat
January	41	40	Extreme danger
February	42	40	Extreme danger
March	43	40	Extreme danger
April	42.5	40	Extreme danger
May	42.0	40	Extreme danger
June	41.5	40	Extreme danger
July	41.0	40	Extreme danger
August	40.5	40	Extreme danger
September	40.0	40	Extreme danger
October	39.5	40	Extreme danger
November	39.0	40	Extreme danger
December	38.5	40	Extreme danger

### BEWARE OF HYPOTHERMIA

Not because it's cold outside doesn't mean the temps are cool enough. Between January and June, the potential for hypothermia is especially high. Even when the air temp is 40°, the water temp is 60°, the water temperature can still drop to 50° degrees cooler, especially if you are swimming. Hypothermia can occur in as little as 10 minutes.

• Keep as much of your body out of the water as possible.

• Avoid your heart to increase buoyancy.

• If you do fall in, try to get out as soon as possible.

• If you are unable to get out, try to stay dry and warm.

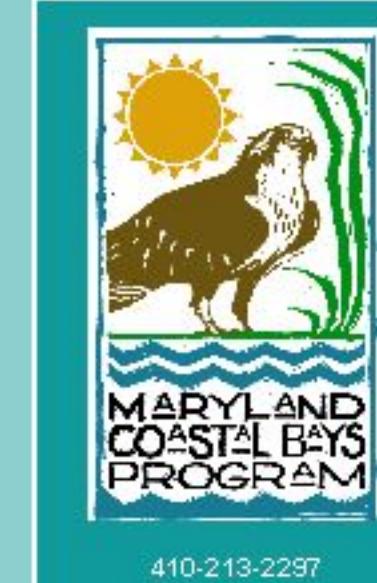
• If you are unable to get out, try to stay dry and warm.

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# Boaters' Guide to Maryland's Northern Coastal Bays

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EXPERIENCES  
[www.delmarvalite.org](http://www.delmarvalite.org)



410-213-2297  
[www.mdcoastalbays.org](http://www.mdcoastalbays.org)

Natural Resources Police  
410-548-7070



Boaters are responsible for  
the safety of their boat.  
Take a free boating  
safety course,  
1-800-336-BOAT.

This map is for reference  
only, and NOT intended  
for navigational purposes.



**Most of the bays are too shallow to navigate (about 3.5 feet on average). Stay in channels to the extent possible.**

