



September Newsletter 2022

Upcoming Volunteer Events (click on each for more details)

- [Volunteer Calendar](#) (one click shopping for events all year)

Director's Notes



A Note from the Director

Estuaries – Where Rivers Meet the Sea

I like that definition. It's a very straightforward and a clear explanation to the often asked question, "What is an estuary?"

But there's a lot more going on than just the river meeting up with the sea. It's where salt water and fresh water mingle and mix. It's where nutrients are trapped and processed. It's where suspended

sediments drop and deposit. In the spring, it's where glass eels struggle to get upstream. It's where some of our most diverse and unique plants and fish grow and thrive. And yes, this is where some of our most sought-after, protein rich and tastiest food comes from. Simply put, estuaries are one of the most dynamic, interesting and important places on this planet.

Which is why we are so fortunate to have a beautiful and productive estuary right here in our own backyard. And I'm not talking about the Chesapeake Bay – which is a fine estuary in its own right. I'm talking about the Coastal Bays estuary. Yes, the one that's probably a stone's throw from where you are sitting right now.

This month we celebrate estuaries. From September 17th – 24th it is National Estuaries Week, and we would like you to take some time to think about what your estuary does for you. Whether it is a place to recreate, to fish, to explore, to earn a living, or just a place to relax, admire and reflect. The fact is, the estuary that you live on, or near, is probably much more central to your way of life than you may realize.

Did you know that the Maryland Coastal Bays Program is part of the National Estuary Program? Did you know that EPA has been providing funding and support to keep this program going for over 25 years? Did you know that Worcester County, Berlin, Ocean City and Ocean Pines have been working with us for years to help restore and protect the Coastal Bays? And did you know that many of you and your neighbors have helped by volunteering to plant native trees, clear invasive weeds, clean up marine debris and financially support the Maryland Coastal Bays Program? For that, we are most thankful.

We know you love this estuary. We know because we hear from you when something is amiss. When there's an algae bloom or a fish kill. We hear from you when there's a problem or a threat. You may not think about it every day, but we know it is a part of your life. Everyday.

Now, I'll ask you to think about what you can do for your estuary. Learn about it. Become informed. Let your

local, state, and national representatives know that you care about the health of the Coastal Bays. And help support one of our sister organizations like the Assateague Coastal Trust or the Lower Shore Land Trust. They work every day to keep this estuary clean and healthy and we know that is important to you. Whether you know it or not.

Kevin

Executive Director

Summer Wetland Assessments

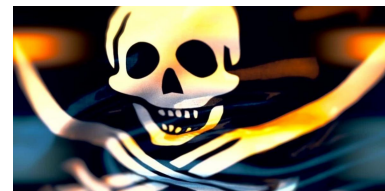


This field season, environmental staff at Coastal Bays completed 16 wetland assessments in Newport and Chincoteague Bays.



These baseline wetland studies help to better understand wetland/marsh characteristics and potential vulnerabilities in the face of changing climate and increased development within the watershed.

Marine Debris Plunder



MCBP is seeking volunteers to pick up marine debris either by land or by sea on Sunday, October 2nd, for the Third Annual Marine Debris Plunder.

The Marine Debris Plunder is a community initiative to raise awareness of the challenges faced in our Coastal Bays with improperly discarded waste and debris that can be found in our marshes, streets and waterways.

You can go on your plunder anytime and can bring it to Captain Jack Sparrow in the West Ocean City Harbor between the hours of noon and 4 to have it weighed, tallied, and disposed of properly. The Captain will award you shirts (while supplies last) for your crew in exchange for your bounty.

You will need to pre-register for this event [here](#) as you will need to pick up your supplies at Pure Lure prior to the event. There will be no registration on the

day of the event.

Please contact [sandi](#) with any questions or details you will need. Big shout out to Ron Jon Surf Shop, Sandpiper Energy, Worcester County, Pure Lure, Blue Water Properties and the amazing fraternity brothers of Theta Chi.

Explore the Estuary Adult Learning Program

Please join us Friday, September 23 from 10 am to 12 pm for a morning of learning about the history of oysters in our Coastal Bays, their importance to our watershed, and current citizen-led efforts to help understand and restore these amazing creatures.

This program will take place at Archer Oyster Company in George Island Landing. Participants will hear about the history of oysters in our Coastal Bays from MCBP Environmental Scientist Carly Toulan, a presentation on citizen science efforts by Gail and Joe Jankowski, and a tour and talk led by Archer Oyster Company owner Jess Baunhofer. At the completion of the tour, we will be canoeing out to Jess' oyster aquaculture leasing to see his endeavor firsthand. To register, please click [here](#). Be advised that this event has filled and it's currently at a waiting list only.



MCBP Chesapeake Conservation Corps Member Katie Kavanagh, Graduates!



Yesterday marked the end of an amazingly successful year for our Chesapeake Conservation Corps member, Katie Kavanagh! Through her time with MCBP, Katie worked alongside our science and education teams, conducting water quality, analyzing data, biologically monitoring various restoration sites, writing lesson plans, leading field experiences, and event planning. If you ever had the privilege to meet Katie this past year, you saw firsthand her hard work ethic, passion for this work, and kind heart. This past April, Katie impressively created a 3-day environmental leadership retreat for high schoolers in Worcester County, providing an opportunity for students to explore environmental careers here in our watershed and build leadership skills. We are proud to say that this program had such an important impact, it will stick around for years to come!

We are thrilled to announce that Katie has been offered and accepted a position as a Caseworker at the International Rescue Committee supporting refugee resettlement efforts in Silver Spring, MD.

Thank you Katie for your wonderful personality and skills this year! If you have the chance to see her before she leaves, be sure to tell her congrats!

Nesting Platform Update

What a successful year it was! We ended the season with 155 Common Tern nests, a total of 181 chicks banded, 91 adults banded, and at least 140 fledglings. Plus 1 American Oystercatcher nest with 1 fledgling. That's at least 140 new Common Terns added to the population, which for a bird with a declining population is a very nice boost!

The raft is slated to be pulled out of the water in about a week to be safely stored for the winter. The last of the tern chicks have successfully fledged and migration is just around the corner. We visited the raft last week and noticed a number of young Common Terns sitting on the side of the raft, and not a single one was banded! We still have some of our terns using the raft as well as these new visitors.

The Common Terns from the raft, as from any Common Tern

colony along the Atlantic coast, form large flocks at staging sites after they are done nesting, or earlier if their nests weren't successful. From these staging sites they will take off out over the Atlantic Ocean and make their way down south to the Caribbean and some will continue on to South America. They most likely make several stopovers before reaching their final destination in October and November, where they will spend the winter sunning themselves on a beach before flocking up once again and heading back up north in April. And hopefully back to the raft!

During the course of the breeding season, Field Assistant Kim Abplanalp has taken lots of beautiful photographs to help document the activity on the raft. We plan on adding a gallery to our website shortly. While Common Terns are graceful birds, she ended up with quite a few rather humorous shots, including the one above.



Volunteers Are Awesome!



Throughout the 26 years of its existence, MCBP has experienced many phenomenal volunteers who have dedicated their skills and passion to our programs to protect our coastal bays.

We are finally able to host gatherings again and were able to co-host a barbecue to celebrate our amazing, dedicated volunteer crew. The event was co-hosted by one of our partners, the National Aquarium, as they will now be the shepherds of the Seal Steward program.

Over 80 people came out to celebrate as one very busy scientist managed to grill over 100 burgers and hot dogs to thank our awesome volunteers!

Volunteer opportunities are listed on our website [here](#)

Creature Feature: Chuck Wills Widow

"There's no mistaking that back and forth chant of the Chuck Will's Widow (*Antrostomus carolinensis*).

If you've ever taken an early morning walk on Assateague before first light, chances are you've heard their throaty call ushered from deep within the thickets of bayberry shrubs. It is unmistakable, catchy, and their call seems to arrive on cue with the heat and humidity of summer...."

-Billy Weiland, MCBP Environmental Scientist

To read the full article on the Chuck Will's Widow, please click [here](#):

