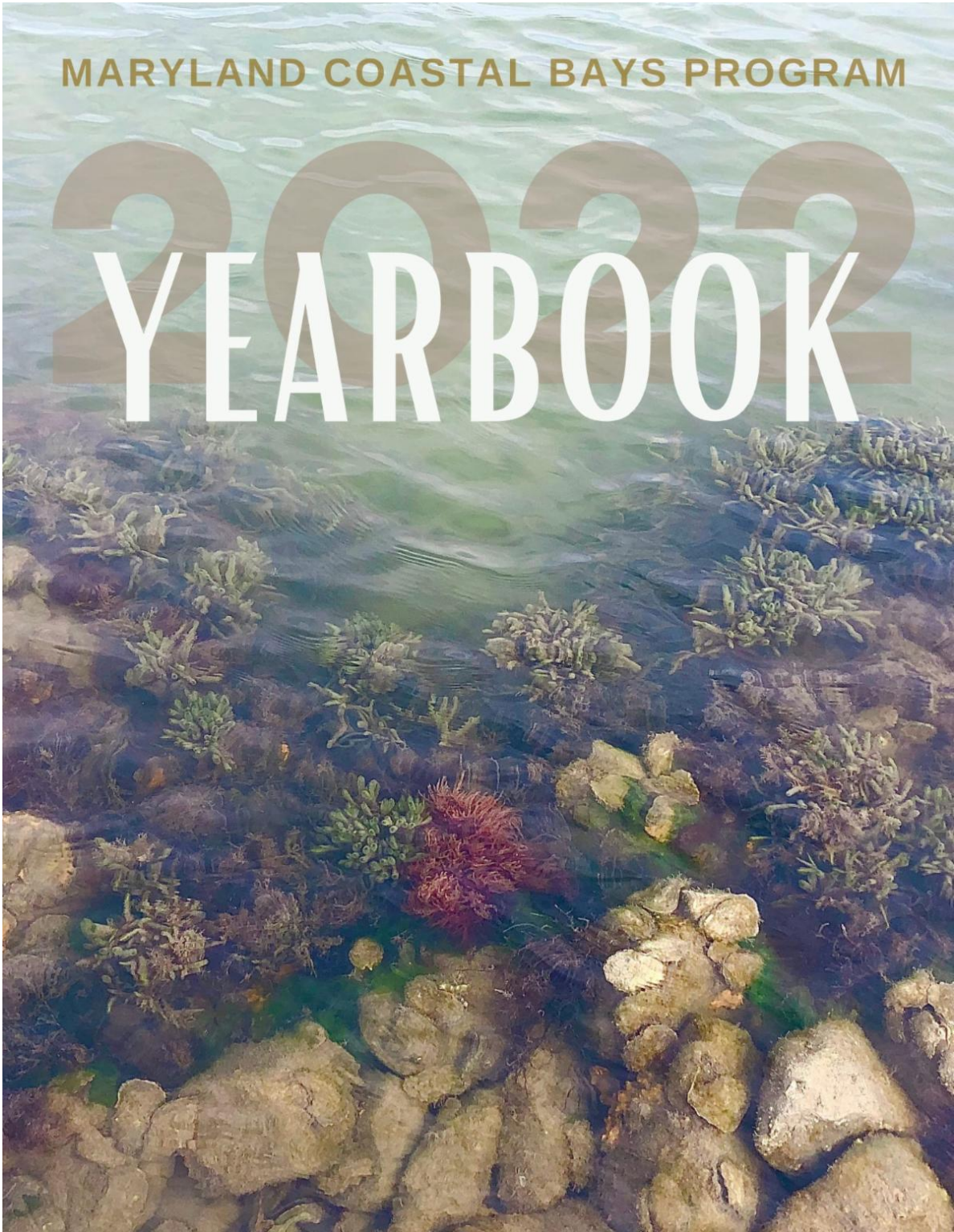


MARYLAND COASTAL BAYS PROGRAM

# 2022 YEARBOOK



## DIRECTOR'S REFLECTION

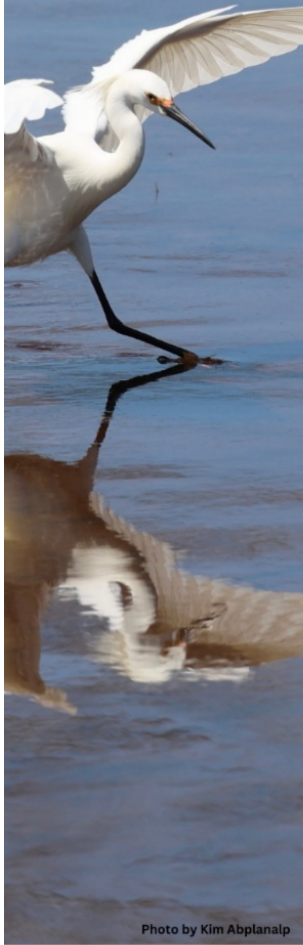


Photo by Kim Abplanalp

Another year passes - in the blink of an eye - and I'm asked to provide my reflections on the year that is nearly over. Reflection is important. I'd like to say that I spend a good amount of my time reflecting, but that would be untrue. There's always something else that rises to the top of the list. Particularly on afternoons when gardens need to be bedded down, tools need to be cleaned and honed, and my boat needs to get outfitted for duck season.

But I did it. I took some time and thought about all the projects, activities, and initiatives that we worked on in 2022. Some turned out pretty well and some still need a bit more fleshing out. That's okay. Not every at-bat is a home run, much less a grand slam. But isn't that where we learn the most?

So, on this beautiful December day, I have taken some time to reflect on the year that was 2022. The first thing that came to mind were the opportunities I had to work with and meet some of our incredible volunteers. I met many at the Bay Day event in Ocean Pines in May. I worked alongside some when we deployed the artificial bird nesting platform in Chincoteague Bay. I met others when we removed invasive species at the Lizard Hill restoration site. Volunteers, like those on our Board, who give of themselves to help us further our mission. These encounters are the things that stick with me when I reflect on the year that was. Getting to know these folks and learning why they are willing to donate their time and energy to helping protect this incredible resource is quite inspiring. All the experience and knowledge that these folks bring to the table is overwhelming and the fact that they are willing to share their knowledge and time with us is incredibly generous.

With that in mind, I thought that maybe 2023 should be the year that we give back to you. Some of the staff here have been working hard to make the public areas that we manage more accessible to you. These are areas that contain unique ecosystems and disappearing habitats. They are home to some of the most uncommon plants and animals here on the lower shore. We want you to experience these places. We'll do our part to give you opportunities to visit, engage, and learn. I think you'll be pleased.

Thanks for all you do to help support the Maryland Coastal Bays Program. We truly appreciate you and your generosity. Have a wonderful holiday season and we'll see you in 2023.

Kevin Smith  
Executive Director  
Maryland Coastal Bays Program

## COASTAL BAYS STAFF



### 2022 STAFF PICTURED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

Anna Smith  
Chandler Joiner  
Carly Toulan  
Kevin Smith  
Dr. Roman Jesien  
Liz Wist  
Steve Farr  
Sharon Peterson  
Dr. Archer Larned  
Wes Schoellkopf  
Kim Abplanalp  
Billy Weiland  
Sandi Smith

### (FORMER STAFF FROM 2022, NOT PICTURED):

Katherine Phillips  
Caitlyn Joseph  
Katie Kavanagh  
Sara Butz

A huge thank you to the  
EPA, our partners,  
volunteers, and amazing  
Board members. None of  
what we do is possible  
without you.



Photo by Zach Garmoe

"Voices of the Coastal Bays" highlights the commercial fishing heritage in Ocean City and uplifts the voices of the commercial fishermen and women that operate out of the West Ocean City Harbor. With a grant from the Beach to Bay Heritage Area, we were able to create a virtual, interactive timeline of the Harbor, interview local fishermen and women on their experiences and challenges, as well as create a "Smart Seafood Guide" for Ocean City, which tells you what seafood is in season and when! You can find all of these on our website. We hope to bring a renewed sense of appreciation for and understanding of our commercial fishing industry in Ocean City and highlight the fishing families who work tirelessly to keep it alive.



Photo by Zach Garmoe

# Highlights of 2022



This year marks the final year for MCBP to co-coordinate the Seal Steward Volunteer Program! Although bittersweet as we loved meeting and working with so many amazing stewards, we are elated that the National Aquarium now has year-round representation in our watershed and will be managing the program. MCBP is proud to partner with so many incredible organizations throughout our watershed and we are very happy the Seal Stewards has become a sustainable, long-term program that protects our winter visitors, both seals and humans!

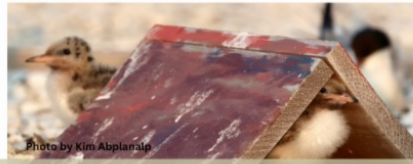


Photo by Kim Abplanalp

In 2022, the largest nesting colony of Common Terns in the Maryland Coastal Bays was on the nesting platform, with 155 nests! With few natural sand island options for nesting, the nesting platform provided a safe alternative so these terns can continue living in our beautiful bays. The platform will be installed again in the Coastal Bays in the spring, and we hope to see most of the terns returning to nest. A big shout-out and thanks to all the volunteers who helped on the platform over the summer and getting it safely out of the water in September!



# IN THE COMMUNITY

Throughout the year, Coastal Bays facilitates an array of volunteer, community, citizen science, & youth events. These activities provide an opportunity to inspire, inform, and engage with both locals & visitors of the watershed. Here's a quick peek into some of our most memorable days "by land" and "by water" from 2022.

Staff at the Association of National Estuary Program Conference



Living Local Beekeeping workshop at Bay Bees Apiary



Service day with Stephen Decatur Middle School



Coastal Bays 2021 Report Card release event at OC Marlin Club



WETLANDS high school environmental retreat at Pocomoke River State Park



Billy Weiland conducting a forest survey in southern Worcester County



Wetland assessment on Assateague Island National Seashore



Bay Day family festival in Ocean Pines



## BY LAND

Worcester County Public Schools summer professional development



Journey Up the Coast youth program with Delaware Center for the Inland Bays



MCBP hosted a kayak tour for the World Seagrass Conference



Discover Your Watershed volunteer event at the Assateague Living Shoreline



Marine Debris Plunder clean up with "Jack Sparrow"



Evening community kayak program on Ayers Creek



Banding Common Terns on the nesting platform



Explore the Estuary adult learning program at Archer Oyster Co.



Assateague Outfitters staff had a great 2022 season! Business boomed for the 2nd year of the Bike Rental Stand.



A very successful 10th year for the Kayak Stand & the Beach Hut - which received a much needed makeover this year!

# AND BY WATER

# FACES OF THE COASTAL BAYS



MCBP Scientist and Educator, Cailyn, and Education Coordinator, Liz



Farmer Carol Cross, owner of Cross Farms, with 4th graders from Snow Hill Middle School on a Living Local field trip.



Estuary Explorers summer camp kids with their recycled cardboard boats at OC Rec and Parks.



The Saltmarsh Assessment and Restoration Team (SMARTeam) conduct a site visit at the James Farm Ecological Preserve to assess wetland restoration techniques.



MCBP staff members Archer and Kim, along with volunteers Russel Kovach and Wayne Klockner, prepare for bird banding.



MCBP Watershed Coordinator, Steve, rescues his hat from the grasp of Isle of Wight Bay. Administrative Specialist, Sharon, provides moral support.



# STRANDED SPAWNING HORSESHOE CRAB RECOVERY TEAM

During horseshoe crab spawning season, tens of thousands of horseshoe crabs make their way onto our sandy beaches to lay and fertilize eggs. These eggs are a major food source for many species in our bays, making spawning season crucial! However, certain spawning grounds in the Coastal Bays can be precarious for these living fossils. Obstructions prevent horseshoe crabs from returning to the water after spawning, which cause strandings. Although horseshoe crabs can remain out of the water for long periods of time, they must keep their gills wet. Summer heat can dry out gills particularly fast, so many of these stranded crabs die.

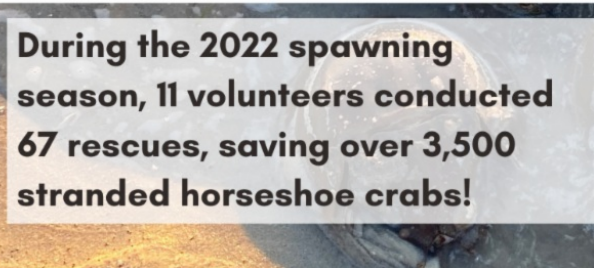
One of MCBP's loyal horseshoe crab survey volunteers, Carol Sottili, has been rescuing stranded horseshoe crabs from Sunset Island in Ocean City for years. Carol's commitment and passion for horseshoe crabs, along with the growing concern over mass casualties in the Coastal Bays, inspired MCBP Environmental Scientist, Carly Toulan, to create the Stranded Spawning Horseshoe Crab Recovery Team.

Volunteer members prevent horseshoe crab deaths by removing stranded crabs from obstructions and returning them safely back to the water. Volunteers receive safe handling training and learn to fill out a basic data sheet to help MCBP keep track of the number of rescued, dead, and spawning horseshoe crabs.



2022 was the pilot year for this program and it was a great success! The Stranded Spawning Horseshoe Crab Recovery Team is a great addition to our on-going horseshoe crab monitoring program and we are hoping to expand the program with more volunteers and new locations for the 2023 spawning season.

If you are interested in joining this amazing volunteer program, please contact Environmental Scientist, Carly Toulan at [ctoulan@mdcoastalbays.org](mailto:ctoulan@mdcoastalbays.org).



**During the 2022 spawning season, 11 volunteers conducted 67 rescues, saving over 3,500 stranded horseshoe crabs!**

# VALUABLE VOLUNTEERS

## EVENT CREW



**HARBOR DAY**



**BAY DAY**



**MARINE DEBRIS PLUNDER**

## WATER QUALITY



**MD CONSERVATION CORPS**



**FISH SURVEYS**



**VOLUNTEER INTERN SARA**

## PLATFORM PEOPLE



**DISMANTLING CREW**



**MONITORING GROUP**

# THANK YOU!





# FAVORITE FAUNA

Photo by Zach Garmoe **BLUE CRAB**



**MARBLED SALAMANDER**



**LIZARDFISH**



**OYSTER TOADFISH**



**LADY CRAB**



**NEEDLEFISH**



**PIN FISH**



**BLACK SEA BASS**

Photo by Zach Garmoe



**TWO-TOOTHED MARSH SNAIL**



**COMMON TERN CHICKS**



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