

# TIDELINES



News & Notes From the Hampton Roads Office of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation

JUNE 2026

## Clean the Bay Day a Huge Success

On May 2, more than 2,500 volunteers gathered at over 135 sites throughout Virginia to pick up more than 54,000 pounds of litter as part of CBF's Clean the Bay Day. Clean the Bay Day is the state's largest and longest-running litter cleanup. Since 1989, Clean the Bay Day has engaged more than 179,500 volunteers who have removed 7.15 million pounds of debris from across the state.

Edward Jones was the presenting sponsor for this year's Clean the Bay Day. Other valued sponsors included Cox Communications, ITC Federal, LLC, and the Port of Virginia.

As usual, the most common items found during this year's cleanup were plastic and glass bottles, plastic bags, and cigarette butts. This year's litter removal played a critical role in mitigating the pervasive threat of microplastics. Litter, especially plastic, doesn't just disappear. It breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces, known as microplastics. More than 90 percent of microplastics that enter the Bay stay in

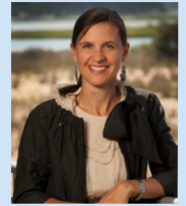


Members of the Federal Managers Association, Chapter 3 pose after picking up trash in Portsmouth as part of Clean the Bay Day.

the Bay. These microplastics can be ingested by fish and animals in the water, entering the food chain and potentially harming wildlife and even human health. Additionally, larger debris can entangle animals and degrade the natural beauty of the Bay and our local waterways.

Among the volunteers at Clean the Bay Day were many elected officials, community leaders, service members, Scout groups, small businesses, large corporations, and thousands of other Virginians. Thanks to everyone who joined us!

From the Desk of  
**Christy Everett**  
HAMPTON ROADS  
DIRECTOR



Blue crabs in the Chesapeake Bay received both good news and bad news in the results released in May from the annual blue crab winter dredge survey, conducted jointly by Virginia and Maryland.

The survey estimates a total of 349 million blue crabs in the Bay in 2026, slightly lower than the long-term average of 400 million crabs. This is a 46 percent increase from last year's estimate of 238 million crabs, which was the second lowest number recorded since the survey began in 1990. Juvenile blue crabs saw a significant increase after six consecutive years of below-average numbers. Adult male numbers are also up. However, adult female crabs continued their decline and remain well below average.

While the increased numbers of juveniles and males are encouraging, the downward trend in the Bay's adult female blue crab population is still concerning. Because females can bear millions of eggs, they are key to increasing the overall population.

To support a strong blue crab population, the focus needs to remain on three fronts: preventing pollution, restoring important blue crab habitats such as underwater grasses and oyster reefs, and tackling the growing threat of blue catfish.

*Christy Everett*

## CBF Welcomes Hampton Roads Leaders on the Water

In April, CBF was pleased to welcome local and state leaders aboard a CBF education vessel for a trip leaving from downtown Norfolk. Participants included local government representatives, state legislators, and members of the business community. On the trips, attendees learned about local water-quality issues and had meaningful conversations on innovative ways different constituencies are working to prevent pollution. These boat trips are a great way to bring leaders together so they can collaborate to improve local water quality and the Bay's health—as well as allowing them to spend the day on the water exploring.



An attendee enjoys hands-on activities and learning about water-quality issues on a CBF educational boat trip for local and state leaders this spring.

## Governor Signs Pro-Environment Bills into Law

In May, CBF was honored to attend a bill signing hosted by Governor Spanberger at Widewater State Park in Stafford County.

The governor signed several bills that CBF advocated for during the 2026 General Assembly session including ones to help identify sources of PFAS and provide for more robust testing of these “forever chemicals.” PFAS or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a class of over 15,000 synthetic chemicals used in consumer goods and industrial processes for their heat-, water-, and stain-resistant properties. PFAS do not readily break down and instead accumulate in people, wildlife, soil, and water.

Additionally, the governor signed bills to protect and enhance wetlands and wetland migration corridors and legislation that gives added weight to projects in low-income areas that incorporate nature-based solutions when distributing funds from the Resilient Virginia Revolving Loan Fund.

While we celebrate these legislative victories, we are still waiting for legislators to pass a



From left to right: CBF Virginia Executive Director Chris Moore, Governor Abigail Spanberger, and CBF Policy Manager Jay Ford at a bill signing event.

budget. Legislators plan to return at the end of June with a compromise budget in hand so it can be approved before July 1. Funding for long-overdue research into the menhaden population amid intensifying warning signs and the large harvest by the industrial fishery is still in limbo until this is resolved, as well as funding for wastewater treatment plant upgrades, the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program, community forestry programs, and others. Check out the Calendar Section to learn how you can let state legislators know that you support funding for a healthy Chesapeake Bay.

## Federal Fisheries Updates: Menhaden and Oysters

In early May, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) delayed action on potential new protections for menhaden in the Bay. The commission has been weighing Draft Addendum II to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic menhaden, which defines options to address Chesapeake Bay menhaden concerns such as starving osprey chicks and plummeting bait catches for watermen. The commission had been expected to advance the measure for public comment at the meeting. Instead, it unanimously voted to delay consideration and set up a work group to further develop the proposal. Draft Addendum II considers reforms that could cut the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap by up to 50 percent. It could also implement new rules that spread out the industrial menhaden harvest across

the season. ASMFC's next opportunity to take up the measure will be at its August meeting.

Also in May, the House Appropriations Committee passed a funding bill for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that would allow commercial fishing on protected oyster reefs and cut off restoration funds for oyster sanctuaries most in need of investment. Oyster sanctuaries in the Chesapeake Bay provide immense ecologic and economic benefits, and have received strong private, state, and federal investments under the promise that they will remain protected from harvest. Join CBF as we urge the House to reject these devastating provisions for oyster restoration—see the Calendar Section to learn how.

## CBF in the Community RESTORATION

### Oyster Gardening

Various dates, times, and locations throughout Virginia

Help bring back this vital species by growing oysters alongside your dock. After a year, the adult oysters are returned to CBF for planting on sanctuary reefs. Workshops are being offered throughout the region. Register today by visiting [cbf.org/vaoystergardening](https://cbf.org/vaoystergardening).

### Mallard Point Living Shoreline

August 3 to August 17

Various times each day

Eberly Terrace, Hampton

Join CBF staff to help install a living shoreline and grass buffer along the banks of the Hampton River, adjacent to the Mallard Point Condominium complex. Visit [cbf.org/events](https://cbf.org/events) to register.

## ADVOCACY

### State Budget Action Alert

Right now, Virginia legislators are negotiating key funding decisions that will determine how we can reduce pollution, restore waterways, and build resilience. As budget negotiators balance competing priorities, they need to hear from you about the value of a healthy environment. Visit [cbf.quorum.us/campaign/vaspecialsession](https://cbf.quorum.us/campaign/vaspecialsession) to take action before the end of June.

### Federal Oyster Action Alert

The House Appropriations Committee passed a funding bill that would open up protected oyster sanctuaries to commercial fishing and cut off restoration funds for oyster sanctuaries. Email or call your representative and tell them to reject these measures. Visit [cbf.quorum.us/campaign/oaafunding](https://cbf.quorum.us/campaign/oaafunding) to let Congress know they need to protect oyster sanctuaries.

## COMMUNITY

### VoiCeS Adult Education Class

Consecutive Wednesdays

September 16 through October 21

Portsmouth

Save the date for CBF's adult education class, where you can explore a range of Bay-related topics. Registration coming soon!



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