

Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Join Us for a Discovery Lab!

Discovery Labs are provided every month by the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (CBNERR). These labs provide fun, family-friendly opportunities to learn about the Chesapeake Bay and our local environment. Each lab focuses on a different topic and includes exhibits, demonstrations, and hands-on activities for kids and adults. Most labs also include a short presentation by an expert on the topic. CBNERR Discovery Labs are located at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in Gloucester Point.

Discovery Lab
Web page:



Labs take place in the Catlett Burruss Research and Education Lab from 6:00-8:00 PM.
The speaker presentation occurs from 6:30-7:00 PM.

While the labs are free, registration is required due to limited space. Register at: http://www.vims.edu/cbnerr/education/public_programs/index.php

2016 Schedule:

January 19 – The Benthos

Speaker: Cate Turner, VIMS

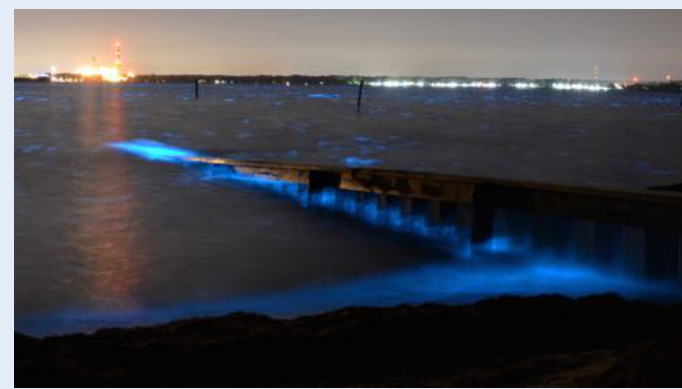
The deepest layer of a body of water such as an ocean or a river is referred to as the benthic zone. Organisms that live in this community are called the “benthos,” and they live on, in, or near the sea floor. Learn about the various organisms that call the benthic zone their home, why the benthos are important, and how scientists are using research tools and technology to study and document what is going on in this zone. Come prepared to get your hands dirty!



February 16 – Plankton

Speaker: Brandon Conroy, VIMS

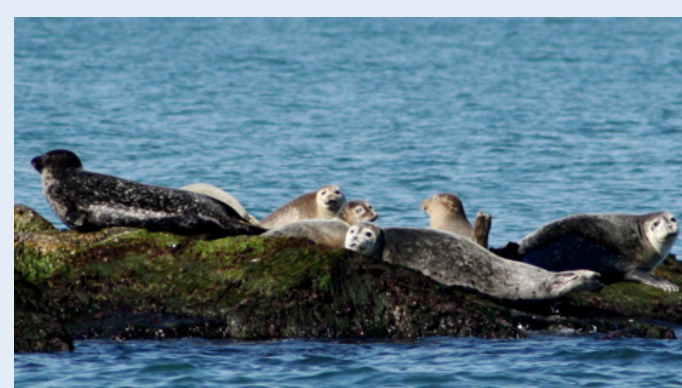
The word “plankton” comes from the Greek planktos, meaning “wanderer.” Plankton are a diverse group of organisms, both plant and animal, that live in the water column and cannot swim against a current. They are incredibly important in aquatic food webs, forming the base of the food chain and providing a food source to many large animals such as fishes and whales. Hear about VIMS zooplankton research in the Amazon River Plume, while looking at preserved specimens, displays, and participating in fun activities!



March 15 – Marine Mammals

Speaker: Dr. Christine Meynard, VIMS

Marine mammals are warm-blooded animals, much like humans, that live or feed in the ocean. There are 129 species of marine mammals around the world, including all of our whales, dolphins, seals, and manatees! Marine mammals play a very important role in marine ecosystems, especially as predators of smaller organisms. However, scientists estimate that 23% of our marine mammals are currently threatened! Come learn more about marine mammals in the Chesapeake Bay region, the dangers they are facing, and how you can help them!



April 19 – Bivalves

Speaker: Bruce Pfirrmann, VIMS

Bivalves are a group of invertebrate animals that have two shells to protect a soft body inside. Oysters, clams, mussels, and scallops are all members of this group. Bivalves can live in both fresh and salt water. Many of them are filter feeders, and are very important in keeping our water clear! They are also important sources of food, for humans as well as other animals. Observe and touch live bivalves, as well as other creatures that live on oyster reefs. Learn about all the ways that bivalves are important to the Chesapeake Bay region, and how human activity has historically impacted these important animals.



June 21 – Plant Adaptations

Speaker: Erin Shields, VIMS/CBNERR

An adaptation is a trait or feature that a species has to help it live in a specific place or habitat. Different plants have different adaptations based on where they live. While an adaptation can help a plant survive in one place, it can make it very difficult for that plant to live in a different place. Come learn about the various adaptations that plants in the Chesapeake Bay region have developed to live on land or in the water, including all the different ways that they find food and grow, while participating in fun activities like creating a salt marsh field guide and tasting salt from a blade of *Spartina* grass.



July 19 - Rays

Speaker: Bob Fisher, VIMS

Rays- disc-shaped cousins of sharks and skates- are common inhabitants of the Chesapeake Bay. Join Bob Fisher, a fisheries and seafood technology specialist at VIMS, as he describes the importance of rays in the Bay ecosystem and explores whether a ray fishery might help reduce their reported consumption of farmed shellfish. The lab will offer a look at the distribution of rays around the world, information about the dangers of ray “stingers,” and activities to distinguish rays from skates. This lab will focus on the Cownose Ray.



August 23 – Eels

Speaker: Zoemma Warshafsky, VIMS

Did you know that electric eels are not true eels, but rather a type of knifefish? True eels are a group of fishes with long, snake-like bodies that are often confused with their electric cousins. There are almost 800 species of eels around the world. They can range in length from 2 inches to nearly 13 feet! The most common species of eel found in this region is the American eel. American eels have a fascinating life cycle, and are very important in the Bay ecosystem as both a predator and prey. Come learn more about these misunderstood creatures and why they are important not only to our local region but around the world!



October 18 – Mad Lab

Explore the wonders of dry ice, slime, and things that glow in the dark! This Halloween-themed lab will have many hands-on activities to explore the creepy, yucky, and slimy parts of science. Have a spooky fun time as you trick-or-treat your way through the lab stations. Brave the dark and you may win prizes for the best marine-themed costume or most creative costume. We encourage you to dress up for this event as you trick-or-treat your way around the lab. There will be no speaker for this lab.

