



Virginia Marine Resources Commission



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O u r M i s s i o n S t a t e m e n t

The Marine Resources Commission serves as stewards of Virginia's marine and aquatic resources, and protectors of its tidal waters and homelands, for present and future generations.

Where we are headquartered

- The Commission is headquartered on Fort Monroe, VA
- Law Enforcement Operates from 4 Area Offices
 - Northern Area, Heathsville VA
 - Middle Area, Gloucester VA
 - Southern Area, Newport News Va
 - Eastern Shore, Belle Haven VA
 - Operations Center (Dispatch) located in Newport News

History of VMRC

1864: FISHERIES EXPLOITATION - OYSTER NAVY

VA and MD established
State Oyster Police
Navies to enforce order,
boundaries, and prevent
poaching.

1875: VIRGINIA FISHERIES COMMISSION ESTABLISHED

Act was passed for the
appointment of an
advisory Fish
Commission.

1897: OYSTER NAVY TRANSFERRRED TO FISHERIES COMMISSION

The four vessel Oyster
Navy transferred to the
Fisheries Commission.

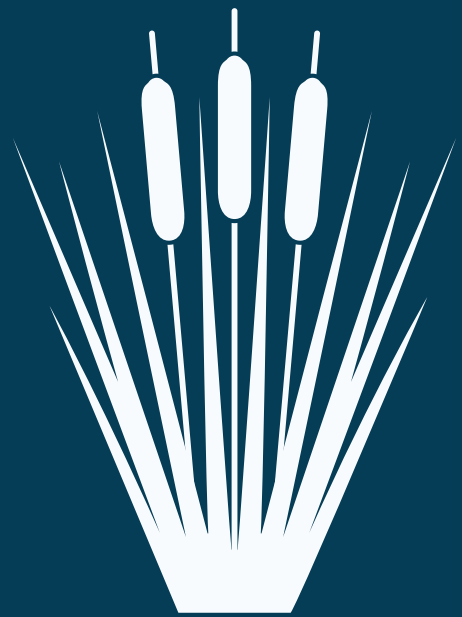
1968: VMRC - NEW NAME, NEW MISSIONS

Legislative study
recommended broadened
mission for agency.
Commission of Fisheries
became the Marine
Resources Commission.

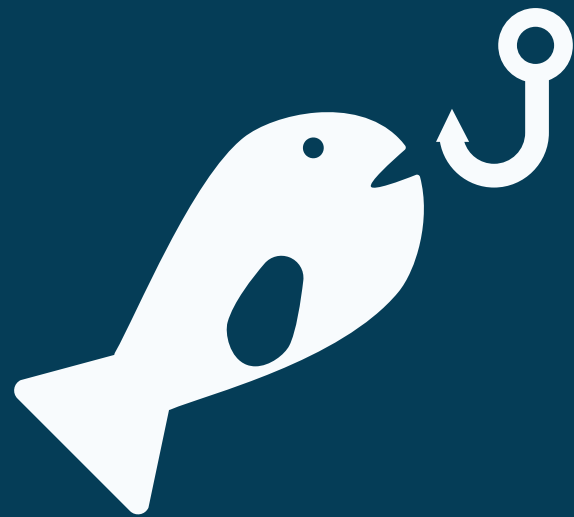
The Commission (aka Board)

- Meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month*
- Consists of 8 members and the Chairman (Commissioner)
- Members, to the extent possible, shall representative of all areas of interest in Virginia's marine resources, including commercial, recreational and environmental interest.
- Powers:
 - Promulgate regulation and guidelines
 - Decide on protested wetlands, submerged lands, and aquaculture permit applications.

VMRC Divisions



Habitat
Management



Fisheries
Management



Shellfish
Management



Law
Enforcement



Administration
and Finance

VMRC DEPARTMENTS

■ Habitat Management

Manage water bottoms in public trust for the citizens of the Commonwealth. The Habitat Management Division works with those who wish to use them for piers or water-dependent projects.

■ Oyster Replenishment

Manage the shellfish resources and shellfish harvest that occurs in Virginia's tidal waters, including public oyster, clam, and private grounds leased for the propagation of shellfish.

■ Fisheries Management

Manage marine fishing, both recreational and commercial. Work to create and maintain sustainable fisheries for the benefit of all anglers and the ecosystem.

■ Law Enforcement

The Virginia Marine Police exercise the powers and duties conferred upon them by the General Assembly. Enforce marine fishery and habitat conservation laws and regulations. Have the same powers as sheriffs and other law-enforcement officers to enforce all of the criminal laws of the Commonwealth and regular conservation police officers.

VA Tidal Waters And Territorial Sea Defined by COV

- "Territorial sea" means the waters within the belt, three nautical miles wide, that is adjacent to Virginia's coast and seaward of the mean low-water mark.
- Total of 7,213 miles of Shoreline
- 4 tidal rivers reaching as far as 100 miles inland
- 3,200 sq. miles of water

Managing Our Coastal Habitats

SUBMERGED LANDS

Virginia's tidal water property managers, ensuring our waterways support world class boating, commerce, fishing, and recreation.

COASTAL DUNES AND BEACHES

Protecting our communities from storms and floods and providing world class beaches.

WETLANDS MANAGEMENT

Providing key nursery habitats for our iconic fisheries and filtering pollutants each tide cycle.

2020

Commercial Seafood

- OVER 322,000,000 LBS. OF
SEAFOOD LANDED IN
VIRGINIA
 - Over \$215,000,000
dockside valuation of
product landed
-

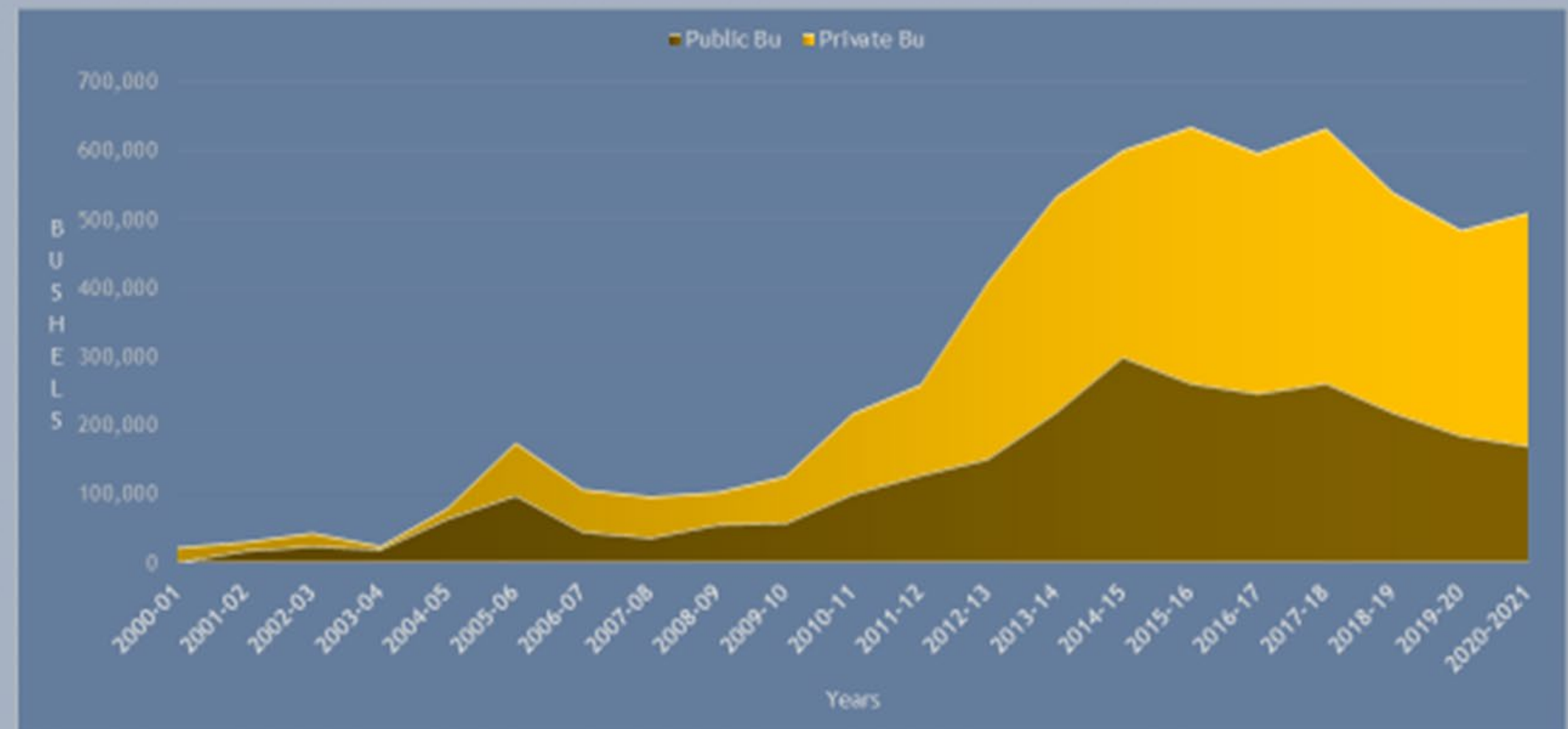
2020

Recreational Fishing

- 25,080,912 LBS
 - OVER 750,000 ANGLERS
ANNUALLY
-

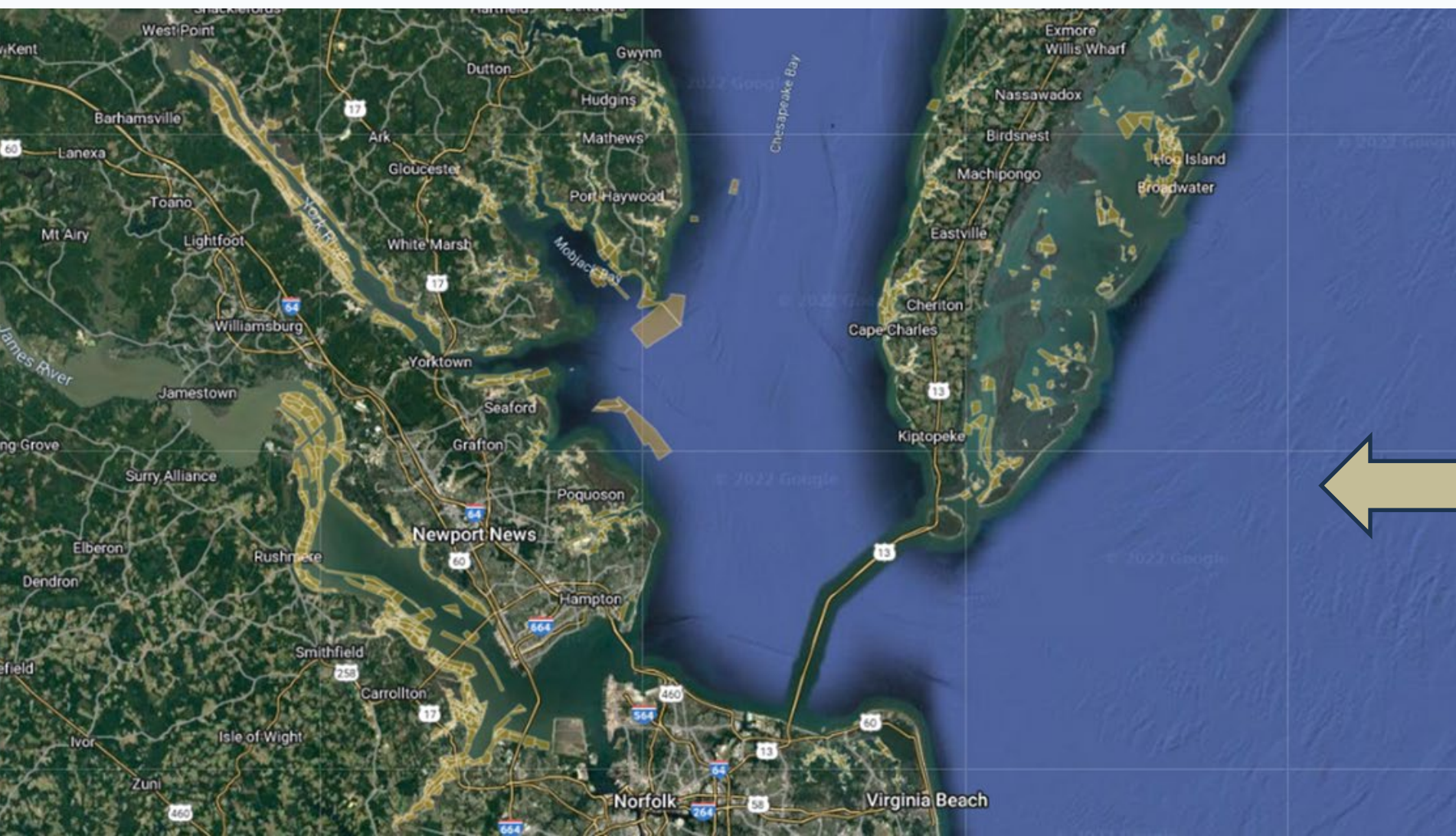
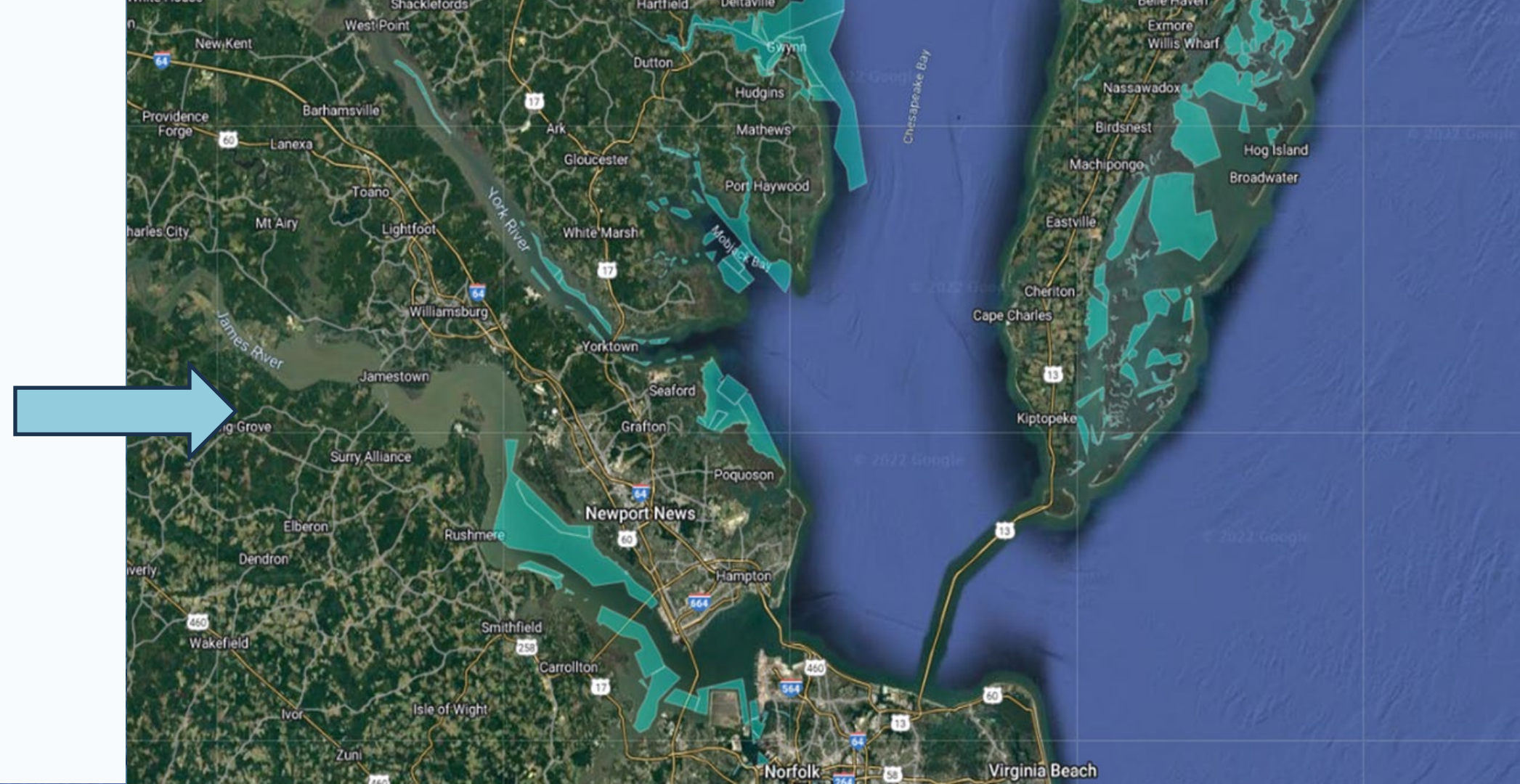
Virginia Oyster Harvest

PUBLIC VS PRIVATE OYSTER HARVEST



Public Grounds & Types

- Approximately 251,000 Acres of Public Grounds (Baylor Survey)
- Baylor Grounds refer to public oyster grounds designated by a 1894 survey to remain open to public shellfish harvesting.



Private Grounds & Types

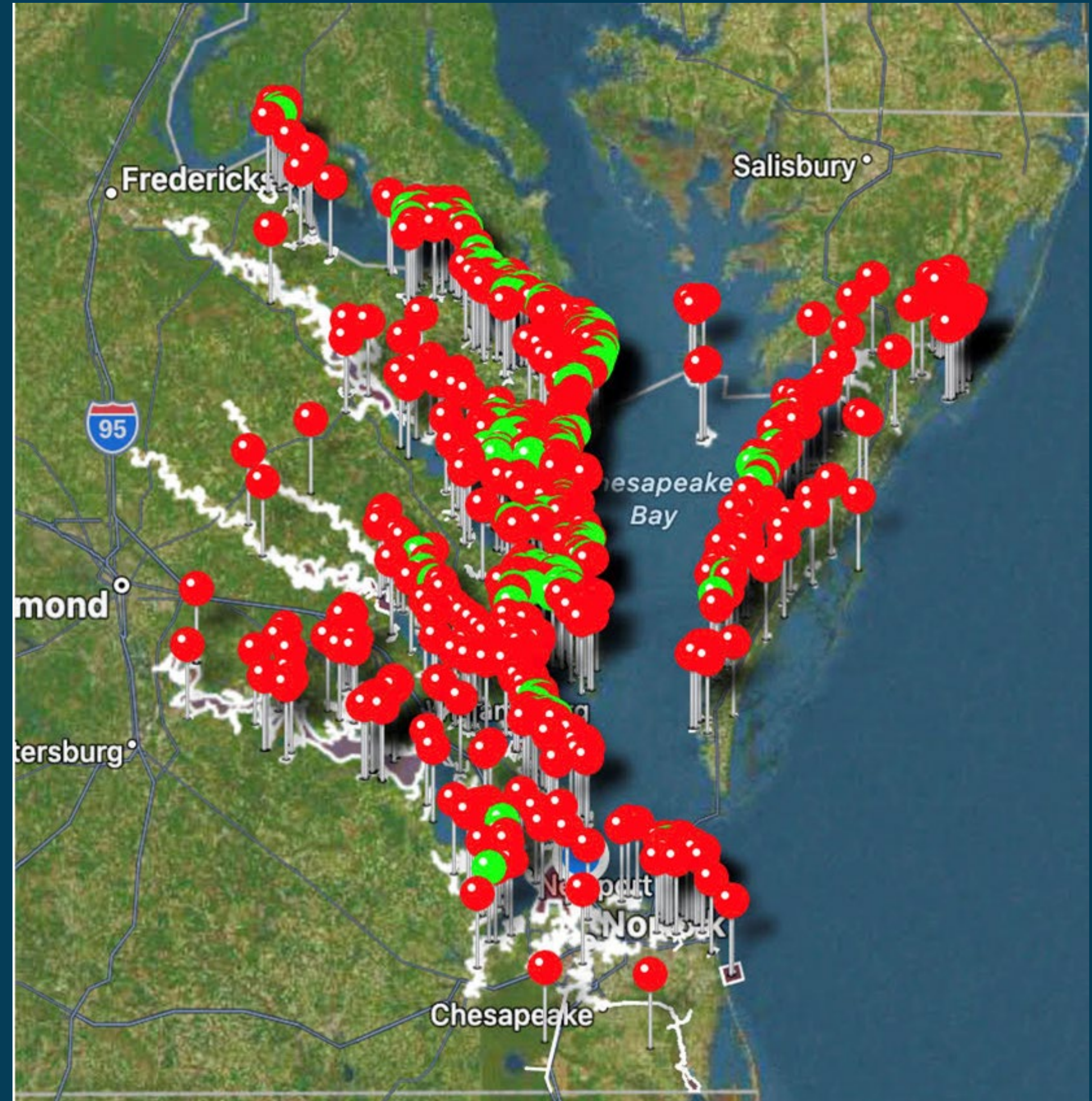
- Approximately 126,000 Acres of Private Grounds Leased from the Commonwealth.
- \$1.50 per acre since 1960 (increased from \$1.00 per acre)
- 2025 CPI Inflation value ~ \$16.60 per acre

An aerial photograph of the ocean with deep blue waves and white foam. A large white rectangular box is centered on the image, containing text. There are small white rectangular marks in the top-left and bottom-right corners of the image.

35

OYSTER SANCTUARIES IN THE WATERS OF THE
COMMONWEALTH, WITH THE LARGEST BEING
WRECK SHOAL AT 746 ACRES

Shellfish Condemnation Zones





VIRGINIA LAW

Atlantic States
Marine Fisheries
COMMISSION



Virginia Marine Resources Commission

**FISHERIES MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW:
STATE, REGIONAL, FEDERAL**

VIRGINIA LAW



Code of Virginia

The Code of Virginia contains the laws passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor for the Commonwealth of Virginia. *Updated July 1 to reflect the legislation passed during the previous session.*

[Code of Virginia »](#)

**Title 28.2. Fisheries and Habitat
of the Tidal Waters**



Virginia Administrative Code

The Virginia Administrative Code contains the regulations adopted by state agencies in the Commonwealth of Virginia. There are 24 titles, each representing a subject category with agencies assigned to the appropriate title. *Updated daily.*

[Virginia Administrative Code »](#)

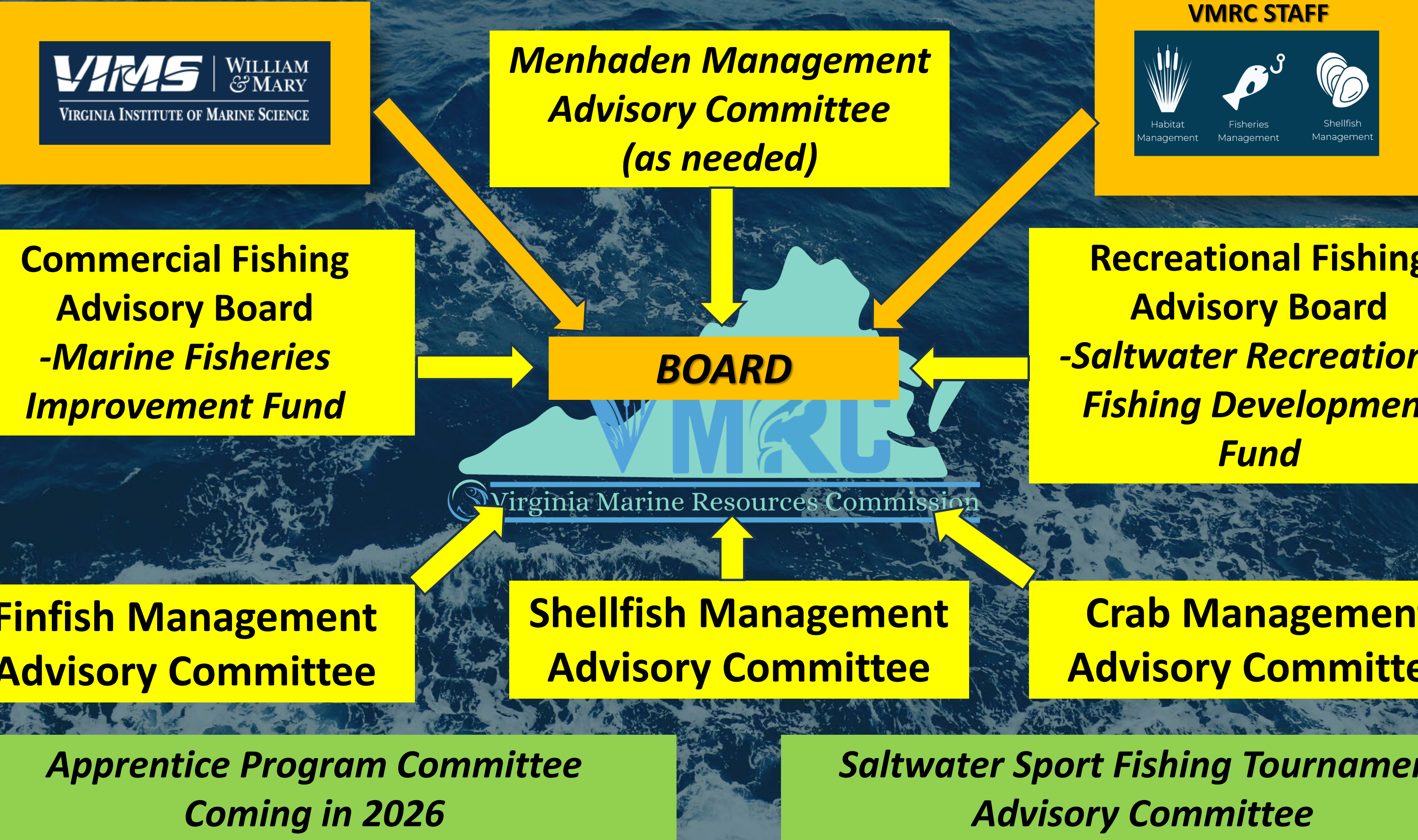
**Agency 20. Marine Resources
Commission**



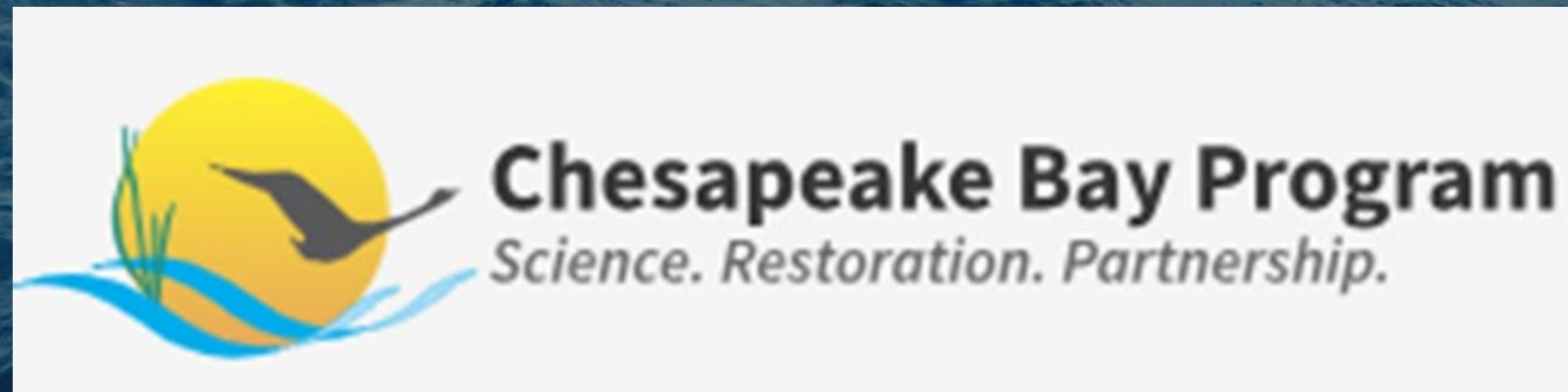
Constitution of Virginia

The Constitution of Virginia defines and limits the powers of state government and the basic rights of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Like all other state constitutions, it is supreme over Virginia's laws and acts of government, though it may be superseded by the United States Constitution and U.S. federal law. *Updated annually after legislative session.*

[Constitution of Virginia »](#)



REGIONAL MANAGEMENT



The Chesapeake Bay Program is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983.

The Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC) combines the expertise of state representatives and scientists from the Chesapeake Bay region with federal fisheries scientists from the National Marine Fisheries Service's Northeast and Southeast Fisheries Science Centers. This committee has met each year since 1997 to review the results of annual Chesapeake Bay blue crab surveys and harvest data, and to develop management advice for Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions: the state of Maryland, Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC).

REGIONAL MANAGEMENT



The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) was formed in 1942. The purpose of the Commission is:....to promote the better utilization of the fisheries, marine, shell and anadromous, of the Atlantic seaboard by the development of a joint program for the promotion and protection of such fisheries, and by the prevention of the physical waste of the fisheries from any cause.


It is not the purpose....to authorize the states joining herein to limit the production of fish or fish products for the purpose of establishing or fixing the price thereof or creating and perpetuating monopoly.

REGIONAL MANAGEMENT



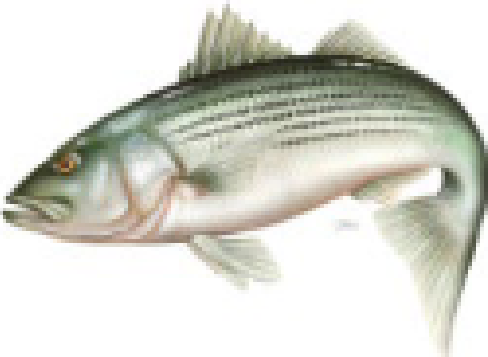

Quick Guide to ASMFC Species Stock Status

(Current as of November 2025)

SPECIES	OVERFISHED	OVERFISHING	ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW
	<u>American Eel</u>	Depleted	Stock status based on trend analysis in 2023 benchmark stock assessment. Measures implemented in 2013/2014 to reduce fishing mortality and prevent expansion of the fishery. ME glass eel quota set at 9,688 pounds for 2025-2027. Coastwide yellow eel harvest cap reduced to 518,281 pounds based on continued population decline.

REGIONAL MANAGEMENT



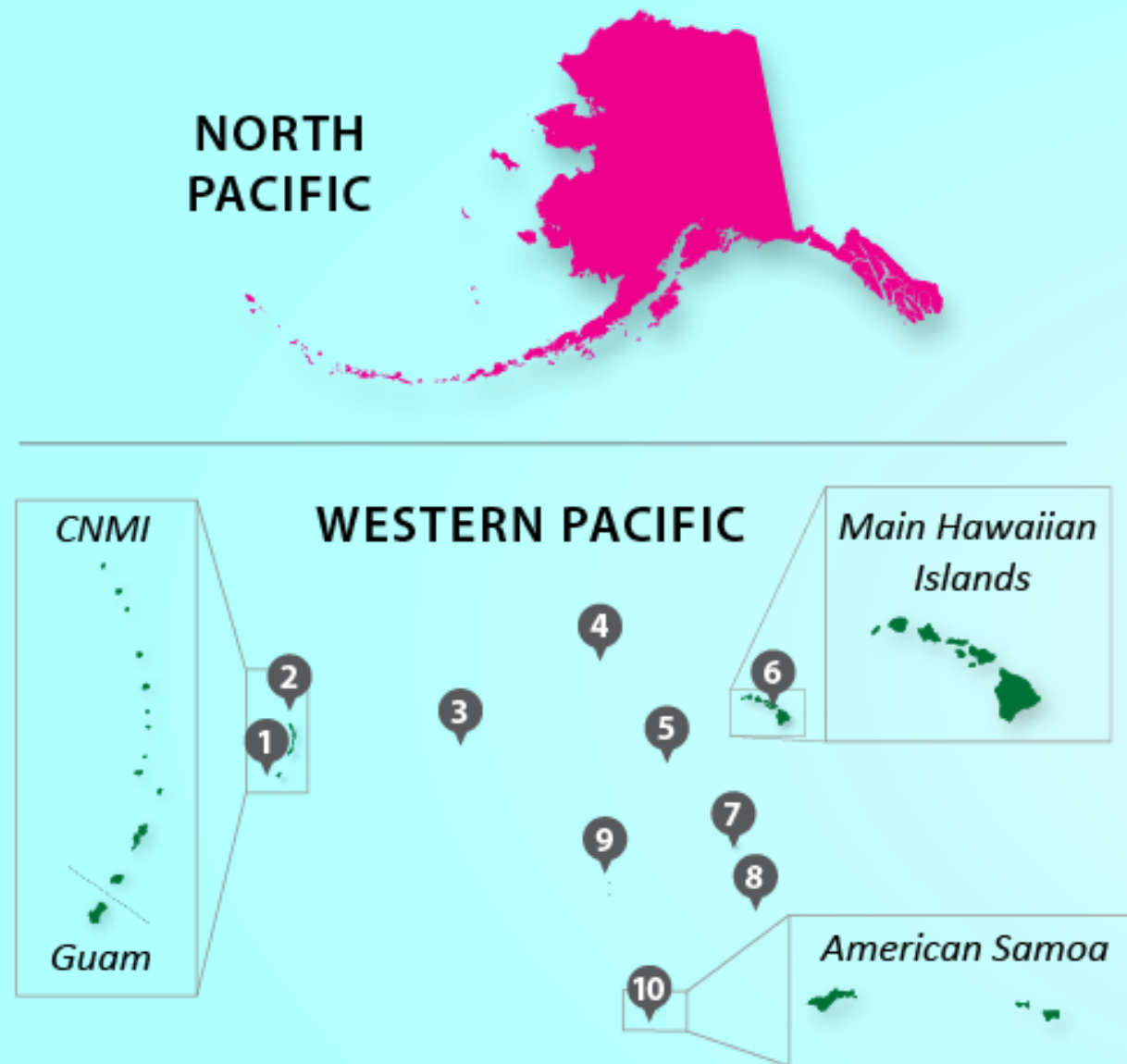
SPECIES		OVERFISHED	OVERFISHING	ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW
	Atlantic Striped Bass	Y	N	Stock status based on 2024 assessment update. Stock rebuilding deadline is 2029. To support stock rebuilding, more restrictive management measures implemented in 2024 to reduce fishing mortality.
	Atlantic Croaker	Unknown	Unknown	2020 TLA triggered management action for Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic regions; changes to recreational and commercial fishery regulations implemented in 2021. Benchmark assessment underway.

FEDERAL MANAGEMENT

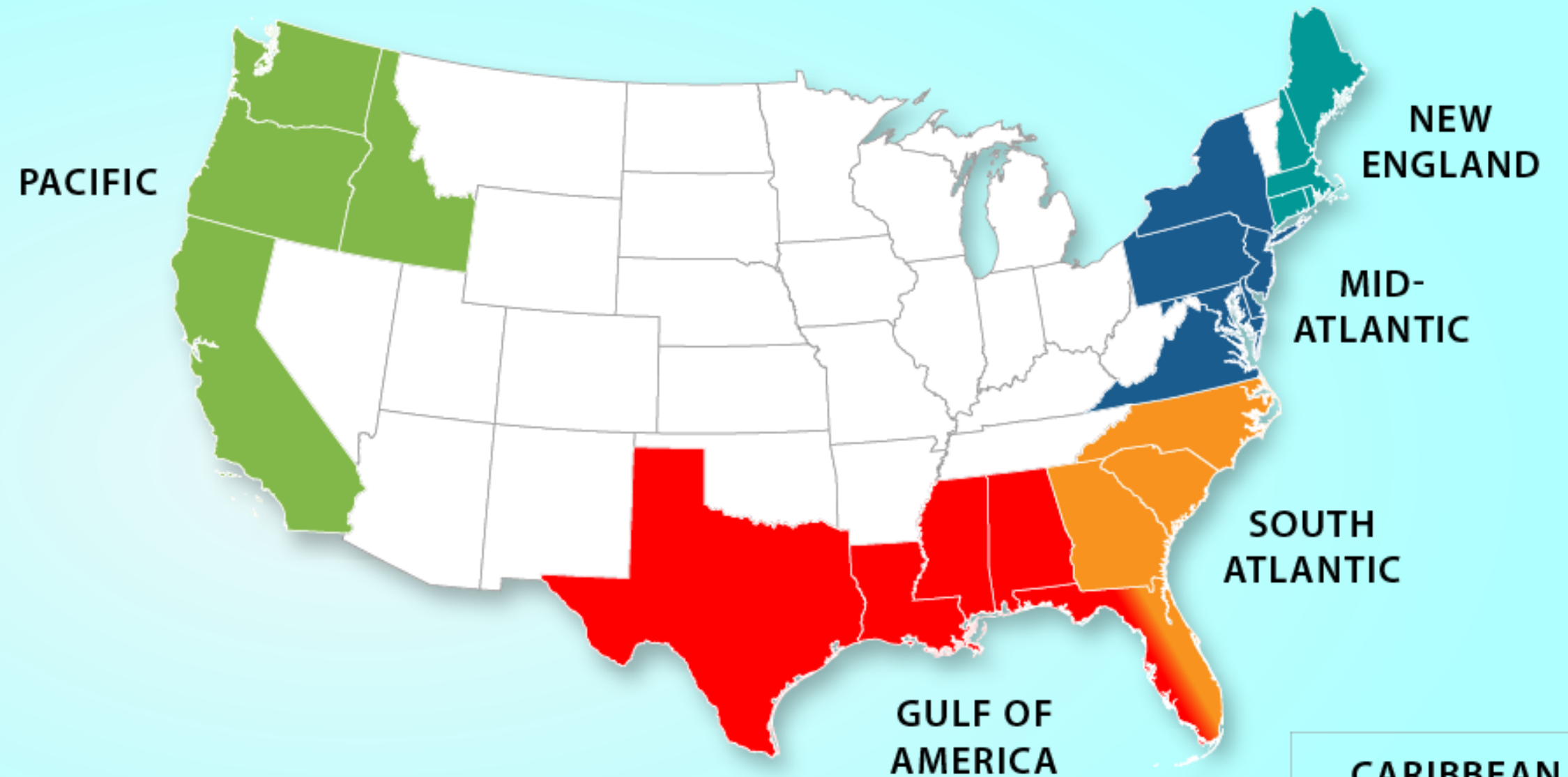


The Mid-Atlantic Council's management authority extends from three to 200 miles off the coasts of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. Although the Mid-Atlantic Council includes voting members from North Carolina, the South Atlantic Council has primary management authority over federal waters off the coast of North Carolina.

FEDERAL MANAGEMENT



1) Guam; 2) Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI); 3) Wake Island; 4) Midway Atoll; 5) Johnston Island; 6) Hawaiian Islands; 7) Palmyra Atoll and Kingman Reef; 8) Jarvis Island; 9) Baker and Howland Islands; 10) American Samoa.



Note: Several states are represented on more than one Council: (1) Washington and Oregon are represented on the Pacific and North Pacific Councils; (2) North Carolina is represented on the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic Councils; and (3) Florida is represented on the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils.



MID-ATLANTIC FISHERIES

Commercial and recreational marine fisheries in the Mid-Atlantic region support jobs, businesses, and coastal communities, providing recreational opportunities and supplying fresh seafood to local and global markets. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council develops science-based management plans to ensure the long-term sustainability of these fisheries and the marine ecosystem.



53,307
nautical miles²
Area managed by the
Mid-Atlantic Council

15 Species managed by the
Council under fishery
management plans
50 Additional forage species
managed as "ecosystem
components"

68 Million
Number of recreational
fishing trips taken in the
Mid-Atlantic in 2022

\$3.6
Billion
Total spending on
recreational trip
expenditures

98
Million
Number of fish
harvested by
recreational anglers

542 Million
Pounds of fish & shellfish harvested
in the Mid-Atlantic by commercial
fishermen in 2022

\$484 Million
in landings revenue

35,406
Jobs supported by the
commercial fishing
industry in 2022

19.7
Pounds of fish &
shellfish eaten by
average Americans
per year

which
makes
the U.S.

\$5.5 Billion

Combined sales impacts of the commercial and
recreational fishing industries in the Mid-Atlantic
region in 2022

23,313
Jobs supported by
the recreational
fishing industry in
2022

4th
Largest consumer
of seafood in the
world (trailing only
China, India, and
Indonesia)

DID YOU KNOW?

Atlantic Mackerel

Atlantic Mackerel are graded by fat content with the highest-fat content fish fetching the best prices in a worldwide market.

Longfin & Illlex Squid

Longfin squid can change colors rapidly when threatened or excited by expanding or contracting bags of color in their skin.

Butterfish

Developed as an export market to Japan, butterfish were auctioned off & served as breakfast at high-end hot-springs resorts.

Spiny Dogfish

This small shark has venomous spines in front of its dorsal fins, which it uses for defense against predators.

Summer Flounder

Summer flounder are masters of camouflage, capable of changing their skin color and pattern to blend in with the ocean floor.

Scup

Scup are small fish but they fight energetically when hooked, making them a favorite target for both child and adult anglers.

Black Sea Bass

Black sea bass are protogynous hermaphrodites, meaning many begin life as females and later transition to males as they grow.

Bluefish

Known as the "marine piranha" because of its aggressive feeding habits, bluefish have been known to bite humans.

Tilefish

Tilefish only live along outer edge of continental shelf, where the sea floor is bathed by warm waters from the Gulf Stream.

Monkfish

Using their large mouths, monkfish have been known to eat prey half their size, and capture water-birds at the sea surface.

Surfclam & Quahog

Surfclams and ocean quahogs were the first U.S. fisheries managed under catch shares programs.

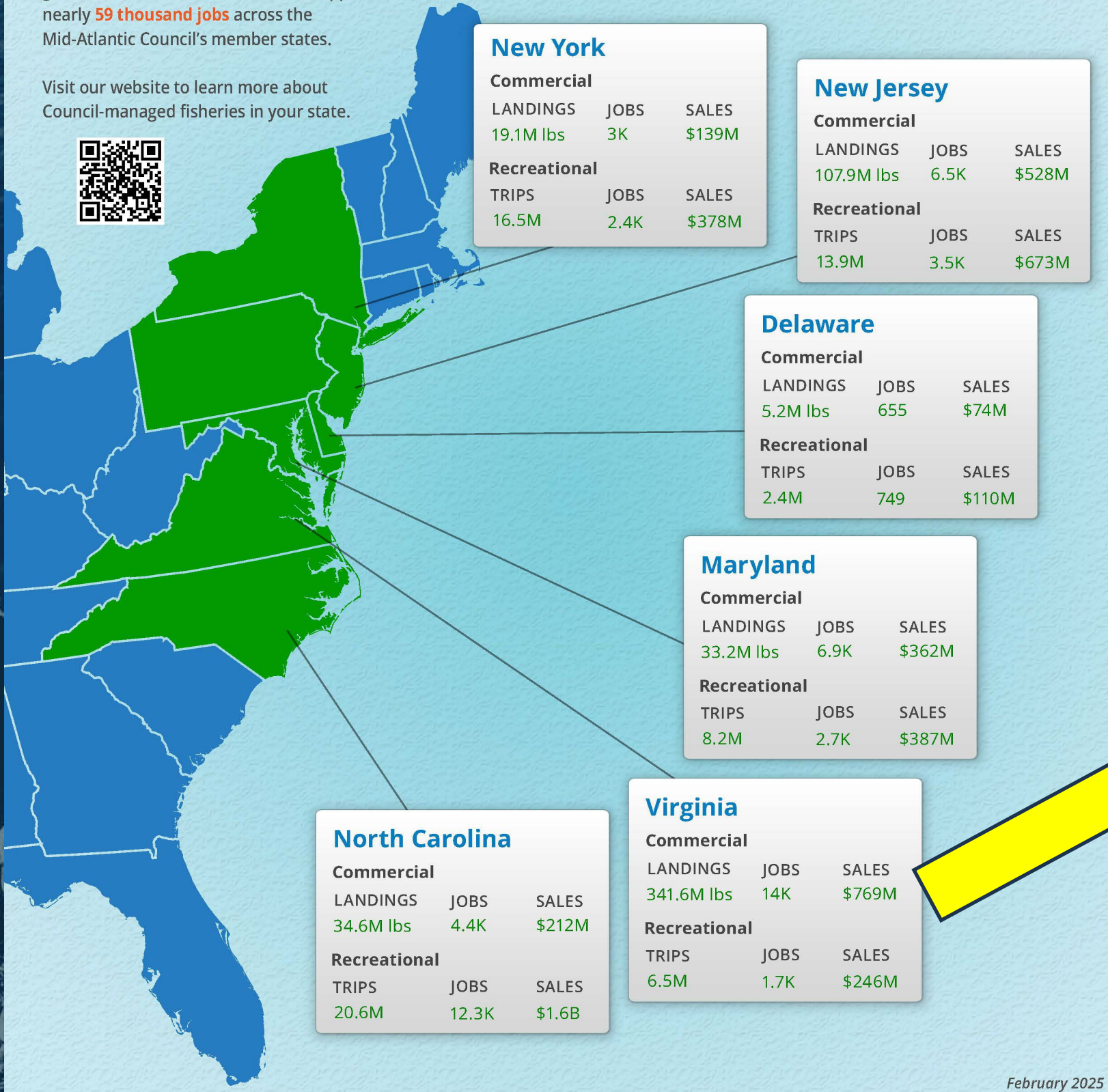
February 2025

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

FISHERY IMPACTS BY MEMBER STATE

In 2022, commercial and recreational fisheries generated **\$5.5 billion in sales** and supported nearly **59 thousand jobs** across the Mid-Atlantic Council's member states.

Visit our website to learn more about Council-managed fisheries in your state.



New York		
Commercial		
LANDINGS	JOB	SALES
19.1M lbs	3K	\$139M
Recreational		
TRIPS	JOB	SALES
16.5M	2.4K	\$378M

New Jersey		
Commercial		
LANDINGS	JOB	SALES
107.9M lbs	6.5K	\$528M
Recreational		
TRIPS	JOB	SALES
13.9M	3.5K	\$673M

Delaware		
Commercial		
LANDINGS	JOB	SALES
5.2M lbs	655	\$74M
Recreational		
TRIPS	JOB	SALES
2.4M	749	\$110M

Maryland		
Commercial		
LANDINGS	JOB	SALES
33.2M lbs	6.9K	\$362M
Recreational		
TRIPS	JOB	SALES
8.2M	2.7K	\$387M

North Carolina		
Commercial		
LANDINGS	JOB	SALES
34.6M lbs	4.4K	\$212M
Recreational		
TRIPS	JOB	SALES
20.6M	12.3K	\$1.6B

Virginia		
Commercial		
LANDINGS	JOB	SALES
341.6M lbs	14K	\$769M
Recreational		
TRIPS	JOB	SALES
6.5M	1.7K	\$246M

Virginia

Commercial

LANDINGS	JOB	SALES
341.6M lbs	14K	\$769M

Recreational

TRIPS	JOB	SALES
6.5M	1.7K	\$246M

February 2025



This infographic reflects 2022 commercial and recreational fisheries data published by NOAA Fisheries as of February 2025. Commercial jobs and sales values are based on domestic harvest and do not include seafood imports. Visit the **Fisheries One-Stop-Shop** for the most recent data and publications.





Virginia Marine Resources Commission

Questions?