

Underwater Grasses

What are underwater grasses?

Underwater grasses grow in the shallow waters of the Chesapeake Bay and its streams, creeks and rivers. These aquatic plants add oxygen to the water, store carbon, absorb nutrient pollution, trap sediment, reduce shoreline erosion and provide food and habitat to fish, blue crabs and waterfowl.

Benefits of underwater grasses

Save us money

The economic value of the carbon storage, nitrogen removal and wildlife habitat provided by the grasses growing in the Bay in 2016 reached an estimated \$220 million.

Improve our water

Even non-native grasses are a benefit to the Bay. For example, the non-native hydrilla can tolerate poor water quality. By stabilizing suspended sediment and improving water clarity, healthy hydrilla beds make conditions more habitable for native grasses to return.

Enhance our shorelines

By improving water clarity, underwater grasses increase the value of waterfront homes.

What can you do to help?



Identify and track underwater grasses

Download the Water Reporter app and join the Chesapeake Bay SAV Watchers group to record your underwater grass sightings. The Water Reporter app will help you learn to identify grasses, and by providing your sightings, you will help scientists gain a richer understanding of the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Learn more at www.WaterReporter.org.



Maintain your grasses without harming them

Underwater grasses along your shoreline or around your dock are a sign of improving water quality and habitat for Bay critters. These grasses may be trimmed in areas required for navigation to deeper water, but check with your state environmental agencies and make sure to follow their regulations before removing any underwater grasses.



Boat smart

If you can't avoid navigating through underwater grass beds, be sure to slow down and trim up your motor. When you're out of the grass bed, put your motor in reverse and back up your boat to blow off any plants that may have collected between your motor and your transom.