

Open Water



**Captain John Smith
Chesapeake National
Historic Trail**



Open Water

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the country. An estuary is a body of water made of a mixture of freshwater from rivers and saltwater from the ocean. This mixture of salt and fresh water is known as brackish. Even though it is very large, the Bay is only 20 feet deep on average. The Bay's open waters are home to fish, invertebrates, and aquatic plants. Underwater grasses are an important source of food and shelter for small animals like blue crabs. Grasses also keep the water clean and help with pollution and erosion.