

**STATE OF THE BAY**  
**by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation**

"How's the Chesapeake Bay doing?" It's a question we are frequently asked.

The health of the Chesapeake relies on natural systems that filter water and provide habitat for aquatic life. The **State of the Bay** report is a measure of the Bay's health. Scientists rate its health by examining the best available historical and current information. Scientists use 13 indicators in three categories: ***pollution, habitat, and fisheries***. Scientists then assign each indicator a score between 1 and 100. Taken together, these indicators offer a measure of the Chesapeake's health.

The Bay we know today is measured against the healthiest Chesapeake we can describe—the rich and balanced Bay that Captain John Smith saw in the early 1600s. Smith explored the Chesapeake when clear water revealed meadows of underwater grasses, huge oyster reefs that posed a threat to boat travel, and abundant fish. Modern science confirms many of Smith's observations. Smith's Bay rates **100** on our index and is our benchmark.

The *State of the Bay* report provides a reference for how far we have fallen from Smith's Bay and how far we must go to reach a "saved" Bay. **A saved Bay is strong enough to survive the storms of nature and of humankind, and it is rich enough to nurture diverse cultures and contribute abundantly to our economy. We rate that as a 70 on the *State of the Bay* index.**

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Guided Reading Questions for "State of Bay" article

- 1) What is the "State of the Bay report"?
- 2) What are the three categories scientists use to determine the health of the bay?
- 3) When did the bay have a score of 100% meaning the healthiest bay possible?
- 4) How did John Smith describe the Chesapeake Bay?
- 5) Why is it important to restore the bay?

