



## Wetlands

Swamps and marshes that connect deep water and land are known as wetlands. These areas provide habitat for many animals and filter the water entering the Chesapeake Bay. In recent years, people have come to understand the important role wetlands play in preserving the health of the ecosystem.

Wetlands act as a nursery area for many animals who travel into their shallow waters to search for food and find protection from larger predators. Young striped bass, perch, and sea trout are just a few of the fish species that use the shelter provided by plant cover found in wetland areas. Blue crabs spend much of their young lives in marshes, and adult crabs hide in wetlands after molting while their new shell is still soft. Wetlands provide food and resting areas for ducks and geese as they migrate through the Bay area every winter.



Swamps and marshes also filter water entering the Bay. Sediments and pollutants which wash from land into the water are trapped by the many plants found in wetlands before they reach the Chesapeake. The roots of wetland plants also protect the shoreline from erosion.

When humans fill in wetlands to build new homes along the water, they remove areas that are important for improving the water quality of the Bay. This also removes habitat for many types of animals. These “critical areas” are now protected by strict laws that prevent the filling in of swamps and marshes for development.



# Wetlands

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

DIRECTIONS: Read the text on the previous page, then answer the following questions in complete sentences. Write your answers on the lines provided.

1. What is a wetland?

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2. What are three types of fish that use wetlands as nursery areas?

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3. How are wetlands important to ducks and geese?

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4. Explain how wetlands filter water entering the Chesapeake Bay.

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5. Why do you think new laws were passed to protect swamps and marshes?

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