

## **NOAA Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System**

### **First Landing Buoy: Winter Seasonal**

The wintertime water at the First Landing CBIBS Buoy may be warmer than the Bay water at other buoys upstream. The reason is that large volumes of water, like the Atlantic just outside this location, respond to air temperature changes more slowly than the smaller, shallower volumes of water in the Bay and its rivers. This buoy is also further south than all of the others except the Nauticus Buoy in the Elizabeth River.

The relatively warm, stable water mass around this buoy and the habitat offered by the various shoals and rocky islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel attract some rockfish, sheepshead, and tautog, as well as several species of gulls, to the area around the buoy, though most of the fish winter further offshore. Many mature female crabs have buried in mud bottom areas nearby, waiting for spring when they release their already-fertilized eggs in these high-salinity waters.

The First Landing Buoy does, however receive some mean winter weather from the Atlantic. The Virginia and Maryland Pilots who bring cargo and cruise ships into the Port of Hampton Roads or run them up the Bay to the Port of Baltimore have to deal with those storms. Pilots board the ships at all hours of the day and night, arriving here aboard seaworthy launches operated by skillful captains and climbing rope ladders up the ships' sides. The launch-to-ship transfer is always tricky, and more so in winter, but the near-real-time wave, wind, and current observations from this buoy have become valuable safety factors for them.

As winter progresses, you can check the trends and current conditions at [www.buoybay.noaa.gov](http://www.buoybay.noaa.gov). Cold water requires extreme caution and extra safety practices for boaters. Before heading out on these waters, check conditions at the NOAA CBIBS First Landing buoy, and check the NOAA National Weather Service forecast for the area.