

**NOAA Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System
Patapsco Buoy
Spring Seasonal Information**

Welcome to NOAA's Patapsco CBIBS Buoy, located just east of the intersections of the Craighill and Brewerton Ship Channels entering Baltimore's Harbor from the south and north, respectively.

Here in the main Bay just outside the mouth of the Patapsco and Baltimore Harbor, the powerful freshwater currents of the largest river on the Atlantic coast (the Susquehanna) mix with salt water that tides push into the Chesapeake from the ocean. For fish like American shad and rockfish (striped bass), the declining salinity that they find as they travel upstream encourages them to swim further toward their ancestral spawning grounds, way upriver for shad, and near the Susquehanna Flats for rockfish.

These two species are examples of *anadromous* fish, which live in the ocean but ascend rivers to spawn in spring. American shad have multiple relatives exhibiting the same behavior, including hickory shad, alewives, and blueback herring (the latter two known generically as *river herring*). Meanwhile, white perch spawn in the Patapsco, and crabs come out of the bottom mud where they have spent the winter, to begin foraging over the oyster reefs around this buoy.

The head of the Bay—which is actually the tidal Susquehanna—is the largest rockfish spawning ground for the species on the Atlantic coast, so there are plenty of big fish swimming straight ahead, and plenty of anglers looking for them. There is plenty of fish, crab, and boat traffic as the water warms through the 60s. Those temperatures may seem chilly to us, but they signal a very busy season for Bay creatures.