

## **NOAA Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System Potomac (mouth of the Potomac)/Point Lookout Buoy: Summer Seasonal**

Summer conditions at the NOAA Lower Potomac CBIBS buoy reflect the interplay between rainfall in the Potomac River's sprawling four-state (plus the District of Columbia) watershed, the flow of water down the Chesapeake's mainstem, and the tides' push of Atlantic salt water up the Bay. If you'd like to view good graphic representations of the lower Potomac's water quality features over time, and the ways they affect each other, you can visit [www.buoybay.noaa.gov](http://www.buoybay.noaa.gov) and create your own graphs. This is a great feature for anyone who wants to understand how the Bay and its rivers "work."

As summer settles in, young croakers, spot, menhaden, silversides, and bay anchovies spread out across the Potomac's seven-mile-wide mouth at Point Lookout. The buoy here marks the junction of two of the largest rivers on the Atlantic coast of the United States: the tidal Susquehanna (which is actually the Chesapeake's main stem) and the Potomac. Both wind and currents conspire to produce powerful current rips at Point Lookout itself and over nearby channel edges. Some of the small fish will become food for larger fish, especially rockfish, gray trout, adult croakers, and flounder. Fast-swimming bluefish and Spanish mackerel are already chasing anchovies and "peanut" (or baby) menhaden in the open waters outside the Point Lookout buoy.

The little fish also have to avoid predators from above, especially terns, laughing gulls, and herring gulls, and from the ospreys, great blue herons, and fast-swimming furry fishermen like river otters that chase them in the shallows. Summer is a busy time in this part of the Chesapeake.