

DELAWARE'S PRIORITY HABITATS

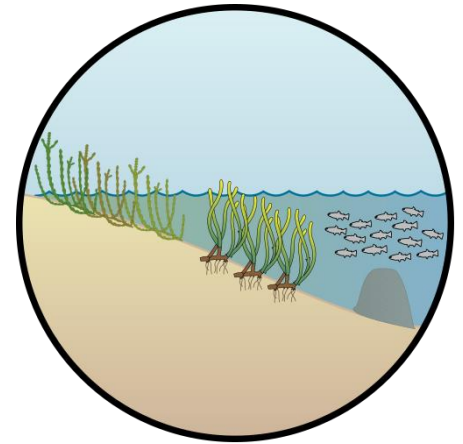
ACFHP works to restore and conserve fish habitat in DE and along the Atlantic Coast.

SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION (SAV)

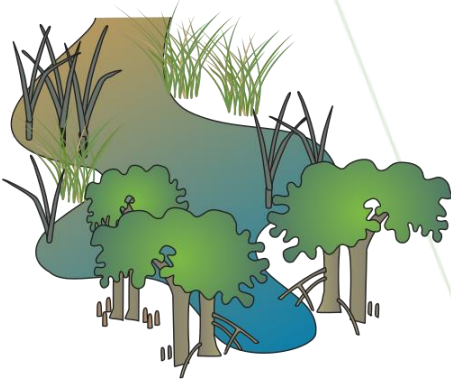
WHAT: Plants that live below the water's surface in large meadows or small patches in coastal and estuarine waters.

WHY: SAV removes excess CO₂ and adds oxygen to the water and is **2x more effective** at storing carbon than terrestrial forests by acreage.

PRIMARY THREATS: Dredging and coastal maintenance, water quality degradation and eutrophication, and vessel operation.



TIDAL VEGETATION



WHAT: Marshes found in estuaries and freshwater environments.

WHY: Common nursery and spawning habitat for marine species, filters out pollutants and contaminants, sequesters **2-4x more carbon** per acre than tropical forests. Offers coastal communities protection from storms, floods, and sea level rise.

PRIMARY THREATS: Dredging and coastal maintenance, water quality degradation and eutrophication, and sedimentation.

RIVERINE BOTTOM

WHAT: Riverine bottom from the headwaters to the coast.

WHY: The bottom habitat serves as spawning and nursing grounds for many species, including American eel, river herring, shad, and Atlantic sturgeon. The sediments also hold invertebrates and vegetation that provide food for many fish species.

PRIMARY THREATS: Obstruction to fish passage/habitat connectivity, dredging and coastal maintenance, water quality degradation and eutrophication.



MARINE AND ESTUARINE SHELLFISH BEDS



WHAT: Oyster reefs, scallop and hard clam beds, and shell accumulations.

WHY: Shellfish are excellent at removing excess nutrients, contaminants, and suspended sediments from the water column through filtration. They also provide habitat and food for estuarine species, stabilize sediments, and reduce the threat of coastal erosion.

PRIMARY THREATS: Water quality degradation and eutrophication, sedimentation, dredging and coastal maintenance.

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