

Barnacles are part of the Elizabeth River's natural cleanup crew by acting as live filters for the water!



Barnacles

Sessilia

Size: less than 1 inch in diameter

Lifespan: 5-10 years

Habitat: You can find barnacles in the shallow and surface regions of the Elizabeth River attached to rocks, pilings, boats, and other hard surfaces. You can regularly find them attached to the Learning Barge under the water.

Range: Can be found all up and down the Elizabeth River in salty, fresh, and brackish (mix of salty and fresh) water.

Diet: Barnacles are filter feeders, meaning they get their food through the nutrients in the water like plankton. Filter feeders are fantastic for the river because they help keep our river clean! They are our natural cleanup crew.

Appearance: Barnacles can range in color from white, to ivory, to gray. They are small animals (around half an inch to an inch in diameter) and have a flat base with an opening at the top that has two valves that open and close like "trap doors."

Predators: Many young fish and whelk snails feed on barnacles. Barnacles in their larvae stage are an important food source for the Elizabeth River's food chain.

Fun Facts: Barnacles can attach to things by creating a cement-like adhesive (barnacle glue!). It is currently known as one of the strongest natural glues in the world. They are also considered crustaceans, similar animals to crabs and lobsters.

What can you do? Help keep the Elizabeth River clean by leaving barnacles alone on dock pilings and other non-moving surfaces!

On-Line Resources

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/barnacles.html>

<https://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/fieldguide/critter/barnacles>

<https://www.blueoceansociety.org/blog/creature-feature-barnacle/>



www.elizabethriver.org