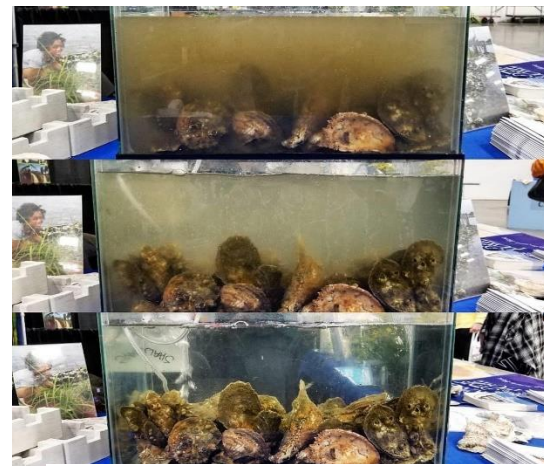


The Elizabeth River Project strives to restore the population of oysters by building living shorelines and oyster castles.

GREAT NEWS! In 2018, The Lafayette river, a branch in the Elizabeth River, became the first Virginia *river to have a restored population of eastern oysters.*



A demonstration by the Elizabeth River Project showing the filtering power of oysters.

Eastern Oyster

Crassostrea virginica

Size: 3-5 inches on average.

Range: Native to eastern North America

Habitat: Oysters live in bays and rivers that have **brackish** water (that means a mix of salty and fresh). With the Elizabeth River having brackish water throughout, it creates the perfect habitat for these shellfish. They can be found anywhere from 8 to 35 feet deep in the water and create their own reefs by attaching to one another.

Facts: Oysters are considered **filter feeders**, meaning they eat plankton and other particles in the water. In fact, one oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water in one day! They are the Elizabeth River's natural clean up crew.



Appearance: Although they are 3-5 inches on average, some oysters can reach a length of eight inches. They have a rough shell that protects their soft body and vary in color from white to gray to tan.

Predators: Many crabs and fish eat oysters, such as the blue crab and oyster toadfish. Humans are also popular predators to oysters.

Benefits: Not only do they help clean the Elizabeth River, oyster reefs provide habitat to many fish and invertebrates like blennies and mummichog.

What can you do? Protect our oysters and oyster reefs in the Elizabeth River.

Installed oyster castles along the Eastern Branch of the Elizabeth River.



On-Line Resources

<https://elizabethriver.org/lafayette-river-restoration>

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/fieldguide/critter/eastern_oyster

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/invertebrates/group/oysters/>

Elizabeth River Project
Making restoration a reality

www.elizabethriver.org