

# Chessie



# Returns!

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in North America. The Bay watershed, the land that eventually drains into the Bay, covers 64,000-square miles and parts of six states—Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia, Delaware—and our nation’s capital, the District of Columbia.

Each person in the Chesapeake Bay watershed lives just a few minutes from a stream or river that eventually flows into the Bay. These waterways are home to thousands of different plants and animals.



The Chesapeake Bay Program is the unique local, state and federal partnership leading the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. Bay Program partners include the states of Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania; the District of Columbia; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government; and the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative body; and citizen, scientific, and local government advisory committees.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. Along with other federal, state and local agencies and private organizations, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working to improve the health of the Bay and its rivers.

*Concept by Dave Folker  
Art and Verse by Britt Eckhardt Slattery*

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Ohessie



Returns!

This book belongs to \_\_\_\_\_

“I don’t care,” claimed the boy, as he tossed an old can right into the Bay with a flick of his hand.  
“It really won’t matter at all, anyway,  
I know that the tide here will wash it away.”



“Now hold on, just a minute! This water’s my home!”

came a cry from the gurgling, watery foam.

“Who are you?” gasped the boy to the beast (who was green),

“Well, you are the strangest thing I’ve every seen!”

“Why, I’m Chessie, the monster of the Chesapeake Bay, I’ve come here to say that it isn’t okay to litter and dirty the home of my friends! The health of the land and the water depends on people like you! You really should care! How would you like to breathe dirty air? The animals know, but the people should care and learn more about this big place that they share!”



“I’ve really no time to listen to this!”

I’m going to school, I’ve a class I can’t miss.

Get out of my way, you funny old critter!

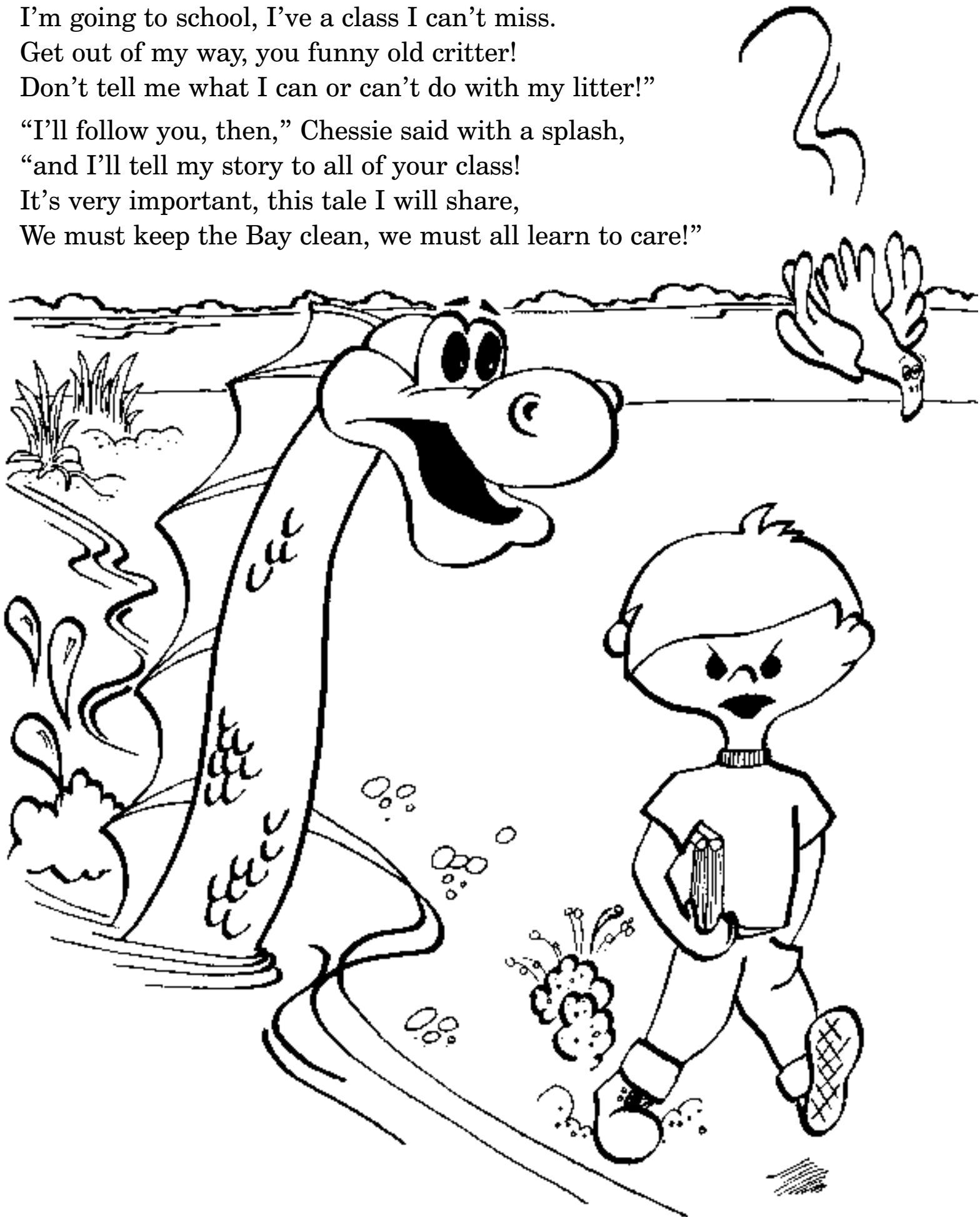
Don’t tell me what I can or can’t do with my litter!”

“I’ll follow you, then,” Chessie said with a splash,

“and I’ll tell my story to all of your class!

It’s very important, this tale I will share,

We must keep the Bay clean, we must all learn to care!”

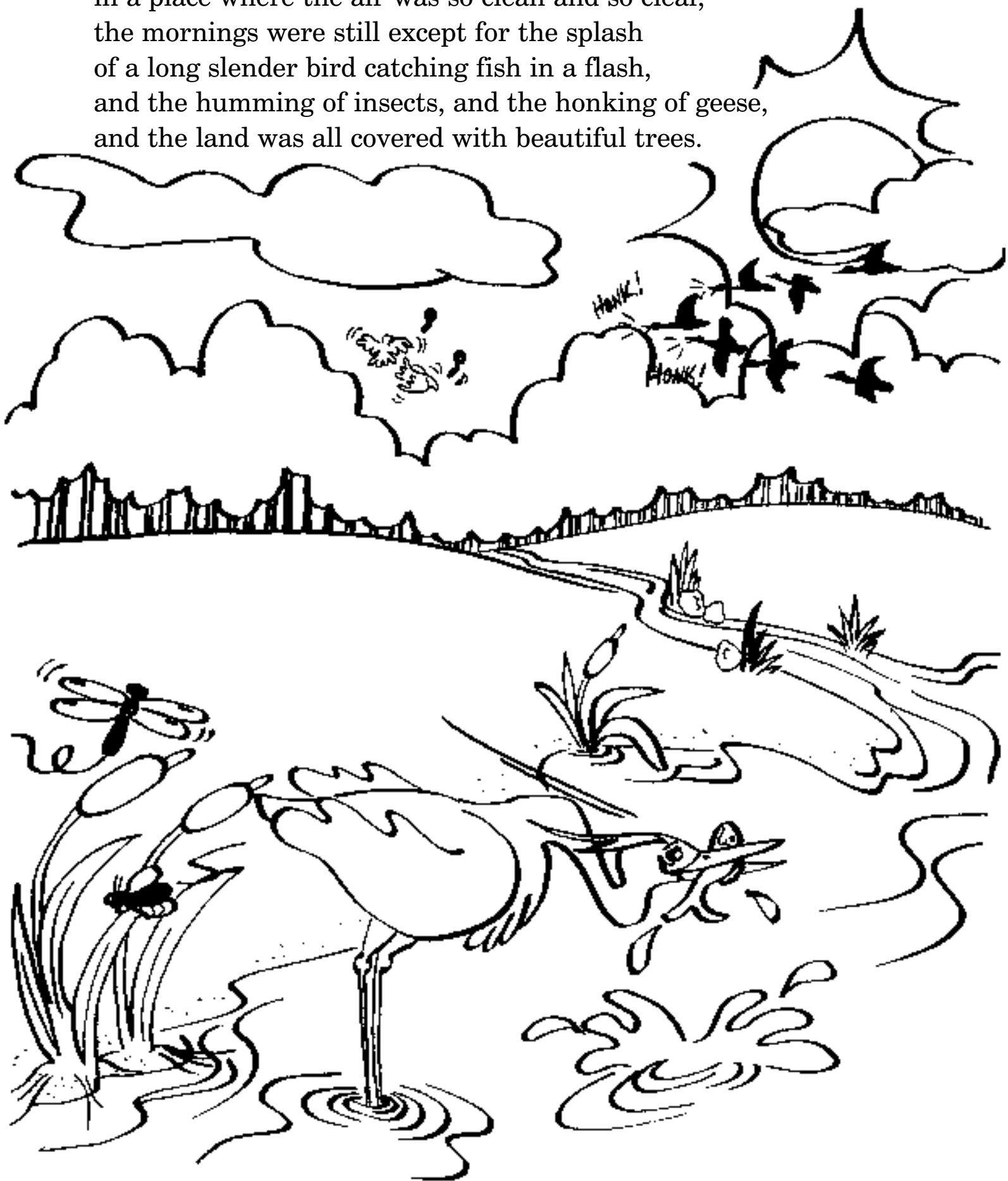


“Hey, it’s Chessie!” cried the children, as she came through the door.  
The boy looked surprised, “Has she been here before?”  
“Everyone knows Chessie,” laughed a girl in a dress,  
“Before Chessie came, this place was a mess!  
But she taught us how special our Bay is to us.  
Now sit down and listen, and don’t make a fuss!”





A long time ago in a land very near,  
in a place where the air was so clean and so clear,  
the mornings were still except for the splash  
of a long slender bird catching fish in a flash,  
and the humming of insects, and the honking of geese,  
and the land was all covered with beautiful trees.

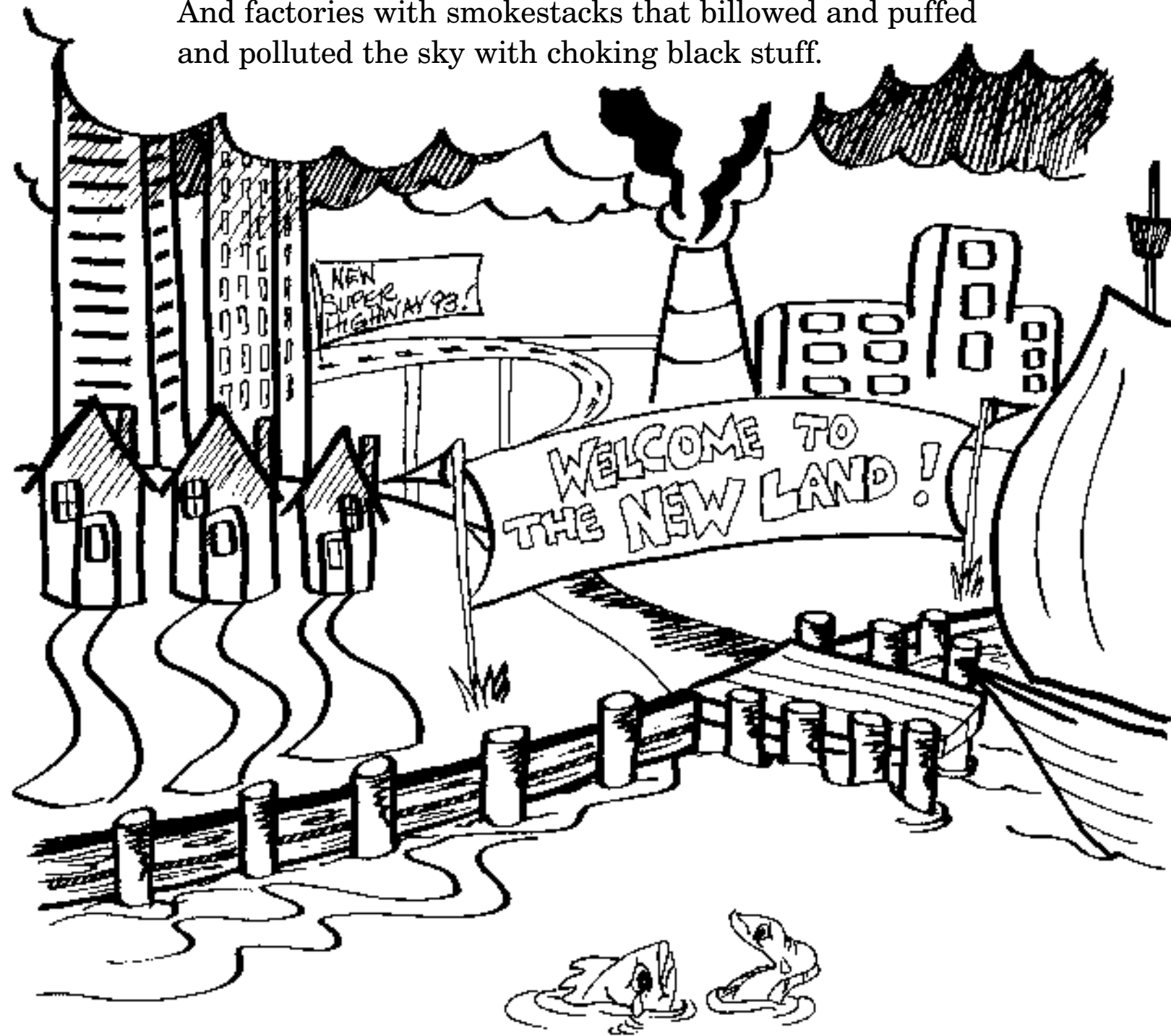


Then men came from afar, with their axes they chopped,  
they planted their crops, and before they had stopped,  
where there once had stood trees, now stood huge fields of hay.  
They built houses galore, they decided to stay.  
So they lived off the land and they fished in the Bay,  
and in the beginning life was okay.



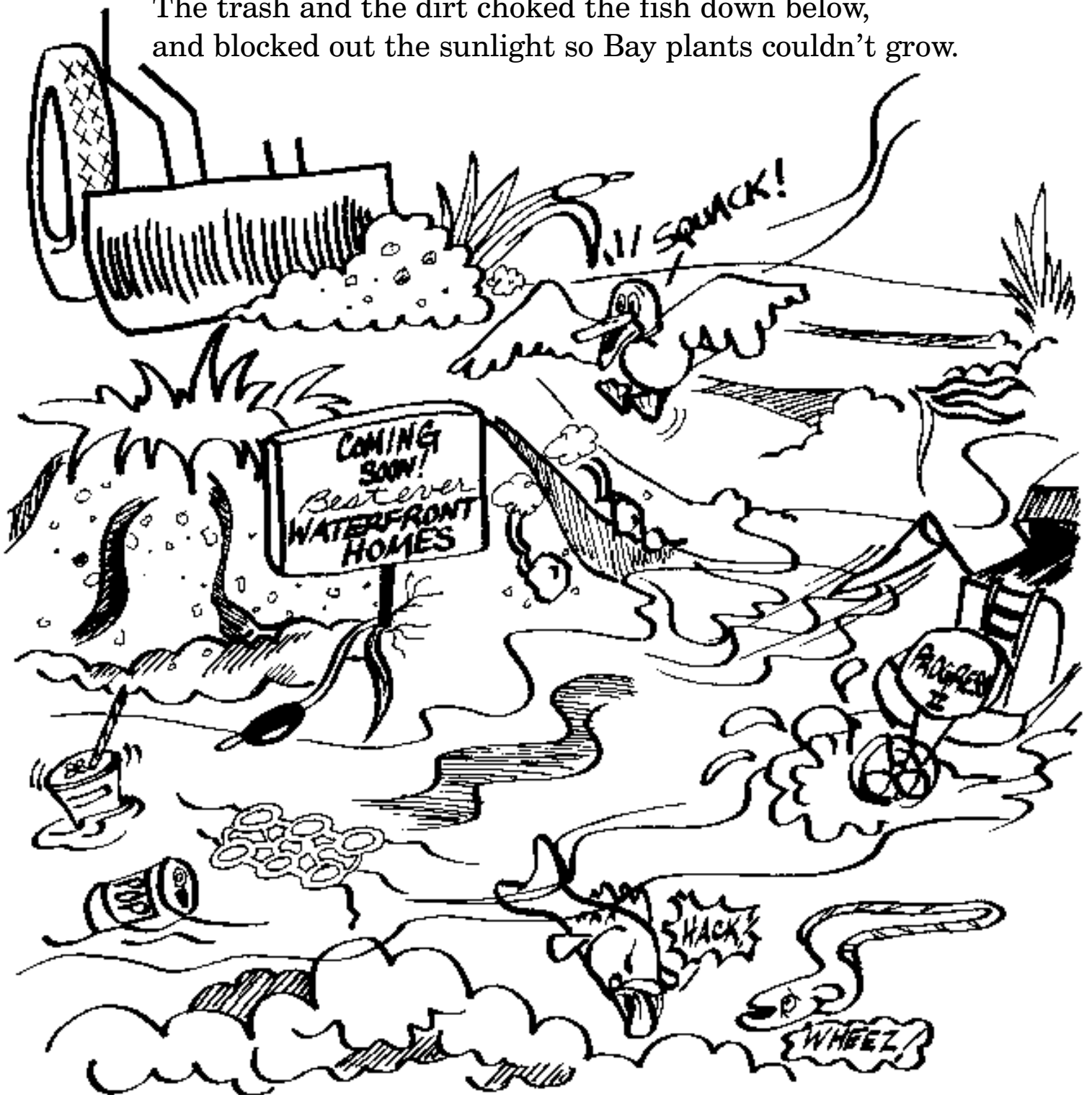
Then more people came and the colony grew,  
and they needed more space — so what did they do?  
They tore down more trees and they cleared off the ground  
where the animals lived where their food had been found.  
And soon where a babbling brook once had been,  
came the buzzing of progress, a deafening din.

“This life’s for the birds!” was the colonists’ cry,  
“Lets build several highways where dirt roads now lie!”  
And they build skyscrapers so high, high, high, high!  
And factories with smokestacks that billowed and puffed  
and polluted the sky with choking black stuff.



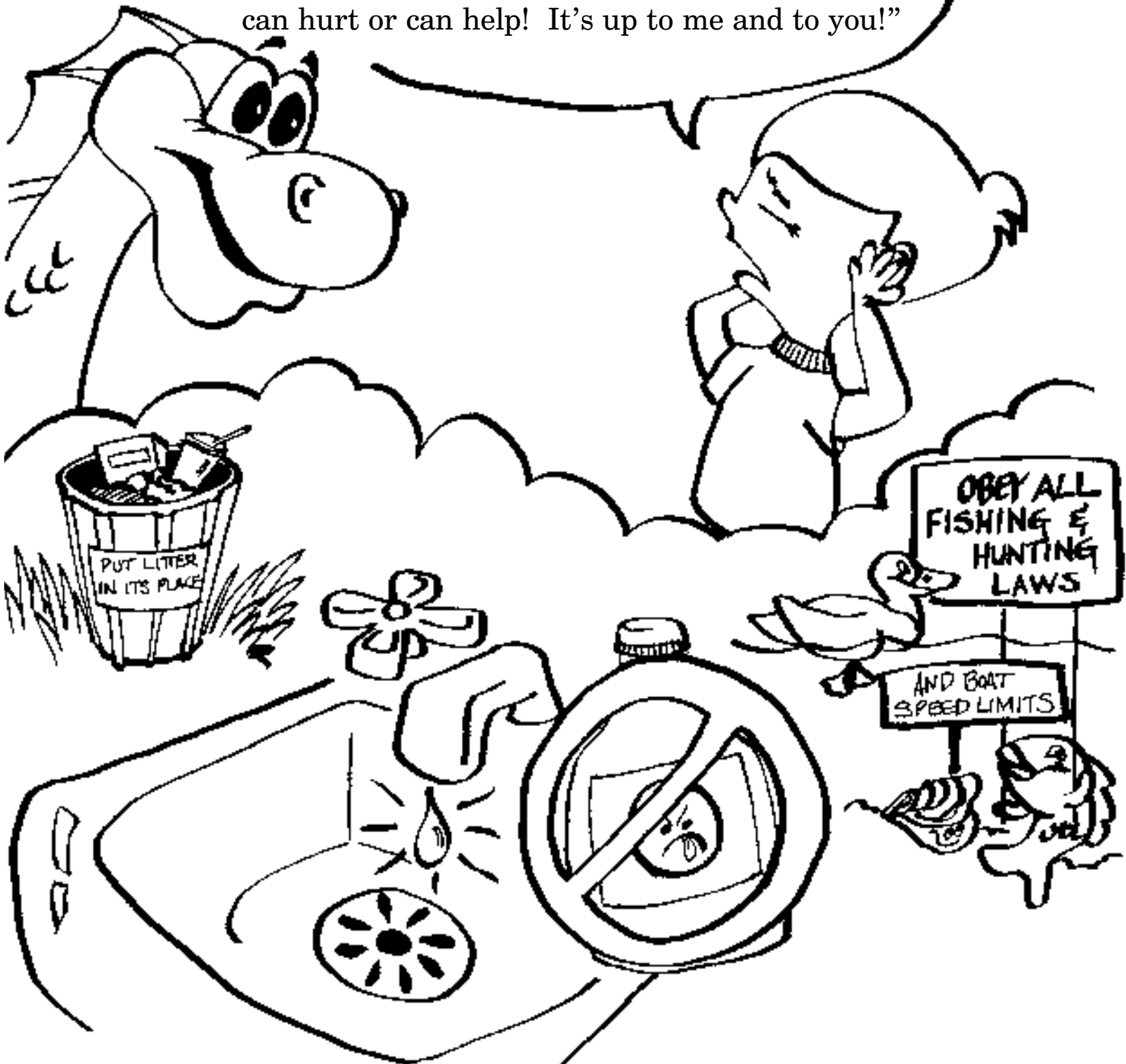
They ripped up the marshes to build close to the shore,  
they threw trash in the water, and then, what is more,  
they took all the fish, and left none for the others,  
their boats churned the bottom, the oysters were smothered!  
They shot *all* the ducks and the geese and the deer!  
They kept plowing down trees— their reason was clear —  
they wanted more roads and more building built here.

They kept on polluting, and didn't slow down,  
and soon all the water was ugly and brown!  
The trash and the dirt choked the fish down below,  
and blocked out the sunlight so Bay plants couldn't grow.



“Stop! STOP!” cried the boy, “I can’t bear to hear more!  
I’ve learned my lesson, by hearing your lore!  
I’ll join you in helping to make our Bay better!  
Now I know it’s important to all work together!”

“I’ll pick up some trash, that’s one thing I’ll do!  
And when I go fishing, I’ll take only a few!  
At home I’ll save water, be careful, and think!  
And I’ll never dump poisons out into the sink!  
I’ve learned even small things that kids like us do  
can hurt or can help! It’s up to me and to you!”



“From misusing the water and the land all around,  
we’ve been losing our wildlife that used to abound.  
But we *can* all help problems like these to slow down!  
The Bay and its animals need OUR help to survive!  
Let’s *all* take part in keeping our Chesapeake alive!”



# The A-Mazing-ing Striper

Many people make their money by catching fish, crabs, oysters or clams. In the Bay region, these people are called **watermen**. They sell their catch to people who want to eat these tasty critters of the Bay. Lots of other men and women just enjoy catching fish. They are called sport fishermen or **anglers**.

For a long time, the **striped bass** (also called *striper* or *rockfish*) has provided fun, money and food to anglers and watermen, and other people who live in the Bay's watershed. A while ago, many people were worried about the survival of striped bass in the Bay. Because of over fishing (catching too many fish) and pollution, there were not as many stripers in the Bay as there had been. In order for the striped bass to thrive again in the waters of the Bay, they needed lots of help from us. As a result, scientists and policymakers developed a plan to help the fish. Everyone in the Bay region, especially sport fishermen and watermen who agreed not to catch any striped bass, took action to help the fish. Today, the striper population is returning to normal.

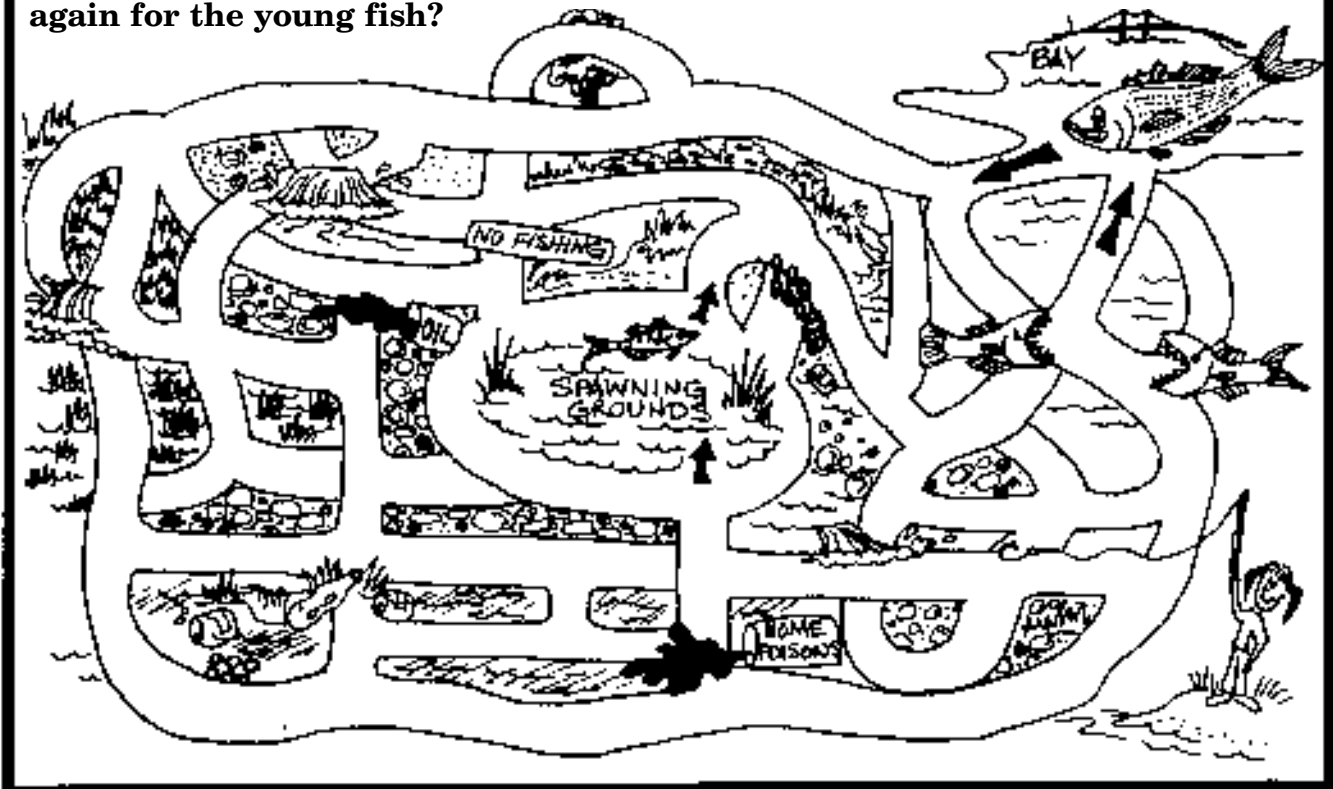
The striper is a kind of fish that lives most of the year in salty ocean water. When it is time for the fish to have young (to **spawn**), they must swim from the ocean, through the Chesapeake Bay, and up into the freshwater rivers and streams that are connected to the Bay. Here, they lay their eggs, then return to the ocean. The young fish hatch in the fresh water. When they are old enough, they, too must swim down the river, through the Bay, and out into the ocean. These fish will return to the Bay area when it is time for them to spawn.

Lots of things can happen along the way to keep adult stripers from spawning. They can be caught, or they could die because of unhealthy water. Sometimes their path upstream is blocked by something man-made, such as a dam.

Young fish may have an even harder time surviving the journey, because they are small. Naturally, many young stripers become food for other animals. But lots of others die because the water is polluted. Water does *not* have to be *very* polluted to kill tiny, young fish.

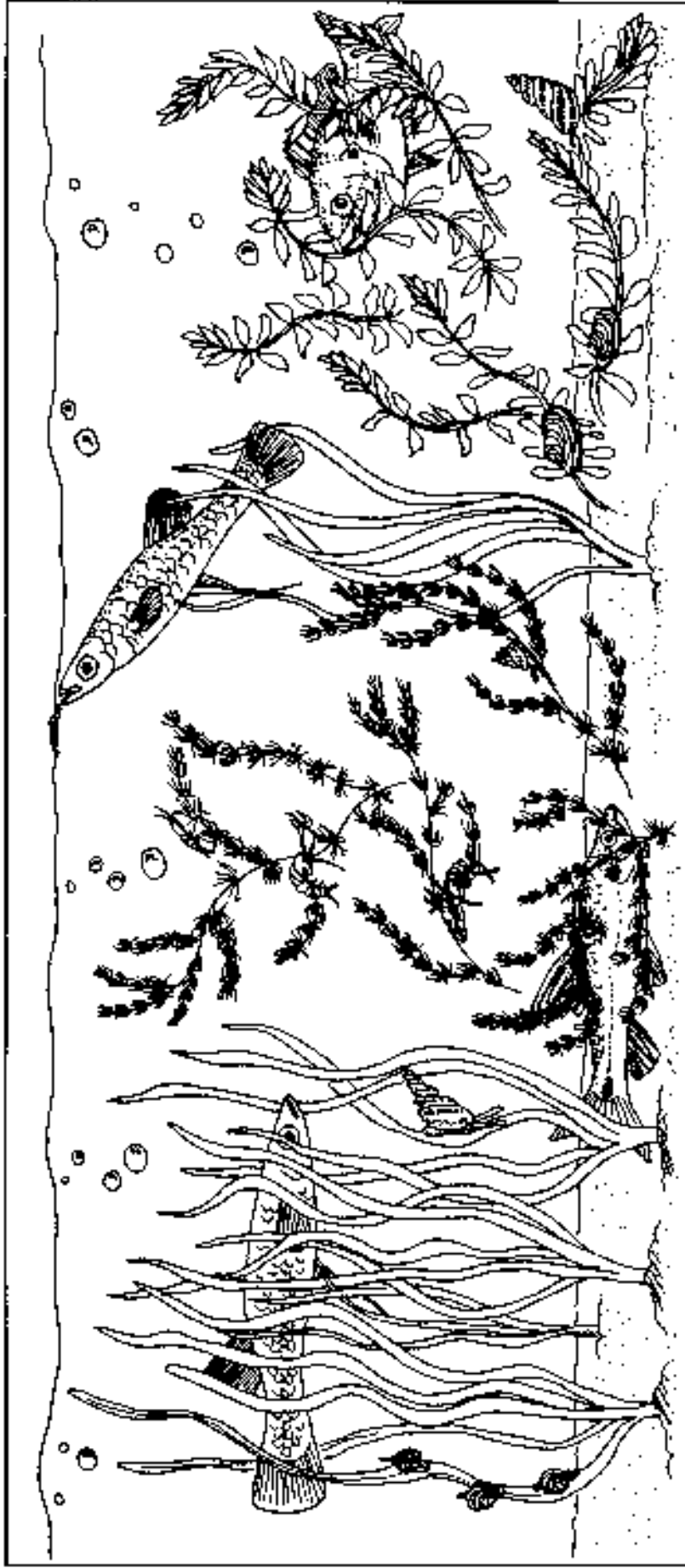
Can you think of any way that people could help these fish to survive?

Help the striper get to his spawning grounds! Draw a path to the spawning grounds for the adult striped bass. Can you also trace a safe path back again for the young fish?



# Animal Hide and Seek

Beds of underwater grasses (sometimes called "SAV") are important nursery, hiding and feeding areas for many different Bay animals. Pretend that you are a big, hungry fish looking for a mouthful. How many animals can you find hiding among these grasses? Circle them.



**KEY:**

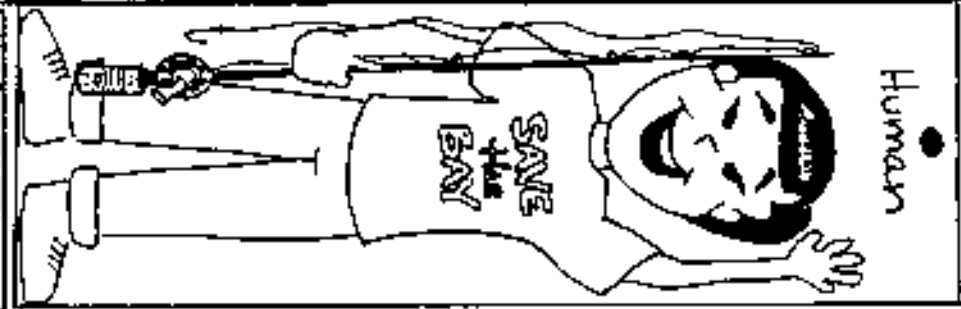
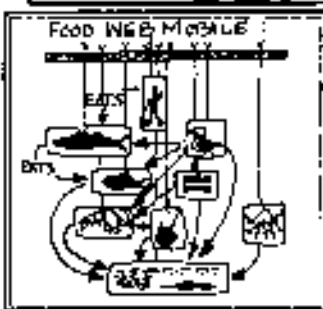
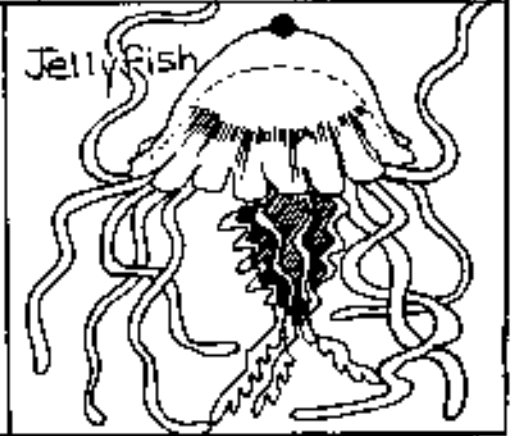
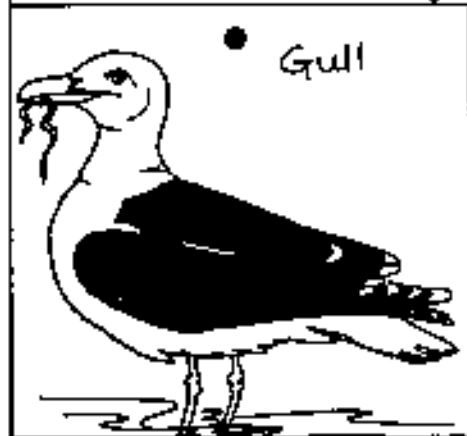
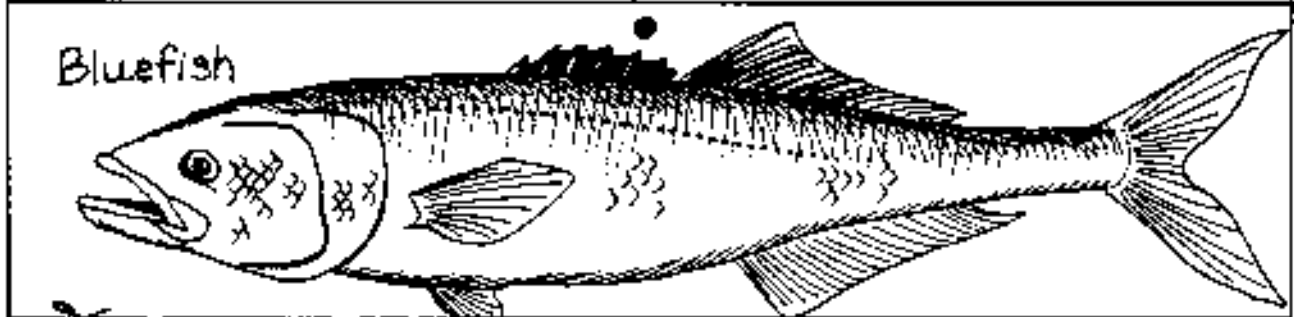
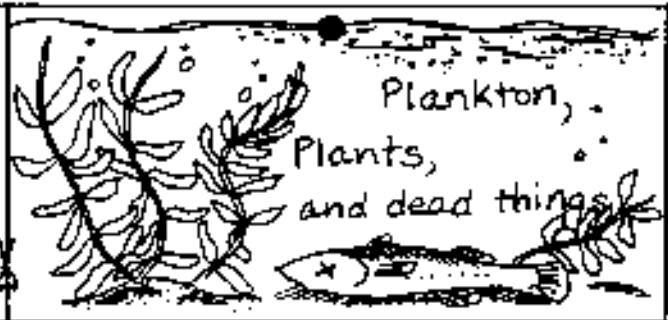
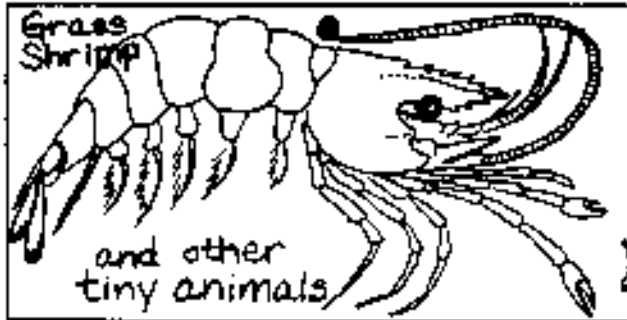
- Finger nail clams
- Scuds
- Mussel
- Shiner
- Mosquito larva
- Squid
- Smalls
- Sunfish
- Mosquitofish



# Make a Food Web Mobile!

Here are pictures of animals that make up part of the Bay's food web. In a food web, plants become food for animals, animals become food for other animals, and some plants and animals add to the soil, helping more plants to grow. Following the directions and the diagram at the bottom of the page, make a food web mobile to hang in your favorite place.

**You will need:** scissors, crayons, string or fishing line, a stick that is about 12 inches long, and (optional) pasted and colored cardboard. **Step 1)** Color and cut out the pieces. **Step 2)** Punch a hole at the top of each piece and tie on a piece of string. **Step 3)** Hang the animals from the stick. Those that eat the other animals should hang closest to the stick; the animals that get eaten by them should come next, and so on.



## **Related publications about the Chesapeake Bay**

### ***Chesapeake Bay: Introduction to an Ecosystem***

A comprehensive overview of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem that includes information on the Bay's ecology, geology and plants and animals. A helpful resource for students in grades 8-12.

### ***Bay-B-C's***

A multi-disciplinary approach to teaching about the Chesapeake Bay. *Bay-B-C's* includes background material and lesson plans for teachers of grades K-3, with songs, games and stories for students.

### ***Chesapeake Bay Watershed Activity Kit***

A three part kit —A non-technical Bay watershed map emphasizing the immense network of rivers and streams that make up the Chesapeake drainage system, student work maps and a teacher guide.

### ***The State of the Chesapeake Bay***

This report, published every two years, describes the health of the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries, habitats, and the creatures that call the Bay home.

### **For copies of these publications contact:**

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[www.chesapeakebay.net](http://www.chesapeakebay.net)

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**Chesapeake Bay Program**  
*A Watershed Partnership*

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