



## BE A JAMES CHANGER

### TROUBLED TRAVELERS MIGRATORY FISH IN THE JAMES

There are many different species of migratory fish that call the James River home including American Shad, Atlantic Sturgeon, Striped Bass, Blueback Herring, Alewife, and American Eel.

These migratory fish complete incredible journeys related to their spawning runs. Spending part of their lives in the ocean and part in freshwater rivers, these fish not only require healthy waters and habitat, but also open rivers where they may freely migrate. **Threats to migratory fish include...**



Habitat & water quality



Climate change



Water withdrawals



American Shad



Predation



Dams

### CHANGE THE JAMES AND THE JAMES WILL CHANGE YOU

Volunteering with the James River Association provides a unique opportunity to connect with nature, foster a sense of community, and make a positive impact on the environment. Engaging in activities like advocacy outreach, water quality monitoring, and boat patrols enhances personal fulfillment and conservation awareness. The increase in the health of the James River would not be possible without the James Changer community, whose commitment of both time and resources plays a crucial role in preserving and improving the health of the river. JRA volunteers directly contribute to cleaner water, habitat restoration, and a more sustainable river ecosystem, ensuring the long-term well-being of one of Virginia's most precious natural resources and the wildlife that calls it home.



For more information about the various JRA volunteer programs, please visit: [thejamesriver.org/what-you-can-do/](http://thejamesriver.org/what-you-can-do/).

**About the James River Association** The James River Association is a member-supported nonprofit organization founded in 1976 to serve as a guardian and voice for the James River. Throughout the James River's 10,000 square mile watershed, the James River Association works toward its vision of a fully healthy James River supporting thriving communities. The James River Association believes that "when you change the James, the James changes you". With offices in Lynchburg, Scottsville, Richmond, and Williamsburg, the James River Association is committed to protecting the James River and connecting people to it.

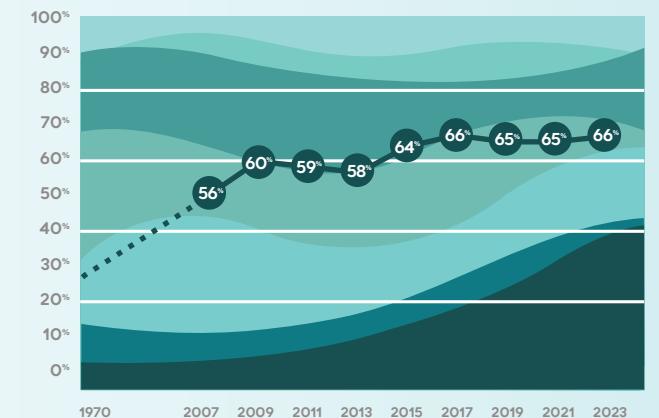


# STATE OF 2023 THE JAMES

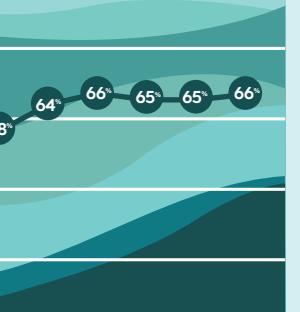


## KEY CONCLUSIONS

- The overall grade of the State of the James has improved to a B with a score of 66% from its failing health decades ago. Although the pace of progress has slowed, a grade-A James River is possible if we keep up our collective efforts and continue to address key issues together.
- Underwater grasses expanded to their highest total on record and tidal water quality also returned to its recent high. Both of these indicators are largely influenced by pollution from upstream sources, so their collective improvement signifies broader progress.
- The James River's American shad population remains at zero. To save this iconic species and other migratory fish in the James, Virginia must take swift action to address the threats identified in the American shad recovery plan due to the General Assembly in 2023.
- Strong investments by Virginia in clean water programs for wastewater, agriculture and urban stormwater has yielded direct improvements in pollution controls and helped to improve the overall health of the river. The more we invest in the river, the more improvement we see in the river's health.
- Climate change is making future progress for the State of the James more difficult. We all must do our part to safeguard the James River for future generations.



## STATE OF THE JAMES SHOWS A RESILIENT RIVER



## 2023 BENEFITS OF A HEALTHY RIVER



### SEAFOOD PRODUCTION

**4.1 million pounds** of commercial fish and shellfish were landed from the James in 2022, a total dockside value of \$11.9 million. The James is home to one of the largest oyster reef complexes in the world and produced over one million pounds of oysters, the largest share of Virginia's oyster harvest.



### DRINKING WATER

**2.7 million people** rely on the James River for water, making it Virginia's largest source of drinking water.



### RIVERSIDE PARK VISITATION

Riverside parks offer opportunities for outdoor recreation and enjoyment. Riverside parks along the James and its tributaries saw over **7 million visitors** in calendar years 2021 and 2022.



### HUNTING & FISHING LICENSES

**539,510 people** registered boats and purchased hunting and fishing licenses in the watershed in 2022.



### PUBLIC RIVER ACCESS

There are hundreds of places to enjoy the James and its tributaries. At least **52 public river access sites** have been added in the watershed since 2013.



# STATE OF THE JAMES

## 2023

SCORE | GRADE

RIVER HEALTH

67%

B

RIVER RESTORATION EFFORTS

65%

B

OVERALL

66%

B

GRADING SCALE: A 80%-100% B 60%-79%  
C 40%-59% D 20%-39% F LESS THAN 20%

