

## Assessments

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ICPRB works with colleagues to develop and apply uniform methods of evaluating Potomac and Chesapeake monitoring data, in order to assess aquatic ecosystems from an interstate, basin-wide perspective.

The development of basin-wide [Ecosystem Indicators](#) is a long-term ICPRB objective. These quantitative measures are useful in evaluating the structure and function of habitats and biological communities, as compared to desirable or undisturbed (reference) conditions. These indicators – and the metrics and indexes created from them – inform us about the condition of key ecosystem components such as submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), plankton, benthic stream animals, and juvenile fish. Information gained from indicators, metrics and indexes helps determine what improvements are needed to restore and maintain healthy Potomac ecosystems.

ICPRB staff have primarily focused on developing indicators for two important aquatic environments.

### [Non-tidal Wadeable Streams & Rivers](#)



- ICPRB Potomac ecoregions
- Stream and river habitats
- Benthic macroinvertebrate communities
- Assessments

### [Tidal Open Waters](#)



- Plankton communities
- Habitat suitability
- Ecosystem indexes of integrity

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The Commission has also begun an effort to develop indicators for [tidal embayments](#), where the Coastal Plain streams meet the tidewaters. A long-term objective of ICPRB is to present maps of basin-wide ecosystem assessments on this webpage as they become available.