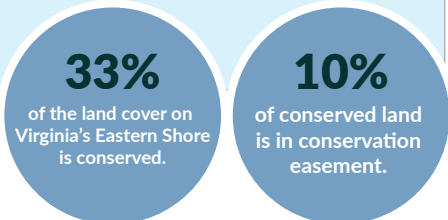
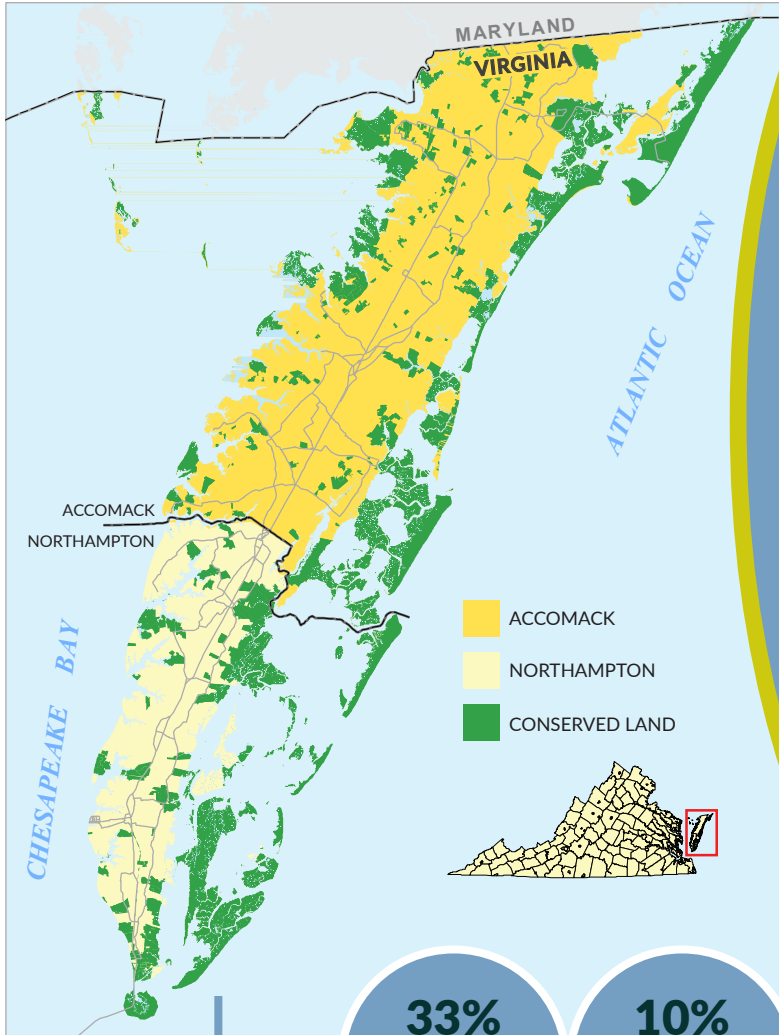


# CONSERVATION'S POSITIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS for Virginia's Eastern Shore

A newly released study from George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis and Urban Analytics, Inc. highlights the positive impact conserved land has on the economies of both Northampton and Accomack Counties in Virginia. The study was commissioned by the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program to inform decision making at the county and state levels.



The Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, along with the Commonwealth of Virginia and other partners have invested more than \$100 million since 1969 to protect and restore 133,000 acres of coastal and mainland habitats.

## INCOME AND JOBS

### CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS



### AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY



### CONSERVATION VISITOR SPENDING



\*Gross Regional Product (GRP) is the market value of all final goods and services produced within a geographic area in a given period of time.

## TAX REVENUE

Property tax revenue paid on land with conservation easements:

ACCOMACK	NORTHAMPTON
\$303,650	\$322,700

For every \$1.00 spent annually to provide public services to support land with conservation easements, revenues were:

ACCOMACK	NORTHAMPTON
\$2.38	\$1.15

# COMMUNITIES

The Eastern Shore of Virginia is a 75-mile-long peninsula flanked by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Chesapeake Bay to the west, with a population of fewer than 50,000 living in the counties of Northampton and Accomack.

This rural community includes many multi-generational families and individuals who work in the agriculture, aquaculture, aerospace, and tourism industries that depend on land conservation and high water quality to sustain their livelihoods.

There is a strong connection between Eastern Shore communities, natural resources and large, protected lands and waters.



Photo Credit: © Zak Poulton



Photo Credit: © Jennifer Davis/TNC

Mariah Tankard, from Arcadia High School, is measuring the salinity of the Atlantic Ocean using a portable refractometer while on a class field trip to Parramore Island.

## HOW DO CONSERVATION EASEMENTS WORK?

Conservation easements are used to protect natural or open-space lands from development while continuing in perpetuity the availability of such land for various purposes including agriculture, forestry, recreation, and the preservation of historical or architectural characteristics.

Property taxes are paid on land with easements, but easements lower the fair market value, resulting in lower tax assessments and revenue. In 2016, conservation easements lowered real estate tax revenue in Accomack by \$79,095 and by \$283,611 in Northampton.

Aquaculture on the Eastern Shore of Virginia is a thriving local industry that relies on conserved lands to provide clean growing waters. In 2016, the Eastern Shore of Virginia's aquaculture industry spent \$157,000,000; added \$114,000,000 to the regional gross domestic product; and directly employed 445 people in Accomack and Northampton counties. Locally farmed shellfish, such as Cherrystone Clams and Sewansecott Oysters, help make Virginia the nation's top hard clam producer and the East Coast's top oyster producer.



Photo Credit: © Gordon Campbell

For more information about The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve, please visit [www.nature.org/vcr](http://www.nature.org/vcr) or call (757) 442-3049.

## STUDY INFORMATION

[Socio-Economic Impacts of Conserved Lands on Virginia's Eastern Shore, July 2017.](#)



The findings are based on land-use and fiscal conditions in each county as of fiscal year 2016 (July 1, 2015–June 30, 2016).