

Filter Feeders: animals that eat microscopic plants and animals suspended in the water. Some of this is detritus, decayed plants or animals washed in from the land. Some filter feeders, like oysters, clean the water taking out nutrients, and then bind the rest in clumps which settle to the bottom of the body of water, improving water clarity. Clearer water allows sunlight to penetrate encouraging the growth of underwater plants which provide oxygen in photosynthesis, and habitat. In the past, oysters were plentiful enough in the Chesapeake Bay to filter the entire bay in about 4 days. Their demise from over harvesting and disease means the remaining oysters now take over a year to filter the same amount of water so clarity has gone down.