

Quotes from John Smith Concerning the Chesapeake Bay Area

- “A few Bevers, Otters, Beares, Martins and minkes we found, and in divers places that abundance of fish, lying so thicke with their heads above the water, as for want of nets (our barge driving amongst them) we attempted to catch them with a frying pan: but we found it a bad instrument to catch fish with: neither better fish, more plenty, nor more variety for smal fish, had any of us ever seene in any place so swimming in the water, but they are not to be caught with frying pans.”
Captain John Smith, 1608
- “Of fish we were best acquainted with sturgeon, grampus, porpoise, seals, stingrays whose tails are very dangerous, brits, mullets, white salmon, trouts, soles, plaice, herring, conyfish, rockfish, eels, lampreys, catfish, shad, perch of three sorts, crabs, shrimps, crevises, oysters, cockles, and mussels.”
Captain John Smith, 1612
- “Of birds, the Eagle is the greatest devourer. Hawks there be of diverse sorts as our Falconers called them, Sparrow hawks . . . Goss hawks, Falcons and Ospreys . . . In winter there are great plenty of Swans, Cranes gray and white with black wings, Herons, Geese, Duck . . . Parrots, and Pigeons. Of all those sorts great abundance, and some other strange kinds to us unknown by name.”
Captain John Smith, 1612
- “Of beasts the chief are Deer, nothing differing from ours. In the deserts towards the heads of the rivers, there are many, but amongst the rivers few.”
Captain John Smith, 1612
- “Their Bears are very little in comparison of those of Muscovia and Tartaria. The Beaver is as big as an ordinary water dog, but his legs exceeding short . . . His tail somewhat like the form of a Racket bare without hair . . . They have many Otters, which, as the Beavers, they take with snares, and esteem the skins great ornaments; and of all those beasts they use to feed, when they catch them.”
Captain John Smith, 1612