

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**MARYLAND PORT ADMINISTRATION AND SCHOOL CHILDREN TAKE  
BABY TERRAPINS – BACK TO THE BAY**

BALTIMORE, MD – Beginning May 22, and running through June 7, over 500 school children, teachers and chaperons will be involved in releasing baby terrapins born on Poplar Island back into the Chesapeake Bay. While on the island, students will be afforded the opportunity to take part in identifying wetland grasses and adaptations, tour Phase Two of the island and then document and measure the terrapins before their release. This educational program is a collaborative initiative between the Maryland Port Administration, Arlington Echo an environmental component of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education and Maryland Environmental Services.

Of the 1500 hatchlings found last year on Poplar Island, 110 were fostered in 50 Anne Arundel County School classrooms as well as at the Kent School and Gibson Island Country School. During the period from October 2005 to May 2006, the baby terrapins were reared in classrooms from kindergarten to high school biology classes. Students monitored the growth by taking measurements, graphing data on length, height, width weight and feeding behavior. The compiled data has been given to researchers at Ohio University.

As far back as 1847, Poplar Island was a 1,140 acre community to a small population of Bay fishermen and their families. By the late 1990's, only four acres of the Island remained. In 1998, restoration of the Island began by the placement of contaminated sediment dredged from the Bay's channel. Today, Poplar Island is once again its original 1,140 acre size and has become an international model for its positive use of dredged sediment and the creation of a wildlife habitat. By 2014, completion date for Poplar Island, over 40 million cubic yards of dredged material will have been placed at the site.

Today, the Island is divided into two sections: 570 acres of upland habitat and 570 acres of inter-tidal wetlands. In 2002, over 100 species of birds had been documented ranging from the American Bald Eagle to the Muted Swan and American White Pelican. Nine species of moths and butterflies along with various mammals, reptiles and insects have made the Island their home as well. Dozens of species of trees, marsh shrubs, herbaceous plants and grasses have been planted by adult volunteers and school children. In 2009, the beginning of an extension of 575 acres will be added to the Island.

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