

Maryland’s Geographic Diversity

by JIL SWEARINGEN

The State of Maryland is home to five physiographic provinces—Coastal Plain, Piedmont, Blue Ridge, Ridge and Valley, and Appalachian Plateaus (figure 1), and six ecoregions—Middle Atlantic Coastal Plain, Southeastern Plains, Northern Piedmont, Blue Ridge, Ridge and Valley, and Central Appalachians (figure 2).

Physiographic provinces are large-scale geographic areas formed by geological and climate forces acting over millennia. As a result, these areas have unique landscapes, topography and physical features. Ecoregions are smaller geographic areas within the boundaries of the physiographic provinces and are characterized by unique plant communities and other ecological components.

In this issue, we’re featuring the Coastal Plain Province and two of its ecoregions—the Middle Atlantic Coastal Plain and Southeastern Plains—with an article on Maryland’s salt marshes by Jim Brighton. We’ll examine other regions of the state in future issues of *Marilandica*.

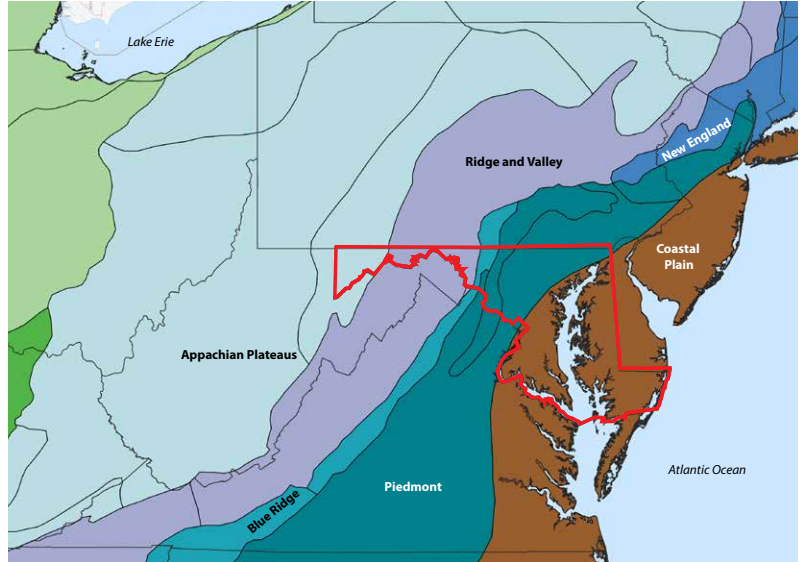


Fig. 1. Physiographic Provinces of the Mid-Atlantic
U.S. Physiographic Provinces (USGS 2021). Graphic by crehakt. Red outline of Maryland by E.C. Fisher.

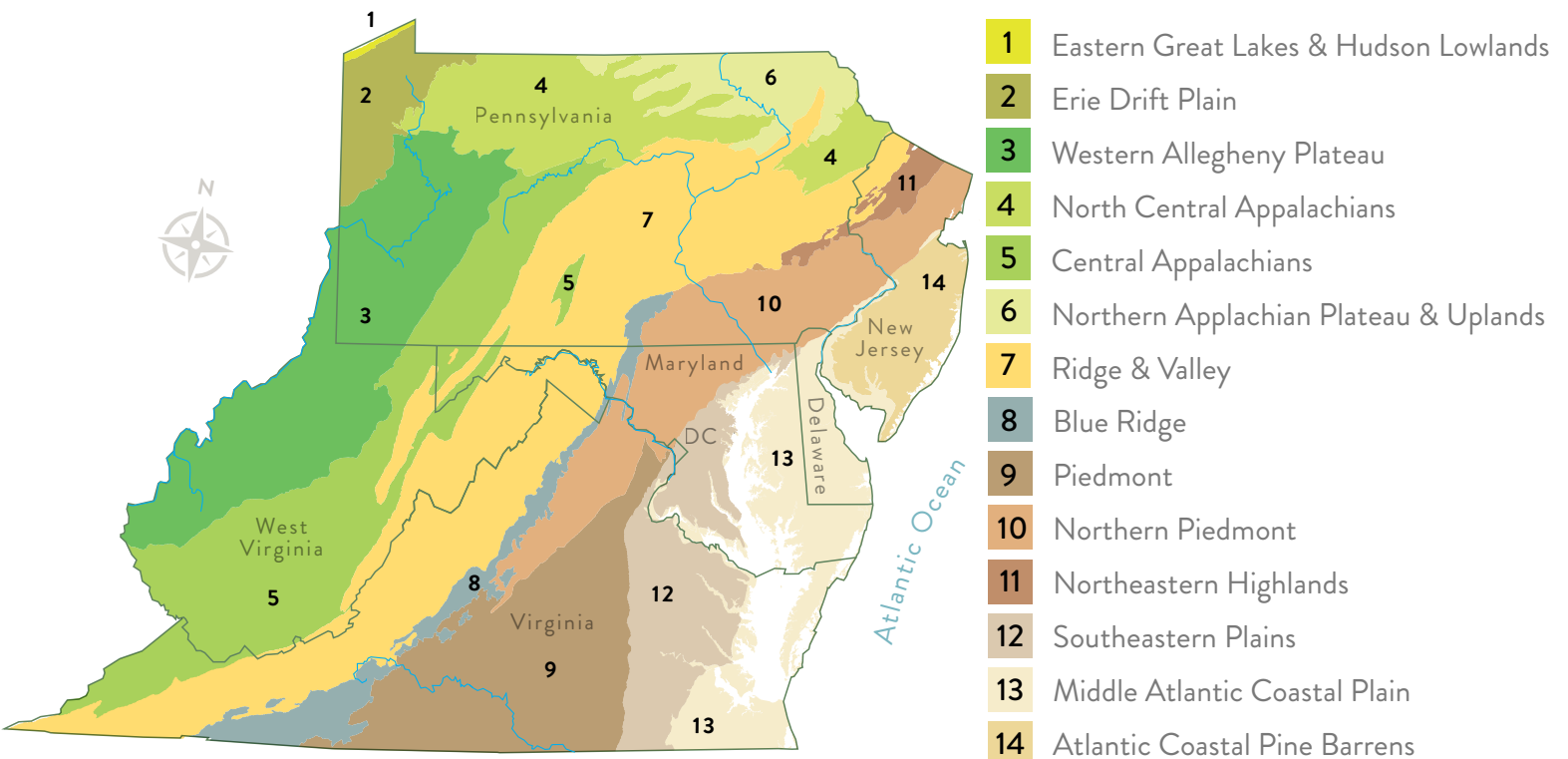


Fig. 2. Level III Ecoregions of the Mid-Atlantic

Graphic by Amanda Wray. Based on data from the April 2013 Continental United States Map. Courtesy of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory.