

To all Eastern Zone Open Water Competitors:

This year's OW swim will take place off Bay Ridge, just south of Annapolis, MD. This is a salt water venue in the Chesapeake Bay and there is a possibility of Sea Nettles in the course. If they are not bad we will hold the swim as advertised. If the Sea Nettles are heavily concentrated we may have to cancel the swim.

If the swim takes place, and you choose to swim at your own risk, you may wear full body swim suits. Also bring along some Vaseline to coat uncovered skin. Vinegar is good to pour on stings post race.

NOAA has put together a forecasting model that does a pretty good job locating the highest concentrations of sea nettles and they publish it on the web. Below is a link to that model:
<http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/forecasting-sea-nettles//>

The Chesapeake Paddlers Association has been working along with other on-the-water-groups to assist the researchers by providing a "ground truth" to improve the accuracy of the prediction model. The current display is a bit of a problem since it gives a rather large Pixilation which makes for the erroneous reading/indications of a zero probability of Sea Nettles at locations like Bay Ridge.

Though a sting from a Chesapeake Bay sea nettle can be quite painful, it is usually not dangerous unless an allergic reaction occurs. Once stung by a sea nettle, the victim should first remove any bits of tentacle that may be attached to the skin. It is recommended that one use gloves, but if none are available, the pads of the fingers may be used since they, along with the palms of the hands and bottoms of the feet, are not susceptible to the nematocysts. The affected area should be rinsed either with hot water or salt water, and then the venom should be neutralized using vinegar. Any remaining nematocysts should be carefully removed using either tweezers or a credit card edge. Once treated topically, acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be taken for pain management. (Some swear by *Adolph's Meat Tenderizer* also.)

I will try to keep everyone informed as much as I can by posting race course conditions to the Eastern Zone Web Site.

Notice of Cancellation will also be posted to the Eastern Zone website:
<http://www.easternzoneswimming.org/>.

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