

# ESTUARY

N., PLURAL ESTUARIES | [ES-CHOO-AIR-EE]

THE WIDE LOWER CHANNEL OF A RIVER WHERE IT FLOWS INTO THE SEA. ESTUARIES EXPERIENCE TIDAL FLOWS, SO THEIR WATER IS A CHANGING MIXTURE OF FRESH AND SALT, WHICH MAKES THEM FERTILE AREAS FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF MARINE LIFE. (SEE WHY THEY'RE SO IMPORTANT?)

## ESTUARIES ARE A BIOLOGICAL ORCHESTRA

THEIR HARMONIOUS COMBINATION OF BRACKISH WATER, SHALLOW DEPTHS AND HIGH LEVELS OF NUTRIENTS FORMS AN IDEAL ENVIRONMENT FOR MICROSCOPIC MARINE ORGANISMS, WHICH IN TURN FORM THE BASE OF THE MARINE FOOD CHAIN BY FOSTERING HEALTHY POPULATIONS OF FISH, AMPHIBIANS AND SHELLFISH. IN AN ESTUARY, EVERY SPECIES PLAYS ITS PART.



**75%** OF THE U.S. COMMERCIAL SEA CATCH COMES FROM ESTUARIES



**37%** OF ESTUARY MARSHES IN THE CONTIGUOUS U.S. ARE IN LOUISIANA

**LOUISIANA** IS THE LARGEST COMMERCIAL FISHERY IN THE CONTIGUOUS U.S.

LOUISIANA'S SHORELINE IS **7,721 MILES LONG\***

THAT'S ONLY 1% LESS THAN FLORIDA, AND MORE THAN MAINE AND CALIFORNIA COMBINED

LOUISIANA'S ESTUARIES, FED BY THE NUTRIENT-RICH MISSISSIPPI AND ATCHAFALAYA RIVERS, MAKE UP THE **SEVENTH LARGEST ESTUARY IN THE WORLD**

\*When we say shoreline, we mean all of the places where land and water meet. And in Louisiana, that's a whole lot of places. | This data comes from NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and USGS (United States Geological Survey).