



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18DO130

Site Name: Snake Island South

Prehistoric

Other name(s) South Snake Island

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

Early, Middle, & Late Woodland shell midden

## Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 3

SCS soil & sediment code KgB,FadA,Mtd

Latitude 38.3472

Longitude -75.9975

Physiographic province Eastern Shore Coastal P

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation m

Site slope 0-2%

Ethnobotany profile available  Maritime site

Site setting

-Site Setting restricted

-Lat/Long accurate to within 1 sq. mile, user may need to make slight adjustments in mapping to account for sites near state/county lines or streams

### Topography

- Floodplain  High terrace
- Hilltop/bluff  Rockshelter/cave
- Interior flat  Hillslope
- Upland flat  Unknown
- Ridgetop  Other
- Terrace  Elevated marshland
- Low terrace

### Ownership

- Private
- Federal
- State of MD
- Regional/county/city
- Unknown

### Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Fishing Bay

#### Saltwater

- Ocean
- Estuary/tidal river
- Tidewater/marsh

#### Freshwater

- Stream/river
- Swamp
- Lake or pond
- Spring

Minimum distance to water is 0 m

## Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site

Woodland site

Contact period site  ca. 1820 - 1860

Archaic site

MD Adena

ca. 1630 - 1675

ca. 1860 - 1900

Early archaic

Early woodland

ca. 1675 - 1720

ca. 1900 - 1930

Middle archaic

Mid. woodland

ca. 1720 - 1780

Post 1930

Late archaic

Late woodland

ca. 1780 - 1820

Unknown historic context

Unknown prehistoric context

Unknown context

### Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American

Asian American

African American

Unknown

Anglo-American

Other

Hispanic

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

## Site Function Contextual Data:

### Prehistoric

- Multi-component  Misc. ceremonial
- Village  Rock art
- Hamlet  Shell midden
- Base camp  STU/lithic scatter
- Rockshelter/cave  Quarry/extraction
- Earthen mound  Fish weir
- Cairn  Production area
- Burial area  Unknown
- Other context

### Historic

#### Urban/Rural?

#### Domestic

- Homestead
- Farmstead
- Mansion
- Plantation
- Row/townhome
- Cellar
- Privy

#### Industrial

- Mining-related
- Quarry-related
- Mill
- Black/metalsmith

Furnace/forge

Other

#### Transportation

- Canal-related
- Road/railroad
- Wharf/landing
- Maritime-related
- Bridge
- Ford

#### Educational

#### Commercial

- Trading post
- Store
- Tavern/inn

#### Military

Battlefield

Fortification

Encampment

#### Townsite

Church/mtg house

Ch support bldg

#### Burial area

Cemetery

Sepulchre

Isolated burial

#### Bldg or foundation

Possible Structure

Post-in-ground

Frame-built

Masonry

Other structure

#### Slave related

Non-domestic agri

Recreational

Midden/dump

Artifact scatter

Spring or well

Unknown

Other context

## Interpretive Sampling Data:

### Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken

### Historic context samples

Soil samples taken

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken



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## Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types		Koens-Crispin	
Clovis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perkiomen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehana	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vernon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Piscataway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (stem)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calvert	<input type="checkbox"/>
Le Croy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Selby Bay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Morrow Mntn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guilford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brewerton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Madison/Potomac	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otter Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Levanna	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coulbourn	1	Townsend	3	Yeocomico	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selden Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minguannan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monongahela	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accokeek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mockley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sullivan Cove	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wolfe Neck	3	Clemson Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Vinette	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moyaone	<input type="checkbox"/>		
				Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>		

## Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone		Staffordshire		Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pearlware	<input type="checkbox"/>			Rhenish	<input type="checkbox"/>
						Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

## Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts		Other fired clay	
Flaked stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unmod faunal	303
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oyster shell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	8	Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Storage/trash pit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shell midden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ossuary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
House pattern(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hearth(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Lithic reduc area	<input type="checkbox"/>		

## Lithic Material

Jasper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fer quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sil sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	European flint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Basalt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Dated features present at site

See below radiocarbon dates

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Activity item(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faunal material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc. kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal items	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Historic Features

Const feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hearth/chimney	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheet midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Earthworks	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mill raceway	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Paling ditch/fence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Road/walkway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheel pit	<input type="checkbox"/>		

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

## Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1: 1730 +/- 25 years BP	Reliability	Sample 2: 1800 +/- 25 years BP	Reliability	Sample 3: 1870 +/- 30 years BP	Reliability
calibrated dates were AD 480-670		calibrated dates were AD 420-610		calibrated dates were AD 780-990	
Sample 4: 1140 +/- 25 years BP	Reliability	Sample 5: 1170 +/- 25 years BP	Reliability	Sample 6: 1120 +/- 25 years BP	Reliability
calibrated dates were AD 1070-1270		calibrated dates were AD 1050-1240		calibrated dates were AD 780-990	
Sample 7: 1860 +/- 35 years BP	Reliability	Sample 8: 1860 +/- 25 years BP	Reliability	Sample 9: 1800 +/- 25 years BP	Reliability
calibrated dates were AD 340-580		calibrated dates were AD 350-560		calibrated dates were AD 420-610	

Additional radiocarbon results available



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Historic

Brief

Description: Early, Middle, & Late Woodland shell midden

Unknown

## External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at N/A

Additional raw data may be available online

## Summary Description:

Site 18DO130, also known as Snake Island South, is an Early, Middle, & Late Woodland shell midden located near Blackwater River at the northwest side of Fishing Bay. The area is southeast of the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. The site consists of a scatter of fire-cracked rock with some oyster shell on both upland and drowned surfaces. The area was plowed as indicated by the fragmented shell near the surface of the bank profile. The USDA soil survey classifies the site as BT (Bestpitch and Transquaking soils, very frequently flooded, tidal marsh), though researchers indicate that this is likely an error and should be noted as Klej complex 0-2%. The boundary between 18DO114 and 18DO130 is arbitrary, since refuse material is continual between both sites, as noted on the forest floor. However, the original documenters of these sites did not recognize both exposures.

By 1608, sections of lower Dorchester County and Somerset County had been surveyed by John Smith, within a year of the initial English settlement at Jamestown. The results of Smith's survey were published in his famous and often reproduced 1612 "Map of Virginia." Smith's map is very generalized, but it provides the earliest view of the study area and seems to show some marked similarities to the modern landscape. Although differently named, Smith's map clearly defines the Honga River, Fishing Bay, the Nanticoke River, the Wicomico River, the Manokin River, the Annemessex River, Tangier Sound, and Pocomoke Sound. His map also documents the presence of several Indian villages, notably the Nause and the Nantaqeaack, the Nause being the only group plotted within one of the study areas. The Nause seem to be located on the eastern side of the neck of land leading out towards Elliott's Island, and the location of the camp would be within the Fishing Bay study area. If the Smith map is indeed accurate with respect to the Nause camp, it may have been located near the forested hummock on Upper Greens Cove, on the west side of the Nanticoke River. The next detailed historical map of the region is Augustine Herrman's 1670 map of Virginia and Maryland.

Surprisingly, the Herrman map shows less detail than the Smith map. The mouth of the Honga River and the Fishing Bay area seem to be poorly defined and no colonial residences are plotted within the Fishing Bay area. However, the Fairmount area seems to have been thoroughly settled by 1670, as indicated by the numerous houses plotted in that portion of Herrman's map. The establishment of early land patents within the Fairmount SWMA seems to substantiate Herrman's recognition of colonial residences within this portion of coastal Somerset County, Maryland. Interestingly, it seems that most of the Fishing Bay area was settled relatively late and that the historical colonial presence was somewhat limited. The 1861 survey of the Fishing Bay area shows a few farms or small plantations as late as the mid-19th century. The 1847 coastal survey further substantiates that the Fishing Bay region had only a limited number of farms and residences. In fact, neither survey mapped any detailed information for the Transquaking River beyond its mouth. After the Civil War, the 1877 survey plots numerous towns, wharves, roads, landings, and residences within the Fishing Bay area, as well as, the Fairmount area.

The historic map data for both the Fishing Bay and the Fairmount areas clearly support the contention that there was a post-Civil War boom relative to the seafood industry and the waterman's way of life. The archaeological evidence for the historic presence in both wildlife management areas is abundant and ranges from an isolated ship keel exposed in the marsh to an early roadbed situated stratigraphically below a modern paved road.

The site was first identified by the landowner Norman Brice, who sent a letter to Chris Barse (MGS) in 1983. He provided a map location, artifact finds, and the relationship with the northern site 18DO114. Artifacts noted by Brice include a celt, celt fragment, and deer bone.

In 2002 and 2003, the site was twice examined during fieldwork. The artifact inventory included 3 fragments of Townsend ware, 1 unknown fragment of shell-tempered ware (Townsend or Mockley), 4 chert flakes, and 1 quartz flake collected in 2002. In 2003, 3 fragments of Wolfe Neck ware and 1 fragment of Coulbourn ware were found at the site. It was determined by researchers that 18DO114 and 18DO130 were separate eroded shoreline exposures of the same single archaeological site. Shell midden material extends from the north side of Snake Island to the southern end of the island. A midden and oyster-shell filled pit features were also noted along the bank profile. A small cluster of ribbed-mussel was also noted in the bank profile.

In 2009, a research project was undertaken in Fishing Bay. Larger Chesapeake bay-wide, millennial-scale investigations of the crab (*Callinectes sapidus*) and oyster populations, which indicate consistent and sustainable prehistoric use of crab and oyster resources across Chesapeake Bay, had been undertaken previously. This smaller scale, in-depth analysis of shell middens within Fishing Bay examined the local expression of that pattern, particularly in light of considerable environmental changes. Test excavations at six sites around Fishing Bay were conducted as part of this study: 18DO35 (South Elliotts Island), 18DO127 (Doctor's Creek Hummock), 18DO130 (South Snake Island), 18DO429 (North Guinea Island), 18DO436 (West Groggs Point), and 18DO439 (North Central Elliotts Island). Excavation methods varied depending on the size and condition of the deposit. The strategy focused on larger units that could provide sufficient samples of artifacts, oyster valves, and other faunal remains, along with smaller column samples that could be used to characterize the range of resources in the deposits. At Site 18DO130, one 1 x 1 m unit (unit 1) and one 1.3 x .6m unit (unit 2) were opened. The units were screened through ¼ inch and 1/8 inch screen. Material collected from Unit 1 included oyster left valves, vertebrate remains, and artifacts from 50 L, and all screen residuals from the remaining 50 L. Artifact type was not identified in this study. All screen residuals were collected from Unit 2.

At site 18DO130, two distinct shell features were identified. One, located just at the high tide line, is a small, superficial shell feature with two nearly identical dates (AD 1050–1240 and AD 1070–1270) that suggest a very short term occupation during the Late Woodland. The other is a small shell pit feature dating to the Middle Woodland that was exposed only during low tide. Bulk samples from each of these small features were removed and screened over 1/16 inch (1.59 mm) mesh, with all material retained for analysis. The Middle Woodland shell pit contained a relatively high proportion (6.7%) of stout tagelus (*Tagelus plebeius*), a species of shellfish common to Chesapeake Bay, which is absent from all other sites studied as well as the Late Woodland component at 18DO130. While it is possible that the stout tagelus was more abundant during the early development of Fishing Bay, the 18DO130 shell pit also contained a larger vertebrate assemblage than any of the other sites (still fairly small; NISP ¼ 236, 62 g) and was the only site to contain small amounts of blue crab remains. Vertebrate remains were relatively low, but a wide variety of species, including deer, raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*), small rodents, fish, birds, and turtles were identified.



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Unknown

These data suggest that the people who occupied this site may have had more diverse subsistence activities than Late Woodland peoples perhaps because the oyster-rich estuary in Fishing Bay was not yet fully developed. This is related to a broader trend noted by Custer (1989), Rick et al. (2016), and Waselkov (1982), in which Early Woodland and some Middle Woodland sites tend to have greater taxonomic richness than Late Woodland sites. Current explanations suggest a combination of less specialized early foraging strategies and environmental change, but a larger sample of Early and Middle Woodland shell middens from throughout the region is needed to fully evaluate these trends.

As part of this study, ten radiocarbon samples were taken. 18DO130a (Intertidal Pit Feature) was tested and dated as 1730 years old with an error of 25 (calibrated dates were AD 480-670). 18DO130b (Pit features, Sample 2) was tested and dated as 1800 years old with an error of 25 (calibrated dates were AD 420-610). 18DO130c (Pit features, Sample 2) was tested and dated as 1870 years old with an error of 30 (calibrated dates were AD 780-990). 18DO130d (Upper deposit, possible pit feature) was tested and dated as 1140 years old with an error of 25 (calibrated dates were AD 1070-1270). 18DO130e (Unit 2 base of midden, 13 cmbs) was tested and dated as 1170 years old with an error of 25 (calibrated dates were AD 1050-1240).

18DO130f (Base of Unit 2) was tested and dated as 1120 years old with an error of 25 (calibrated dates were AD 780-990). 18DO130g-1 (Pit feature, 10 cmbs) was tested and dated as 1860 years old with an error of 35 (calibrated dates were AD 340-580). 18DO130g-2 (Pit feature, 10 cmbs) was tested and dated as 1860 years old with an error of 25 (calibrated dates were AD 350-560). 18DO130g-3 (Pit feature, 10 cmbs) was tested and dated as 1800 years old with an error of 25 (calibrated dates were AD 420-610). 18DO130g-4 (Pit feature, 10 cmbs) was tested and dated as 1770 years old with an error of 25 (calibrated dates were AD 440-640).

In summary, site 18DO130 is a shell midden temporally associated with Early, Middle, & Late Woodland periods. This is based upon site inspection, limited archaeological excavation, and radiocarbon dating. Further research is necessary to make further conclusions, though it is suggested from faunal analysis that the people who occupied this site may have had more diverse subsistence activities than other Late Woodland peoples.

## External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

95008672, 18DO130 SF, 18DO114 SF