

NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE FORCE

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This agency, created by Chapter 348, Acts of 1972, traces its beginnings to the establishment of the State Oyster Police Force in 1868 for the enforcement of the oyster laws of the State. Legislation enacted in 1874 brought all forces afloat under the Commission of Fisheries and named the new unit the State Fishery Force. In 1922, the Force became a part of the former Conservation Department and was known as the Maryland Patrol and Inspection Fleet. In 1941, the Patrol Fleet was incorporated into the Department of Tidewater Fisheries and its name was changed to the Division of Inspection and Patrol. In 1960, the Force became a part of the Division of Law Enforcement of the Department of Tidewater Fisheries, renamed the Marine Police Division in 1962.

The Natural Resources Police Force enforces State laws and regulations pertaining to commercial and sport fishing, boating, waterways pollution and wildlife conservation. Also, it conducts boating and hunting safety educational programs.

Activities also include the operation of the Natural Resources Police Academy at Matapeake, operation of a central maintenance and supply facility, operation of an aviation unit to provide airborne surveillance and rescue services to the enforcement programs and other agencies of the Department of Natural Resources.

The 125-man Marine Division includes Headquarters, Communications, and Field Force Sections.

Among its other duties, it recovers stolen or lost boats and stolen outboard motors, renders other water-oriented assistance to the boating public, including delivery of emergency messages, regatta patrols, tow into port disabled vessels, removal of persons from water, first aid administration, ice breaking, search for missing boats, fire

fighting on boats, engine repairs, and refloating of boats from grounding on shoals.

The Inland Division of the Natural Resources Police Force is charged with the responsibility of enforcing all laws and regulations relative to the protection and preservation of wildlife, and with the welfare and safety of the citizenry. It apprehends persons for violations of the fish, game, boating and litter laws and regulations.

Inland Officers assist Wildlife Law Enforcement officials in contiguous states in the apprehension of game and fish violators, assist state and local police in the apprehension of felons, and search for persons reported as lost or missing. They also search for and recover drowning victims, relay emergency information to hunters and fishermen, render assistance to boaters and recover drifting unmanned boats.

Thousands of people receive firearms and hunter safety instructions during a year.

Units manned by this division include patrol boats, runabouts, vehicles, and one twin-engine Amphibian aircraft.

The force inspects boats for conservation and boating violations. It also inspects seafood processing houses and trucks carrying seafood cargo. It makes arrests and issues warnings for violations of boating and conservation laws, trips to collect water and shellfish samples for the Seafood Program in conjunction with the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and boat accident investigations.

FOREST SERVICE

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The Forest Service, created by Chapter 348, Acts of 1972, succeeded the Department of Forests and Parks established by Chapter 508, Acts of 1941. The latter department superseded the Board of Forestry created by Chapter 294, Acts of 1906. The Forest Service is responsible for the overall direction, supervision and coordination of the activities in the State Forests. Programs