

Waterway Improvement provides services to the general boating public including placement and maintenance of navigational aids, removal of derelict vessels, ice breaking, dredging, and the construction of regional boating facilities and local small-boat launching ramps, piers, and ancillary facilities.

Program Open Space administers the funds made available to local communities for open and recreational space under the provisions of the Outdoor Recreation Land Loan of 1969. In addition, Program Open Space coordinates the acquisition of land for the use of all Departmental agencies.

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATION

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The Fisheries Administration, created by Chapter 348, Acts of 1972, combines the functions of the former Department of Chesapeake Bay Affairs, established by Chapter 82, Acts of 1964, and the Fish and Wildlife Administration, created by Chapter 252, Acts of 1970. The former department superseded the Department of Tidewater Fisheries, established by Chapter 508, Acts of 1941, while the latter Administration succeeded the former Department of Game and Inland Fish, established by Chapter 354, Acts of 1939. The Fisheries Administration is responsible for the preservation, enhancement, development, and use of all fishery resources in Maryland, both tidal and freshwater. The agency is directed by an Administrator appointed by the Secretary of Natural Resources.

Part of the Administration's tidewater fishery management program includes planting six million bushels of oyster shells for propagation purposes, transplanting seed oysters on 2,000 acres of public oyster bars, monitoring blue crab movement to determine fluctuations in annual harvest, investigation of instances of fish mortalities, an inventory of 106 one-mile stream sections in an anadromous fish study, and monitoring of striped bass reproduction and harvesting.

Its freshwater fishery management program includes stocking Maryland ponds and streams with 900,000 finfish.

In addition, the Administration produces over 320,000 freshwater trout stocked from Maryland's

hatcheries. Extensive rehabilitation of the lakes, ponds, and streams is carried on through chemical and mechanical means to provide better freshwater fishing (Code Natural Resources Article, secs. 1-102 and 4-201).

WILDLIFE ADMINISTRATION

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The Wildlife Administration, created by Chapter 348, Acts of 1972, is responsible for the maintenance of an abundant population of wildlife throughout the State. The Administrator is appointed by the Secretary of Natural Resources.

Among the Administration's duties is the management of 35 wildlife areas encompassing 102,000 acres.

Recreational activities on state-owned and cooperative lands include hunting, fishing and crabbing, trapping, birdwatchings, field trials, dog training, hiking, and nature study and appreciation.

In addition, the Administration evaluates public demands, wildlife population and harvest parameters, and environmental factors, and applies management techniques to ensure sustained production for use.

The 1973 Session of the General Assembly approved a Non-Game Section to be added to the staff of the Wildlife Administration. The Section is funded with general and special funds—approximately 90 percent general and 10 percent special. Endangered species, song and insectivorous birds, and other wildlife are studied, managed, and protected as the need arises and funds allow (Code Natural Resources Article, sec. 10-101).

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.