



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Mark J. Belton, Secretary
Mark L. Hoffman, Acting Deputy Secretary

August 28, 2015

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
President of the Maryland Senate
State House, H-107
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

The Honorable Michael E. Busch
Speaker of the House of Delegates
State House, H-101
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Re: Submission of Report regarding Maryland's Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund

Agency: Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Report Authority: Natural Resources Article § 1-706 (MSAR #10398)

Dear President Miller and Speaker Busch:

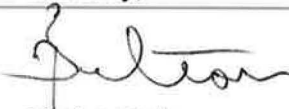
Please find attached the Department of Natural Resources' annual report on Maryland's Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund for FY 2015.

The report details the distribution and use of the funds collected from taxpayers' contributions when submitting their annual income tax returns. The Department of Natural Resources receives fifty percent of the donations collected. DNR's Wildlife and Heritage Service, which is responsible for the conservation of Maryland's nongame, threatened and endangered species program, receives the bulk of the Department's allocation and this report summarizes how the funds were spent. The remaining fifty percent of the collected contributions are allocated to the Chesapeake Bay Trust.

The Department of Natural Resources appreciates being the recipient of Maryland's taxpayers' generous contributions. We will continue the wise use of these funds to conserve and protect our natural resources for the benefit of all Maryland's citizens.

Should you have any questions or comments regarding this report, please feel free to contact DNR's Legislative Director, Rich Norling, directly at 410-260-8112, or by email at rich.norling@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Mark J. Belton
Secretary

Attachment

cc: Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services Library

Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund

Wildlife Conservation Annual Report FY15



Photo courtesy of George Jett

Submitted by:

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife and Heritage Service
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

2015

Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund

The Maryland General Assembly created the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund in 1988 to provide funds through a program whereby Maryland taxpayers can donate monies to help restore the Chesapeake Bay and save Maryland's endangered species and nongame wildlife. Taxpayers can make this contribution when submitting their annual income tax return. They can either donate a portion of their tax return to the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund or add their donation to the amount of taxes owed the State.

Of the proceeds donated to this Fund, 50% are distributed to the Chesapeake Bay Trust for bay education and restoration grants and 50% are distributed to the Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife and Heritage Service to conserve nongame wildlife, threatened and endangered species, and their habitats. The funds are available to promote the conservation, propagation, and habitat protection of nongame, threatened and endangered species. Authorized activities may include acquisition, monitoring, surveying, habitat protection, habitat restoration, public education, and urban wildlife programs.

Department of Natural Resources Wildlife and Heritage Service

The Wildlife and Heritage Service is the unit within the Department of Natural Resources that is responsible for the conservation and management of Maryland's wildlife resources, including nongame, threatened and endangered species. The Wildlife and Heritage Service is organized into programs that address game animals, invasive species, Wildlife Management Areas (i.e., public lands for hunting and other wildlife-oriented recreation), technical assistance to private landowners, and public outreach. The program responsible for the conservation of nongame, threatened and endangered species is called the Natural Heritage Program.

The Natural Heritage Program oversees the conservation of the State's nongame wildlife resources, including birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates. The program is the lead agency for threatened and endangered species conservation in Maryland, including plants and animals. Decisions on the listing of species as endangered or threatened are deter-

mined by the Natural Heritage Program and officially listed through the State's regulatory process. This program also works on species of greatest conservation need, including declining wildlife and rare native plants, as well as rare or unique natural communities. Within the Natural Heritage Program there are three functional programs, namely the Science Program, Habitat Conservation Program, and Conservation Technology Program.

The Science Program is responsible for species status assessments, threatened and endangered species listing, inventory and monitoring species of concern, applied research, development of natural community classification for Maryland, and restoration of rare or unique ecosystems and natural communities. The State zoologist, botanist, wildlife ecologist, invertebrate zoologist, community ecologist, and restoration ecologist perform the primary functions of this program.

The Habitat Conservation Program conforms to the Department's four regions, with a Regional Ecologist in each region. The staff of this program works closely with public land managers to conserve biodiversity on these state properties. They also work with private landowners, local planning and zoning agencies, and conservation organizations to influence plants and wildlife conservation on private lands. The environmental review process annually reviews 3,000+ projects for potential impacts to threatened and endangered species and other species of concern. The Habitat Conservation Program also supports outreach to private landowners who wish to support habitat for declining species by linking them to funding sources and technical assistance.

The Conservation Technology Program serves as the central data management service for the Natural Heritage Program. A centralized database houses 30+ years of data on the State's rare, threatened, and endangered species. This database is part of a national network of state natural heritage programs. Location information for these species are mapped and stored on a GIS system. Various mapping products are produced for internal and external users. Generalized location information, called SSPRA, is available to the public for planning and environmental review purposes.

Use of the Fund:

The Natural Heritage Program receives the majority of the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Funds allocated to the Department of Natural Resources for nongame, threatened and endangered species. In FY15 the amount spent by the Natural Heritage Program was \$462,718. This comprised 16% of the Natural Heritage Program's operational budget. Most of these funds were used to match federal funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for endangered species and wildlife diversity conservation. The total FY15 budget for the Natural Heritage Program was \$2,926,345. The Office of the Secretary also received a portion of Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Funds to support the various administrative functions of the Department of Natural Resources. These administrative functions include personnel, legal, accounting, public communications, and computer support. The same portion (16%) of all special funds allocated to the Department go toward this support. In FY15 the amount allocated to the Office of the Secretary was \$72,200.

**Department of Natural Resources Accounting Statement – FY15
Expenditures of the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund**Office of the Secretary

Object 01: Salaries and Wages	\$ 72,200.00
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Wildlife and Heritage Service

Object 01: Salaries and Wages	\$ 260,928.20
Object 02: Technical and Special Fees	\$ 0.00
Object 03: Communications	\$ 6,287.10
Object 04: Travel	\$ 10,541.65
Object 06: Fuel and Utilities	\$ 3,089.53
Object 07: Motor Vehicle Operations and Maintenance	\$ 37,374.89
Object 08: Contractual Services	\$ 38,547.91
Object 09: Supplies and Materials	\$ 24,394.43
Object 10: Equipment Replacement	\$ 2,209.00
Object 11: Equipment Additional	\$ 1,075.29
Object 12: Grants, Subsidies & Contributions	\$ 0.00
Object 13: Fixed Charges	\$ 6,070.00

Wildlife Conservation Projects Funded by the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund – FY15

The following projects were conducted by the Natural Heritage Program during July 2014 through June 2015. These projects were funded in part by the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund. For wildlife related projects, these tax checkoff funds were used to match federal funds. For plant related projects, Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Funds supported the project entirely or in part. The Department of Natural Resources cost accounting system does not allow for each and every project to have its own accounting code, so the amount expended on each project cannot be provided.

Wildlife projects

- Assess status of rare, threatened and endangered animals
- Monitor and conserve colonial waterbird populations
- Monitor Allegheny woodrat populations
- Monitor Puritan and northeastern beach tiger beetles
- Assess response to Puritan tiger beetle habitat restoration
- Participate in regional bird conservation efforts
- Provide technical assistance and monitoring for bog turtles
- Monitor hibernacula for wintering bats
- Conduct bat acoustic surveys
- Cosponsor statewide amphibian and reptile atlas project
- Conserve diamond-backed terrapin populations
- Work with partners to conserve reptiles and amphibians
- Detect the extent of mortality events from *Ranavirus* in amphibians
- Investigate occurrence of White Nose Syndrome in hibernating bats
- Bog turtle population and habitat monitoring
- Monitor nesting northern goshawks in western Maryland
- Habitat restoration planning for northern goshawk
- Targeted inventory and monitoring for rare animal species
- Provide assistance to the Important Bird Area Program
- Provide technical guidance to private landowners interested in migratory bird habitat management on their lands
- Golden-winged warbler surveys
- Hellbender monitoring and habitat enhancements
- Freshwater mussel reintroduction

- Coordinate development of the Maryland Bird Conservation Initiative
- Provide assistance to surveys for Appalachian cottontail and spotted skunk

Plant projects

- Assess status of rare, threatened and endangered plants
- Rare plant herbarium collection management
- Rare plant inventory and population monitoring
- Research on endangered plants for conservation planning, including Kate's Mountain clover (state threatened)
- Restore and manage sandplain gerardia habitat
- Monitor seabeach amaranth reintroduction on Assateague Island
- Management of invasive species at Soldiers Delight NEA
- Gather information for the extirpated flora project
- Gather data for the *Juncus* atlas project
- Assisted with "Grasses of Maryland" website
- Natural community classification and inventory
- Complete Annotated List of Maryland's Rare Plants
- Monitor sensitive joint-vetch populations on the Eastern Shore
- Shale barrens restoration in Western Maryland
- Delmarva bay ecosystem restoration on the Eastern Shore
- Swamp-pink population monitoring

General biodiversity projects

- Manage the rare, threatened, and endangered species database
- Conduct environmental reviews for impacts to species at risk
- Technical assistance for land use planning and management
- Identify and map Maryland's Biodiversity Conservation Network
- Biodiversity assessment of DNR lands
- Develop a Natural Areas Inventory to describe and help preserve BioNet sites.
- Assist with assessment of lands for state acquisition or easements
- Participate in the Northeast Regional Conservation Needs project
- Educate the public about nongame wildlife, threatened and endangered species, and natural communities
- Revise the Maryland Wildlife Diversity Conservation Plan (now called the State Wildlife Action Plan)
- Participate in regional conservation planning

Promotional Efforts

By law, no more than 5% of the donations collected in a given year may be used to promote the tax checkoff. DNR provides 5% of the annual allocation of the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund to the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) to develop and fund the promotional campaign each year. In FY15, the amount provided to CBT was \$23,136. This amount is included in the reported DNR expenditures in object 08 (contractual services).

