

Western Maryland and some parts of the Eastern Shore we have a fairly good supply of wild turkeys. I am told that last year we raised and released 2,100 of these birds for sportsmen to shoot.

In addition to our unexcelled fishing grounds of the Ocean and Tidewater area, we have good fishing in the rivers, streams, ponds and lakes of the interior. Our Department of Game and Inland Fish has constructed some 25 community lakes for public fishing, and the Department maintains cooperative agreements for fishing in all major impoundments. The trout streams of Western Maryland are stocked annually with 100,000 legal-sized brook, rainbow and brown trout.

We are doing all we can to conserve and replenish the wildlife of our State. Before I became Governor this year, I was for some 17 years Comptroller and a member of the Board of Public Works of the State, and in that office I was happy to have the opportunity to play some part in this program of conservation.

During the time, we acquired 40,000 acres of land which we opened for public hunting. In addition to that, our Department of Game and Inland Fish is developing another 150,000 acres of State forest lands for public hunting. We hope to be able to buy additional acreage for hunting ground as funds become available. All of the land was bought with revenues produced by the Department of Game and Inland Fish through the sale of licenses, fines and some federal aid.

And I should like to say, incidentally, it is a great pleasure for a Governor, harassed as most of us are by budgetary problems, to work with an agency like our Department of Game and Inland Fish. It is, and always has been, entirely self-supporting. Its entire budget of \$1,100,000 is sustained by the money it produces.

Maryland is gratified to be a part of this Association of Southeastern States and to be able to cooperate with our neighbors to the south in a regional effort to conserve wildlife and enhance the pleasures of hunters and fishermen. We pledge continued cooperation in this worthwhile endeavor.

To conclude, may I say again, in behalf of all of the people of the State, that we welcome you to Baltimore and Maryland and we hope all of you will visit us as often as you can.