

created by Chapter 508, Acts of 1941. In creating the new Department, the General Assembly stated its intention to confer upon it the authority and responsibility for the "planning, development, management, and conservation of the Chesapeake Bay and all other tidal waters and the shorelines and bottoms thereof." Specific responsibilities include water-oriented recreation development, shore erosion control, waterways improvement and maintenance, and the issuing of permits for the mineral exploration and exploitation of the Chesapeake Bay bottoms.

The Commission consists of five members appointed by the Secretary of Natural Resources for four-year terms. Two of the members must reside on the Eastern Shore, two represent the Western Shore, and one must reside in either Charles, Calvert, or St. Mary's counties. The Commission elects its Chairman annually, subject to the approval of the Secretary.

The Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the Director, considers the need for resource development from the points of view of the economic and social interests of the citizens of the State, and recommends to the Director long-range plans and programs of the Department, and reviews the annual budget request.

The Director is appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Natural Resources. As head of the Department, the Director is responsible for the exercise of all the powers and duties conferred upon the Department.

The Department has made substantial progress in restoring the productivity of the commercial fisheries in Maryland. Oyster production has increased from an all-time low of 1,243,497 bushels in the 1962-1963 season to a modern high of 3,014,670 bushels during the 1966-1967 season, as a result of vastly increased production of seed oysters by the State. Production during the 1967-1968 season exceeded 3,000,000 bushels, and is expected to continue at about the same level in the foreseeable future.

Maryland now produces more than seventy-five percent of the entire U. S. catch of soft shell clams. The State leads the nation in the production of striped bass (rockfish) and is second only to Virginia in the production of blue crabs. The landed value of Maryland's fishery products rose from \$11,729,000 in 1964 to more than \$17,000,000 in 1967.

The phenomenal growth of recreational boating has imposed heavy responsibilities on the Department. This has necessitated the enlargement, retraining, and re-equipping of the Maryland Marine Police. This unit now mans forty-three mobile field units, including forty-two inboard cruisers and a 5-place helicopter equipped for search and rescue operations. Forty-eight high-powered outboards supplement the fleet during the boating season, and the full-time force of 122 men is augmented by 20 part-time inspectors on weekends and holidays. The Department accomplished the retraining of personnel by the establishment of the Maryland Marine Police Academy in March 1963. All law enforcement personnel are now qualified in skills which enable them to provide maximum service in the field of public safety. Many have received advanced training in scuba diving, underwater demolitions, and other skills. The Maryland Marine Police is believed to be the largest, best-trained, and best-equipped unit of its kind in the world.

Under legislation enacted in 1964, and amended in 1966 and 1968, Maryland offers up to fifty percent funding for the construction of shore erosion control structures, which is substantially more than any other state. The Department offers, in addition, technical advice and assistance to Maryland property owners who have shore erosion problems.