



*Larry Hogan, Governor*  
*Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor*  
*Mark Belton, Secretary*  
*Joanne Throwe, Deputy Secretary*

May 11, 2018

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 2017.

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, Allison Cordell, directly at 410-260-8112, or by email at [Allison.cordell@maryland.gov](mailto:Allison.cordell@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

Mark Belton  
Secretary

Attachment

cc: Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services Library

# Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund

## Wildlife Conservation Annual Report FY17



Submitted by:

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

2017

## **Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund**

The Maryland General Assembly created the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund in 1988 whereby Maryland taxpayers can donate funds 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 percent are distributed to the Chesapeake Bay Trust for bay education and restoration grants and 50 percent 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.

## **Wildlife and Heritage Service**

The Wildlife and Heritage Service is the unit of the Department of Natural Resources responsible for the conservation and management of Maryland's wildlife resources, including nongame, threatened and endangered species.

The 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.

## **Natural Heritage Program**

The Natural Heritage Program oversees the conservation of the state's nongame wildlife resources, including birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. It 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 determined by the 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 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 (Eastern, Central, Southern and Western), with a regional ecologist in each. 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 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. 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 Sensitive Species Project Review Area, 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 FY17 the amount spent by the program was \$249,433. This comprised 8 percent of its operational budget. The total FY17 budget for the program was \$3,053,420. 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 majority of the projects listed below are funded primarily with these federal funds and matched with tax checkoff dollars, with the exception that most of the plant projects are funded with state money only. Federal funds are only available for federally-listed threatened or endangered species.

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. These administrative functions include personnel, legal, accounting, communications and computer support. The same portion (17 percent) of all special funds allocated to the department go toward this support. In FY17 the amount allocated to the Office of the Secretary was \$42,900.

### **FY17 Expenditures of the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund**

<u>Office of the Secretary</u>	
Object 01: Salaries and Wages	\$ 42,900.00

Wildlife and Heritage Service

Object 01: Salaries and Wages	\$ 61,941.85
Object 02: Technical and Special Fees	\$ 12,087.64
Object 03: Communications	\$ 6,040.71
Object 04: Travel	\$ 8,830.06
Object 06: Fuel and Utilities	\$ 3,089.60
Object 07: Motor Vehicle Operations and Maintenance	\$ 60,217.46
Object 08: Contractual Services	\$ 28,672.95
Object 09: Supplies and Materials	\$ 17,858.94
Object 10: Equipment Replacement	\$ 0.00
Object 11: Equipment Additional	\$ 242.93
Object 12: Grants, Subsidies & Contributions	\$ 0.00
Object 13: Fixed Charges	\$ 7,551.00

**Wildlife Conservation Projects Funded by the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund – FY17**

The following projects were conducted by the Natural Heritage Program during July 2016 through June 2017. 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 since federal funds are only available for federally-listed threatened or endangered plant species.

Wildlife projects

- Assess response to Puritan tiger beetle habitat restoration
- Assess the status of rare, threatened and endangered animals
- Bog turtle population and habitat monitoring
- Conduct bat acoustic surveys
- Conserve diamond-backed terrapin populations
- Coordinate development of the Maryland Bird Conservation Initiative
- Co-sponsor statewide amphibian and reptile atlas project
- Freshwater mussel reintroduction and translocation monitoring
- Golden-winged warbler surveys
- Hellbender monitoring and habitat enhancements
- Improve pollinator habitats
- Investigate occurrence of white nose syndrome in hibernating bats
- Monitor Allegheny woodrat populations
- Monitor and conserve colonial waterbird populations
- Monitor golden eagle movements.
- Monitor hibernacula for wintering bats
- Monitor Puritan and northeastern beach tiger beetles
- Participate in regional bird conservation efforts
- Provide assistance to surveys for Appalachian cottontail and spotted skunk
- Provide assistance to the Important Bird Area Program

- Provide technical assistance and monitoring for bog turtles
- Provide technical guidance to private landowners interested in migratory bird habitat management on their lands
- Survey for rare bats in summer and identify roosts
- Surveys and land management for rare butterflies
- Targeted inventory and monitoring for rare animal species
- Work with partners to conserve reptiles and amphibians

#### Plant projects

- Assess the status of rare, threatened and endangered plants
- Assist with development of Maryland Plant Atlas
- Delmarva bay ecosystem restoration on the Eastern Shore
- Establish deer exclosures to protect rare plants
- Management of invasive species at Soldiers Delight Natural Environment Area
- Monitor seabeach amaranth reintroduction on Assateague Island
- Monitor sensitive joint-vetch populations
- Natural community classification and inventory
- Rare plant herbarium collection management
- Rare plant inventory and population monitoring
- Research on endangered and threatened plants for conservation planning, such as Kate's Mountain clover
- Restore and manage sandplain gerardia habitat
- Shale barrens restoration in Western Maryland
- Swamp-pink population monitoring

#### General biodiversity projects

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

#### **Promotional Efforts**

By law, no more than 5 percent of the donations collected in a given year may be used to promote the tax checkoff. The department provides 5 percent of the annual allocation of the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund to the Chesapeake Bay Trust to develop and fund the promotional campaign each year. In FY17, the amount provided to the Trust was \$15,529. This amount is included in the reported department expenditures in object 08 (contractual services).