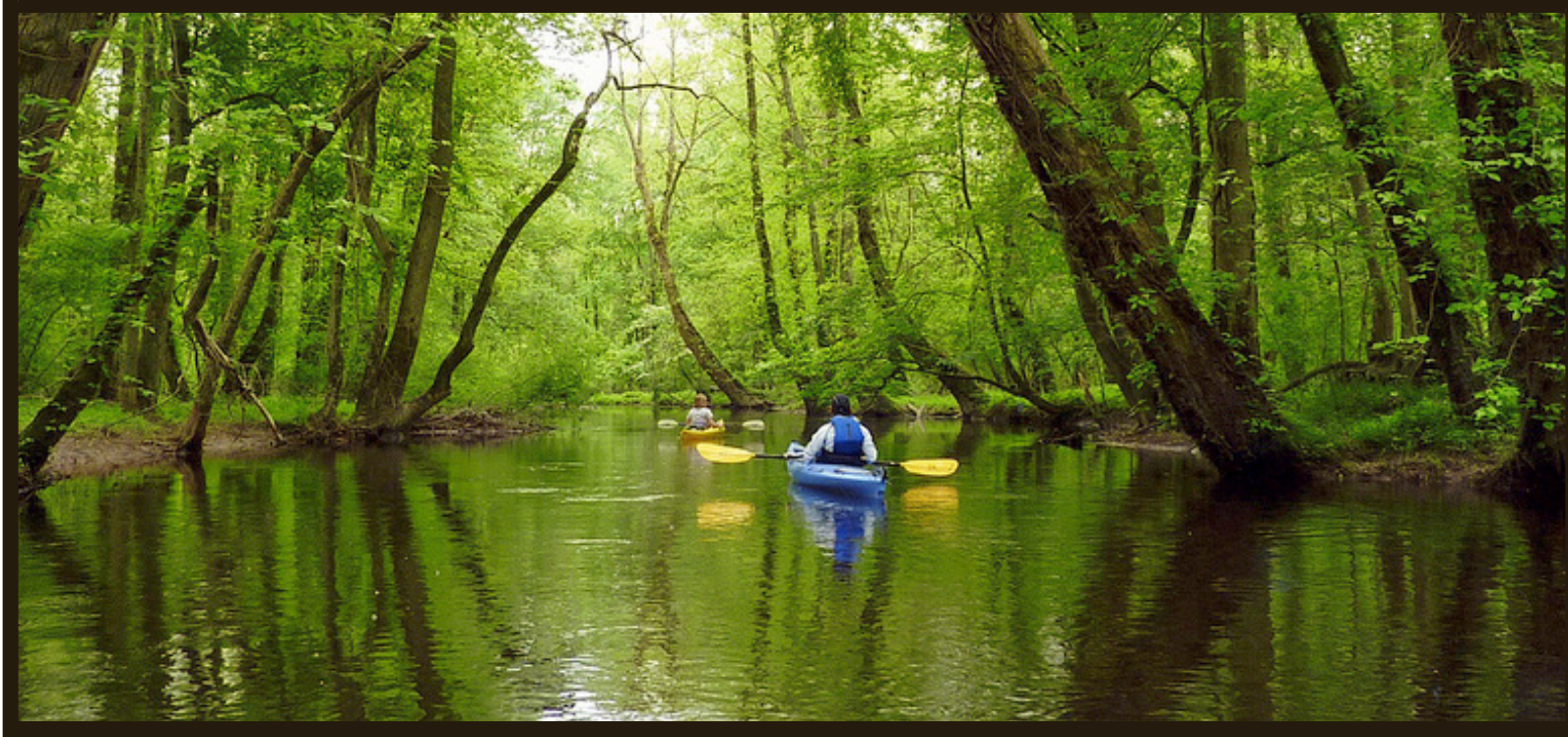


MARYLAND STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN

2015-2025





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Foreword

Wildlife conservation plans, in a broad sense, are important instruments that guide and prioritize activities for wildlife species and their habitats. These plans must take a holistic approach to be effective— considering not only the status of a particular species, but also the entire ecosystem. Planning for the conservation of wildlife also must take into account the needs and values of Maryland’s diverse citizens and industry.

In 2005, Maryland met the challenge of creating a statewide, comprehensive wildlife action plan. *The Wildlife Diversity Conservation Plan* was completed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources with the assistance of the public and partners from many agencies and organizations.

Over the last ten years, some of the tasks identified in the 2005 plan have been completed, and we are privileged to enjoy the benefits of diverse wildlife and healthy habitats in Maryland. Reflecting on our collective accomplishments, we still find that there is much work to be done. Pressures to wildlife still appear in many forms – from the effects of an ever-changing climate to pollution of rivers and streams.

At this 10-year mark, it is time to reassess our wildlife conservation needs, incorporating the information we have learned, the current state of our environment, and the priorities of our citizens. The goal of this state wildlife action plan revision is to continue to work with partners to support Maryland’s wildlife diversity by recovering declining species, maintaining functioning biological systems that support native plants and animals, and preventing common species from being threatened to the point of endangerment; in other words, to keep common species common and prevent any additional species from requiring enhanced protection.

Years of development, planning, and partnerships have resulted in the creation of this plan; one which will guide wildlife conservation in Maryland for the coming decade. Maryland’s borders frame diverse natural systems and species that have great potential for commercial, ecological, educational and recreational activities.

This plan presents information about these species and habitats for use by government agencies, non-profit organizations, schools and universities, private landowners, commercial interests, and – most importantly – Maryland citizens. The plan connects scientific knowledge about species and habitats with known threats, and describes conservation actions that will lead to good stewardship of the state’s natural resources over the next decade.

The efforts of conservation planners and species experts, partner organizations and educational institutions, private and public resource managers, small businesses and industries, and the Maryland public, will ensure that the future of our native plants and animals is bright.

The *2015 Maryland State Wildlife Action Plan* provides a guide for all of us to shape a better and brighter future.



Mark Belton
Secretary
Maryland Department of Natural Resources



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Maryland's State Wildlife Action Plan benefited greatly from the contributions of many partner organizations, species experts, and leaders in conservation. This Plan will be a wealth of information and structure that will guide wildlife conservation over the next ten years thanks to those organizations and individuals who participated in the revision process throughout 2014 and 2015. Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife and Heritage Service coordinated the revision of the Plan, but this effort would not have been a success without the support and guidance of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Northeast Fish and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee. Numerous individuals from local, state, and federal agencies, Native American tribes, non-governmental organizations, industry, and academic institutions provided important input throughout the revision of this document.

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Ultimately, it is the citizens of Maryland who will reap the benefits of the direction of Maryland's State Wildlife Action Plan and it is to them that these efforts are dedicated. The Development Team thanks the citizens of Maryland for their input during the revision process and for the public appreciation of Maryland's wildlife that drives statewide conservation efforts.





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