

The Maryland Envirothon

Wildlife and Heritage Mission & Program Funding

Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Mission

The **mission** of the Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Service is to conserve Maryland's diverse native wildlife, plants and natural communities that support them, using scientific expertise and informed public input. Along with this the Service is charged with:

- ensuring the long term conservation of the full array of native ecosystems, natural communities and species (both animals and plants) that comprise the biological integrity of Maryland.
- helping to educate the residents of Maryland about the laws that protect our natural resources and our citizens, as well as to help educate teachers and students and all Marylanders who are interested in the conservation of our state's natural and hunting heritage.
- Striking the necessary balance between the ecological needs of Maryland's wildlife and heritage resources, and the societal needs and desires of Maryland's citizens.

Maryland Wildlife Program Funding

The majority of funding for Maryland's state wildlife programs comes from hunting licenses and fees and from a special, federal excise tax on sport hunting devices and ammunition. About 70% of Maryland's state budget for wildlife programs comes from these two sources. The federal aid funds are derived from an 11% excise tax on sport hunting devices and ammunition through the Pittman-Robertson Fund. For the past 60 years, sportsmen and women have been contributing to this fund through this excise tax mechanism.

Each state receives a share of the funds, which is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Hunters' dollars are used for hunter education programs, enforcement of wildlife regulations, wildlife-related education programs and conservation programs. Other sources of funds include federal grants and the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund, to which donations are made through the Maryland Income Tax Form.