

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1037 (Delegate Lisanti)
Health and Government Operations

State Designations - State Waterfowl - Canvasback Duck

This bill designates the canvasback duck (*Aythya valisineria*) as the State waterfowl.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Designating a State waterfowl does not affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Maryland State Flag was adopted in 1904 followed by the adoption of the Black-eyed Susan as the State flower in 1918. Since then, the State has adopted many additional official symbols, as shown in **Exhibit 1**. The Governor is also authorized to designate a citizen as the State's Poet Laureate.

As the historical agency for Maryland, the State Archives is the central depository for government records of permanent value, as well as certain designated private records. These records are available to the public for research about topics, including State symbols, on an ongoing basis. The State Archivist may, on request or at the State Archivist's discretion, review, evaluate, and make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding State designations under Title 7 of the General Provisions Article.

Exhibit 1
State Symbols of Maryland

<u>Type</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Statutory Authority</u>
Bird	Baltimore Oriole	Ch. 54 of 1947
Boat	Skipjack	Ch. 788 of 1985
Cat	Calico Cat	Ch. 194 of 2001
Crustacean	Blue Crab	Ch. 724 of 1989
Dessert	Smith Island Cake	Chs. 164/165 of 2008
Dinosaur	<i>Astrodon johnstoni</i>	Chs. 403/404 of 1998
Dog	Chesapeake Bay Retriever	Ch. 156 of 1964
Drink	Milk	Ch. 220 of 1998
Exercise	Walking	Chs. 400/401 of 2008
Fish	Rockfish (Striped Bass)	Ch. 513 of 1965
Flower	Black-eyed Susan	Ch. 458 of 1918
Folk Dance	Square Dance	Ch. 707 of 1994
Fossil Shell	<i>Ecphora gardnerae gardnerae</i>	Ch. 688 of 1994
Gem	Patuxent River Stone	Ch. 272 of 2004
Horse	Thoroughbred Horse	Ch. 359 of 2003
Insect	Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly	Ch. 253 of 1973
Reptile	Diamondback Terrapin	Ch. 476 of 1994
Song	“Maryland, My Maryland”	Ch. 451 of 1939
Sport	Jousting	Ch. 134 of 1962
Team Sport	Lacrosse	Ch. 272 of 2004
Theater	Center Stage	Ch. 1003 of 1978
Theater – Summer	Olney Theatre	Ch. 1003 of 1978
Tree	White Oak	Ch. 731 of 1941

Source: Maryland State Archives

Background: According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the canvasback duck is a large diving duck that breeds in prairie potholes and winters on ocean bays. The canvasback duck has a distinctive sloping profile, and the male has a rusty red head, white body, and black chest and tail.

Maryland, and the Chesapeake Bay in particular, are part of the winter habitat for the canvasback. According to the bill’s preamble, the Chesapeake Bay’s Susquehanna Flats was once the winter home of about half of North America’s canvasback duck population. Their near annihilation by unregulated harvesting helped inspire the U.S. Congress to enact the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which empowered the federal government to set

season and bag limits on the hunting of migratory game birds. The canvasback is one of about 800 species listed in the treaty as of December 3, 2013.

According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, populations of canvasback ducks have fluctuated widely. Low levels in the 1980s put the canvasback on lists of special concern, but numbers increased considerably in the 1990s. As of 2015, the International Union for Conservation of Nature listed the canvasback duck as a species of least concern.

The decline of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) in the Chesapeake Bay, where canvasbacks find wild celery, their principal food supply, has also contributed to the decline in the number of this migratory game bird. A key goal of Maryland's multibillion-dollar commitment to the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort is the return of SAV, a critical prerequisite for growing and sustaining the canvasback population.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Archives, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, International Union for Conservation of Nature, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Legislative Services

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