

The Maryland Department Of Natural Resources
and
The Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission

Annual Maryland Sport Fisheries Achievement Award



Shawn Kimbro
2025 Recipient



Josh Kurtz

Secretary

Department of Natural Resources

Lynn Waller Fegley

Director

Department of Natural Resources,
Fishing and Boating Services

Scott Lenox

Chair

Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission

2025 Award Presentation

October 14, 2025

Shawn Kimbro,

nominated by

David B. Rockland

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Photo by Brenden Felch

“I believe that when people learn how to ethically enjoy our shared natural resources, they inevitably become conservationists and environmentalists. Through my work with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, CCA Maryland, and the many fishing and environmental organizations throughout the state, I’ve met a diverse group of knowledgeable and passionate people who have dedicated their lives to cleaner water and better habitat. For all they do and for all they are teaching me, I am deeply grateful. There is much work ahead, and our mission has only begun.”

- Shawn Kimbro

Nominated by David B. Rockland

I serve on the Board of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay with the nominee, am a former member of the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission (a long time ago), fish the Chesapeake extensively, own a farm outside Centreville, and wrote for many outdoor publications including Saltwater Sportsman, Field&Stream and Outdoor life. It is my pleasure to nominate Shawn Kimbro who has provided sustained efforts in habitat management, conservation, angler education, and promoting Maryland recreational fishing.

Shawn became active in Chesapeake watershed conservation efforts in 2006 when he began writing articles about catch & release ethics for local and regional periodicals. His careful catch and release techniques were recognized by the Washington Post in an article that was syndicated to newspapers nationally. This kicked off a nearly two decades of conservation and environmental advocacy. Shawn published his first book, An Introduction to Chesapeake Light Tackle, in 2013. The popular book sparked transformative interest in conservation-minded fishing techniques in Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay. Based on his online blogs and social media postings, it teaches the innovative light tackle techniques he has acquired over his 60 plus years of fishing. Looking out for the fish and improving their Chesapeake Bay habitat is a frequent theme in Shawn’s writing and especially in the chapter called, “Giving Something Back” in which he writes, “The most important thing we can do is lead by example.”

Shawn has led by example in 2011 as he worked to revive the “Careful Catch” program. With sponsorship by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Department of Natural Resources, the program educated anglers on all aspects of catch and release fishing and promoted the use of circle hooks when fishing with bait. While championing the Careful Catch program, Shawn spoke to thousands of anglers when he visited fishing clubs, conservation organizations, boat shows, and other outdoors related events. The theme of his talks was “good for the fish and good for the fisherman.” Circle hooks were subsequently mandated in Maryland, and they have been accepted by the fishing community as an invaluable conservation tool.

Shawn is currently the longest-standing member of the board of directors for the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. He was introduced to the organization after attending a Project Clean Stream cleanup on the Eastern Shore. He was impressed by the Alliance mission to put politics aside and bring together communities, companies, and conservationists who work toward upstream solutions for a cleaner Chesapeake Bay. During his tenure, Shawn has led efforts to implement sustainable agricultural practices, plant new forests to filter pollutants, promote homeowner initiatives, manage stream restoration projects, and facilitate thousands of community stream cleanup events.

In 2021, Shawn worked on an award-winning short-format fishing documentary produced by The Braker Brothers called *A Journey Upstream*. Focusing on the connectivity of clean water habitat to two pivotal Maryland fish, brook trout and striped bass, Shawn makes

the point that everyone has a responsibility to give back for the privilege of great fishing. The film was selected by the Fly-Fishing Film Tour where it showcased Maryland’s diverse recreational fishing to audiences across the country and around the world.

In 2022, Shawn joined three others to propose then create the first state-wide fly-fishing trail in the nation. The Maryland Fly Fishing Trail was accepted by the Maryland Department of Tourism and promoted by the Department of Natural Resources. Shawn went to work identifying and writing descriptions of the 48 trail sites, two in every Maryland County and in Baltimore City. During the selection process and with the goal of promoting local businesses, he contacted nearly every fly-fishing guide and tackle shop in the state. The Trail now provides a unique opportunity to encounter a diverse range of Maryland angling experiences, from brook trout fishing in the western rivers, to striped bass angling in the Chesapeake Bay, to billfishing off Maryland’s Atlantic coast.

Shawn continues to promote Maryland fishing and to improve habitat, educate anglers, and conserve our natural fin-fish resources. In addition to Chesapeake Light Tackle, he has written two additional books including *The Right Stuff – Gear and Attitudes for Trophy Light Tackle Fishing*, and *How to Catch Chesapeake Panfish*. All his books promote ethical fishing and habitat conservation. He has served on both the National and State boards of the Coastal Conservation Association and he has written articles for *The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership*. He has served as a proxy on the Sports Fishing Advisory Council and worked with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission on the management of shad and river herring. He continues to serve on the board of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay where he recently participated in the creation of a strategic plan that focuses on equity in clean water outcomes and seeks to involve diverse communities across the watershed to achieve healthier habitat.

Shawn maintains his efforts to educate anglers on conservation and environmental issues as the host of the Annapolis Wild & Scenic Film Festival. He produces a popular online fishing video series, and he volunteers his musical talents for conservation benefits and community events. He contributes articles for the Fish & Hunt Maryland website, and he is a frequent speaker to conservation groups and environmental organizations. When he isn’t fishing, he collects and preserves antique Chesapeake Bay fishing equipment and related angling artifacts. He lives on Kent Island where he enjoys hosting an environmentally oriented book club called “Good Earth, Clean Water.”

Maryland Sport Fisheries Achievement Award

Past Recipients

2020 - Dr. Kenneth Lewis

2020 - Benard 'Lefty' Kreh (posthumous)

2021 - Robert Wall

2021 - Joseph W. Brooks (posthumous)

2022 - Captain Bruno Vasta

2022 - James 'Jim' Gracie (posthumous)

2023 - Captain Monty Hawkins

2024 - Dr. Ray Morgan

2025 - Shawn Kimbro

Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission

The commission was established to advise the Maryland Department of Natural Resources on sport fisheries-related matters referred to the commission by the department. The commission is comprised of individuals from across the State who represent the interests of various constituencies in recreational fisheries and one member represents the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission.

The Maryland Sport Fisheries Achievement Award was established in 2019 by the commission for Maryland-related recreational fisheries. This prestigious award recognizes individuals who have provided sustained efforts in habitat management, conservation, education, research, and / or other meaningful contributions that benefit fish and recreational fishing in Maryland. The award is a celebration of conservation, education, and sportsmanship. Thank you to all in attendance today and thank you to all nominators for submitting nominations representing individuals from around the State.



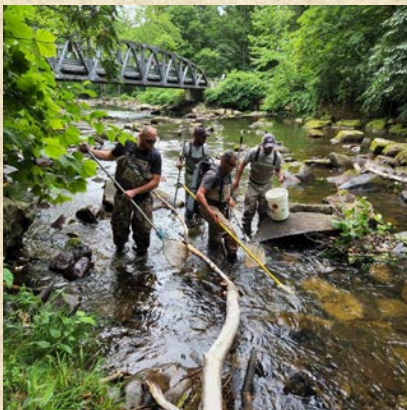
The Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Inspired by nature and rooted in science to improve and grow stewardship for Maryland's natural resources.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources leads the state toward a resilient future by using data, partnerships, and an innovative spirit to improve ecological, social, and economic outcomes for all Marylanders.

Objectives

- Sustainable Populations of Living Resources and Aquatic Habitat
- Healthy Maryland Watershed Lands, Streams and Non-Tidal Rivers
- Natural Resources Stewardship Opportunities for Maryland's Urban and Rural Citizens
- Conserved and Managed Statewide Network of Ecologically Valuable Private and Public Lands
- Diverse Outdoor Recreation Opportunities for Maryland Citizens and Visitors
- Diverse Workforce and Efficient Operations



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