

## **What are stronghold watersheds?**

Stronghold watersheds are those watersheds in the state that are most important for the protection of Maryland's aquatic biodiversity. Stronghold watersheds are the places where rare, threatened, or endangered freshwater fish, amphibians, reptiles, or mussel species have the highest numbers (abundance and number of occurrences). Special protection of these watersheds is necessary to ensure the persistence of these imperiled fauna.

## **What is aquatic biodiversity?**

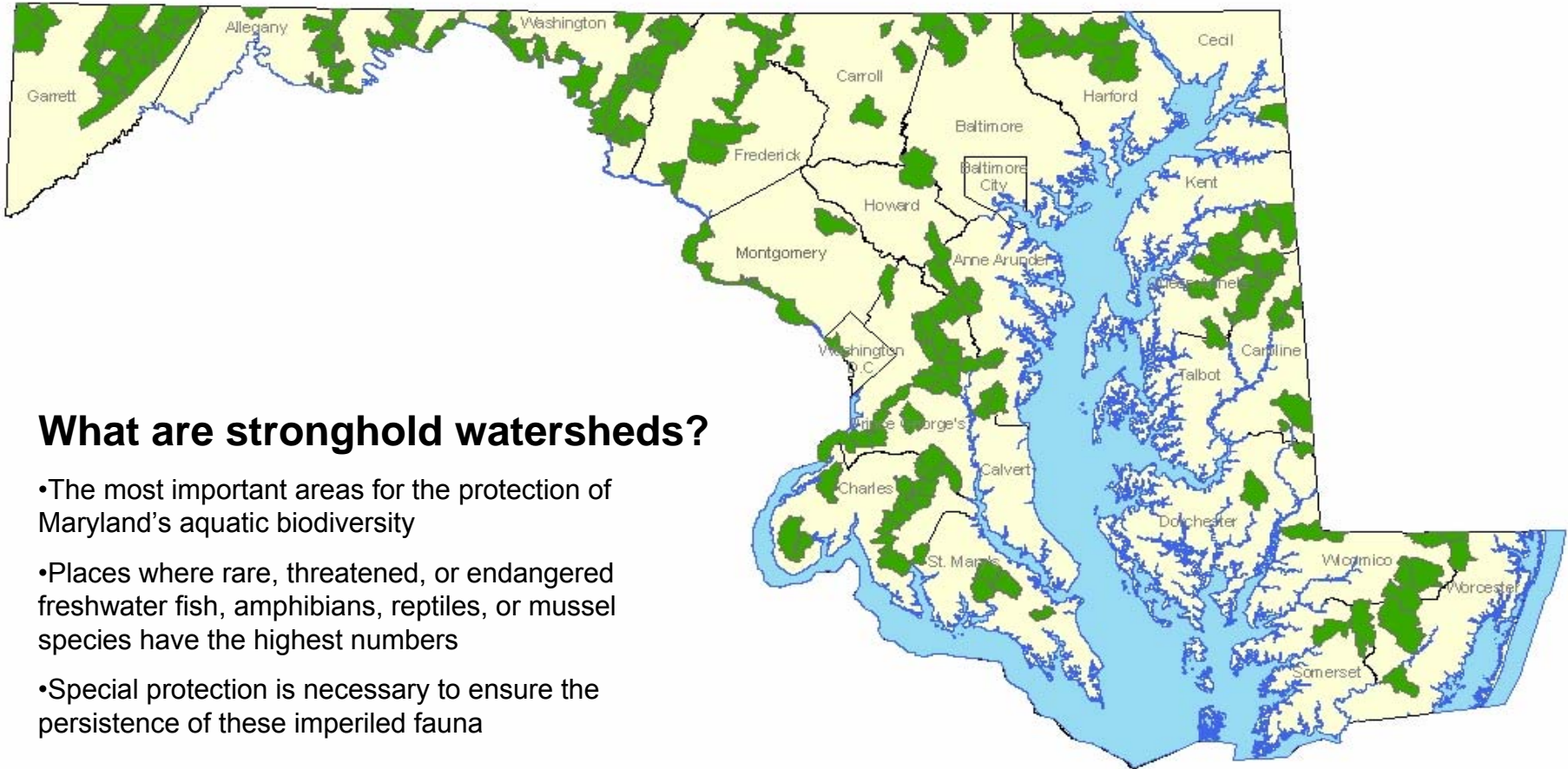
Aquatic biodiversity is a term that describes the many unique species that live in Maryland's waters.

## **Why are rare, threatened, and endangered species important?**

These species are those that are at the greatest risk of extirpation (local extinction). Once they are gone, recovery is likely not possible. Generally, these species are the most sensitive species to environmental degradation. A small change in watershed condition can permanently eliminate one or more of these sensitive species.



# The Stronghold Watersheds of Maryland



## What are stronghold watersheds?

- The most important areas for the protection of Maryland's aquatic biodiversity
- Places where rare, threatened, or endangered freshwater fish, amphibians, reptiles, or mussel species have the highest numbers
- Special protection is necessary to ensure the persistence of these imperiled fauna

For more information on Stronghold Watersheds or for maps that can be used for land use and watershed planning, contact Scott Stranko ([sstranko@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:sstranko@dnr.state.md.us)), Andy Becker ([abecker@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:abecker@dnr.state.md.us)), or visit our website at: <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/streams/mbss/> or call us at 1-877-620-8DNR x8605

