The rivers and marshes around Delaware City provided the ideal habitat for fishes, waterfowl and muskrats. In the 1800s, local residents thought this wildlife would always be available and abundant.

The harvesting of fish and birds in excessive numbers put populations at risk. Serious pollution in the Delaware River reinforced the downward trend. The annual springtime spawning runs of sturgeon, shad, and herring became increasingly precarious.

Finally, the passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 largely put an end to the hunting that had harvested hundreds of thousands of birds annually. Today the State of Delaware protects much of the marshland around Delaware City as state parks and wildlife areas.

**Sources:** Delaware City—Port of History, Delaware City Historic District National Register Nomination; Delaware Public Archives; Federal Writers’ Project—Delaware, William P. Frank, News Journal, 1979; Port Penn Area Historical Society; Bruce Stutz, Natural Lives—Modern Times, People and Places of the Delaware River.