



PAINT CREEK LAKE WILDLIFE AREA

Highland and Ross Counties

DISTANCE FROM MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS

54 miles from Columbus

69 miles from Cincinnati

55 miles from Dayton

54 miles from Springfield

154 miles from Akron-Canton

174 miles from Cleveland

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Paint Creek Lake Wildlife Area is located in southwest Ohio, at the south edge of Greenfield on the Paint Creek fork and the southeast edge of Centerfield on the Rattlesnake fork of Paint Creek Lake. State Routes 138 and 753 bisect the Rattlesnake fork approximately 15 miles east of Hillsboro. The area may be reached by turning north off U.S. 50 onto State Route 753 or onto Rapid Forge Road in Ross County.

The 5,090-acre wildlife area lies at the upper end of Paint Creek Lake, a flood control reservoir operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In summer, the reservoir is normally 1,170 acres with 25 miles of shoreline. During periods of heavy rainfall, the reservoir covers portions of the wildlife area that are normally dry. Paint Creek State Park, 5,934 acres, lies south of the wildlife area on both sides of the reservoir.

Meadow and grain crops make up about one-third of the wildlife area. The remainder of the wildlife area is about equally divided in woodland and reverting fields of shrubs, small trees, grasses, and forbs.

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

Paint Creek Reservoir was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for flood control and recreation. It was completed in 1974. Of the 9,179 acres licensed to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, 5,090 acres are managed by the Division of Wildlife for public hunting and fishing. The remainder of the area is managed by the Division of Parks and Recreation. State parks have special hunting and trapping regulations. Consult the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation, Fountain Square, Columbus, Ohio 43224 or the park manager.

Wildlife area habitat management work has included development of crop rotations and field sizes to provide food and cover for upland wildlife. Wildlife habitat has been enhanced by planting trees and shrubs to establish field dividers, improving existing fencerows through selective cutting, and protecting and improving woodlands.

FISH AND WILDLIFE

Bobwhite quail, ring-necked pheasant, cottontail rabbit, white-tailed deer, fox and gray squirrels, and groundhogs are the major game species. Common furbearers are raccoon, opossum, muskrat, mink, weasel, skunk, red fox, and gray fox. Waterfowl are most common during migration and good numbers of wood duck's nest and rear their broods on this area each spring and summer. A variety of songbirds can be found on the area.

Largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass, white and black crappies, bluegills, catfish, sunfish, suckers, and carp are found in the lake. The fishery has developed from the resident fish population in the main streams. Saugeye were stocked in 1982.

HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND FISHING

Paint Creek is popular for hunting rabbits and squirrels, both of which are found throughout the area. Squirrel hunting is best for gray squirrels in the larger stands of mature woodland and for fox squirrels in the smaller woodlots, along the streams, and in woody fencerows. Rabbits and groundhogs can be found throughout the area. Waterfowl hunting is available on the reservoir and the streams coming into the reservoir. Deer hunting is good throughout the area.

Trapping is most productive around pond areas and along the streams running into the reservoir.

Crappies and bluegills are taken around brush and in tops of fallen trees throughout the lake. Largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass are taken along the shoreline, around stumps, logs, and large limestone rocks. Catfish, sunfish, and carp are taken throughout the lake. Several low-level rock dams were constructed below the dam and all species are taken in this tailwater fishery.

PUBLIC USE FACILITIES

Several parking areas are distributed throughout the wildlife area. Two canoe launching areas are available along Rattlesnake Creek. Two boat ramps with sanitary facilities, picnic facilities, and drinking water are located on the lake. A camping area is located off Taylor Road on the east side of the lake. A pioneer farm is located on the west side of the lake. An overlook, a playground, and picnic and fishing areas are located below and around the dam area, managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Further information may be obtained from the Wildlife District Five Office, 1076 Old Springfield Pike, Xenia, Ohio 45385; telephone (937) 372-9261.

TURN IN A POACHER

Ohio's TIP, "Turn In a Poacher," program is helping to curtail poaching throughout the state. TIP is designed to involve the public in reporting wildlife violations. Citizens who observe wildlife violations should call the TIP toll-free hotline, 1-800-POACHER.