

# Wild Ohio

Fall 2006

M A G A Z I N E

Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



Harold Roe  
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*We are dedicated to conserving and improving the fish and wildlife resources and their habitats, and promoting their use and appreciation by the people so that these resources continue to enhance the quality of life for all Ohioans.*

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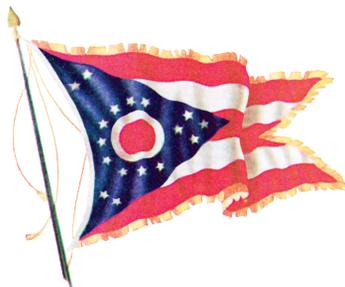
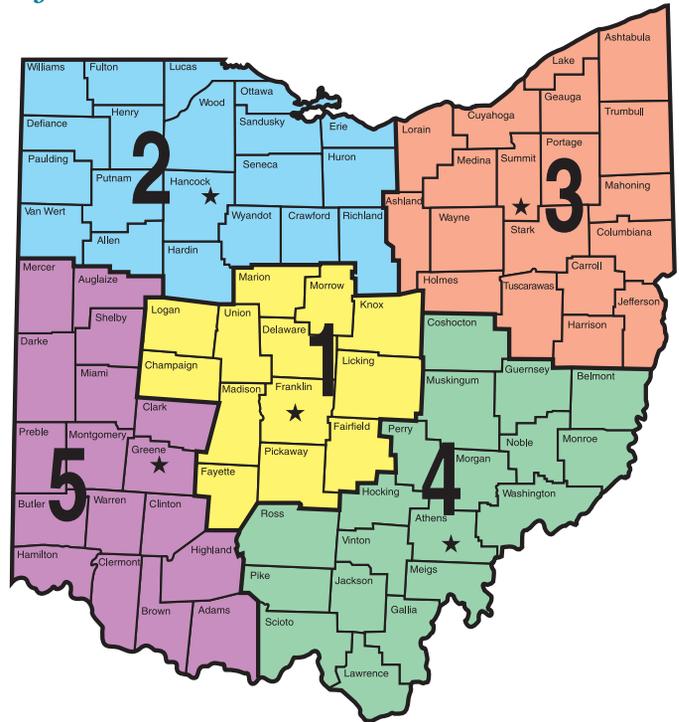
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**Wildlife CALENDAR**

- September 1** Opening day of hunting season, squirrel, early Canada goose, dove, rail, moorhen, and snipe.
- September 8-10** Ohio State Trappers Assoc. Convention, Auglaize County Fairgrounds, Wapakoneta, Ohio. Visit [www.ohiostatetrapper.org](http://www.ohiostatetrapper.org).
- September 23** National Hunting and Fishing Day, For more information call (203) 426-1320 or go to [www.nhfd.org](http://www.nhfd.org).
- September 23-24** Lake Erie Waterfowlers Festival, Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, Ottawa County, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., (419) 898-0960, ext. 31.

For more statewide events log onto <http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife/calendar>.

# Wild Ohio

M A G A Z I N E

Fall 2006 Volume 17, Number 3



## Features

### Ohio Hosts Ducks on the Move

6-7

Ohio may not be a major duck factory, but serves as a very valuable stopover for migrating waterfowl.



### Catching the Non-Traditional Bite in Ohio Reservoirs

8-9

As fall approaches many sportsmen turn their thoughts to hunting, while a number of crappie fishing enthusiasts cash in on some excellent fall fishing.



### In the Kitchen with the Wild Game Gourmet

10-11

Wild Ohio magazine takes readers inside the kitchen of Wild Ohio TV's popular "Wild Game Gourmet."



### Families Afield

12-13

The Mentoring Way for New Hunters and Trappers  
The new apprentice hunting license allows new hunters and trappers to sample the experience before completing a hunter or trapper education course.



### 2006-2007 Ohio Hunting Regulations

14-15

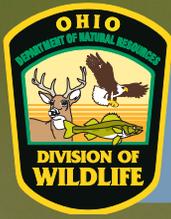
## Departments

### On the Cover:

The cover artwork of mallards taking flight titled "Busting Out," was painted by Ohio wildlife artist Harold Roe. The renown wildlife artist is a four-time winner of the Ohio Wetlands Habitat Duck Stamp Competition and named International Artist of the Year by Ducks Unlimited.



Watchable Wildlife	<i>American kestrel</i>	4
Wild Things		16
Outdoor Skills	<i>Hunting Accord</i>	18
Wildlife Law Enforcement	<i>Field Notes</i>	19
Backyards for Wildlife	<i>Q &amp; A</i>	20
For Wild Kids	<i>Saturday Morning Wildlife</i>	21
Wild Game Gourmet	<i>Wild turkey and dove</i>	22
Wildlife Reflections	<i>The Birthday Present</i>	23



# Ohio's watchable wildlife



## **KESTRELS** **AT A GLANCE**

**MATING:**  
Monogamous

**PEAK BREEDING ACTIVITY:**  
Late February-late March

**INCUBATION PERIOD:**  
29 to 31 days

**NUMBER OF EGGS:**  
3 to 6

**YOUNG HATCH:**  
Generally in late April  
or early May

**EGGS PRODUCED:**  
Once a year, but they will  
re nest if the first nest is  
destroyed. (There are reports  
of second broods following a  
successful first nesting.)

**ADULT WEIGHT:**  
Males - 3 to 5 ounces;  
Females - 3 to 5.8 ounces

**ADULT LENGTH:**  
Males - 8.75 to 10.5 inches  
wingspan - 22.5 to 24 inches

**LIFE EXPECTANCY:**  
15 months

## Watchable Wildlife

## • Hovering

story and photos by Tim Daniel

When some hear the word falcon an image of a large, high-speed bird of prey enters their mind: A fierce bird that can dive over 200 miles per hour and nests on rocky cliffs or skyscrapers. But not all falcons fit that stereotype. Despite the fact that it is the smallest North American falcon, the American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) is nonetheless striking to observe, whether it is suspended in mid-air while searching for prey or perched on a thin branch or telephone wire.

The population of American kestrels in Ohio increased in the 1800s as the land was cleared for agricultural uses. Nowadays, they can be found in all of Ohio's 88 counties; however, they are less numerous in the intensively farmed areas of the state because of the lack of suitable nesting habitat and prey. These petite predators are widely distributed, but fairly common winter residents in Ohio.

The kestrel is about the size of a blue jay and can be identified by a reddish-brown back and vertical black stripe called a

mustache on both sides of its head. The male's crown is blue-gray with a reddish patch. The female's crown is similar to the male's but paler. The slate-blue wings easily identify the males while the female's wings are a darker brown. This species has a swallow-like flight pattern until prey is spotted; then it hovers with wings beating rapidly before descending on its prey. The catch is taken to a perch where it is torn apart by a hooked-shaped bill. After feeding, this falcon will sit erect on a perch, usually a tree snag, bush, fence post, or wire.

The diet of these avian predators consists primarily of large insects like grasshoppers, along with small mammals including field mice, voles, and shrews. Occasionally, they will take a bird, hence the old time name of sparrow hawk. During the nesting season, the male of this species has been known to store food in grassy clumps for future use.

The species is monogamous, but they may not remain with their mate during the winter. The male will generally return to



## *Along the Highway; The American Kestrel*

their nesting area first and begin to set up territories. Females join them a few days later and pre-nesting behavior begins. In Ohio, pairs may begin courtship displays as soon as late February.

Kestrels are unique in that they are our only cavity nesting hawk. That means they need either trees that are mature enough to have developed rotted hollows or old woodpecker holes, or man-made structures such as barns in which to build their nests. They are an adaptable species and will also readily use nest boxes erected near good foraging habitat. The nest box hole should face east and it's recommended that it be between 10 and 30 feet from the ground. Once a suitable nesting location has been found, the female will lay three to five eggs that will take about a month to hatch. It will typically take the young another month to fledge and begin to hunt on their own.

### **VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES**

As you drive along Ohio's roads and highways you have a good chance to see these little falcons. They often perch on telephone wires and utility poles near open grassland habitat. State wildlife areas that provide habitat attractive to these birds include Killdeer Plains, Deer Creek, and Delaware wildlife areas. Viewing opportunities are best in the summer and winter except in the northeastern snowbelt area of the state. Spring migrants can also be seen along the western shore of Lake Erie. Photo by Bill Bosstic.



# Ohio Hosts Ducks on the Move

by Dave Sherman



Every fall thousands of ducks stream south over Ohio's skies. These birds are in the middle of a long journey that may last another month or two. As duck hunters and bird watchers witness the high flights of birds passing overhead, many avian enthusiasts wonder exactly where these birds came from and where they are headed.

Wildlife biologists have been working to solve the mysteries of migration for over 100 years in North America. In 1902, Dr. Paul Bartsch of the Smithsonian Institution was the first to use a systematic and scientific system to analyze bird banding data. Many biologists followed in Bartsch's footsteps; however, Frederick C. Lincoln of the U.S. Biological Survey was the most influential in establishing the basis of North America's banding program.

After several years of banding waterfowl, biologists learned that ducks and geese use migratory corridors to go between their breeding grounds in the north to their wintering grounds in the south. In addition, biologists also learned how long birds live, the probability that a bird survives from

one year to the next, and population trends of various species. (As part of a cooperative program among states in the Midwest, the Division of Wildlife annually bands about 1,200 wood ducks every year to determine their population trends.)



Ohioans can support programs that benefit waterfowl and their habitat by purchasing state wetland habitat stamps and federal duck stamps.

In Ohio, hunters and birders report about 550 duck bands a year with over 90 percent of those bands coming from mallards, black ducks, wood ducks,

and blue-winged teal. Since 1921, over 21,000 duck bands have been recovered in Ohio with over 80 percent of those bands reported by hunters. The remaining bands are reported by biologists when they recapture banded birds and by people who find ducks that have been killed by cars, predators, or other means. The number of reported bands has dramatically increased since people can now report bands either by phone (1-800-327-BAND) or the internet (<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/default.htm>).

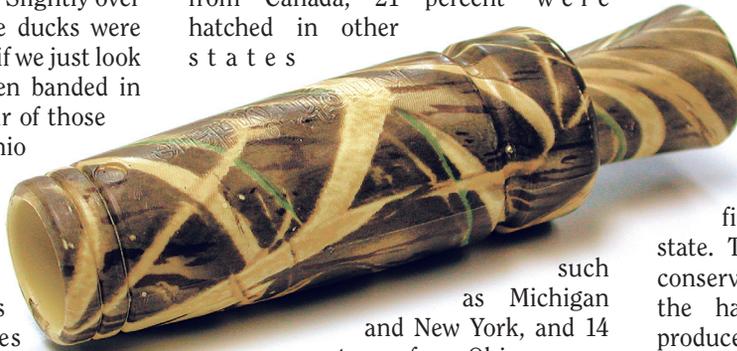
Having over 21,000 band returns at your disposal would seem like more than enough information to determine the origin of ducks passing through Ohio; however, biologists can't use all of the banding data when trying to determine where ducks are hatched. They only use ducks that were banded as ducklings or as young birds before the ducks start their first fall migration. Ducks that are banded after their first fall migration can be used to calculate survival and general movements, but there is no way to determine where the bird was hatched, so those band returns are not used.

Mallards are the number one duck in the waterfowler's bag, so it's no surprise that we have more band returns for them (12,000) than all other ducks combined. Since we have so many mallard band returns, we looked at only the mallards that were banded as ducklings, which was 343. Slightly over half (57 percent) of these ducks were banded in Ohio. However, if we just look at mallards that have been banded in the last 20 years, only four of those birds were hatched in Ohio while 26 were hatched in Canada, and 27 were hatched elsewhere in the United States.

Changing landscapes and agricultural practices may have contributed to the reduction in the number of ducklings produced and subsequently banded in Ohio. In addition, a reduced effort to band mallards in Ohio may also have contributed to the reduction of Ohio banded mallards. While an average of 13 ducklings were banded each year prior to 1985, on average only three ducklings were banded per year after 1985.

Black duck recoveries in Ohio are a distant second to the mallard with

slightly less than 4,000 bands reported. Since there were such a small number of total band recoveries, we used both duckling and immature ducks to examine black duck origins. Of the 441 band recoveries used, we found that 65 percent of the black ducks originated from Canada, 21 percent were hatched in other states



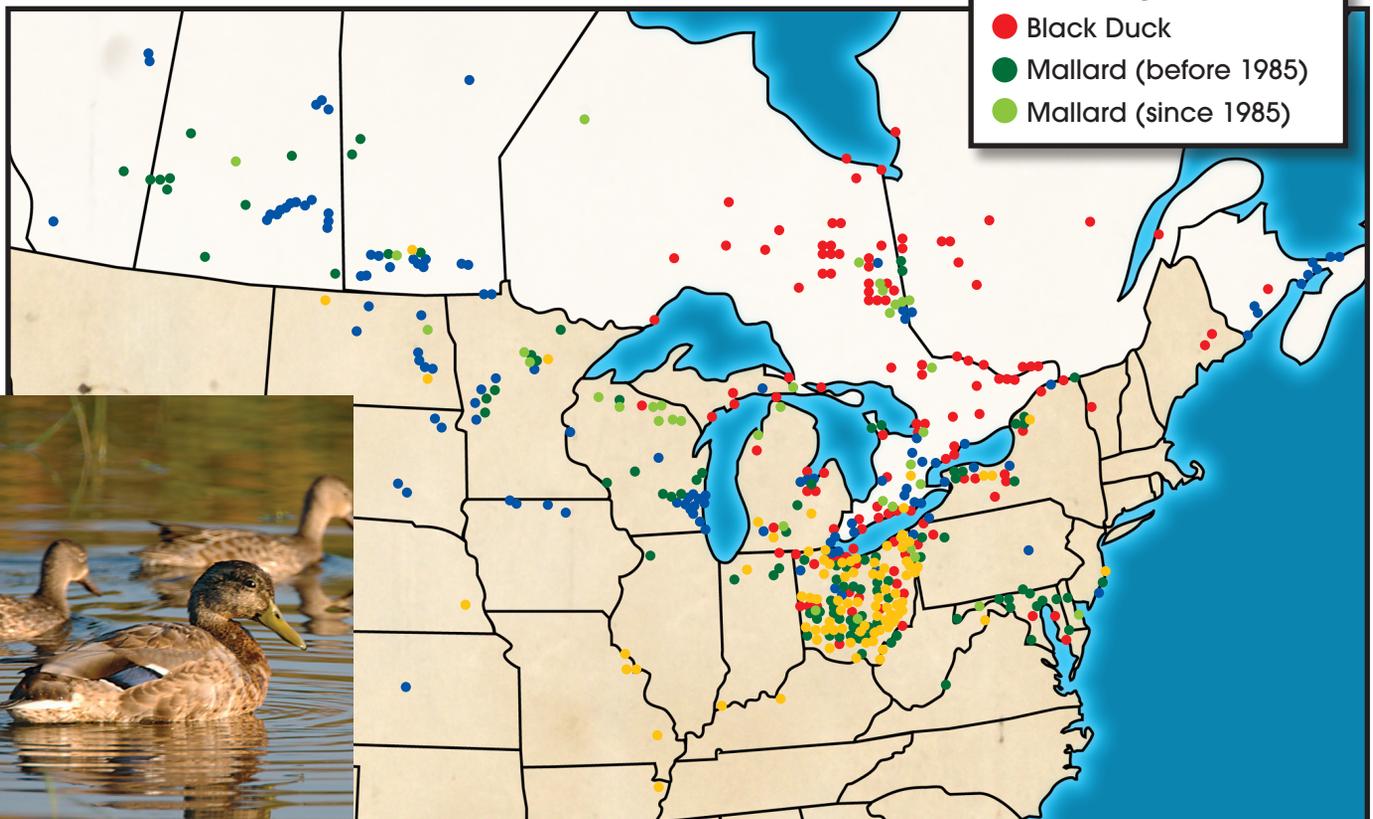
such as Michigan and New York, and 14 percent were from Ohio.

Wood ducks are the second most popular bird taken by Ohio duck hunters, thus we have a fair number of banded wood ducks recovered in Ohio (3,480 recoveries). Of those, nearly 700 were banded as ducklings or immature birds. We found that over 90 percent of the woodies recovered in Ohio hatched here in the Buckeye State.

The blue-winged teal is the last duck that we examined for hatching origins, and we had a very small sample size with

only 611 recoveries reported in Ohio. Only 217 of these teal were banded as ducklings or young birds before their first migration, and nearly half of these were hatched in the prairie pothole region of the Dakotas and southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

As the maps show, other than wood ducks, Ohio does not produce a lot of ducks, but it is extremely important as a migration stopover. Ducks naturally funnel through the marshes of Lake Erie and filter throughout the rest of the state. To that end, it's important for conservationists to work to preserve the habitat where the ducks are produced – mainly in Canada and the eastern states. This is why the Division of Wildlife partners with conservation organizations such as Ducks Unlimited to help conserve and enhance the valuable nesting habitat in these areas. Ardent duck fans can help these birds by buying the state wetland habitat stamp or the federal duck stamp. An Ohio Wetland Stamp can be purchased at any license outlet; the federal Duck Stamp is available at most U.S. Post Offices.



# Catching the Non-Traditional Bite in Ohio Reservoirs

Cooler temperatures, shorter days, and turning leaves are not what most anglers consider signs that excellent crappie fishing is just around the corner. But as summer turns to fall and many sportsmen turn their thoughts to hunting squirrels, rabbits, or deer, a number of crappie die-hards are cashing in on excellent fishing in Ohio's lakes and reservoirs, and you can too.

**"you might  
find yourself  
hooked by this  
non-traditional  
bite!"**

"Last year I did good right up to two days after Thanksgiving," said James Grachek, a crappie enthusiast from northern Ohio. "You won't take home buckets of fish like you do during spawning time, but 10 to 12 big crappie can be caught during each outing." What Grachek and other avid crappie anglers know is that consistently catching late-season crappie is about location, timing, and some very simple presentations of lures or bait. Key in on each of these and you might have steady crappie action all to yourself.

# Autum n Crappie

## AUTUMN CRAPPIE

### Location, Location, Location...

Location is important. Late-season crappie are likely to be found near good cover such as fallen trees, artificial structure, or other stick-ups, similar to the types of cover they frequent in spring. However, the best cover to fish during spring is not necessarily the best during fall. On fall outings, look for cover with immediate access to deeper waters instead of those shallow spawning bays that you checked last April or May. In particular, check cover near sloping points, outside bends of creek channels, steep shorelines adjacent to creek channels, or cover near deeper water. Moving offshore a bit and checking drop-offs near these areas can pay off, too. A less traditional area that also is worth a try is the spillway where moving water may attract and concentrate crappie. Spillways can often be easy to fish from shore and they can be surprisingly productive.

## AUTUMN CRAPPIE

### The Right Timing...

Consider starting your fall crappie hunt during early October. "Lakes and reservoirs have usually "turned-over" by this time of the year, becoming uniform in temperature and oxygen from top to bottom and this can put crappie on the move," says Rich Zweifel, fisheries biologist with the Division of Wildlife's Inland Fisheries Research Unit. "This is why we choose early October through November as the time to survey crappie populations in our reservoirs." Anglers also should expect overcast days to out produce bright days and late afternoon until dark to be the best times, particularly on reservoirs with clear water.

## AUTUMN CRAPPIE

### Final Steps to Hookups

With the locations and time narrowed down, three effective yet simple methods of catching fall crappie will help put fish in the cooler. These include jig casting, long-pole dabbling, and trolling. Jig casting with light spinning or spin-cast tackle and six- to eight-pound test line is the most popular method. Cast 1/16- or 1/32-ounce jigs to likely spots to actively search for crappie during

early fall. Light jigs allow for a slow and enticing drop, producing solid strikes. Size can be important, too. "I never go above the two-inch size for plastic grub bodies to prevent short strikes," remarked Grachek. Other simple, time-tested tricks can increase the odds as well. Some anglers will try a jig with a spinner or add a spinner when water conditions are a bit turbid or churned up. Also try fishing the jig below a float to give extra casting distance on windy days or to control the depth of the jig. Or spice up your presentation with a little extra flash. "Jig bodies with metal flakes produce more fish for me, maybe because the reflection they give off in the water as they swim," added Grachek.



Another proven technique is long-pole dabbling. Long-pole dabbling involves using a 10- to 14-foot telescopic pole to position a jig, minnow, or jig and minnow combination to thoroughly fish areas when crappie are tight to cover or less active. The same small jigs that are effective for casting will do the trick for long-pole dabbling, but the approach is slower and more meticulous. Take advantage of the long pole to present the bait near likely spots. Once positioned, slowly lower the jig or minnow a few inches at a time along cover, pause

before lowering it more, and move and repeat to thoroughly cover an area. As water temperatures continue to drop, long-pole dabbling will out produce jig casting and can be effective right until ice forms.

Trolling is a less traditional method of catching crappie, but can be very effective. Using an electric motor or paddling a small boat to slowly troll mini-crankbaits is an excellent way to locate groups of fish or make good catches on otherwise slow days. Trolling does, however, require slightly heavier tackle. Ten-pound test will help prevent losing lures when snags are encountered and fishing two rods per angler will up the odds of finding fish. The popularity of small porta-boats and kayaks has

increased the number of anglers interested in trolling small reservoirs for crappie and other fish, and their success has kept them at it.

Crappie population and creel surveys conducted by the Division of Wildlife indicate that excellent catches of 8- to 12-inch crappie can be expected in a number of lakes and reservoirs around the state this fall. Top spots include long-time favorites like Delaware Lake, Hoover Reservoir, Pleasant Hill Reservoir, Clear Fork Reservoir, Atwood Lake, Deer Creek Reservoir, Seneca Lake, Grand Lake St. Mary's, and Cowan Lake. In addition, many upground reservoirs in northwest Ohio provide not only good crappie fishing, but excellent shoreline access, including Findlay #2, Harrison, and the Norwalk reservoirs.

Anglers should be aware of special regulations at some areas. Six reservoirs have nine-inch minimum length limits, including Delaware Reservoir, Alum Creek Lake, Deer Creek Lake, Tappan Lake, Seneca Lake, and Caesar Creek Lake. Most areas do not have daily creel limits, with the exception of Killdeer Plains, Oxbow Lake, and the St. Joseph River wildlife area lakes where keeping 10 fish per day is the limit.

Autumn will be here before you know it so why not add a late-season crappie trip or two to your list of outdoor adventures this year. You might find yourself hooked by this non-traditional bite!

# In the Kitchen with the Wild Game Gourmet

by Melissa Hathaway



Guest chef Dan Schneider, the Division's law enforcement administrator, prepares his favorite pheasant.



Associate Producer Vicki Ervin downloads digital photos of wild game recipes for posting on the Division's Website.

One of the most popular regular features on the Division of Wildlife's *Wild Ohio* TV show is the "Wild Game Gourmet." Vicki Mountz, host and executive producer, has been the Wild Game Gourmet since the show was created 10 years ago. The Division's popular chef is recognized all across Ohio for her creative wild game dishes prepared on the show.

"When the *Wild Ohio* TV show was first produced, the "Wild Game Gourmet" was run from time to time as a special feature," said Mountz. "After realizing how popular the segments were with our viewers, we decided to make it a regular feature on the show. Most people that hunt like to prepare wild game. And you'd be surprised at the number of men who like to cook wild game and want to share it with their family and friends."

Prior to working with the Division of Wildlife, Mountz syndicated columns on cooking wild game and fish for a number of hunting and fishing magazines and conducted cooking seminars at sport

shows. "I've loved to cook since I was a kid and I am an avid hunter so I was always trying to adapt recipes. If you're going to hunt, you need to find ways to cook the game that you and others will enjoy."

Mountz suggests that all cooking should involve a lot of experimenting, especially wild game. If you have a favorite recipe for chicken, try preparing it with wild turkey, or substitute venison in a beef recipe. But also adapt recipes to suit your own taste. "I watch the Food Network all the time and have a large collection of recipe books. I am constantly altering recipes to make them my own, not just by substituting with wild game or fish, but changing some of the other ingredients as well. You can always adapt a recipe for you or your family by substituting with your favorite ingredients such as herbs and vegetables."

## WILD GAME GOURMET "Lights, Camera, Cook"

The "Wild Game Gourmet" segments are usually filmed in Mountz's own

kitchen. "I knew it would be easier to film the show from my own home because I know what kind of cooking utensils, pots and pans, seasonings, and serving dishes I have on hand. When filming elsewhere, we had to travel with a lot of cooking equipment and gear or assume the location had the equipment needed to prepare the meal being filmed. When my husband and I bought this house, we needed to remodel the kitchen anyway so I asked him to design a kitchen that would work for taping the show. He's very handy so I now have a kitchen that accommodates cameras and more than one cook."

Only rarely does Mountz need to ask others for the game or fish for filming the TV show. Mountz always has plenty of venison on hand because she and her husband are both avid deer hunters. As a hunter and angler, she usually has easy access to many other kinds of game and fish as well. Many times Vicki invites guest chefs to join her on the show and the guest chefs often provide their own game. "I generally try to invite a guest



Wild Ohio TV host and editor Skip Trask films a segment of the "Wild Game Gourmet."



The Wild Game Gourmet Vicki Mountz prepares venison burgers during a filming session of the "Wild Game Gourmet."

chef that I know has a particular passion, such as an avid bluegill fishermen or enthusiastic pheasant hunter. Most often the guest chef will have the fish or game available for the dish he or she is preparing."

Most of the guest chefs on the "Wild Game Gourmet" are Division personnel, simply because Vicki knows which ones like to hunt, cook, and share their recipes with the audience. She also invites other guests who are recommended by Division staff who know someone who loves to cook wild game and would be entertaining on the show. From time to time, Mountz also invites professional chefs from area restaurants that include wild game on their menus. These segments are filmed in the chef's own kitchen.

**WILD GAME GOURMET**  
**The Joys and Benefits of Wild Game Cooking**

Some folks might argue that it is much simpler to buy meat and fish from the local grocery store than to hunt and prepare their own fish and game.

"Cooking wild game is like growing your own vegetables; there's a certain mystique about it," says the Wild Game Gourmet. "You get special enjoyment and a feeling of accomplishment when you do it yourself. You feel somewhat adventurous and a little like a pioneer in that your hunting or fishing skills brought home the food and you prepared it yourself. Plus, as do many hunters, I like knowing that I tracked and field dressed the game. Proper care in the field results in the best meat on the table." (Vicki butchers all her own deer, where many hunters use the services of a professional butcher.) "Like growing your own vegetables, there is special enjoyment that you planted it, you harvested it, and you end up eating it."

Mountz is an advocate of the health benefits of eating wild game. "Most wild game such as venison, has less fat and cholesterol than beef, but I'm not against a good beef steak now and then. In general, most wild products are leaner than domestic-raised beef or poultry because they are living off the land and

not being fed like domestic animals. And I like the taste of venison and other wild game equally well. Sometimes you have to prepare wild game a little differently than domestic varieties. For instance, the taste of domestic turkey and wild turkey is very similar. However wild turkeys are much more active, and are tougher because they have much more muscle so they should be prepared differently," she added.



Look in your local TV listings to find out

when *Wild Ohio* TV airs in your area. If you don't see *Wild Ohio*, ask your local PBS station, cable, or satellite provider to carry it. You can also find recipes from the Wild Game Gourmet on the Division of Wildlife's Website at [www.wildohiocookbook.com](http://www.wildohiocookbook.com) and in *Wild Ohio* magazine. (See page 22 of this issue.) You can submit your favorite wild game recipes to the Wild Game Gourmet at [www.wildinfo@dnr.state.oh.us](mailto:www.wildinfo@dnr.state.oh.us).



# *Families Afield*

## The New Apprentice Hunting & Trapping License



### THE APPRENTICESHIP

#### The Mentoring Way for New Sportsmen and Women

Ohio has a new category of hunting license called the apprentice hunting license. This license was developed as a part of a nationwide effort called Families Afield. Families Afield projects are designed to remove barriers that prevent hunters from passing along the hunting heritage. Apprentice hunting licenses or fur taker permits allow new hunters and trappers, both adults and youth, to sample the experience of hunting under the mentorship of a licensed adult prior to completing a hunter or trapper education course.

To hunt or trap, apprentice license and permit holders must be accompanied by a licensed hunter or trapper 21 years of age or older. To accompany means to go along with another person while staying within a close distance that enables uninterrupted, unaided visual and verbal communications.

Having previously held an apprentice license does not qualify the holder to purchase a regular hunting license or fur taker permit. To obtain a regular hunting license, a hunter education course must be completed successfully. To obtain a regular fur taker permit, a hunter education course and fur taker education course must be successfully completed. Apprentice licenses and trapping permits are available to both residents and non-residents, youth or adults. No one may purchase more than three apprentice hunting licenses or fur taker permits in his or her lifetime.



## THE APPRENTICESHIP

### Pass on the Hunting Heritage Suggestions for Mentoring

To act as the mentor of an apprentice license or permit holder means that you have the opportunity to pass along the hunting heritage. That's a big responsibility because the experience the apprentice has under your mentorship may determine whether the apprentice will become a hunter or trapper. The following suggestions will help ensure that your apprentice has a safe and enjoyable experience.

#### Understand the basics

Make sure your guest is familiar with all safety aspects of hunting and trapping. It is very important that you provide them with information, even though you may consider it very basic information. Encourage them to sign up for a hunter education class at their earliest opportunity.

#### Teach by example

Remember to practice what you preach.

#### Be patient

Your hunting or trapping knowledge has taken many years afield to acquire. Be understanding and foster the same development in the apprentice.

#### Keep a positive attitude

An understanding and positive mentor will build the apprentice's self-esteem and confidence.

#### Provide appropriate equipment

If the apprentice does not have the right gear, make sure they are able to borrow it for the outing. Be sure the firearm fits the apprentice and is properly sighted in. Take the time to have them practice with the firearm and become familiar with its proper use and safe operation.

#### Make sure they dress accordingly for the trip

A cold, wet, uncomfortable apprentice is not likely to ask for a second trip.

#### Pass on your knowledge and ethics

Help them appreciate and respect the outdoors and the animals they hunt or trap.

#### Share your enthusiasm and love for the outdoors

Your enthusiasm is contagious. If you are passionate about hunting or trapping, the apprentice may soon share the same passion.

#### Don't set them up to fail

Keep the outing fun and don't put pressure on the apprentice to be successful. Emphasize the quality of the experience rather than hunting success.

#### Make sure they are comfortable

Don't insist they continue the activity if they seem to be losing interest. There will be other days.

#### See our Website

Hunter education and other hunting information is available at [www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife).

## THE APPRENTICESHIP

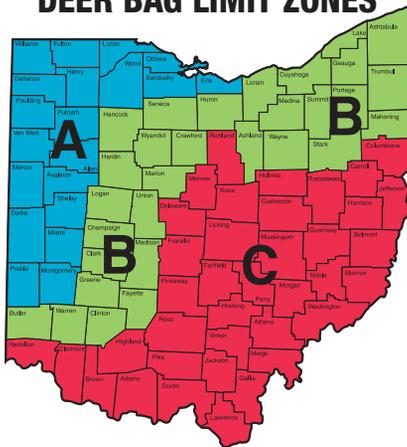
### Checklist of things to teach the apprentice:

- ▶ The hunting heritage and how hunters pay for conservation
- ▶ Proper care and use of firearms and equipment
- ▶ Basic safety rules
- ▶ Marksmanship
- ▶ Ethics – the hunter's responsibility to animals, landowners, and the environment
- ▶ Wildlife identification and habits of the various species
- ▶ Proper field care of game
- ▶ Cooking tips or recipes to help them enjoy the game they bring home
- ▶ Take along your camera to capture this very important moment for both the mentor and the apprentice



September 1 marks the kick-off date for the state's fall hunting seasons with the opening of squirrel, dove, Canada goose, rail, moorhen, and snipe hunting. Ohio hunters will have expanded deer hunting opportunities this fall with an additional weekend of deer-gun hunting (December 16 and 17) in addition to the traditional week-long deer-gun season which opens November 27. Check the 2006-07 Hunting and Trapping Regulations brochure (Publication 85) and the Waterfowl Hunting Seasons brochure (Publication 295) for complete regulations. Regulations brochures are available at Division of Wildlife offices and other outlets where hunting license are sold, and on the Division's Website at [www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife).

**DEER BAG LIMIT ZONES**



Bag Limits for Zones A, B, and C are:  
 Zone A - 1 Deer limit per license year.  
 Zone B - 2 Deer limit per license year.  
 Zone C - 3 Deer limit per license year.

**FALL TURKEY HUNTING COUNTIES**



Counties Open for Hunting

**DEER HUNTING SEASONS**

Hunting Seasons	Opening Date	Closing Date
<b>Archery Season</b>	September 30	February 4
<b>Early Muzzleloader Season: Special Permit Required;</b> Wildcat Hollow, Salt Fork Wildlife Area, Shawnee State Forest	October 23	October 28
<b>Youth Gun Season:</b> Statewide Season Antlered or antlerless deer.	November 18	November 19
<b>Gun Season:</b> Statewide Season Antlered or antlerless deer.	November 27	December 3
	December 16	December 17
<b>Statewide Muzzleloader Season</b> Antlered or antlerless deer.	December 27	December 30

**OTHER HUNTING SEASON DATES AND BAG LIMITS**

Species	Opening Date	Closing Date	Daily Bag
Squirrel gray, red, fox, black	September 1	January 31	6
Mourning dove	September 1 - See Small Game Hunting Section of Hunting Regs		
Ruffed grouse	October 14	February 28	3
Ducks, Geese	See Waterfowl Hunting Section of Hunting Regs		
Cottontail rabbit	November 3	February 28	4
Ringneck Pheasant	November 3	January 7	2 (roosters only)
Bobwhite quail	November 3	November 26	4
Fox, Raccoon, Skunk Opossum, Weasel	November 10	January 31	No Limit
Crow Fri. Sat. Sun. Only)	June 9, 2006	March 18, 2007	No Limit
	June 8, 2007	March 16, 2008	
Coyote	No closed season for hunting or trapping		No Limit
Wild boar	No closed season for hunting; trapping prohibited		No Limit
Groundhog	Closed during deer gun season only.		No Limit

**TRAPPING SEASON DATES**

Species	Opening Day	Closing Day
Fox, Raccoon, Opossum, Skunk, Weasel	Nov. 10, 2006	Jan. 31, 2007
Mink, Muskrat	Nov. 10, 2006	Feb. 28, 2007
Mink, Muskrat, Raccoon, Opossum, Skunk, Weasel (Erie, Ottawa, Sandusky, and Lucas County east of the Maumee River)	Nov. 10, 2006	Mar. 15, 2007
Beaver, Statewide	Dec. 26, 2006	Feb. 28, 2007
River Otter (See Hunting Regulations for limitations)	Dec. 26, 2006	Feb. 28, 2007

A Fur Taker Permit is required (except for coyote) to hunt or trap furbearing animals in Ohio.

**WILD TURKEY HUNTING SEASONS**

Hunting Season	Opening Date	Closing Date
Fall wild turkey. Open in specific counties	October 14, 2006	October 29, 2006
Fall wild turkey <i>archery only</i> . Open in specific counties,	October 30, 2006	November 26, 2006
Spring youth only wild turkey season	April 21, 2007	April 22, 2007
Spring wild turkey. Open statewide except Lake La Su An Wildlife Area.	April 23, 2007	May 20, 2007

## YOUTH HUNTING SEASON DATES

Youth Hunt	Date
Youth Hunters Small Game Season	Oct. 21 - 22 and Oct. 28 - 29, 2006
Youth Deer Gun Season	Nov. 18 - 19, 2006
Youth Spring Wild Turkey Season	April 21 - 22, 2007
Youth Spring Wild Turkey Hunts	Controlled hunts on selected areas during spring season April 23, through May 20, 2007
Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days	Sat. and Sun. prior to North Zone Waterfowl season
Youth Waterfowl Opening Day Hunts	Selected areas only on Waterfowl opening day
Youth Controlled Deer Hunts	Selected areas by application only
Youth Controlled Waterfowl Hunts	Selected areas by application only

[www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife)



## HUNTERS FOR THE HUNGRY

### Share Your Harvest

Several organizations help fight hunger in Ohio by helping hunters donate a portion or all of their venison to folks in need. The Division of Wildlife wishes to thank you, the Ohio hunter, for making a difference by donating your venison to the hungry of our state. Any butcher/processor interested in participating in this program should call 1-800-WILDLIFE.

To donate deer, contact one of the following organizations:

#### Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry

[www.fhfh.org](http://www.fhfh.org)  
or call 1-866-GET-FHFH.



#### Buckmasters Project Venison

[www.badf.org/processors.html](http://www.badf.org/processors.html)  
or call 1-800-240-3337.



#### SCI Sportsmen Against Hunger

[www.safariclubfoundation.org/humanitarian/sah/rs1.asp](http://www.safariclubfoundation.org/humanitarian/sah/rs1.asp)  
or call (520) 620-1220.



## DIVISION'S EDUCATION COORDINATOR RECEIVES AWARD

The Environmental Education Council of Ohio awarded Jen Dennison, wildlife education coordinator for the Ohio Division of Wildlife, with its "Christy Dixon Award." The award is given each year to a young professional who has contributed significantly to environmental education in Ohio. Dennison, known mostly for her involvement in Project WILD, was described in her award nomination as "a terrific workshop leader, extremely knowledgeable, and a great resource on a vast number of wildlife-related topics."

In other education news, the National Project WILD office awarded the Division \$4,000 to increase the presentation of Project WILD into colleges and universities across Ohio. The grant will enable the Division to create an advisory committee for this project made up of professors, as well as host a facilitator training for college and university professors.



## STEELHEAD SEASON HEATS UP

When the cool autumn air combines with renewed flows from Ohio's Lake Erie tributaries, it spells the beginning of steelhead trout season. Anglers should gear up for this popular Central Basin stream fishery that runs through the fall, winter, and spring. The Division stocks steelhead trout in the Grand, Chagrin, Rocky, and Vermilion rivers, and Conneaut Creek. The steelhead in this photo was taken on the Vermilion River.

## ENDANGERED MUSSELS RELEASED IN BIG DARBY CREEK

For the first time in Ohio history, endangered mussels that were created in a lab especially for the purpose of saving the animal from extinction, were returned to the wild last June. The Columbus Zoo, in partnership with The Ohio State University (OSU), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Columbus Metroparks, and the Division of Wildlife, successfully propagated Northern riffleshell mussels at the zoo's Freshwater Mussel Research and Conservation Facility. After years of propagation efforts, the mussels were successfully released into the Big Darby Creek. The Northern riffleshell is a federally endangered freshwater mussel that once lived in many of Ohio's rivers. Habitat loss and numerous other factors have all but extirpated this animal from the state.



## DOWN ON THE FARM

Bob Evans, 88, displays the wild turkey he shot in Gallia County during the 2006 spring season. Well known for his restaurant and food businesses, Mr. Evans has actively been involved in wildlife conservation, hunting, and fishing for many years. He served on the Ohio Wildlife Council and is a member of the Ohio Natural Resources Hall of Fame. Today, Bob Evans is still very involved in managing his farm for wildlife and has a special interest in bobwhite quail.



## NEW OSTA FACILITY COMPLETED

The Division of Wildlife granted \$150,000 for clay target throwing machines at the new Ohio State Trap Shooting Association (OSTA) grounds in Morrow County that opened last June. The facility got off to a grand start when the facility hosted 350 young shooters in the Ohio Scholastic Clay Target Championship as well as competitors in all other classifications for the Ohio State Shoot.

## BIOLOGISTS TRACKING WALLEYE AND SAUGEYE MOVEMENTS

Biologists have implanted radio transmitters in 50 adult walleye to track the fish in the Sandusky River and Sandusky Bay, and better understand movement patterns, locate specific spawning sites, and determine whether fish spawn every year. This research information will be used to enhance the Sandusky River walleye population, which has undergone significant declines in abundance over several decades.

Inland research is being conducted by the Division of Wildlife in collaboration with OSU to help better understand the habits and movements of reservoir-stocked saugeye. Saugeye are stocked in more than 60 reservoirs around the state. Radio transmitter tags were implanted in saugeye at Hoover Reservoir to track movements, determine habitat preferences, and learn how the saugeye relate to food sources over the next year.

## FORMER MEAD LANDS REMAIN OPEN TO PUBLIC USE

Hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts will enjoy continued public use of 43,000 acres of forested lands in seven southern Ohio counties thanks to a formal agreement between the Division of Wildlife and the Scioto Land Company. The Scioto Land Company purchased the acreage that lies in Vinton, Adams, Pike, Jackson, Gallia, Ross, and Hocking counties from the Dayton-based Mead Corporation. Regulations and conditions of use for the land that existed under the previous agreement with Mead remain unchanged.



## CANADA GOOSE TO GRACE 2007 HABITAT STAMP

Artwork of a Canada goose by Richard Clifton of Milford, Delaware won first place at this year's Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp design competition. Clifton's painting will appear on the Ohio wetlands stamp for fall 2007. The winning entry was selected from a field of 42 original paintings submitted by artists in 19 states, including 12 entries from Ohio. This was Clifton's second win in an Ohio conservation stamp competition. In 1994, he was the Ohio winner with his painting of a pair of mallards. He has won 23 state wildlife stamp designs.

Approximately 28,000 Ohio wetland stamps were purchased last year. Proceeds from stamp sales help fund vital wetland habitat restoration projects in Ohio. Artwork of a Northern pintail by Bowling Green, Ohio native Gregory Clair is pictured on the current 2006 habitat stamp.



## PF YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Tyler Baer, of Portage, Ohio was recently appointed to Pheasants Forever's (PF) first-ever National Youth Leadership Council. Baer is one of 19 youths selected from across the country. Youth council members will serve as young advisers and spokespeople on issues related to the outdoors, conservation, and PF. They will provide ideas for the PF youth magazine "Upland Tales" and the PF Website, and discuss outdoor youth activities and youth-related initiatives for PF chapters and the national headquarters.

Fourteen-year-old Baer was nominated to the new youth council by the Wood-Lucas Ohio PF Chapter. He is very active in the outdoors in hunting, fishing, camping, and boating, and also plays football, basketball, and baseball. The ninth grade honor roll student also helps his parents operate the family campground and marina. He is the son of Renea and Mary Baer, Wood County wildlife officer. (Tyler is pictured with his hunting partner, his black lab Mavrick.)

## FIRST EVER OHIO RIVER GRAND SLAM

Ohio River angler Larry Freda, the first ever "Ohio River" Grand Slam recipient, registered his catches with the Division of Wildlife in June. The program challenges anglers to catch a Fish Ohio size fish of specific species to qualify for an Ohio River, Lake Erie, or Inland Waters Grand Slam. Freda landed a 22" hybrid-striped bass, 16.5" sauger, and 35" flathead catfish for his Ohio River Grand Slam.

## DIVISION OF WILDLIFE AND DUCKS UNLIMITED CONTINUE STRONG PARTNERSHIP

The Division of Wildlife presented Ducks Unlimited (DU) with a check for over \$168,000 at the annual DU Convention last April. The check represented the final installment for five years of funding support for the Southwestern Ontario Landscape Initiative in Canada. During the same convention, the Division was presented the DU Heritage Award. The Heritage Award is presented to individuals who contribute \$50,000 towards DU's habitat conservation program. The Division is the only resource agency to ever achieve that status. Division Chief Steven A. Gray later presented the award at an Ohio Wildlife Council meeting.



**Standing, L to R:** Larry B. Mixon, Sr. (*council member*), Gildo Tori (*DU*), Division of Wildlife Chief Steven A. Gray, Heather Braun (*DU*), James R. Lynch (*council member*), Lee Howley (*council member*). **Seated L to R:** Charles E. Franks (*council member*), Karen Stewart-Linkhart (*council member*), Horace W. Karr (*council member*), Gary Grant (*council member*). **Not pictured:** Howard Calhoun (*council member*).





# OUTDOOR SKILLS The Hunting Accord

## Blueprint for the Future of Hunting

Taking a strong stance for the future of North America's hunting heritage, over 60 key conservation organizations and state, provincial, and federal wildlife management agencies met during the Symposium on North America's Hunting Heritage. A result of the symposium was the ratification of the North American Hunting Accord.

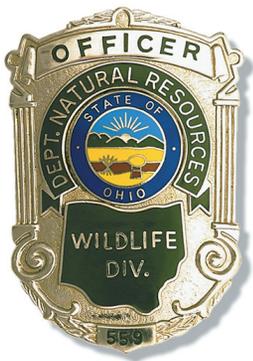
### North American Hunting Accord

- Hunting is the lawful and responsible pursuit of wildlife, including the opportunity to harvest animals for food, clothing and cultural purposes; and
- Hunting remains a relevant and enduring part of our culture and heritage, providing sustenance for the human spirit and a vital link to understanding and appreciating an ever-changing natural world; and
- Hunting provides a continuing and sustainable source of healthy natural food that enriches the body as well as the soul; and
- Early leaders of the hunting community – Audubon, Seton, Thoreau, Roosevelt, Leopold, Clarke and others – recognized and promoted the need for conservation policies and programs to benefit all wild creatures in North America; and
- The hunting community has always been in the forefront of ensuring the continuing welfare of all wildlife and their habitats; and
- The hunting community, including private landowners, generates many billions of dollars annually in support of habitat conservation, restoration and enhancement that has benefited all wildlife; and
- Hunting is carefully regulated to prevent the endangerment of wildlife populations; and
- Hunted species continue to be sustainable in response to science as well as traditional knowledge-based management, careful regulation and habitat conservation; and
- The hunting community stands ready to work cooperatively with all groups whose goal is to ensure the well being of all wildlife populations; and
- The hunting community, inclusive by nature, open to all races, colors, creeds, and genders, strives to improve understanding among all participants; and
- The hunting community and associated government agencies have developed and implemented hunter safety and education programs that have reduced accidents to a rate which is lower than most other outdoor activities.

The North American hunting community and the agencies that regulate the activity, hereby declare their support for and agree to take action, to the extent such actions are consistent with their mandates, on the following articles. By these undertakings, the activity of hunting will continue to be ecologically sustainable, safe, lawful, ethical and true to the hunting heritage of our forefathers.

- The North American hunting community pledges to conduct itself in a responsible manner that will maintain and strengthen public acceptance of hunting and hunters.
- The North American hunting community and associated agencies and organizations will work cooperatively and constructively in the funding and delivery of hunting-related programs and in the collection and use of science based and traditional knowledge-based information to manage wildlife populations and their habitats.
- The North American hunting community will develop, articulate and personally adhere to ethical principles and practices, including the spirit of fair chase, which will guide its conduct before, during and after the hunt.
- The North American hunting community will maintain and strengthen its longstanding commitment to the conservation of wildlife and its habitat, through the funding and support of ecologically sustainable initiatives.
- The North American hunting community will participate, as appropriate, at the global level, in support of wildlife conservation, including the consumptive uses of wildlife that are legal and ecologically sustainable.
- The North American hunting community will continue to support initiatives that promote natural resource conservation and public safety, and that preserve hunting cultures and traditions.
- The North American hunting community will continue to seek an appropriate balance between the use of new technologies in hunting and their impact on the resource, the experience, the application of skills and the maximization of opportunities for hunter access.
- The North American hunting community, associated agencies and organizations that finance, deliver and regulate hunting programs will ensure staffs are knowledgeable of the richness and diversity of our hunting culture and heritage.
- The North American hunting community and associated agencies and organizations, will develop and implement initiatives that retain and recruit participants.
- The North American hunting community will share the rich history and traditions of hunting in all its forms with future generations in a manner that reflects respect for the quarry and the responsibilities of the hunter.





## Wildlife Law Enforcement

# Field Notes

### NEW RADIO SYSTEM IN PLACE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

The Division of Wildlife has been working with ODNR in implementing a new statewide communications system for the Division's law enforcement personnel. MARCS (Multi-Agency Radio Communications System) will provide a communications backbone for statewide public safety and emergency management in a single system shared by numerous state agencies, including ODNR's law enforcement personnel. The system will provide mobile voice, data, vehicle location services, and computer-aided dispatching.



### SOMETHING NOT QUITE RIGHT? GIVE US A TIP

With the opening of Ohio's various hunting seasons, Ohioans are encouraged to report wildlife violations they observe or hear information about in their area. Many of the citations issued each year by Ohio's wildlife officers are the result of the Turn-in-a-Poacher, or "TIP" program. Designed to involve the public in reporting wildlife crimes, TIP encourages citizens who observe wildlife violations or suspect illegal wildlife activity to record all pertinent information, then call the TIP toll-free hotline at 1-800-POACHER (1-800-762-2437). TIPs can also be sent via e-mail by linking to: <http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife/Contact/TIPform.htm>. The caller's identity may remain completely anonymous.

### GEARED UP FOR EXTENDED DEER GUN SEASON

Many families spend Thanksgiving weekend in anticipation of Monday (November 27) -- the opening day of deer gun season. It is not surprising that the popular deer gun season is the busiest time of year for the Division's law enforcement personnel. All of the state's officers, investigators, and supervisors will be out in force to make sure the new nine-day deer gun season goes as smoothly as possible. (The 2006 deer gun season was expanded from November 27 - December 3 to two additional days to include December 16 and 17.)

During the seven-day 2005 deer gun season, approximately 350,000 sportsmen and women took to the woods and fields. Although most hunters encountered are law-abiding, ethical hunters, officers issued 1,639 citations for wildlife violations. More citations are issued by far during the deer gun season than any other hunting season of the year. The most common citation written during the deer gun season in recent years has typically been hunting deer with an unplugged shotgun. The most common citations written during the 2005 deer gun season were for:

1. Hunting deer with an unplugged shotgun (347).
2. Failing to tag a deer (221).
3. Hunting without written permission (187).
4. Hunting deer without a deer permit (159).
5. Failing to wear hunter orange (139).
6. Hunting before or after legal hunting hours (119).
7. Hunting with the aid of motor vehicle/shooting from a roadway (97).
8. Hunting without a hunting license (82).
9. Failure to carry a deer permit or hunting license while hunting (47).
10. Improperly handling a firearm in a motor vehicle (45).

#### Know Before You Go ...

Read the Ohio Hunting and Trapping Regulations Brochure (Publication 85) before the hunt. Ignorance of Ohio's wildlife laws is no excuse. Regulations brochures are available at Division of Wildlife offices, outlets where hunting license are sold, and online at [www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife).

### Regulations Afield...

#### How Well Do You Know Ohio's Wildlife Laws?

Test your knowledge of Ohio's hunting and fishing regulations. The Division's law enforcement staff has provided a few of the most commonly asked questions about wildlife laws. Do you know the answers?

1. Do you have to wear hunter orange while hunting small game?
2. Can you track a wounded deer onto or across private property?
3. If a landowner will not give permission to a hunter to track a wounded deer on his or her property, can a wildlife officer retrieve the deer for the hunter?
4. Can you remove antlers from a dead deer found in the woods or along the road?
5. Can you cut up a deer to make it easier to bring from the woods, then take the head to the check in station?

Answers on page 21

# Backyards for Wildlife Q & A



by Donna Daniel

Do you have a question that you've always wondered about concerning wildlife in your backyard? If so, send your questions to:

**Wild Ohio Magazine**, Attention: Melissa Hathaway,  
Editor, 305 E. Shoreline Drive, Sandusky, OH 44870,  
or e-mail [melissa.hathaway@dnr.state.oh.us](mailto:melissa.hathaway@dnr.state.oh.us).

Due to space limitations, we regret that not all questions submitted may be answered. If you need a quick response to a question, please contact your nearest wildlife district office.



**Q:** For the past three years while deer hunting, I have seen a cardinal that is part red and part white. Would this be considered an albino?

Larry Kyle, Xenia, OH

**A:** To be considered a true albino, an animal must be completely white with pink eyes. Since the bird you are seeing has some red coloration it would be correctly referred to as a partial albino. Albinism and part albinism occur in many species including red-tailed hawks, Northern cardinals, and white-tailed deer (piebald). The occurrence is purely a genetic variation and doesn't affect overall populations. Animals exhibiting degrees of albinism are capable of breeding but lack the advantages—including camouflage—that usual coloration may give their counterparts.



**Q:** A squirrel nest in our backyard remained intact after 50-plus mph winds! What do squirrels know about building homes that we do not?

Harley Downs, Caledonia, OH

**A:** The engineering and construction skills of wildlife can be amazing. Squirrels construct their nests by interweaving leaves very tightly; they end up quite dense and virtually waterproof. So a squirrel nest is able to withstand strong winds much better than a framed structure like humans would build.



**Q:** I remember a black racer snake that lived in a fencerow on our dad's farm in the 1960s. The snake would chase my brother and me until we turned and chased it. Can you please tell us more about this snake?

Bill Vickroy, Lancaster, OH

**A:** Both the black racer and its larger relative, the blue racer, occur in Ohio. The blue racer is found in western Ohio and the black racer in eastern Ohio. Racers are among the swiftest and most graceful of all our snakes, however their top speed is only 8 to 10 miles per hour. When alarmed, they rapidly vibrate the tip of their tail, as do many other species of snakes. The racer is one snake which will approach a person and this is often interpreted as an attack. In 1995, the General Assembly named the black racer as the official Ohio State Reptile!

## Squirrels in Ohio...

### Did you know:

- Ohio has four species of tree squirrels: fox, gray, red, and flying – all are common throughout the state
- Squirrels often use hollow trees or another type of nook in which to den and raise young.
- Squirrels are omnivorous, meaning they eat both animal and vegetable matter.
- Common foods are nuts, berries, tree buds, and insect larvae. They will also raid bird nests for eggs and young.
- The Southern flying squirrel does not actually fly, but glides. This is Ohio's only nocturnal squirrel.
- Squirrels generally bear two litters a year, one in late winter/early spring, a second in summer
- Squirrel hunting provides an excellent starting point for first-time hunters.

### To attract squirrels:

- Plant trees that produce fruits and nuts like hawthorn, oak, and hickory.
- Leave dead limbs and trees standing as hollows and holes are needed for den sites.
- Put up squirrel nest boxes to supplement natural cavities. Plans are available at: <http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife/pdf/pub389.pdf>.



by Jen Dennison



Why do kids think wolves are mean? Why do owls have a reputation for being wise? Are bears really that ferocious? Or are they more like Winnie the Pooh?

### Where do kids get their impressions of animals?

Well, a lot of it comes from cartoons. Think about the last Disney movie you watched. Were the animals behaving like their real counterparts? Do lions and tigers really walk on their hind legs? Of course not. Sometimes it's easy to separate the cartoon characters from the real thing. But sometimes it's not. So here's an activity to try next time you're watching cartoons.

#### PICK A CHARACTER IN THE CARTOON OR MOVIE . . .

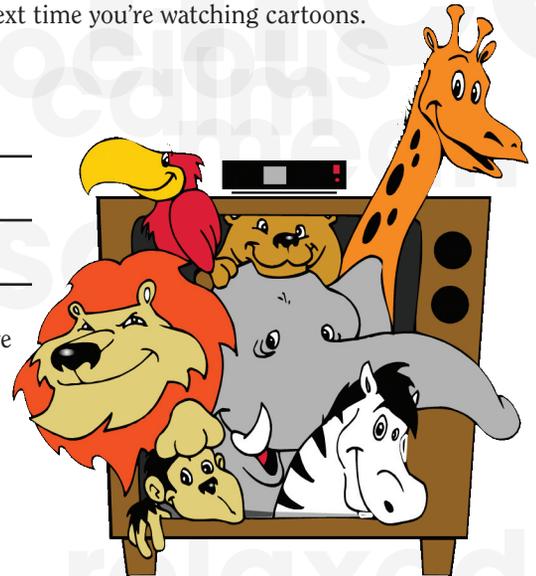
Name of cartoon character \_\_\_\_\_

What real animal is the character based on? \_\_\_\_\_

Is that real animal wild, tame, or both? \_\_\_\_\_

Now think about the behavior of the cartoon animal versus the real animal and compare them. Here's a list of behaviors to think about. Write yes or no for each animal.

BEHAVIOR OF . . .	REAL ANIMAL	CARTOON CHARACTER
Can it talk?	_____	_____
Can it walk on four legs?	_____	_____
Can it walk on two legs?	_____	_____
Does it have hands?	_____	_____
Can it run fast?	_____	_____
Does it wear clothes?	_____	_____
Is it smart?	_____	_____



Now think about your first impressions of the following animals. Are they really true? For example: When you think of owls, the first thing you might think of is wise. Is this true? If you're not sure, do a little research on the Division of Wildlife's Website at [www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife) and look for our Species page for help.

NAME YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION	TRUE OR FALSE
Bear _____	_____
Fox _____	_____
Snake _____	_____
Spider _____	_____
Bat _____	_____

The above activities were adapted from Project WILD © 2001 Council for Environmental Education

#### PAGE 19 Regulations Afield ANSWERS:

1. Only during the statewide primitive weapons season and the Youth Deer Gun Season.
2. Yes, provided the hunter has permission from the landowner.
3. No, a wildlife officer cannot retrieve the deer.
4. Shed antlers may be possessed at any time without a receipt. Skulls with antler and/or deer parts may only be possessed with a tag, seal, or certificate stating their legal acquisition. Contact your local wildlife officer or the nearest wildlife district office for help.
5. No, the law states that the whole deer with head attached to the carcass, must be transported to the check station for inspection.



# WILD GAME GOURMET

## r e c i p e s

Wild Game Gourmet • photos by Tim Daniel  
the Wild Game Gourmet as seen on **Wild Ohio** Video Magazine

### Buffalo Turkey Dip

2 cups cooked wild turkey breast (*diced or shredded in very small pieces*)  
8 ounces ranch dressing  
8 ounces cream cheese  
8 ounces shredded cheddar  
3 celery stalks, chopped fine  
¼ cup onion, chopped fine  
6 ounces hot or Buffalo sauce  
Loaf of crusty bread or crackers

Soften cream cheese then mix all ingredients well. Let stand in refrigerator for an hour or more (can be made the night before). Bring to room temperature to serve. Cut thin slices of crusty bread to make bread rounds. Serve dip on bread rounds or crackers.

Contributed by Sue Howard



### Grilled Dove

Dove breasts (*four per person*)  
Teriyaki sauce  
Water chestnuts, sliced  
Strips of bacon, cut in half (*enough for one-half slice per breast*)

Marinate dove in teriyaki sauce overnight. Place water chestnuts on top of dove breast, wrap in 1/2 slice of bacon, and hold together with a toothpick. Put on low heat on BBQ grill and close lid. Turn about every 5 minutes and cook about 20 minutes or until bacon is browned.

Contributed by Vicki Mountz



**For more great wild game recipes go to [www.wildohiocookbook.com](http://www.wildohiocookbook.com)**

# WILDLIFE Reflections

## the birthday present

by C.E. Tenoglia

"I don't want to get up Dad, it's too cold," said my 12-year-old son, John, as I tried to rouse him at the ungodly hour of 4:45 a.m. The only light in his room was emanating from his alarm clock, wind driven sleet pelted his window. While the sounds outside his window might send a chill up the spine of most, for a duck hunter, those sounds are like the wail of a siren.

Today was December 26th, my 43rd birthday. To mark the day, I was giving myself a duck hunt with John, and my friend, Ken McFann. Although I refused to acknowledge middle-age, I wondered to myself how I got to be 43 so soon.

Still more than an hour before sunrise, John and I drove off, the headlights of my truck reflecting against the falling, wintery, mix. Ken was waiting when we reached the cornfield. He climbed into my extended cab talking a mile a minute. "Hope you brought coffee . . . Man she sure is a blowin'...Had several hundred in this field yesterday . . . I could see 'em from the road... Farmer's corn picker must not be worth a lick cause corn is layin' everywhere . . .You know the birds are gonna want back in there today." I waited patiently for him to take a breath or pause, amused by his obvious excitement.

The three of us, along with my lab, Blackjack, slogged across that muddy field, set out a few dozen decoys, and hunkered down just before legal shooting light. Suddenly, the heavens began to rain ducks, as more than 100 piled into that cornfield. "Happy birthday to me," I thought. Then, as quickly as they appeared, the ducks lifted off and began to fly across the river abutting this field, far from the range of our smoke poles. It appeared they landed in the river, just over the trees, about 100 yards behind us

First light came and went without a single bird even buzzing our spread. Bored, my son now fidgeted, sighed, whined, said he was hungry repeatedly, and made a general nuisance of himself. He picked up an ear of corn, shelled some and let fly at Ken. Ken shelled his own handful and returned fire. I was seated between the combatants. John howled with laughter as Ken's last volley struck me and ran down my shirt. Our makeshift blind had now lost all semblance of order, and I had to either call my birthday hunt a bust, or go and see if any ducks did land on the river.

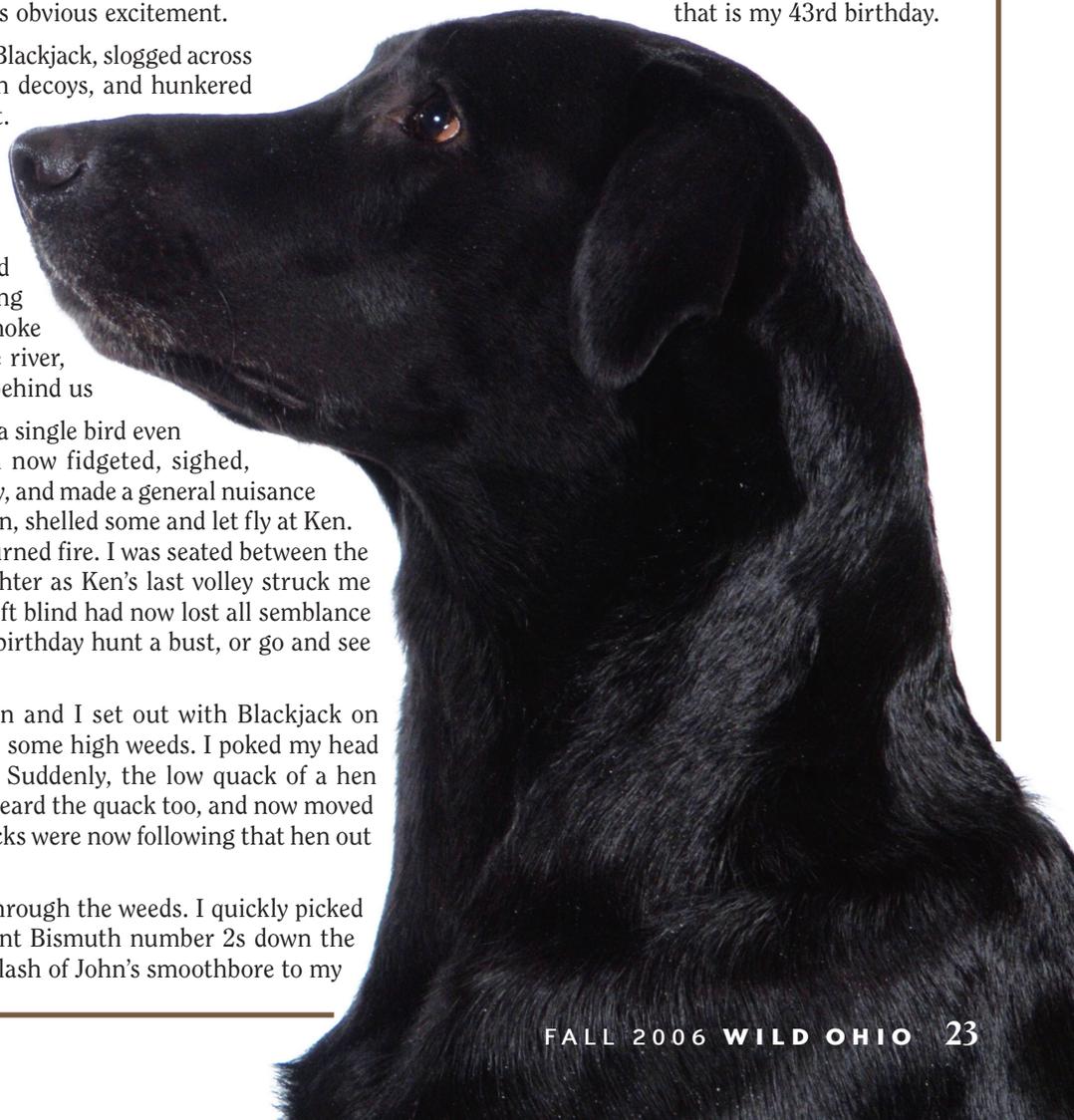
Ken graciously declined, and John and I set out with Blackjack on heel. We reached the river's edge and some high weeds. I poked my head through to find not even one duck. Suddenly, the low quack of a hen mallard spun me on my heels. John heard the quack too, and now moved in next to me. As we watched, 100 ducks were now following that hen out from the hidden river bank below.

I barked "take 'em," as we bulled through the weeds. I quickly picked out a big, green head. Instantly, I sent Bismuth number 2s down the barrel, to see nothing fall. I saw the flash of John's smoothbore to my

right. A duck fell. I fired a second time. Nothing. John did the same, and another duck fell. I fired my third round and got nothing but a raspberry chorus from those ducks, as they took flight. John racked his pump gun and let fly with his final shot. Astoundingly, a third duck folded neatly, and made a mighty splash.

John began a dance that could only be entitled "pure joy." He turned to me and said, "Hah, three - zip, what do you think of my shooting now Pop." It surely was an awesome shooting display, so I answered as all dads do when bested by offspring and shrugged, "Not bad." I could not maintain my false indifference, and drew John close. "Proud of you," was all I could get out before my eyes inexplicably started to well up. "Thanks, Pop," he replied, suddenly sounding much older.

I was glad that my son was able to take these beautiful birds, but today was not really about how many ducks were taken. Today was about the sounds of wind and sleet at my son's window, whistling wings overhead, my son's broad smile after besting his dad, and the passing of traditions and sportsmanship from father to son, which all now make up the great memory that is my 43rd birthday.



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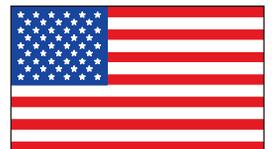


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