Wild Ohio

Spring 2006

MAGAZINE

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

Wild Ohio MAGAZINE

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

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Division of Wildlife Mission Statement

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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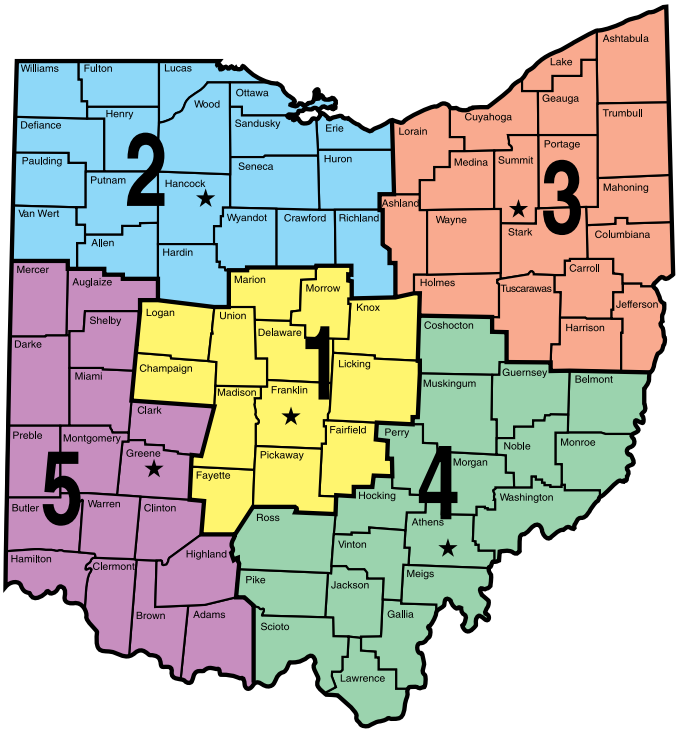

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1-888-HOOKFISH
Toll-free for a Lake Erie fishing report

1-800-POACHER
Toll-free to report poaching

http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife
Division of Wildlife Website

On the Spring Wildlife Calendar

April 7-9 — **Lake Erie Wing Watch,** Hikes and seminars for beginning to advanced birders, Firelands College, Sandusky, Contact the Sandusky/Erie County Visitors Bureau, 1-800-255-3743.

May 6-7 — **Free Fishing Days,** all state residents are invited to experience Ohio's fantastic fishing without having to purchase a fishing license for these two days.

May 13 — **International Migratory Bird Day,** activities at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, Ottawa County (419) 898-0960, ext. 31; 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

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Features

Your Map to Angling Success 6
Newly updated Ohio lake maps can be your ticket to fishing success this spring. Read about all the features these updated maps reveal.

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Ohio's Official State Record Fish list is the billboard for the largest sportfish catches ever landed by Buckeye anglers. Could there be a new state record swimming in your favorite fishing hole?

True Friends of Magee Marsh 14
A group of dedicated individuals is putting their heart and soul into preserving Magee Marsh and enhancing the wildlife experience for visitors.

On the Cover...

For many Ohio anglers, the bluegill sparks fond childhood memories, often of their very first catch. Found in most streams and water bodies across the state, bluegills provide for a fun, family fishing experience and many fond memories. Photo by Tim Daniel.

Bringing Back the Bobwhite 8
The nostalgic call of "bob-WHITE" and the rush of excitement upon bumping a covey of quail will hopefully become more commonplace through a new federal initiative.

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Hellbender

Ohio's watchable wildlife

Watchable Wildlife • Slippery and

story and photos by Tim Daniel

Salamanders are amphibians and related to frogs and toads, but they do not make themselves known with loud calling like other amphibians. Because of their secretive nature and nocturnal lifestyle, salamanders do not easily disclose their location. They love dark, wet places, often in deep woods, which is one reason why finding one of these slippery critters can be a real challenge.

Salamanders in Ohio are generally inconspicuous most of the year. During the spring breeding season they appear in large numbers apparently out of nowhere. Some species migrate by the hundreds during cool spring rains as they move toward water to lay eggs.

Nearly all of Ohio's 26 species of salamanders belong to either the Mole Family or the Lungless Family. Mole salamanders are large, thick-bodied, and spend most of their lives underground. Mole salamanders also have well developed lungs. The lungless salamanders are slender and oxygen is absorbed through their skin or a thin membrane in their mouth and throat. This family does not have lungs or gills as an adult. Last but not least, the hellbender and mudpuppy are two species that are strictly aquatic and live their entire lives under water.

Good salamander habitat generally consists of a wet wooded environment with standing water in the spring. These areas of standing water are called vernal pools and usually dry up by summer. Most salamanders are found in or near wetlands. They must live in these soggy surroundings because they lack the scales of reptiles, which make them susceptible to drying out. Some species have the ability to burrow underground; others use burrows created by different animals like crayfish.

All salamanders are carnivores and come out from their hiding places during damp nights to hunt for prey. Most species eat large amounts of invertebrates such as worms, insects, and snails. Salamanders are equally important as food for many other animals such as raccoons, opossums, mink, river otters, frogs, snakes, and fish. They are also significant indicators for a healthy environment because many live in both aquatic and terrestrial habitats.

Spotted Salamander

Red Salamander

Tiger Salamander

Secretive: Ohio's Salamanders

Salamanders have a variety of reproductive strategies. The majority hatch from eggs and spend several weeks growing as tadpole-like larvae before they undergo metamorphosis to become adults. The adults will often return to breed at the same site where they were born when they reach sexual maturity. When salamanders lay their eggs some prefer running water such as in streams and rivers, while others prefer the standing water in such areas as wetlands, vernal pools, or bogs.

The Division of Wildlife supports the salamander monitoring program through the Wildlife Diversity Fund. You can find out more about this program and Ohio's slippery and secretive salamanders at **www.ohiosalamanders.com.**

Viewing Opportunities

Ohio has a wealth of salamanders throughout the state. Finding an individual can be an adventure given that they go into hiding during the daylight hours. The best place to begin your search is in any wet, wooded environment with standing water in the spring, especially in or near wetlands. The best time for viewing comes at night either after or during an early spring rain when the temperature is near 50 degrees. Using child-like curiosity by searching under rocks and logs is still the best way to discover these mysterious creatures.

Longtail Salamander

your map to angling success

By Stacy Xenakis
Biologist, Inland Fisheries Research Unit

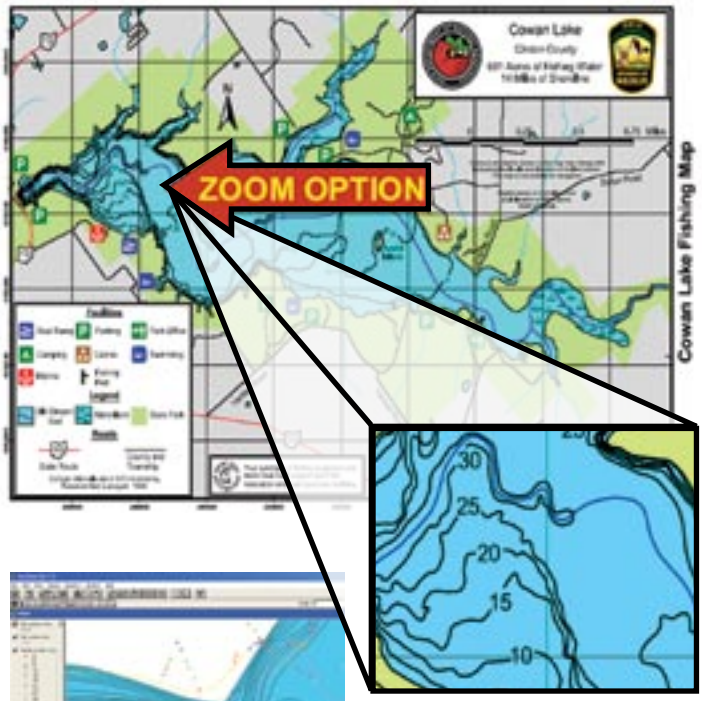
The three questions you might ask yourself before choosing to wet a line in Ohio's many lakes and reservoirs are "when, where, and how to find and hook fish?" Fishing reports on the Division of Wildlife's Website can provide the details about each of these important points, but did you know that additional details about "where" can be found by searching the Website for a map of a specific lake? In fact, many of our lake maps have been updated to provide current depth and shoreline information and other features such as roads, facilities, and fishing access sites.

To see the current list of all lakes, visit **www.dnr.state.oh.us/wildlife/fishing** and choose "Lake" in the left navigation bar under

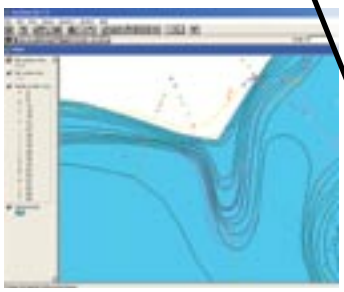
"Find a Map."

Updates of lake contours are important because these waters change over time. Normal aging from natural and artificial processes such as sedimentation from inflow streams and eroding shorelines cause lakes to become shallower; whereas, dredging activities undertaken to aid navigation creates unnatural depth. Information about these bottom alterations is not only important to navigate our reservoirs, but it can also vastly improve your catch rates. While anglers generally target structure visible at or near the water's surface, the underlying terrain can be just as significant in locating fish. Identifying areas that attract fish such as underwater humps, holes, points, channels, and drop-offs will increase the likelihood of filling your live-well.

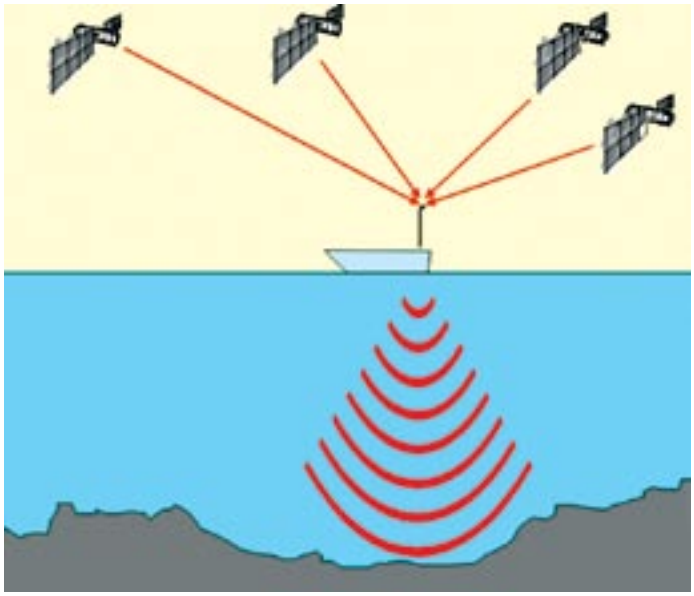
Other revisions to the lake maps include the addition of facilities, roads,



New features, which are only available on-line, include geographic coordinates and a zoom option.



Original contours (in blue) are created using the depth data and then edited to smooth the lines.



The GPS antenna receives a signal from at least four satellites to obtain a geographic position. The datalogger then combines the coordinate data with the depth data from the echo sounder.

Thousands of geographically referenced depth points are collected to describe the area in as much detail as possible. As the driver navigates the boat along a transect, the datalogger records the coordinates along with a water depth every three seconds.

Fathometer

Datalogger

Antenna

and access sites resulting from improvement projects and development. New features which are only available on-line include geographic coordinates and a zoom option. When paired with a personal GPS (Global Positioning System) these new features are particularly useful in locating and navigating to prime fishing spots. The zoom option provides a tool to zoom-in to a specific area on the map, and the UTM (Universal Transverse Mercator) coordinates, located along the map's outside edges, allow you to identify waypoints. Saving these waypoints in your personal GPS before you head out to the lake can save a lot of driving time and increase the amount of time spent fishing.

Creating a lake map involves detailed surveying, computer analysis, and extensive editing of the results. Since 1998, Division of Wildlife staff has been collecting geographically referenced depth data from a list of prioritized lakes in each wildlife district. Thousands of individual points are collected using a survey grade depth finder connected to a survey grade GPS while a biologist drives a boat along a series of transects from one end of the reservoir to the other. Areas with a lot of variation in depth, particularly the shoreline, are surveyed intensively to ensure that the new maps describe the area in as much detail as possible. Once survey data are collected, they are processed to develop depth contour lines and shoreline features.

After the lake contours are completed, other features such as roads, access, and facilities are added. Once the facilities and contours are reviewed by the lake manager, the new lake maps are printed and posted on the Division's Website. Currently, 31 lake maps have been updated and over 100 more updates will be completed over time. So log on to the Division's Website, find your favorite lake, and map your way to angling success this spring.

BRINGING BACK THE BOBWHITE

by Luke Miller

CRP's new habitat program aims to increase the population of Northern bobwhite quail by establishing buffers of native warm-season grasses and other plantings along agricultural field borders.

Ask any farmer who worked the land during the 1950s to the early '70s to describe the agricultural landscape of that time period and you will hear stories of smaller fields, brushy draws, fencerows, and crop field edges. This was a time when a family could make a living by using smaller equipment, crop rotation, and managing pasture land for a few head of livestock. They also will tell you about sounds of "bob-WHITE" near the homestead and the rush of excitement created by bumping a covey of quail.

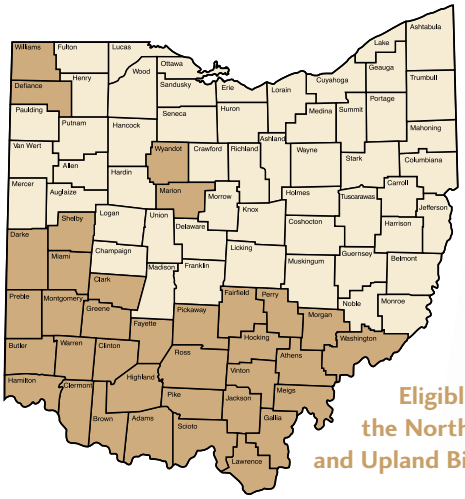
With the drastic changes in the agricultural landscape over the past three decades, quail habitat in Ohio has decreased dramatically. Coupled with the devastating winters of 1976–77 and 1977–78, quail population levels in the fall of 1978 were 90 percent below their previous 17-year average and many counties were completely devoid of quail. Although a few remnant populations survived in southern Ohio, the coveys were destined to remain near these areas of brushy cover. Because quail do not migrate long distances across open terrain, their movements were restricted by the lack of connecting cover like fencerows, field edges, and old pastures.

Subsequently, numbers of quail have also dropped nationally. The population has declined from an estimated 59 million birds in 1980 to about 20 million in 1988. To help reverse this trend, President Bush recently announced the Northern Bobwhite Quail/ Upland Bird Habitat Initiative. This new habitat practice is part of the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program that is administered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency. The national goal is to increase the population of Northern bobwhite quail by 750,000 birds annually by providing cost share to farmers and landowners to create 250,000 acres of buffers consisting of native warm-season grasses, legumes, wildflowers, forbs and shrubs along agricultural field borders. Ohio has been allocated funding to help restore 14,200 acres which is to be enrolled by September 30, 2007.

What makes this new initiative unique is that it is the only USDA conservation practice that will require a monitoring plan to record the response of populations of quail and other birds associated with grasslands and field borders. The Division of Wildlife research biologists are playing an integral role in the development and implementation of this research within the Ohio counties approved for this program. The data collected from this monitoring project will provide valuable insight on the success of the initiative, which could lead to continued funding for the establishment of additional field border habitat after 2007.

Because of the limit of 14,200 acres approved for Ohio, a total of 35 counties, most of which are located in southern and western Ohio, have been selected for enrollment. These counties represent the current range of bobwhite quail in Ohio and have the greatest potential to restore habitat for bobwhite quail and other grassland dependent species of birds. To be eligible, cropland must meet the cropping history requirement of being farmed four out of the last six years.

For more information about the Northern Bobwhite Quail/ Upland Bird Habitat Initiative, contact your county wildlife officer, or call the wildlife district office nearest you to speak to the private lands biologist assigned to your county.



Eligible Ohio Counties for the Northern Bobwhite Quail and Upland Bird Habitat Initiative

Quail Forever (QF) was created last August as an arm of the national Pheasants Forever (PF) conservation organization. This new non-profit is dedicated to protecting and enhancing quail and other upland wildlife through habitat improvement, public awareness, education, and advocacy for sound land management.

To learn more about QF in Ohio, contact:
Jim Inglis *(QF and PF state biologist)*
(419) 209-0851
jinlis@quailforever.org

QUAIL forever
The Habitat Organization

Wildlife on the Farm Through CRP

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

Over half the threatened and endangered species in the United States are affected by agriculture. This is where the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) comes to the rescue. The CRP, administered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners to help protect environmentally sensitive land and conserve natural resources.

The CRP provides payments to enrollees to take qualified farm lands out of crop production for a 10- or 15-year term and plant it with beneficial grasses or trees. These plantings reduce water runoff and sedimentation, protect groundwater, help improve the condition of lakes, ponds, and streams, and increase wildlife habitat. Since CRP's inception in 1985, approximately 300,000 acres of Ohio farm lands have been enrolled to benefit wildlife and other natural resources.

Gill Davis, a farmer in Madison County, has been enrolled in the CRP for four years and has seen first-hand the progress that has been made. "I have seen an incredible increase in many species of wildlife on my property," said Davis. "The pheasant population has quadrupled with coveys of young pheasants now a common sight. I see more hummingbirds and blue birds each year. I saw quail for the first time this year, as well as wild turkey that were not in our area before. The deer population is also thriving (in both numbers and size) in the high grasses we planted. I also see more predators like birds of prey and coyote, which is good to keep a balance in nature."

Davis planted Indiangrass and big blue stem surrounded by yellow and red clover. He created abundant brush piles for smaller game and laid down cut trees for cover in the heavier, dense tree areas. He also planted black raspberry and alfalfa in strategic areas.

"Ohioans have many different concerns that we spend time and effort on – our homes, our children, their schools, city improvements, our football teams, and our hobbies. I also believe it is important to protect wildlife by creating crucial wildlife habitat," Davis said. "The decrease in wildlife and their habitat is partially because of man's actions, and it is up to us to make sure that our children's children will be able to enjoy and know wildlife."

"Funds from hunters and anglers also contribute to wildlife habitat, and people need to understand this," Davis added.

Heidi Devine, Division of Wildlife private lands biologist, discusses the new bobwhite quail initiative with Highland County agricultural landowners Tate and Corey Cockerill.

OHIO'S RECORD LUNKERS

by Melissa Hathaway

(photos courtesy of Outdoor Writers of Ohio)

Not all the big ones get away! Ohio's official state record fish list is the billboard for the largest sportfish catches by Buckeye anglers. And potential new state record fish could be lurking in any lake, reservoir, river, stream, and private pond across the state. Over the past 10 years alone, 46 record fish tumbled from their pedestals. Only a few state record fish holders have remained on the prestigious list for decades without challenge from contenders.

Ohio's state record fish are certified and records maintained by the Outdoor Writers of Ohio (OWO). Division of Wildlife fisheries biologists assist OWO's Record Fish Committee by verifying the species of a potential record. The list includes current record holders in 41 species categories of sportfish taken by anglers by hook and line. A separate Bow Fishing Division includes five species categories for fish taken by bow and arrow. While OWO used a formula of combined length and weight to determine state record fish prior to June 1, 1993, state record fish are currently determined by certified weight only.

"Although Lake Erie has produced the most state records hands down, state record fish have come from water bodies scattered throughout the state since the State Record Fish program was started in 1957," said Tom Cross, OWO's state record fish chairman.

The busiest year for state records occurred in 1999, according to Cross. Anglers smashed 11 records in eight categories. During that banner year, records for burbot, gar, and pumpkinseed were broken twice, while records for redear sunfish, buffalo sucker, tiger muskellunge, hybrid sunfish, and walleye were broken once. The 1999 walleye, burbot, and buffalo sucker records remain the current record holders today.

BIG FISH STORIES

SMALLMOUTH BASS
9.5 pounds, 23 ½ inches
Lake Erie, June 16, 1993

One notable record breaking category is the smallmouth bass category. Anglers marveled when the 51-year old record for smallmouth bass was broken in May 1992 by a 7.74-pound (22 5/8 inches) Lake Erie smallmouth taken in the Kelleys Island area. The previous record was taken in 1941 in the Mad River and weighed 7.5 pounds (24 ½ inches). The 1992 record was broken just one year later by almost two pounds by another Lake Erie catch. Randy Van Dam, of Kalamazoo, Michigan, caught the current record smallmouth in the South Bass Island area June 16, 1993. It tipped the scales at 9.5 pounds (23 ½ inches).

MUSKELLUNGE
55.13 pounds, 50 ¼ inches
Piedmont Lake, April 12, 1972

Muskellunge are known for their power, fight, and tremendous size, making any muskie catch a trophy by most anglers' standards. The Division of Wildlife has been stocking muskies in selected lakes for over 50 years and partnering with the Ohio Huskie Muskie Club to promote this fishery. Despite the many large muskies landed by current muskie anglers, the current state record is 30 years old. Weighing in at 55.13 pounds, (50 ¼ inches), it was caught in Piedmont Lake by Joe D. Lykins April 12, 1972.

WALLEYE
16.29 pounds, 33 inches
Lake Erie, November 23, 1999

Lake Erie's Western Basin is referred to as the "Walleye Capital of the World," and the state record fish pulled from the lake are testimony to that. Tom Haberman of Brunswick was sure glad he and his friends decided to go fishing instead of rabbit hunting on November 23, 1999.

Haberman was perch fishing off Cleveland when he unexpectedly caught his whopping 16.29-pound (33 inches) walleye. He was fishing with minnows on a perch rig using six-pound test line on ultralight spinning tackle. Division of Wildlife biologists determined from scale samples the fish to be from Lake Erie's 1986 or earlier walleye hatch, making the fish at least 13 years old.

YELLOW PERCH
2.75 pounds, 14 ½ inches
Lake Erie, April 17, 1984

Lake Erie's yellow perch numbers have rebounded from declines in the early 1990s, and large numbers of jumbo perch have been the rave across the lake over the past several years. Yet, no one has landed a perch larger than the 2.75-pound (14 ½ inches) perch caught by Charles Thomas, of Lorain, April 17, 1984, over 20 years ago.

"The possibility of a new state record yellow perch definitely exists, as our surveys show some fish from the 1996 hatch are still out there," said Jeff Tyson, supervisor of the Division's Lake Erie Fisheries Research Unit at Sandusky. "Additionally, in 2006 there will be decent numbers of seven- and eight-year-old fish (1998 and 1999 hatches). These fish could potentially top the scales at over three pounds."

STEELHEAD TROUT
20.97 pounds, 36 ½ inches
Lake Erie, October 2, 1996

The Division raises and stocks steelhead trout in five of Lake Erie's Central Basin tributaries. These trout spend the fall through winter months in the streams providing angling opportunities for wading anglers. These trout move to the open lake during the summer months providing yet another sport fishery for Lake Erie anglers. Mike Shane, of New Middletown, holds the current record with his 20.97-pound (36 ½ inches) steelhead he caught from the east breakwall of Conneaut Harbor in the early morning of October 2, 1996.

FROM THE STATE RECORD BOOKS:

Newest State Record

GREEN SUNFISH

Ohio's newest state record is also held by the youngest current record holder, 15-year-old Timothy Cory Hively, of Bethel. His green sunfish was taken from a farm pond in Clermont County on May 8, 2005. The fish weighed .99 pounds (10 5/8 inches).

The youngest angler ever to join the ranks of Ohio record fish anglers was eight-year-old Emma Sanders, of Columbus, also with a green sunfish. Her state record, caught while fishing with her dad on the Olentangy River in July 1997, weighed in at only .24 pounds (7 inches). It was the first fish ever entered into the newly established green sunfish category.

Newest Record Taken by Bow and Arrow

LONGNOSE GAR

Bow fishing provides a greater challenge by combining archery and fishing into one recreational sport. The newest state record fish taken in the Bow Fishing Division is a longnose gar taken by Ronald Cross of Russellville, Ohio. He took the 14.57-pound (48 inches) gar from Brush Creek on April 14, 2001.

Record Holder for the Shortest Amount of Time

During 1999's flurry of 11 new records, Mike Hepker, of Sandusky, caught his 12-pound, 10-ounce record burbot from the Fairport Harbor breakwall on Lake Erie in Lake County on December 11. His record was broken just nine days later when Bud Clute, of Chardon, caught a 17.33-pound burbot from the same breakwall on December 20.

MORE STATE RECORD FISH

Young Ohio Angler Holds Kentucky Record

Although Ohio's two state record catfish (flathead and channel) did not come from the Ohio River, the river is notorious for its large catfish. Kentucky's current 32-pound state record channel catfish was taken by a young Ohio angler fishing on the Kentucky side of the river. Ten-year-old Kyle Estep of South Point, Ohio caught his large "cat" in May 2004 while casting with a Zebco 33 reel baited with a nightcrawler.

Oldest Record

ROCK BASS

Ohio's oldest record has been on the books for almost 74 years. George Keller of Dayton caught the state record rock bass September 3, 1932 in Deer Creek. It weighed 1.97 pounds and measured 14 3/4 inches in length. Record Fish continued on page 12.

LARGEMOUTH BASS
13.13 pounds (25 1/16 inches)
Farm Pond, May 26, 1976

BLUEGILL
3.28 pounds (12 3/4 inches)
Salt Fork Reservoir, April 28, 1990

CERTIFYING A STATE RECORD FISH

Certain steps must be followed by an angler to have his or her potential record catch legitimately certified and officially designated a state record fish. All fish must be legally caught, and fish from pay lakes are not eligible. Proper procedures include:

- File an Ohio's Record Fish Official Application Form within six months of the catch
- Submit a close-up photo of the fish with the application
- Have the fish weighed on a digital certified scale with at least two witnesses
- Keep the fish frozen and whole for verification by the Division of Wildlife and OWO

"I cannot stress enough that potential new record breakers should get their fish weighed immediately while it is still wet and before it loses weight." says Cross. "The fish should be weighed on a digital scale. Any store, carryout, or butcher that sells meat will have a digital scale certified by the county auditor. They should also obtain a copy of the auditor's certification paper or a photo of the certification sticker adhered to the scale."

"It is also a new record holder's responsibility to contact a Division of Wildlife fisheries biologist and make arrangements to have the species of the fish verified. Too often the fish has turned out to be a hybrid and not a true-blooded species."

Call 1-800-WILDLIFE (1-800-945-3543) or visit www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife to receive a complete list of Ohio's Record Fish or an official application form. For more information on Ohio's state record fish program contact;

Tom Cross, Chairman, OWO State Record Fish Committee
1497 Cross Road, Winchester, Ohio 45697.
Phone/fax (937) 386-2752
E-mail: www.outdoorwritersofohio.org

FISH OHIO

Even if your fish doesn't stand up to a state record, your catch may qualify for Fish Ohio status. The Fish Ohio Program recognizes anglers whose catch meets a minimum qualification length in 19 species categories. Qualifying anglers can print out a certificate on-line and a Fish Ohio lapel pin. Anglers who catch four Fish Ohio qualifying fish in a single year receive a "Master Angler" pin. The new "Grand Slam" award program recognizes anglers who catch three designated species from either Lake Erie, the Ohio River, or Ohio inland waters.

Fish Ohio application forms can be obtained in the Ohio Fishing Regulations brochure (Publication 84), online at;

www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife
1-800-WILDLIFE (1-800-945-3543)

All state record fish statistics shown are correct as of January 1, 2006

Wildlife Has A True Friend In The Friends Of Magee

by Melissa Hathaway

Visiting Magee Marsh State Wildlife Area in Ottawa County is a tradition for many school groups, vacationers, birders, hunters, and other wildlife enthusiasts who visit the Lake Erie shoreline. The wildlife experience provided by the marsh has been enhanced even more in recent years with the contributions of dedicated volunteers and members of the "Friends of Magee Marsh" (FOMM).

Both groups are dedicated to conserving Magee's wildlife, preserving Magee's history, spreading the wetland conservation message, and providing quality viewing and educational opportunities for visitors. Through a valuable partnership, these individuals are helping the Division of Wildlife showcase the crown jewel of Ohio's wetland wildlife areas.

FOMM members and volunteers conduct many diverse projects that support the wildlife area, as well as the Sportsmen's Migratory Bird Center and Crane Creek Wildlife Research Station located there. The volunteers contribute many hours to operating the Bird Center, especially on weekends and during special events. With just one full-time naturalist employed at Magee, the volunteers are instrumental in keeping the Bird Center open to visitors seven days a week throughout most the year.

"The Friends of Magee have one purpose – to make Magee Marsh better for wildlife, and to make it a better place for birders, photographers, hunters, and other wildlife enthusiasts, especially students," said Jim Damschroeder, of Elmore, who has served as president of the FOMM since 2000. "Magee is one of the most, if not the most, pristine and diverse wetland wildlife areas in the state. It has been designated as a top birding location in the country by several national birding publications, which is one reason Magee draws many visitors from throughout the country. Visitors return time and time again to see birds, plants, or wildlife that they have not seen before. Some come every weekend during the spring migration because it is the only place where they can see so many birds in one location in such a short time."

FOMM members operate a book/gift shop at the Bird Center that offers an array of books, shirts, caps, pins, patches, and other items to enhance the visitor experience. All proceeds go directly to Magee Marsh and have provided such physical enhancements as vehicle pull-offs, trail additions and maintenance, seating along the trails, interpretive displays, wetland habitat artwork, and educational equipment such as a TV/VCR, and a weather station.

Some of the volunteers and Friends of Magee Marsh pose for a group photo at their annual banquet at the Sportsmen's Migratory Bird Center.

photo by: Mary Warren

The Magee Marsh volunteers also provide physical labor and maintenance for improvement projects and donate many volunteer hours at the Bird Center. Volunteers and Friends participate in numerous annual special events such as a beach cleanup, International Migratory Bird Day and the Waterfowlers' Festival. The group also held a garlic mustard "pulling party" last summer to help get rid of the non-native plant that was aggressively overtaking native species along Magee's popular boardwalk.

One of the group's most important accomplishments was the Betty Wolfe memorial, according to Damschroeder. Although it was purchased with a memorial donation from the Wolfe family, the Friends had a role in the planning of the wood warbler display and contributed another $3,000 to fund the project. This unique display is especially useful to birders who come to observe warblers at the well-known boardwalk.

When visiting Magee Marsh you may see wading birds, warblers, waterfowl, and white-tailed deer; perhaps a muskrat, trumpeter swan, and maybe your very first bald eagle in the wild. As dedicated partners to the Division of Wildlife, these special "friends" will ensure that Magee Marsh is preserved for future generations to visit and marvel at.

Meet Some "Friends" of Magee Marsh

Steve and Vicki Secord
Toledo

One duo of volunteers and FOMM members is Steve and Vicki Secord. The two have dedicated many hours to volunteering at the Bird Center over the past 10 years and participating in special events such as beach clean-ups, the garlic mustard pulling event, International Migratory Bird Day, Canada Goose Day, Wooden Feather Day, and Waterfowlers' Festival. Steve and son Garrett were the key players in planning and constructing a photography blind located on the walking trail behind the Bird Center.

"We became volunteers and FOMM members because it sounded like fun... and it has been," said Vicki Secord. We have met people from all over the globe who visit Magee Marsh. One day a man gave me a French driver's license in order to borrow a pair of binoculars. And every time I volunteer at the Bird Center, I learn something new about wildlife.

"The Friends group is a diverse group of people, including birders, sportsmen, and just plain outdoor people, who come together with a common focus. By sharing our ideas and our energy we have worked to enhance the visitors' experience at Magee Marsh and the Bird Center.

photo by: Larry DeVries

Magee Marsh Naturalist Mary Warren presents long-time volunteer Bob Lund with a certificate of appreciation for his years of service.

photo by: Melissa Hathaway

Volunteer Vicki Secord informs a visitor about the walking trails available at Magee Marsh.

"Visitors can come out to Magee Marsh and explore at their own pace looking for whatever type of wildlife they choose, or just sit and let the wildlife come to them."

Bob Lund
Perrysburg

FOMM Life Member Bob Lund has served as a volunteer for the past 11 years. "As a founding member of FOMM, I felt the group would be another way to promote Magee Marsh and provide items for visitors to remember their visit. We serve as ambassadors by teaching the many visitors who come from throughout the country about the area."

Some of the volunteers provide their specialties in making contributions to Magee Marsh. Lund should be referred to as the resident "Decoy Curator." As an expert in waterfowl decoy carving and collecting, he maintains the large, valuable collection of antique decoys on display at the Bird Center.

Eugene and Patty Naujock
Toledo

Eugene Naujock serves as the caretaker of the butterfly garden outside the Bird Center. Naujock and his wife Patty have been a part of Magee Marsh for the past eight years after becoming hooked on birding at Magee.

"I think FOMM members and volunteers positively impact Magee Marsh by providing many physical enhancements to the area, but especially by providing greeting smiles to visitors," said Eugene."We are able to discuss with visitors from all parts of the country the features of Magee Marsh, unusual bird sightings, and other nearby nature and birding areas to visit. I have found my time at the Marsh a great learning experience, which I willingly share with others including visitors from Switzerland, England, Canada and many U.S. states from Maryland to California. It should be noted that birders spend some $6 million a year in the Lake Erie shore area, a significant contribution to the local economy."

Jean and Les Swaney
Sandusky

Jean and Les Swaney, six-year volunteers and FOMM members got involved, "because it provided a needed service that we would enjoy, helps others, and offers self-satisfaction -- all in a setting we had already grown to love," said Jean Swaney. She regularly volunteers at the Bird Center and has done everything from greeting visitors to weeding flower beds, picking up trash, and stuffing envelopes for the research staff.

Volunteer Steve Secord and his son built a blind for photographers and other wildlife enthusiasts at Magee Marsh.

photo by: Melissa Hathaway

Join the Magee Marsh Ambassadors

Do you enjoy visiting Magee Marsh and want to do something to help preserve the wetland and its heritage? To become a Magee Marsh volunteer or member of the Friends of Magee Marsh, contact:

Mary Warren
Sportsmen's Migratory Bird Center
(419) 898-0960, extension 31
mary.warren@dnr.state.oh.us

The Friends contributed to the memorial warbler display located at the popular Magee Marsh Boardwalk.

photo by: Melissa Hathaway

photo by: Jim McCormac

NEW OBSERVATION DECK AT THE WILDS DRAWS BIRDERS

Nearly 200 birders attended the dedication of the new birding observation deck at the Wilds in Muskingum County last December. Wilds Director Dr. Evan Blumer, (left), and Dr. Bernard Master of the Ohio Ornithological Society and Division of Wildlife Chief Steve Gray (right) cut the ribbon. The Division of Wildlife contributed $50,000 for the deck. The Wilds, a 10,000-acre large animal conservation and research facility, is also known for its great birding, particularly for hawks and owls.

NEW WILDLIFE AREA OPENS IN SOUTHERN OHIO

An additional 4,000 acres in southern Ohio is now available for public hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing thanks to a five-year agreement between the Division of Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy. The Ironton Forest Wildlife Area features a diverse landscape excellent for wildlife habitat, including high ridges, deep hollows notched by streams, and forested wetlands. The area boasts healthy white-tailed deer and wild turkey populations and provides important habitat to species of special interest, including migratory songbirds, bobcats, and black bear. Located predominantly in Lawrence County, the area is accessible from State Route 93. The Division administers more than 200,000 acres of public land across the state.

The Nature Conservancy®

NOT YOUR TYPICAL KITTY-IN-A-TREE-RESCUE

by Susie Matthews

Late one afternoon last August, State Wildlife Investigator Travis Abele got the call that a bald eagle was somehow tethered to a log in the middle of the Scioto River. Abele immediately headed to the river.

Local resident Tony Phipps had found the bald eagle and contacted authorities. Sergeant Darren Fyke and Deputy Jason Frazier from the Scioto County Sheriff's Department and State Watercraft Officer Heather Abele also arrived at the river to assist. The distressed bird could fly about three feet then would drop down into the water and make its way back to the log. Without hesitation, investigator Abele and the watercraft officer walked waist deep into the river to reach the bird. The plan was to find what the bird was hung-up on, and release it. Once they reached the bird, they realized they needed a new plan.

Apparently the eagle had chosen that spot to catch a quick meal earlier that day. Spotting a catfish close to the surface, the eagle had swooped down, caught the fish, and landed on the log to dine. That particular catfish was on a stringer attached to the log, and with some fancy footwork the eagle had become tangled in the line. After trying to untangle the line mid-river, they decided to cut the line from the log and carry the bird to shore. Once out of the water, they worked to untangle the stringer. The bird did not show much gratitude for the rescue as at one point it grabbed and pulled on a beak-full of the watercraft officer's hair as she worked to free its talons.

As daylight began to fade, they decided the eagle needed to recuperate overnight from its stressful and exhausting day. After a night without distress and almost an entire saugeye for dinner, the eagle was released the next day. The officers watched as the bird flew to a nearby hickory tree where it spent the next day and a half preening and cleaning its feathers. Clean, dry, rested, and hopefully not hungry for catfish, the eagle soared from its perch two full days after being trapped on the river.

EXHIBITION SHOOTER TOM KNAPP WOWED MIAMI COUNTY EVENT-GOERS

Professional Exhibition Shooter Tom Knapp (center) with Miami County Wildlife Officer Jason Snyder (left) and Outdoor Skills Officer Jeff Wenning (right).

Spectators at the annual Miami County Pheasants Forever Chapter's annual Sporting Clays Shoot last July got a special treat. Professional Exhibition Shooter Tom Knapp made a special appearance and performed an exhibition shoot that included various props and shooting tricks. The event also included a challenging sporting clays course for 100 registered shooters, and the Division's Shooting Simulator was open for event-goers.

photo by: Corey Cockerill

DIVISION RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS IAFWA AWARD

The Division of Wildlife received the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' (IAFWA) Ernest Thompson Seton Award for 2005. The award is presented to the state, provincial, or federal agency that has publicly promoted the need for scientific management of wildlife resources. Division Chief Steven A. Gray accepted the award during the annual IAFWA meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. Chief Gray was also presented a companion award for his involvement with the success of Ohio's wildlife management programs. The Division was nominated by Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, and USSA (U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance).

ANGLERS: DISPOSE OF FISHING LINE PROPERLY!

by Jim O'Boyle, Park Ranger
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Caesar Creek Lake

Let this be a reminder of how fishing line can spell trouble, even death, for wildlife. This young Caspian tern got tangled with discarded fishing line on the beach at Caesar Creek Lake. It was still able to fly, which made rescue attempts unsuccessful. In spite of the determination of the adult to care for its offspring, the young tern died after a six-day struggle with the line. Please pick up old fishing line (even if it belonged to someone else) and put it in the trash to help keep our parks and wildlife areas clean and safe.

OUTDOOR CHANNEL

OUTDOOR CHANNEL AIRING *Wild Ohio* TV SHOW

The nationally aired Outdoor Channel has featured two of the Division's *Wild Ohio* TV segments and will most likely air more segments in the future. The channel's Fish and Wildlife Journal (FWJ) airs segments of TV magazine shows produced by state fish and wildlife agencies to show what the states are doing for wildlife management and the sporting opportunities they provide. *Wild Ohio* TV segments have included Ohio's trophy white-tailed deer hunting and Lake Erie's Central Basin steelhead fishery. Go to http://outdoorchannel.com for air times.

GEAR UP FOR LAKE ERIE WALLEYES

Lake Erie anglers should gear up for an exceptional year of walleye fishing. The excellent 2003 walleye hatch, which will dominate the fishery, is comparable to the record hatches of 1982 and 1986. These fish should range from 15 to 20 inches over the course of the fishing season. Anglers can also expect walleyes from hatches of 1999 (20 to 26 inches), and 2001 (18 to 24 inches), as well as older "Fish Ohio" trophy fish.

OUTDOOR SKILLS Bow Fishing

by Marc Sommer

The off season is often thought of as a time of mourning for the hunter. The usual routine of waking early in the morning to get to that prime hunting spot or that secret location on the wildlife area is fragmented with months of longing for the season to begin. For the angler there is an overwhelming feeling to try something new or find that new toy to help catch a big one.

No longer should there be a downtime or "off season" for the hunter or an unfulfilled curiosity of trying something new for the angler – not when there is a sport that combines the skill set of both sports. Bow fishing provides another open season for the hunter and gadgets galore for the angler, and offers a challenge that is sure to bring a lifetime of enjoyment. Bow fishing is becoming a favorite pastime of hunters and a new challenge that appeals to anglers.

Bow fishing combines hunting and fishing into a recreational sport that requires the skills of an angler, such as reading the water, scouting for hot spots, and knowing how to reel in the big fish. It also requires the skills of the archer such as practice, patience, and quick yet concise targeting expertise. If you can combine the two, you will soon have big payoffs in the form of big fish.

The targeted species are "rough" or "forage" fish by fisheries biologists standards, "trash" fish to many avid anglers, and "aquatic gold" to the bow fisher. Rough fish consist of carp, gar, buffalo, suckerfish, and drum, all of which can present a challenge not found in the world of hunting or fishing. Once one of these "gold" species is found, the real fun begins. The art of bow fishing consists of shooting a special arrow from a bow. The arrow is attached to fishing line that is wound either around a spool or in a traditional fishing reel that mounts to the bow. Once a fish below the surface has been struck by a special arrow and arrow tip, angling skills take over and the fish is reeled in.

GEAR INCLUDES:

- A fiberglass bow equipped with a fishing reel or spool that attaches to the stabilizer mount found on most bows;
- Dacron or braided fishing line from 30- to 100-pound test;
- An all fiberglass or fiberglass core arrow, and a special field point that is designed to hold the fish with two barbs.

Reels are available from many fishing tackle manufacturers and arrows and tips are available from most archery tackle manufacturers. For the hard core angler turned hunter there is a rod and reel combination that mounts to the bow and field tips are available with retractable blades.

THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO:

- A valid Ohio fishing license is required.
- Rough fish are easier to target at night when they will move into the shallower waters to feed. April - August are prime months to go in Ohio. Although a boat helps the archer find fish in hard to reach places, bank shots can be found at most inland reservoirs and streams throughout Ohio.
- Missed shots should be expected, but practice does make perfect. For every one foot of water depth an archer should aim about three to four inches below the target to allow for the refraction of the water.
- Fish considered forage fish throughout the state of Ohio based on the Ohio Revised Code include carp, quillback, suckers, bowfin, gar, buffalo, gizzard shad, and goldfish. Sheepshead are also considered forage fish in the Lake Erie fishing district only.

Bow fishing presents an archer year around opportunities to hone skills and offers the angler an opportunity to try a new and exciting method for catching big fish. Now downtime means no more off season hunting blues and one more way to step outside and catch a memory of your own.

Wildlife Law Enforcement

Field Notes

BROWN COUNTY POACHERS APPREHENDED

by Tim Schlater, Field Supervisor, District Five

Acting on a tip through the Turn-In-a-Poacher hotline, Brown County Wildlife Officer Allan Wright followed ATV tracks and deer blood and hair for over a mile that led him to a large 10-point buck hanging from a tree. The buck had been killed with a rifle. However, it was the day before the opening of bow season.

Officer Wright, joined by two additional officers, stood watch on the buck until two men approached through the woods. After a foot pursuit, Dana Holland was arrested, however, Michael McCleese escaped. A search at the nearby McCleese residence resulted in the seizure of 32 items of evidence including a bloody knife, wet camouflage clothes covered in deer hair, and untagged or unlawfully taken deer antlers and turkey parts. A search of the Holland residence resulted in more evidence including hot charred deer antlers, which were recovered from several burn piles where the suspects tried to destroy illegal deer parts.

A total of 38 charges were filed against McCleese, Holland, and Jamie Holland, Dana's brother. The charges included possession of untagged deer parts, possession of deer parts taken unlawfully, deterring a wildlife officer, possession of Division of Wildlife property (signs), hunting turkey without a license, hunting turkey without a turkey permit, failure to tag a turkey, and possession of an untagged turkey. Fines and restitution imposed in Brown County Municipal Court totaled $4,950 and court costs totaled $2,583. Each defendant received a two-year suspension of hunting privileges, and all wildlife parts and a Honda ATV were forfeited.

photo by: Tim Schlater

Brown County Wildlife Officer Allan Wright is shown with some of the items forfeited in the Brown County case.

CANADIAN COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN PAYS HEFTY FINES

A Canadian commercial fisherman paid close to $14,000 (US funds) in fines and restitution in U.S. and Canadian courts for illegally catching fish in the Ohio waters of Lake Erie and falsifying catch reports.

In December 2004, the Division of Wildlife notified the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources that the U.S. Coast Guard was monitoring the Miss Vanessa II as it pulled gill nets in U.S. waters. The captain of the commercial vessel was Jose Pacheco of Wheatley, Ontario. When the vessel returned to Wheatley, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources conservation officers seized 1,161 kilograms of fish, including 1,101 kilograms of walleye. Investigators found that the location of the nets as written in the captain's daily catch report for that day was false.

Pacheco was charged by the Division of Wildlife for taking walleye with the use of gill nets in the Ohio waters of Lake Erie. He appeared in Vermilion Municipal Court last August and paid a $1,000 (US) fine and $4,200 (US) for restitution for the illegally caught fish. In the Ontario Court of Justice in Windsor last September, Pacheco was charged with fishing out of his permitted zone and submitting a false daily catch record. He was fined $5,000 (CA) and ordered permanent seizure of the fish, and the $5,352. (CA) that he had been paid for the fish.

LAKE ERIE BAG LIMITS INCREASED

The Ohio Wildlife Council adopted increases in the daily bag limits on walleye and yellow perch effective March 1, 2006. The daily bag limit on walleye was increased from three fish to four between March 1 and April 30, with a six-fish bag limit the remainder of the year. An existing 15-inch size limit remains. The bag limit for yellow perch was increased from 30 to 40 fish per day. State wildlife biologists will continue to monitor the walleye and perch populations and work with state and provincial partners to ensure the continued vitality of the Lake Erie fishery. A proposal allowing anglers to keep only one channel catfish larger than 28 inches and one flathead catfish larger than 35 inches in a day was also approved.

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****.*

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: I think I saw a five-lined skink in northeast Ohio. Is this type of skink found in that part of the state?

Brett Berry, Bristolville, OH

A: The five-lined skink is a type of lizard that is found throughout Ohio. Surprising to many, there are actually four native species of lizards that occur in a variety of habitats throughout the state. Lizards are reptiles, just like snakes. They differ from slimy salamanders in that they have rough, dry, scaly skin and have claws on their toes. Five-lined skinks live under the bark of decaying logs, in stumps, or in rock piles and feed on grasshoppers, crickets, and beetles. Young five-lined skinks have a bright blue tail which will break off if grabbed to help the skink escape from a predator.

Q: My family and I raise monarch butterflies. We have noticed after hatching that some of the butterflies only have four legs instead of six. Can you explain why?

Justin Hiltner, age 13, Newark, OH

A: Monarchs, like all other insects do actually have six legs. But they look like they only have four legs because the two front legs are tiny and curl up next to the thorax (the part of the body between the head and abdomen). This is a characteristic of their particular family, the Nymphalids.

Q: I've noticed that house finches will sit on my birdfeeder and eat sunflower seeds while the chickadees fly away with a seed. Why don't the chickadees stay and eat at the feeder like the finches?

James Gilliam, Maineville, OH

A: Just like different kinds of birds eat different kinds of food, different kinds of birds also feed differently! Birds like chickadees and nuthatches seem to prefer to fly to a nearby perch to crack open an individual seed, then will fly right back to a feeder for another seed. House finches and cardinals on the other hand, seem to be more comfortable with sitting on the feeder while they eat. These subtle differences are part of what makes up each species' niche – their own way of life within the habitat.

Chickadees in Ohio

Did you know Ohio has two different species of chickadees? Carolina chickadees are found in the southern two-thirds of the state. Their song is a four-part whistle: "fee-bee fee-bay." Black-capped chickadees only live in the northern third of Ohio. Their song is a two-part whistle: "fee-bee."

Both species look a lot alike, so listen for their song and take note of where you are in Ohio to help identify which chickadee you have. Chickadees will sometimes nest in boxes intended for bluebirds. Their nest is made of moss and lined with fur.

Backyards for Wildlife

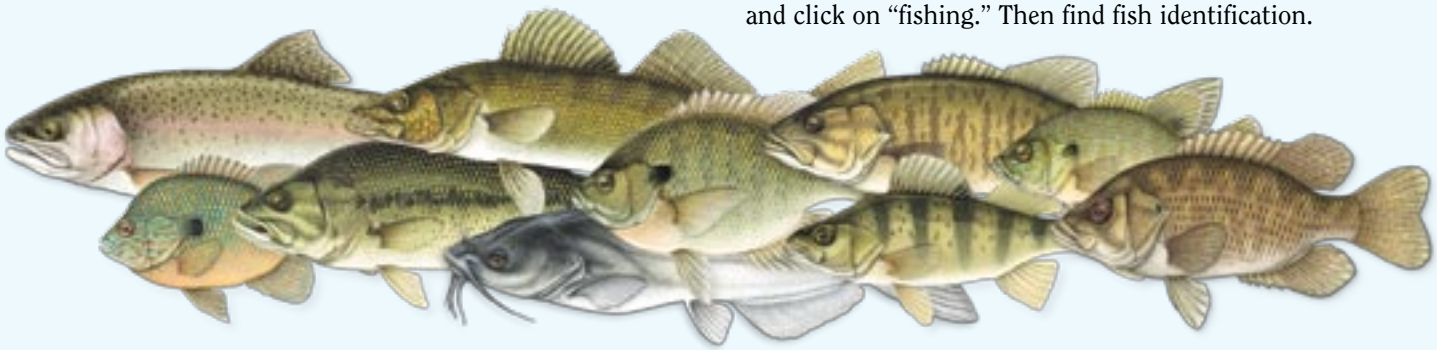
For Wild Kids

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FISH?

by Melissa Hathaway

Do you have a favorite fish? Does your family like to fish for a particular fish species? Bluegills, largemouth bass, and catfish are very plentiful in ponds and lakes all across Ohio. Trout are found in many streams, as well as lakes. Walleyes, yellow perch, and smallmouth bass are the most popular fish for Lake Erie anglers. And lake sturgeon and paddlefish are state endangered species. (It is illegal to fish for endangered fish.)

Do some research on a favorite Ohio fish species and write a short essay about it. Be sure to include its habitat (the type of water body where it lives), its behavior, and any special traits it may have. Is it a game fish (legally fished for), or is it an endangered species? Then create artwork to go with your essay. The best place to begin your search for Ohio's fish is to visit the Division of Wildlife's Website at www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife and click on "fishing." Then find fish identification.



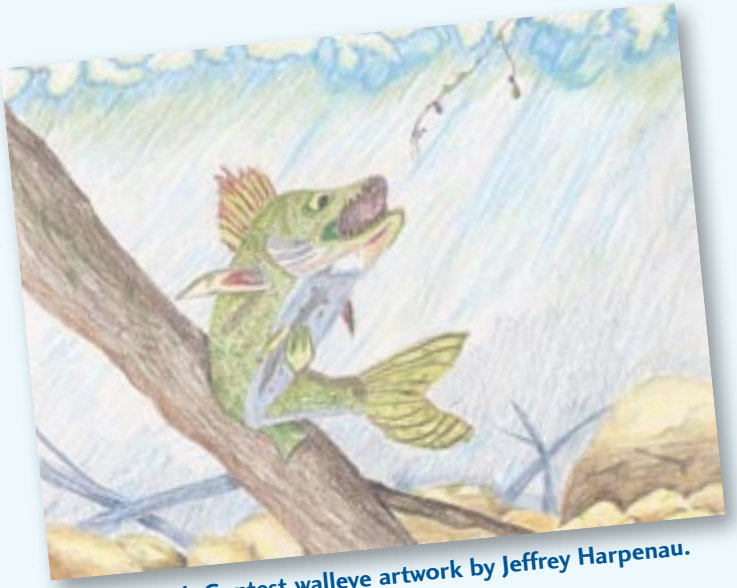
Hey Kids! Take your parents fishing during Ohio's Free Fishing Days May 6 and 7, 2006.

Young Ohio Artists Recognized

Matthew and Jeffrey Harpenau, of Cincinnati, were the 2005 Ohio winners of the Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest. As the Ohio winners they traveled to Minneapolis, Minnesota to represent our state at the national State-Fish Art Expo. They also learned about fish and conservation by writing an essay about the fish species in their artwork.

The organization Wildlife Forever works to preserve America's wildlife and sponsors the program each year. "The State-Fish Art Contest artists are true ambassadors for our natural resources," said Douglas H. Grann, president of Wildlife Forever. "With Matthew's and Jeffrey's help, the State-Fish Art Contest is spreading the good news about our outdoor heritage."

The deadline to enter the 2006 competition is March 31, 2006. You can find out more about the State-Fish Art Contest by logging onto www.statefishart.com.



State-Fish Contest walleye artwork by Jeffrey Harpenau.

State-Fish Contest walleye artwork by Matthew Harpenau.

Wild Game Gourmet

recipes

Wild Game Gourmet
the Wild Game Gourmet as seen on Wild Ohio *Video Magazine*

Simple Baked Fish

1 pound fish fillets
(bluegill, bass, perch, walleye, or other preferred fish)
2 tablespoons melted butter
2 tablespoons Italian breadcrumbs
1 tablespoon dried parsley or other favorite herbs
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese

Spray baking dish with cooking spray. Lay fillets in dish and brush with melted butter. Sprinkle breadcrumbs and cheese over fillets. Bake at 450 degrees 15 minutes or until fillets are opaque and flaking.

Contributed by Lindsay Deering

Southwestern Wild Turkey Salad

(This recipe is a good use for left over turkey)

Salad Ingredients:
¼ wild turkey breast, cut into cubes and sautéed
1 head Romaine lettuce, chopped
1 cup black beans
½ cup corn
1 cup tomatoes, cubed
1 cup shredded cheese *(Monterey Jack and Cheddar)*
1 cup crushed tortilla chips *(lime flavored chips add a unique flavor)*
2 tablespoons fresh chopped cilantro

Dressing:
½ cup Caesar salad dressing
½ teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon chili powder

Toss together first five salad ingredients with the salad dressing in large bowl. Add cilantro, shredded cheese, and tortilla chips; toss again and serve.

Contributed by Vicki Mountz

For more great wild game recipes go to www.wildohiocookbook.com

WILDLIFE Reflections

Dear Division of Wildlife:

My grandson Jordan and I recently enjoyed an afternoon at your Aquatic Visitors Center on South Bass Island. Jordan is an avid angler and I coach him in "anglerese," i.e., "The fish was THIS BIG…" While visiting the center, I related a fish tale to Jordan and your staff and I have this photograph as proof that the fish really was a big one.

The man in the photo is my Uncle Russ Eberle and the sturgeon he caught in 1952. The photo was used in a cover story in the *Vermilion News* (now the *Vermilion Photojournal*). (It also appeared in the *Ohio Conservation Bulletin*, predecessor to *Wild Ohio* magazine, in October 1952.)

Russ caught the sturgeon in a net while working with his father in the family's commercial fishing business several miles off Vermilion. He was a little mysterious about exactly where, no doubt he didn't want any competition at his spot! The sturgeon weighed 194 pounds, and was almost eight-foot long. Uncle Russ was a tad over six foot, and you can see he was dwarfed by his catch.

There was speculation as to how old it was and whether it was the largest sturgeon caught on record. I was told the fish was a big feature on the menu at local fish fries that season, but wasn't that tasty. Too bad it wasn't preserved for posterity.

Commercial fisheries were plentiful in Vermilion and other communities all around Lake Erie when I was growing up. They are gone now and Uncle Russ passed away several years ago. A few old timers are still around who remember when the fish was caught, and when the lake teemed with a variety of fish, including sturgeon, that aren't often found in the lake today; a time when you could see the bottom of the lake through clean, clear waters.

Whenever someone mentions sightings of Loch Ness's Nessie or our own Lake Erie's Bessie, I am reminded of my Uncle Russ and his Really Big Fish. Thank you again for an informative afternoon. We are looking forward to our next visit.

Best Wishes,
Wayne Fischer and Jordan Prieto

The Division of Wildlife's Aquatic Visitors Center is open in May for school group tours by reservation, and open to the public Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend, Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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