

# Wild Ohio

Summer 2006

M A G A Z I N E

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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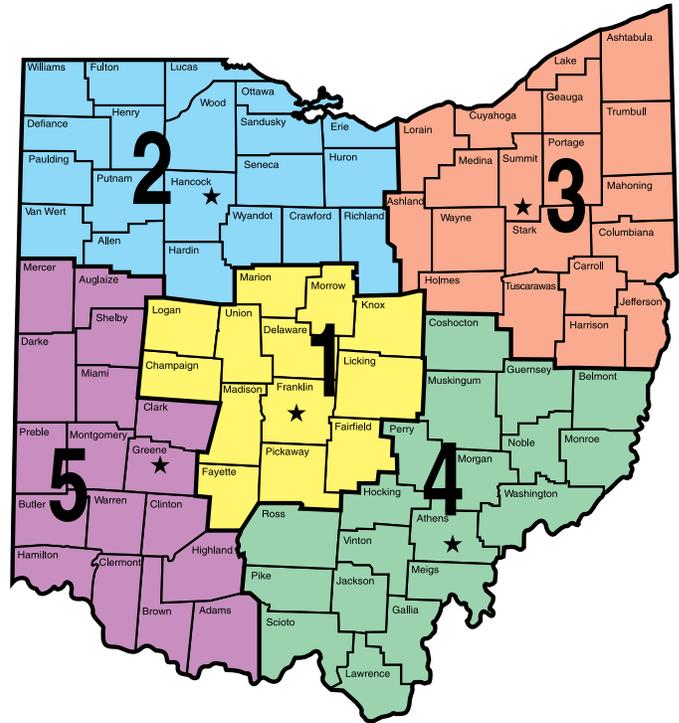
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**1-800-POACHER**

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<http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife>

Division of Wildlife Website

**On the Wildlife Calendar for Summer**

- June 3-11** **National Fishing and Boating Week**, log on to [www.takemefishing.org](http://www.takemefishing.org) to find events in your area.
- July 2-7** **Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports Education Camp**, open to any teen who wants to learn more about Ohio's exciting shooting sports. For more information go to [www.ohio4hshootingports.org/shootingedcamp.htm](http://www.ohio4hshootingports.org/shootingedcamp.htm).
- August 2-13** **Ohio State Fair, Columbus**; visit the wildlife exhibits, walk through the butterfly house, shoot a bulls-eye at the archery range, or let the kids fish in the pond.
- August 26** **Southeastern Ohio Hunting & Trapping Expo**, Pritchard Laughlin Center, Cambridge, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Contact Guernsey SWCD at (740) 432-5624.

For more listings, go to [www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife) and click on the calendar.





## Features



### A Century of Shooting Heritage at Camp Perry

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Camp Perry continues its long shooting heritage as training grounds for both civilian and military marksmen and home of the National Rifle and Pistol Matches.



### Ohio Zoos Go Wild Ohio

10-13

The Division of Wildlife and Ohio zoos partner in unique projects to restore some of Ohio's most interesting native endangered species.

#### On the Cover...

The beautiful orange sulfur butterfly is found in fields, gardens, and woodland edges in all of Ohio's 88 counties. Photo by Tim Daniel.

### Creel Surveys...

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**A Moment of Your Time for a Mountain of Information**  
Creel interviews with anglers provide the Division valuable information that helps monitor, assess, and manage Ohio's lakes and reservoirs for quality fishing.



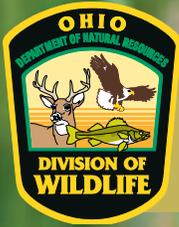
### Ohio Water Trails Program

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The Division is partnering with several agencies to improve river access so Ohioans will be better able to paddle their way closer to riparian wildlife.

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# Ohio's watchable wildlife



## Watchable Wildlife • *Northern*

by Jen Dennison • photos by Tim Daniel

As children, many of us have fond memories of belly-crawling along a pond edge trying to sneak up on frogs. The end result was often a sharp “peep” and a small splash as the frog jumped into the water. That peep was the alarm call of the Northern green frog.

Northern green frogs are by far the most abundant and widely distributed frog in Ohio. Just about any body of water can contain a population of Northern green frogs. They are closely related to the bullfrog and the two are often mistaken for each other. A fairly large frog, Northern green frogs measure 2 ¼ to 3 ½ inches in length. Bullfrogs can be twice that size. You can tell the difference between the two by looking at their backs. Green frogs have two ridges or skin folds that run the length of their back, not found on bullfrogs. Both species have a prominent tympanum (ear) behind each eye. Males and females are distinguished by the size of their tympana. Male green and bull frogs have tympana approximately twice the size of their eyes, while females’ tympana are about the same size as their eyes.

Northern green frogs range in color from green, greenish brown, brownish, yellowish green, and olive, with some rare individuals being blue. They have yellowish or white bellies. Male green frogs usually have yellow throats, which are very bright during the breeding season. Often, there are small black dots scattered on the back, although this is more common in juveniles.

The breeding season for green frogs begins in May and extends into August. The male attracts a female by calling the familiar single “gunk” that sounds like the plucking of a banjo string. A pair will lay and fertilize between 1,000 and 5,000 eggs in a thin mass floating in the water or draped over plant life. The eggs hatch in three to five days into tadpoles three to four inches in length. If they are hatched in the beginning of the breeding season, the tadpoles will metamorphose into adult frogs by the end of the summer. If they are hatched later in the summer, they will overwinter as tadpoles and metamorphose the following spring. Adults overwinter underwater beneath debris and mud.



## VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES

Just about any pond, swamp, marsh, lake, slow-moving stream or river, or other body of water can contain a population of Northern green frogs. For the best chance of getting a good look at one, walk very slowly and quietly along the water's edge. They lay motionless and blend well into their environment, so look closely. Otherwise, once you spook one of these quick critters, you will only hear its high-pitched "peep" alarm call and the small splash of water. Also look for their floating mass of eggs in plant life along the water's edge.



# Green Frog

Northern green frogs use a lay-in-wait approach to feeding. They sit motionless on vegetation and stream or pond banks and catch anything that comes within reach of their long sticky tongue. They will eat anything they can swallow such as insects and their larvae, crayfish, millipedes, spiders, mollusks, earthworms, fish, and other smaller species of frogs.

Many different animals prey on green frogs including fish, other frogs, water snakes, snapping turtles, wading birds, and several predatory mammals including humans. Fried frog legs are considered a delicacy by many people. (Check the 2005-2006 Ohio Fishing Regulations Brochure (Publication 84) for regulations on taking frogs.) Their habit of remaining motionless helps protect them from predators. If danger approaches, they give their characteristic high-pitched "peep" alarm call to warn others, then quickly dive into the water and hide at the bottom.



# A Century of Shooting Heritage at CAMP PERRY

by Mark Witt

For nearly a century, the finest military and civilian marksmen and women from across the United States have gathered at the Camp Perry Training Site each year to participate in the National Rifle and Pistol Matches. Located in Ottawa County, the National Matches afford the opportunity to compete with the best shooters in the country from July through August.

The participation, scope, and allure of the National Matches has increased over the years bringing thousands of competitive shooters, support staff, vendors, and their families to the area. The influx of visitors to Ottawa County during the six weeks of the National Matches contributes over \$12 million to the local economy, according to a study conducted in 2000. Local businesses in nearby Port Clinton and Oak Harbor hang signs welcoming shooters into their establishments in appreciation of their support.

## A Training Grounds for the Country's Best Marksmen

In 1906, the U.S. government purchased much of the land that the Camp Perry Training Site encompasses. General A.B. Critchfield, former Adjutant General of Ohio, is credited as being "the real father of Camp Perry." He had a vision to establish the world's finest rifle range. Since 1907, the National Rifle and Pistol Matches have never left the Ohio shores of Lake Erie. Camp Perry has served not only as a rifle range, but also as an ordinance proving ground, a POW camp during World

War II and the Korea War, an airfield and heliport, a base of operation for the the 200<sup>th</sup> Red Horse Air National Guard Civil Engineering Squadron, an Ohio National Guard training site for a variety of weapon systems, and a state-of-the-art automated rifle range. Nearly all world class rifle and pistol shooters as well as military snipers have roots at Camp Perry.



photo by • CMP Archive Photo

▲ Two shooters dressed in the appropriate attire for the rifle and era represented at the match.

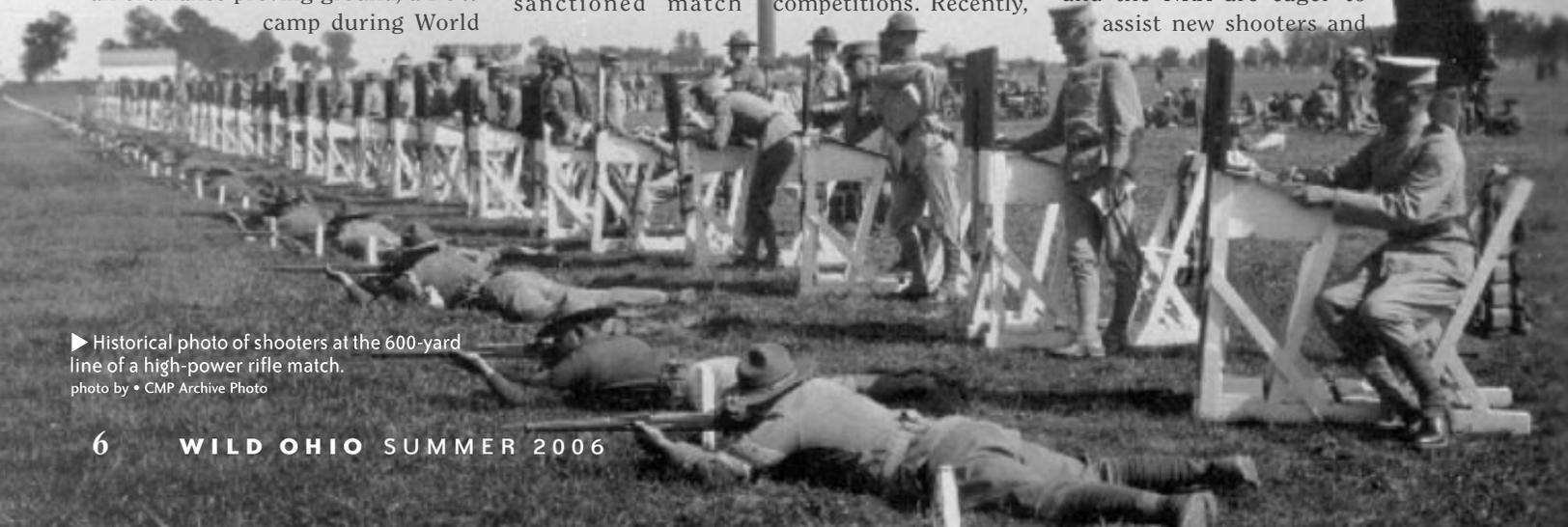
Hosting the National Matches each year, in conjunction with the National Rifle Association and the Ohio National Guard, is the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) whose headquarters and store reside at Camp Perry. The CMP is the evolution of a federal program approved by Theodore Roosevelt known as the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice. The program historically fostered improved marksmanship among the military as well as youth approaching military age.

The CMP's current function is to instruct U.S. citizens in marksmanship, and to promote the practice and safe usage of firearms, as well as to conduct competitions in the use of firearms. This heritage is passed on through the National Matches, Small Arms Firing Schools (SAFS), and a network of state affiliated organizations and sanctioned match competitions. Recently,

the CMP has been working with U.S. Army instructors in teaching advanced marksmanship to Army Squad Designated Marksman using expert civilian service rifle competitors. The CMP also supports Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (JROTC) marksmanship instruction and fields a junior rifle camp program. To support and fund these programs and operations the CMP is authorized by federal law to sell surplus .30 caliber M-1 Garand, 1903 Springfield and .22 caliber military rifles, parts, and ammunition to qualified U.S. citizens for marksmanship purposes. The U.S. Army gives full cooperation and support to the CMP mission.

## The National Matches

The 2005 National Matches saw 3,881 individual competitors, the highest participation since full government support ended in the 1960s. Participation in the National Matches can be a bit confusing and unclear to prospective new shooters. To help, the CMP offers the aforementioned SAFS in both rifle and pistol venues to teach new shooters range safety and rules, target and firearm instruction, and basic and advanced marksmanship skills. After the SAFS, new competitors can participate in any of the fun introductory matches like the John Garand, Springfield/Military Bolt, M-1 Carbine, or M16 matches. (See 2006 National Matches Schedule on the next page.) The CMP, Ohio Rifle and Pistol Association, and the NRA are eager to assist new shooters and



▶ Historical photo of shooters at the 600-yard line of a high-power rifle match.  
photo by • CMP Archive Photo

answer questions about participating in any of the shooting sports. To learn more visit these Websites:

- [www.odcmp.com](http://www.odcmp.com)
- [www.orpa.net](http://www.orpa.net)
- [www.nra.org](http://www.nra.org)

Camp Perry continues to improve itself for future training and range operations. These improvements include road construction, utilities upgrades, renovation of post facilities, and range berm and target replacement projects. Also on display at Camp Perry are tanks, armored vehicles, helicopters, and other military equipment.

Lastly, mentioning Camp Perry in *Wild Ohio* would not be complete without the inclusion of the Camp Perry bald eagle nest located safely down range of the trap and skeet range on the south side of the base. Each year the Division of Wildlife in cooperation with the Ohio National Guard holds a public eagle banding operation that draws hundreds of visitors and school groups. Perhaps it is fitting that our national symbol overlooks a site critical to the training of our military personnel and the home of the National Matches. I believe that Theodore Roosevelt and General A.B. Critchfield would nod in approval.



▲ State Senator Bob Latta and Ohio Governor Bob Taft assist the Division of Wildlife at an eagle banding event at Camp Perry.



photo by • CMP Archive Photo

◀ CMP staff coaches a shooter on the line at the junior air rifle camp.

▼ A junior shooter competes in the National Trophy Pistol Match.



photo by • Christine Elders/CMP

**THE NATIONAL MATCHES** *six weeks of competition*

- July 9-10 SAFS pistol competition and NRA junior pistol camp
- July 10 First Shot Ceremonies
- July 11-16 National Trophy and NRA pistol matches
- July 19-27 NRA smallbore competitions, junior smallbore rifle camp, and the rimfire sporter matches
- July 28-30 SAFS rifle competition and junior high power rifle clinic
- July 30-August 5 National Trophy Matches, M-16, M-1 Carbine, Springfield, and M-1 Garand Matches
- August 6-10 NRA rifle competition
- August 11-14 NRA long range rifle matches and long range firing school

A complete listing of the National Match calendar can be found at [www.odcmp.com/NationalMatches](http://www.odcmp.com/NationalMatches).



photo by • CMP Archive Photo

◀ Historical photo of Alice Bull, the first distinguished female rifle shooter. A trophy is awarded each year in her name.



▼ A competitor fires his M-1 Garand rifle in the rapid fire phase of the John C. Garand Match.

photo by • Sommer Wood/CMP



# Creel Surveys

**creel** (krēl) noun • 1. A large wicker basket for carrying fish. An angler's fishing basket

"Hello, I am Nick with the Ohio Division of Wildlife and I am conducting a survey of fishermen. Would you mind if I asked you some questions? The interview takes about five minutes." Our "Nick" is a Division of Wildlife Creel Clerk, one of the many part time employees, or interns we hire each year to help us learn more about Ohio fishing.

If you have been approached by one of the Division's creel clerks and taken a few minutes to answer their questions, then you are one of the many anglers helping make fishing better here in the Buckeye State. During 2004 nearly 5,000 anglers provided information to creel clerks on 33 reservoirs around Ohio. Survey results supply the Division with information to evaluate regulations and stocking programs, monitor and compare fisheries, and learn more about angler attitudes, opinions, and perceptions.

Each April through July, expect to see creel clerks hard at work on reservoirs during any given weekend. Research has indicated that surveying anglers at these particular times not only allows us to evaluate catch trends and collect other vital statistics, but also maximizes the number of reservoirs we can learn about each year. So look for our creel clerks on shore or in their boats, clipboard in hand, to stop by and chat during the first part of the fishing season.

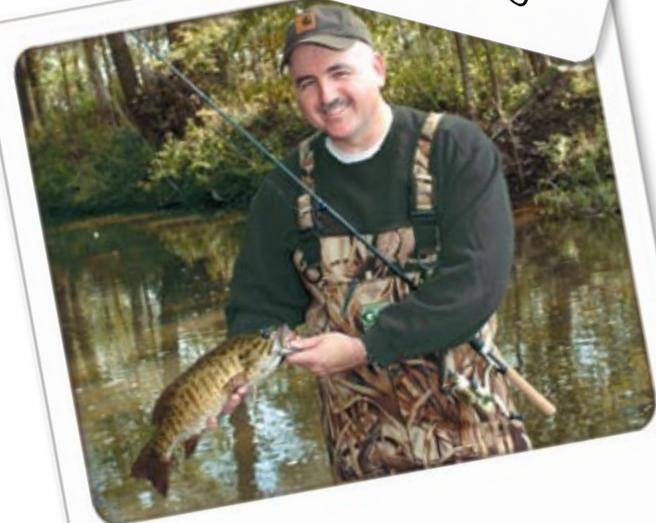
Creel surveys are used to collect three types of information: angler counts, catch results, and angler characteristics, each of which provide data necessary to assess fisheries. Angler counts are made by the creel clerk driving a boat at specific, pre-determined times along the entire distance of a reservoir, or a portion of a reservoir on larger ones, and counting anglers on the shore and in boats. The total number of anglers counted allows us to estimate how many hours anglers are fishing, broken down by shore or boat.

Catch results and angler characteristics are obtained from interviews that creel clerks conduct along the shore, boatside, or at boat ramps. Catch questions include how long an angler had been fishing that day, what that angler was fishing for, what types of fish and how many were caught, and what was kept. This information provides estimates of fishing success and harvest patterns. Angler characteristics questions, including demographic information, provide insights about who our anglers are and what their opinions and attitudes are related to fishing experiences, including the quality of fishing. Taken together, angler counts, catch results, and angler characteristics give us a picture of fishing statewide as well as at specific reservoirs.

Creel survey statistics allow us to evaluate general angling trends or preferences, compare one reservoir to the next from a statewide perspective, and track the performance of a reservoir through time. For example, in 2004 the majority (37 percent) of



*Division of Wildlife creel clerks conduct interviews along the shore, boatside, or at boat ramps on weekends from April through July.*





A brief five minute interview with anglers provide the Division valuable information on catch results and angler characteristics.



The average angler kept about 25 percent of his or her catch during 2004.

reservoir anglers were fishing for “anything that bites.” However, among anglers specifically seeking a particular type of fish 22 percent were after black bass, making it the most sought after fish in many inland reservoirs. Other species such as crappie (11 percent), saugeye and walleye (10 percent), and catfish (9 percent) were sought less frequently.

Creel surveys also allow us to evaluate catch and harvest patterns for certain types of fish. For example, during 2004 the average angler took about an hour to catch a fish of any species. As you might expect, anglers targeting a particular type of fish were much more successful than the average fishermen. For example, crappie anglers typically took about 45 minutes to catch a crappie, while anglers targeting black bass took about two hours to catch a bass. The average angler kept about 25 percent of their catch during 2004. However, release patterns differ among anglers targeting certain types of fish. For example, black bass anglers released 94 percent of their catch, while crappie anglers kept almost 36 percent of the fish they catch.

The Division has always known that Ohio’s anglers are serious about fishing, and the number of days they spend on the water proves it. In 2004, reservoir anglers estimated they fished an average of 55 days per year. Anglers also seem satisfied with the fishing on the reservoir they fished most often. When asked how likely they were to return to their favorite reservoir, 87 percent said they were very or extremely likely to do so.

Information anglers provide to creel clerks is just as important in helping biologists manage Ohio’s fisheries as electrofishing or netting surveys. Division creel clerks will continue to survey 30 to 35 reservoirs per year in search of anglers to interview for many years to come. These interviews generally take less than five minutes to complete and can only provide meaningful information with your help.

We hope you will continue to pitch in and help us again as many of you did in previous years. Giving creel clerks a little of your time can provide us with a mountain of information that helps us monitor, assess, and manage Ohio’s reservoirs for quality fishing.



**Form 10: Angler Survey Interview**  
 ODNR, Division  
 Inland Management

Form Current:

Project: FIDR01	Date:	Loc:
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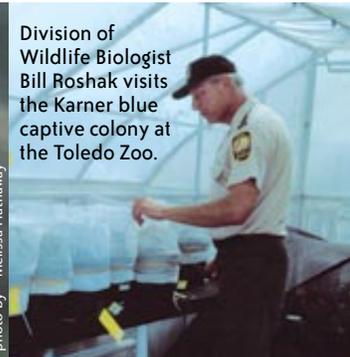
Sample No: _____
Interview/End Time: _____
Angler Type: Sh Bt

Expe

# OHIO ZOOS GO WILD OHIO

by Melissa Hathaway, photos by Tim Daniel

Zoos and wildlife diversity are synonymous. Zoo staff deal with exotic animals from throughout the world, but most folks are surprised to discover that they are also committed to wildlife diversity in their own backyard. Through unique partnerships with the Division of Wildlife, Ohio's zoos participate in wildlife management and education projects to bolster wildlife species right here in the Buckeye State. Several Ohio zoos are instrumental in Division of Wildlife restoration projects by maintaining captive breeding colonies for several of Ohio's endangered species.



Division of Wildlife Biologist Bill Roshak visits the Karner blue captive colony at the Toledo Zoo.

photo by • Melissa Hathaway

photo by • Melissa Hathaway

A Toledo Zoo staff person releases Karner blue butterflies on the Kitty Todd Preserve.

## KARNER BLUE BUTTERFLY

The Nature Conservancy's Kitty Todd Preserve near Toledo is a unique oak savanna remnant with a very special resident. The small but striking Karner blue butterfly, once common in the Oak Openings Region of northwest Ohio, was last seen in 1988. Several years later, the Ohio Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Team formed to develop a plan to bring back the endangered butterfly.

The team selected Kitty Todd Preserve as the initial release site because of the presence of wild lupine plants on the preserve. The rare lupine, the only host plant for the caterpillar of the Karner blue, is found only in the Oak Openings Region and several other locations in the state. Besides loss of habitat, the butterfly's demise was due in part from the lack of natural disturbance – the necessary wildfires that promote the growth of oak savanna plants such as lupine.

The Toledo Zoo built a greenhouse to serve as Ohio's captive rearing facility and

to propagate wild lupine as a source of food for offspring caterpillars. Karner blue butterflies collected at Michigan's Allegan State Game Area were taken to the zoo to start the breeding colony. The female butterflies laid eggs, the eggs hatched, and the pupae are raised as they emerge into butterflies.

The Toledo Zoo is the only institution in the country to successfully reproduce and release the Karner blue butterfly. Since 1998, zoo staff has released over 1,300 Karner blue butterflies (an average of 200 per year) at Kitty Todd.

"The Karner blue project is one of the first of its kind in the United States because of the partnerships of the Recovery Team," said Mitchell Magdich, Toledo Zoo Curator of Education. "The project is being used by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association to establish conservation projects for rare butterflies in other zoos in North America. Our staff has conducted training for other zoo staffs wanting to

conduct similar projects near their zoos."

Because of the unique partnerships and the hours and commitment of the Toledo Zoo staff, these beautiful butterflies are adding color and wildlife diversity once again to the Kitty Todd Preserve. "The Karner blue butterfly population at Kitty Todd is on its way to self sustainability," said Bill Roshak, wildlife biologist for the Division of Wildlife. "While the first Karner blues bred at the Toledo Zoo were offspring of adults collected from the Allegan State Game Area, future releases will now be those offspring from wild produced butterflies obtained at Kitty Todd."

Two Ohio researchers working with the Toledo Zoo recently received a State Wildlife Grant from the Division of Wildlife to study the direct impact of prescribed burning and mowing on Karner blue populations. Other wildlife diversity projects at the Toledo Zoo include a lake sturgeon display, backyard bird display, and a native amphibian display.



The people in the zoo crew photo from left to right Pete Johantgen, Ron Hatcher and Yvonne Clippinger



Division of Wildlife and zoo staffs released 25 Eastern Plains garter snakes at Killdeer Plains June 2005



The Columbus Zoo maintains a captive rearing facility for Eastern Plains garter snakes

## EASTERN PLAINS GARTER SNAKE

On a warm, sunny day in June 2005, staff from the Division of Wildlife and Columbus and Cleveland zoos, and noted herpetologists released endangered Eastern Plains garter snakes on the Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area. Local media attended as well to capture the excitement.

The docile Eastern Plains garter snake once inhabited the prairies of Wyandot and Marion counties. After loss of much of its habitat, the snake exists today on only two remnant prairies on the wildlife area.

The 25 snakes released last June were one-year-old snakes born and reared at the zoos in captive breeding colonies to help boost the wild population. Each snake was implanted with a passive integrated transponder or "PIT" tag. These tags act as a "barcode" containing a unique number to help identify individual snakes in future population surveys.

"I work with wildlife species from all over the world, but these snakes are special because they are right here in our backyard," said Pete Giant, zookeeper at the Columbus Zoo. "Eastern Plains garter snakes are part of the prairie ecosystem. They are part of Ohio's natural resources and we should care about keeping them around for future generations."

After research in 1998 showed a 94 percent

decline in the snake's population from a 1984 survey, a multi-agency partnership was formed to initiate restoration efforts. Biologists collected pregnant snakes from Killdeer Plains in 1999 and 2000 to establish captive breeding colonies at the two zoos. From 1999 to 2002, 89 snakes were released soon after they were born, as compared to the one-year-old youngsters released in 2005. These one-year-old snakes will likely have a higher survival rate than snakes released soon after they are born. Both zoos are continuing this "head-starting" effort to bolster future survival rates of captive-reared snakes. An additional 45 one-year-old snakes reared by the zoos should be released at Killdeer Plains in 2006.

"Research showed the highest mortality rate of snakes is when they are very young," said Doug Wynn, herpetologist and biology teacher. "By having the zoos rear the young during their first year, we are releasing snakes that are larger and less susceptible to predators. This makes the zoos' role in this project very crucial."

The reintroduction project includes a variety of partners, including the two zoos, Division of Wildlife, several herpetologists, and Westerville North High School Field Studies Class led by Wynn. The students have been conducting research on the Eastern

Plains garter snake and other snake species for the past 13 years. The class teaches students how to apply scientific techniques in the field, not just the laboratory. Students involved over the years have conducted the principal population surveys on the Eastern Plains garter snake at Killdeer Plains. "This is real world science exposure to students," Wynn said.

The Division's Endangered Species and Wildlife Diversity Fund supports wildlife reintroduction projects, as well as ongoing research and education projects, many conducted through Ohio zoos. Other Division-sponsored projects at the Columbus Zoo include a wetland display, migratory songbird aviary, aviary curriculum development for educators, Ohio reptile exhibit, backyards for wildlife display, Western banded killifish restoration, and Ohio mussel research and education. In addition, the Division's education personnel conduct training workshops with zoo education and docent staffs on many topics including endangered species and the role of hunting and trapping in maintaining healthy wildlife populations. Many zoo education personnel are also trained in Project WILD.



Swan eggs were taken from wild nests in Alaska and incubated at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo.



Young trumpeter swans were reared at the Wilds for two years prior to release in the wild.



photo by • Melissa Hathaway

## TRUMPETER SWAN

Perhaps no other creature in the animal kingdom has been immortalized for its elegance and beauty as the swan. The majestic trumpeter swan now graces Ohio's natural landscape since the Division initiated the Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction Project 10 years ago.

The loss of habitat and human persecution nearly wiped out the population of trumpeter swans in North America by 1900. Swans were sought for their skins that provided down for powder puffs, and feathers to decorate fashionable hats and to make writing pens. Numerous state conservation efforts gradually rescued the trumpeter swan from near-extinction. In Ohio, the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and the Wilds played a major role in reestablishing this majestic swan.

For the first two years of the project, swans were obtained from zoos and private

individuals and housed at the Wilds before being released into the wild at age two. In a second phase, eggs were collected from wild trumpeter swan nests in Alaska and incubated at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. Once the eggs hatched, the young swans were transported to the Wilds for rearing for two years before being released in groups of 10 to 15 on wildlife areas with suitable wetlands.

Swans reared in the project were released on the following wildlife areas: Magee Marsh (Ottawa County), Mallard Club, (Lucas County) Killbuck Marsh (Holmes County), Pickerel Creek (Sandusky County), Mosquito Creek (Trumbull County), Grand River (Trumbull County), and Killdeer Plains (Wyandot County). Swans were also released at Winous Point Marsh Conservancy (Ottawa County), the Wilds (Muskingum County), Cedar Point National Wildlife Refuge (Lucas

County), and Toussaint Shooting Club (Ottawa County).

Swans, like many avian species, typically imprint on the area where they were released and most likely return to the area to nest once sexually mature. Swans begin to nest at three to four years of age. This brings the story to full circle; today Ohio is home to 18 breeding pairs of trumpeter swans. According to Division wildlife biologists, in all likelihood the population will continue to increase as more and more young fledge from successful nests.

Other projects undertaken by the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo include Wolf Woods, featuring an Ohio wetland, an Ohio birds and butterflies exhibit, Blanding's turtle research, and the Division's Eastern Plains garter snake reintroduction project.

OSU's captive colony of burying beetles was the second of its kind in the country.



## AMERICAN BURYING BEETLE

The fascinating American burying beetle is commonly referred to as a “carrion beetle.” The adult beetles seek out and bury carrion (an animal carcass) about the size of a dove or chipmunk on which their larvae feed. Highly unusual for an insect, both the male and female burying beetle take part in raising the young. Male burying beetles often locate carcasses and then attract a mate. Beetles often fight over the carcass, with the largest male and female individuals usually winning. The victors bury the carcass, the pair mates, and the female lays her eggs in an adjacent tunnel. Within a few days, the larvae develop and both adults feed and tend to the young. The average brood size is 12 to 15, but ranges from one to 30.

The larvae spend about a week in the tunnel being fed by the adults then move to the adjacent carcass where they feed and then crawl into the soil to pupate (develop into adults.) Mature American burying beetles emerge from the soil in 45 to 60 days after their parents initially bury the carcass. Adult burying beetles live for just one year. They are secretive, nocturnal insects which are seldom seen by people.

This colorful beetle was once distributed throughout Ohio as well as in 34 other states, the District of Columbia, and three Canadian provinces. But today it is found only in a handful of states. The

last American burying beetle reported in Ohio was in 1974 near Old Man's Cave in Hocking County.

One recent wildlife diversity effort is a satellite captive breeding colony of the endangered beetles at the Wilds. The Wilds received a State Wildlife Grant to develop a second captive colony. Maintaining two Ohio colonies increases the number of animals which can be raised for release and minimizes the possibility for loss due to unforeseen events.

The Ohio State University (OSU) established Ohio's first captive colony of the beetles in 2002, only the second of its kind in the country. OSU entomologists have released 258 pairs of the captive-reared beetles on public lands in southeastern Ohio from 2003 through 2005.

The American burying beetle was once a component of Ohio's original, primeval ecosystems. If ongoing monitoring shows the reintroduction successful, one of nature's most efficient and fascinating recyclers will be restored to its Ohio home.

“Continuing our strong partnerships with the zoos will lead to more conservation endeavors for Ohio's endangered species in the future,” said Kendra Wecker, wildlife diversity coordinator for the Division of Wildlife.

The Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, and Toledo zoos, as well as the Wilds, a wildlife research and education center in southeastern Ohio, partner with the Division of Wildlife in a wide range of projects to benefit Ohio wildlife. “These partnerships have evolved over the years,” said Carolyn Caldwell, assistant wildlife management administrator for the Division of Wildlife. “The conservation of endangered species is of vital importance to the Division and the zoos. Those involved have found it very rewarding as we work together to conserve and restore native Ohio wildlife.”





# Ohio Water Trails Program

## IMPROVING RIVER ACCESS FOR WILDLIFE-RELATED/BOATING/RECREATION

by Robert Fletcher

### Take a trip down a river, take a trip through history

The early inhabitants of present-day Ohio used rivers as major trails for trading animal furs, implements, and culture. Prehistoric peoples, such as the Adena and Hopewell, fished and hunted along the waterways and built monuments of reverence to water-dwelling animals. Later tribes, such as the Shawnee, Delaware, and Miami constructed settlements adjacent to the great rivers, grew crops in the fertile floodplain soils, and harvested fish, waterfowl, and other game for sustenance. Early pioneers harnessed the river's power through the construction of mills and traded animal furs in the thriving Ohio territory.

However, over time with the advent of planes, trains, and automobiles, the use of many of our navigable rivers became minimal, with the exception of commercial use on a number of the larger rivers. As highway bridges were built over our rivers, little or no effort was made to provide access to the rivers over which they passed. Pollution from industry and lack of waste water treatment also made many of our rivers undesirable places to visit. As a result, use of our state's abundant navigable rivers as transportation routes and recreational areas declined.

Fortunately, the water quality in our rivers improved dramatically in the years following passage of Clean Water Act amendments in 1977. Cleaner water helped spark an upsurge in the popularity of small recreational boats (canoes and kayaks), resulting in a desire to recreate on the many navigable rivers that crisscross the state.

Big Run Road bridge access on the Kokosing River, Ohio's first designated Water Trail.



### A Plan for the Future

The potential existed to significantly increase opportunities on our state's navigable rivers for fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing and general recreational boating. Limited access to significant stretches of our navigable rivers, however, remained a hurdle. This issue was identified as a priority in the Division of Wildlife's Strategic Plan 2001 – 2010 and in the Division of Watercraft's Boating on Ohio Waterways Plan. In an effort to address the issue, the Division of Wildlife formed a working group to look at possible solutions. The group included the Divisions of Watercraft, Parks and Recreation, Natural Areas and Preserves, and Real Estate and Land Management. Later contacts were made with a number of constituency groups and agencies including the League of Ohio Sportsmen, The Smallmouth Alliance, Ohio Greenways, and National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. All these organizations combined their expertise to form the Ohio Water Trails working group.

For nearly two years the group researched how other states were addressing the issue, and collaborated to find possible solutions. Other concerns and related issues arose such as long-term management and maintenance and private property rights and liability. Out of that effort, the Ohio Water Trails Program (OWTP) was born. Once the OWTP was operational, the Division of Watercraft undertook the responsibility of program management, due to their expertise in boating access development, paddling education, and boating safety. The working group continues to provide input and assistance to the OWTP.



### So... What is a water trail?

A water trail is simply a route along a waterway with strategically located access points. Water trails are similar to hiking trails and bikeways, but with one huge difference – the trail already exists; we just need to provide the access. However, as simple as this may sound, there are challenges.

Emphasis needs to be given to the phrase, "strategically located access." Recreational opportunities on a river present unique challenges that are not faced at wildlife areas or lakes where you can leave and return from a single location. Enjoying a quality recreational experience while boating on a river requires development of access points along the length of the river. The investment in developing and maintaining relatively small river access facilities at strategic locations, however, opens up many miles of river for a multitude of recreation opportunities. The development of these access sites provides anglers, waterfowl hunters, and recreational paddlers a safe place from which to launch and retrieve their boats as well as convenient parking. Public access sites also help to address trespass issues on private property by giving boaters easy access alternatives.

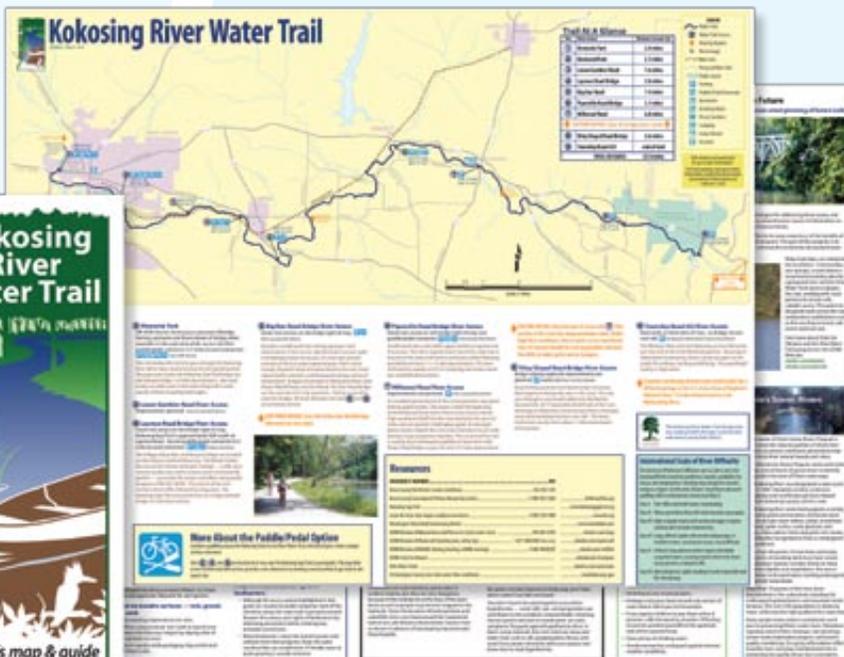
The Water Trails Program will provide access for wildlife-related recreation on Ohio's rivers and streams.



## Kokosing River Water Trail

The Kokosing River Water Trail was designated as Ohio's first water trail in June 2005. A detailed map of the Kokosing Water Trail was produced by the Divisions of Wildlife and Watercraft, and information concerning the water trail is posted on the OWTP Website at [www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/watertrails](http://www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/watertrails). The guide for the water trail includes helpful information on fishing and boating safety tips. Each access site along the trail is described in detail, and local contact information is listed. The Knox County Park District served as the local sponsor for the project, a requirement for a water trail designation, bringing a wealth of knowledge and leadership to the initiative. Since designation, the park district has installed information kiosks, benches, and picnic tables at the access sites, further increasing their use.

The Division of Wildlife looks forward to teaming with other local sponsors and OWTP working group to provide anglers, hunters, trappers, and boaters the access to recreational opportunities that they so richly deserve. The Division encourages families to explore and experience our precious rivers with a paddle just as our forefathers did before us.



The Kokosing Water Trail guide provides a detailed map and other useful information. The guide is posted on the OWTP Website at [www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/watertrails](http://www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/watertrails).

## Boating Access Partnership

The Divisions of Wildlife and Watercraft partner on projects to provide increased boating access that serve the constituency groups of both divisions. Over the past five year, 10 boating access projects around the state have been completed, and 20 more are in progress or in planning stages. Some examples of projects completed under the Wildlife/Watercraft partnership are in the table below.

### BOATING ACCESS COMPLETED PROJECTS

- Dempsey Access • Lake Erie, Ottawa County**  
dredging
- Mazurik Access • Lake Erie, Ottawa County**  
dredging
- Lake Milton, Mahoning County**  
new boat ramp
- Mosquito Lake, Mahoning County**  
boat ramp improvements
- Long Lake (Portage Lakes), Summit County**  
parking lot and ramp renovation
- Ohio River at KH Butler, Gallia County**  
new boat ramp
- Ohio River at Neville, Clermont County**  
new boat ramp



The KH Butler boat ramp on the Ohio River in Gallia County.



### APPRENTICE HUNTING LICENSE AVAILABLE JULY 1

Legislation to establish an apprentice hunting license passed overwhelmingly in the Ohio legislature and is now available effective July 1 for Ohio youth and other adults who want to try hunting. First-time hunters can now experience the sport of hunting while being mentored by a licensed hunter prior to completing a hunter safety education course. First-time hunters are still required to complete a hunter education course to obtain a full license. However, the apprentice license will allow them to try hunting with a mentor before making investments in time to complete a hunter education course. Sixteen- and 17-year-olds can purchase half-price youth apprentice hunting licenses.

The legislation was part of the national Families Afield Program introduced by the US Sportsmen's Alliance, National Wild Turkey Federation, and the National Shooting Sports Foundation. The legislation gained such strong support in the Ohio legislature that it had 28 co-sponsors in the Senate and 51 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives.

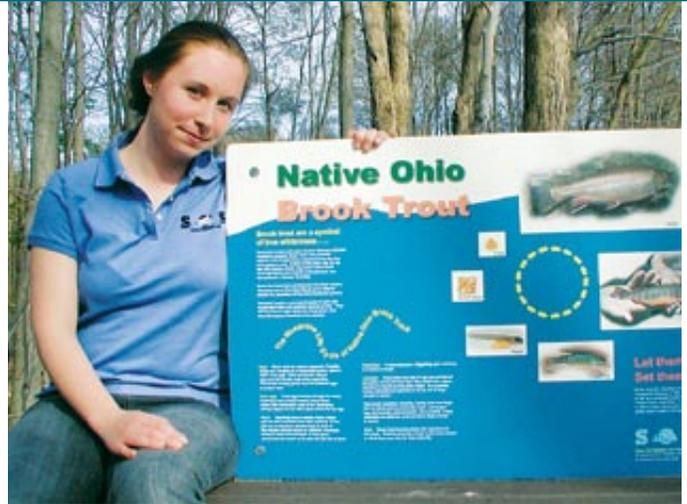
### BUTLER COUNTY COUPLE GETS RARE VISITOR

When a hummingbird first appeared at a feeder in Butler County last November 12, residents Dan and Wanda Schmitz suspected it was probably not a ruby-throated hummingbird – Ohio's only regularly occurring hummingbird.

Dan contacted other birders who came to investigate. It turned out to be an Anna's hummingbird, the first ever recorded in the state and one of very few reports east of the Mississippi River. Anna's hummingbirds are normally found along the Pacific Coast, from southern British Columbia to northern Mexico. It stayed here until December 24.



Photo by • Chris Wood



### YOUNG OHIOAN RECOGNIZED FOR CONSERVATION WORK

Evin McMullen, is making a big splash in her efforts to protect the native Ohio brook trout and its habitat. Evin started SOS (Save Our Stream) three years ago to preserve the native brook trout, the Chagrin River, and the watershed area from the downside of development.

What started as a small project soon grew as she worked with many different organizations to increase the participation in SOS and to gain publicity. Evin received the prestigious President's Environmental Youth Award for her outreach efforts. The Division of Wildlife provided her a \$2,000 Wildlife Diversity grant to produce a book for elementary school students on Ohio brook trout restoration. In addition, she received a \$10,000 Sea World/Fujifilm Environmental Excellence Award.

### AVIARY BEING CONSTRUCTED AT MALABAR FARM

In a partnership with Ohio State Parks, the Division of Wildlife is funding an Ohio Songbird Aviary at Malabar Farm State Park. This large outdoor enclosed aviary will feature many of Ohio's songbirds and allow visitors to experience and observe these native birds close-up in their habitats. The aviary will also house birds for the Division's future bird aviary at the Ohio State Fair scheduled for summer 2007.





### DIVISION OF WILDLIFE KIOSK

The Division of Wildlife has created a unique partnership with Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World in Cincinnati. With so many customers asking store staff for information on fishing and hunting, the Division designed and installed an interactive kiosk in the store. Customers can now look up regulations and other fish and wildlife information, and print out hunting and fishing area maps simply by touching a computer screen right there in the store. Division staff also man booths during several popular special events at the store.

### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HELPS WILDLIFE TOO!

The Division of Wildlife recently partnered with Habitat for Humanity (HFH) in Ross County by hauling away some stumps from a HFH site and making cover for wildlife on Flint Run Wildlife Area. Branches were placed over the stumps to make the brush pile habitat for wildlife.



### OHIO HOLDS FIRST MODERN DAY OTTER TRAPPING SEASON

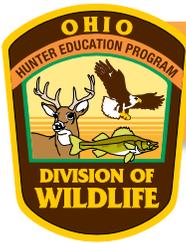
Ohio held its first modern day river otter trapping season last winter. Ohio held its first modern-day river otter trapping season last winter. One-hundred thirty-one trappers checked in 223 otters. The top counties were Trumbull (66), Ashtabula (33), and Wayne (23).



### LAKE ERIE ANGLER SCORES GRAND SLAM

Robert Kramer, of Medina County, is the first angler to ever qualify for the Lake Erie Grand Slam award. The retired schoolteacher's Grand Slam catches included a 30-inch steelhead trout, a 20.5-inch smallmouth bass, and a 28.5-inch walleye. Introduced in 2005, the Grand Slam award recognizes anglers who catch three different species that meet minimum length requirements in a specific category within a license year. Grand Slam categories include Lake Erie, Ohio River, and Inland Waters.





# OUTDOOR SKILLS Hey Kids! Got Game?

## Time to Make Plans for Youth Hunting Season

by Matt Ortman

Ohio has many opportunities for youth to experience the excitement of that first pheasant flush or first deer harvest of the year. Now is the time for youth to prepare for the upcoming hunting season and apply for special controlled hunts held especially for youths.

The Division of Wildlife realized many years ago that youth are the future of hunting in our state. In the last couple of years, we have seen an increase in the number of youth hunting licenses sold statewide. The myriad of increased opportunities for youth hunters each year has likely helped perpetuate this increase.

**SMALL GAME** Each year young people 17 years of age or younger have the opportunity to try small game hunting prior to the statewide opening day. During the two weekends prior to the start of the regular season, youths are able to hunt rabbit, pheasant, and all other legal game that is in season, when accompanied by an adult. Quail may be hunted in those counties open to quail hunting. Also, the Division holds pheasant releases on select wildlife and public hunting areas to correspond to these special hunts.

**WILD TURKEY** The youth spring wild turkey season is held Saturday and Sunday immediately prior to the regular wild turkey season. Youth may only take one bearded turkey during the youth season and hunting hours are ½ hour before sunrise to sunset. Special youth wild turkey hunts are offered on selected public hunting areas during the regular season.

**WATERFOWL** A statewide youth waterfowl season is held statewide on the Saturday and Sunday prior to the opening of the North Zone waterfowl season. This youth hunt is different in that youth must be 15 years of age or younger instead of 17 or younger. Youth controlled hunts are also offered around Ohio and interested youths must apply prior to the July 31 deadline to enter the random drawings.

**WHITE-TAILED DEER** Ohio's youth deer gun season is held on Saturday and Sunday prior to the Thanksgiving weekend. The regular season traditionally begins the Monday after Thanksgiving. Participants 17 years of age and younger must be accompanied by a non-hunting adult and each adult may accompany up to two youths. Also, controlled deer hunts, for which youth can apply, are conducted at various locations. Application period is June 1 through July 31 each year.



With so many opportunities to introduce youth to hunting prior to the opening day crowds, there is no excuse not to introduce a young person in your life to Ohio's wonderful hunting heritage. Check the most current Ohio Hunting and Trapping Regulations brochure (Publication 85) or the Division's Website [www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife) for the latest information on youth hunting opportunities and controlled hunts. Don't forget, the deadline for most controlled hunts is July 31. Good hunting.



Stephen Miles, of Dayton, with his deer taken at a controlled deer hunt at the Ravenna Army Ammunition Plant in November 2005.

### OHIO YOUTH HUNTING SEASONS 2006-2007

#### Youth Hunters Small Game Season

Oct. 21, 22 and 28, 29, 2006

#### Youth Deer Gun Season

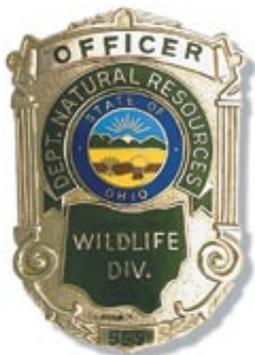
Nov. 18 and 19, 2006

#### Youth Spring Wild Turkey Season

April 21 and 22, 2007

#### Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days

Saturday and Sunday prior to  
North Zone Waterfowl Season



## Wildlife Law Enforcement

# Field Notes

### POACHERS TAKE WILD RIDE WHILE SHOOTING DEER

While investigating a tip, wildlife officers in Licking and Coshocton counties found the remains of six deer killed in fields where the illegal activity allegedly took place, a .44 caliber pistol, and evidence that a vehicle had run off the road.

Officers contacted two suspects who admitted to spotlighting and shooting at as many as 12 deer that night using two different rifles and the pistol found earlier. While spotlighting and shooting the deer, the suspects crashed their Jeep, rolling it over and ejecting them. Miraculously they suffered only minor injuries. They drove the badly damaged Jeep several miles on the rims alone to a friend's house, which was later found by officers. The two men were ordered to serve 60 days in jail and lost their hunting privileges for three years. Together they paid \$2,360 in fines and court costs, \$2,400 in restitution for deer killed illegally, and forfeited a .44 caliber pistol, 7 mm rifle, and 270 caliber rifle used in the violations.



### DNA USED IN POACHER'S CONVICTION

The use of DNA evidence in an investigation resulted in a conviction of a deer poacher in Preble County. Based on a tip, wildlife officers contacted the suspect and found on his property the untagged carcass of a deer he claimed to have killed in Indiana. The officers also searched an area the suspect was known to hunt and found evidence of a recent deer kill.

Blood and hair samples collected at both sites were submitted to a DNA laboratory for analysis. The results confirmed that the samples were from the same animal. The poacher was fined \$1,000 and ordered to pay \$945 in fees and restitution, including the \$450 fee for the DNA analysis. He also forfeited the 12-gauge shotgun he used in the crime.

### DEER LOSES ANTLER IN RESCUE

Wildlife Officers Matt Hunt and Ken Bebout assisted a Fairfield County landowner with a deer that had gotten tangled in a fence, and then tangled the fence around a tree. The officers had three options - do nothing, kill the deer, or shoot off an antler (knowing that the deer could be harmed or killed in the process). They successfully shot off an antler that freed the deer.



### BOUNTIFUL HARVEST

Wayne County Wildlife Officer Eric Ucker discovered this scene where hundreds of pumpkins and squash were disposed of by a landowner along a Wayne County stream. The bountiful harvest was a violation of the stream litter law. The violator was fined and ordered to clean up the site.



## Regulations Afield...

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

Test your knowledge of Ohio's hunting and fishing regulations. Beginning with this issue of *Wild Ohio* magazine, we will include several of the most commonly asked questions. Do you know the answers?

1. At what age do kids need to purchase a fishing license to fish Ohio's public waterways?
2. Can you keep fishing and replace smaller fish with larger fish once you've reached the limit on number of fish allowed in your possession?
3. Can I fillet my fish on my boat before returning to shore?
4. What is the daily bag limit for yellow perch taken from Lake Erie?
5. Can you use a spotlight for wildlife watching at night (not to hunt, but just to observe)?

ANSWERS: 1. Age 16; 2. Yes, as long as the fish are alive upon release; 3. No; 4. 40; 5. No.

# 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:** I snapped this photo of these moths last summer. Can you identify them?

**Jackie Kohlman, Oak Harbor, OH**

**A:** Believe it or not, the answer to both questions is: Cecropia silk moth! Let's start with the moth... Cecropias are big! Their wingspan is 4-5 ½ inches wide. They can be found in suburban and rural areas where food for their caterpillars is found (more on that in a minute). These moths can be seen in May and early June, and then again in late June into July. The moths do not eat—their only purpose is to reproduce. After mating, the female lays eggs on the leaves of certain trees and shrubs including box elder, sugar maple, wild cherries and plum, apple, alder, birch, dogwood, and willows. Eggs hatch in 10-14 days. Young caterpillars feed in groups; however, as they get bigger they become solitary. The caterpillars eat until they grow as big as four inches long then they leave the host (food) plant to spin a cocoon. Cecropia cocoons are about three inches long and are attached full length to a twig. Since cocoons won't hatch until the following year, they are usually constructed in a dark, protected place to help keep them safe from mice and other predators.

**Q:** I took this photo at the building where I work in Worthington, Ohio. Is this a red-tailed hawk?

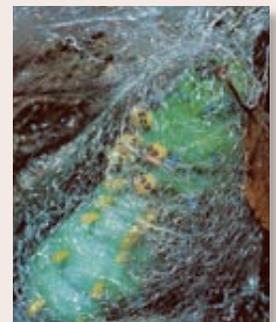
**Scott Speakman, Columbus, OH**

**A:** Yes, this is a red-tailed hawk. The rusty red color of the tail indicates that it is an adult. Red-tailed hawks are one of our most abundant birds of prey, common throughout suburban and rural Ohio. They stand about 19 inches tall and have a wingspan of approximately four feet. Red-tails are often seen hunting grassy edges along highways or in open fields in search of their main prey: rabbits and mice. They also occasionally will take a squirrel, bird, or small groundhog. In Ohio, nesting begins in March-April. A red-tailed hawk nest is bulky and made of sticks typically placed in the crotch of a large hardwood tree around 30 feet high. Sometimes redtails will nest on buildings or other man-made structures. Both sexes help build the nest. With some help from the male, the female incubates two eggs for 30-35 days. The young take their first flights at six to seven weeks of age. Instead of the rusty red color, immature birds have brown stripes across the tail.



**Q:** Can you tell what kind of worm this is? It was found eating my daughter's hedges.

**Wilma Boggs, Bellefontaine, OH**



## NAME THAT BIRD!

by Mary Warren • photos by Tim Daniel

### HOW MANY BIRDS CAN YOU COUNT THIS SUMMER?

Starting today, make a list of all the different kinds (species) of birds that you see. Are you near a window now? Do you see any birds flying, or on the ground, or in a tree? You can see birds most everywhere you go - your backyard, park, beach, even outside the mall! See how many you can find this summer. Here's how to get started.



- Birds are most active in the early morning and late afternoon. Use your eyes and ears and not your voice, and you will find more birds! Move slowly so you don't scare them away.
- Mark down the name of the bird (if you know it), the date, and the location where you see the bird.
- Keep your list with you at all times. You never know when or where you will see your next bird! Sketch the bird on your list if you can.

- A field guide to birds and a pair of binoculars might come in handy. (Look for a field guide at your local library.)

Mail your completed Summer Bird List to:

**Mary Warren**  
**Magee Marsh • 13229 W. SR 2**  
**Oak Harbor, OH 43449**

We will publish some in a future edition of *Wild Ohio!* And you will get a bird booklet and CD of Ohio birds just for sending in your completed Summer Bird List!



### BIRDWATCHING ACTIVITY

Watching the behavior of birds can be a lot of fun. Mark a check in the boxes next to the bird activities that you observe.

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A bird soaring high in the air | <input type="checkbox"/> A bird with a long beak | <input type="checkbox"/> A flock of birds         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A bird taking a bath           | <input type="checkbox"/> A bird making a nest    | <input type="checkbox"/> A bird that is hovering  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A bird that is red             | <input type="checkbox"/> A bird that is singing  | <input type="checkbox"/> A bird feeding its young |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A bird that hops               | <input type="checkbox"/> A bird with webbed feet |   |

# Bugfest

**Saturday, July 15, noon to 4 p.m.**

Learn about the amazing world of insects.  
Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, Ottawa County

• For more information •  
**call (419) 898-0960, ext. 31**



# 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*

### Catfish Cakes

2 catfish fillets (about 1 lb) diced  
1 egg  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1/3 cup onion, chopped very fine  
1/3 cup green pepper, chopped very fine  
3/4 cup Bisquick or other pancake mix  
Salt and pepper  
Oil for frying\*

In a large bowl, mix together fish, onion, green pepper, adding desired amounts of salt and pepper. Mix whisked egg and lemon juice to the fish mixture. Add Bisquick. Form into patties and fry in heated oil. Makes 12 two-inch catfish cakes. Serve with Tartar sauce.

\*Patties can also be broiled on a lightly greased cookie sheet. Flip once so patties can brown on both sides. Bake 10 to 15 minutes at 400 degrees after broiling.

Contributed by Susie Matthews



### Baja Fish Tacos

10-15 small fish fillets, such as crappie, bluegill, or yellow perch  
1 cup bread crumbs  
Spray-on olive oil  
1 cup milk  
Garlic powder  
Salt  
1/2 package Taco Seasoning Mix  
1 package small, soft, white corn tortillas  
Chopped tomato and shredded cabbage for topping

#### Baja Sauce:

1/2 cup mayonnaise	2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 cup plain yogurt	1/2 package Taco Seasoning Mix
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro	2 tablespoons salsa

In medium bowl, combine bread crumbs, garlic powder, 1/2 of the taco seasoning mix, and salt to taste. Dip individual fillets in milk, coat with bread crumb mixture, and place on a cookie sheet lined with aluminum foil. Spray all sides of breaded fillets with a light coating of olive oil. Place in pre-heated 370-degree oven for 10 to 15 minutes or until golden brown and slightly crispy. Mix all ingredients for Baja sauce, and place in refrigerator until fish is ready. Heat tortillas in oven or microwave. Assemble tacos by adding 2 to 3 fillets, shredded cabbage, and Baja sauce to each tortilla. Top with chopped tomato.

Submitted by Corey Cockerill



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

## GETTING BACK IN THE HUNT FROM MY WHEELCHAIR

by Ben Doepel, Outdoor Writer

The National Wild Turkey Federation's "Wheelin' Sportsmen" program is designed to get people in wheelchairs out hunting and fishing. One of the program's national spokespersons is from right here in Ohio -- talented musician and outdoorsman Howie Damron.

When Howie asked me if I would like to go hunting with him and his friends I had mixed emotions. The first was a feeling of joy, but then there was one of doubt. For the last seven years I was shut up in the house confined to a wheelchair from a severe stroke that occurred during an operation. The stroke left my whole left side paralyzed. Howie assured me that he and his friends could take good care of preparing me to hunt from my wheelchair. Right there and then Howie and I became great friends.

I can't lift my left hand and arm to shoot my gun or bow so the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company and F.M. Machine Company, of Akron, customized my chair. They made an armrest that swings from one side to the other so I can shoot my gun or crossbow with my right hand and arm.

Wheelin' Sportsmen staff and Bryan Dickess made arrangements for me to hunt on the Dickess family property in Ironton. Bryan informed me I would be hunting from his grandfather's blind and would be nice and warm. He also told me he recently observed a very large buck chasing does around the blind. The invitation was too good to resist so my wife Rose loaded up the car and we embarked on one of the nicest deer hunts I have ever been on.

At the Dickess' home we were greeted by the Dickess family, Howie and his lovely wife, and an *Outdoor Channel* cameraman. (The hunt was going to be filmed

and aired on the *Outdoor Channel* at a later date.) When I entered the Dickess' home, everywhere I looked were some of the largest and most beautiful whitetail deer mounts I have ever seen. Most were taken with bows on the Dickess' property and a friend's farm near Lancaster.

We spent two wonderful days with the Dickess family, but I did not get a deer. Then the Dickesses made arrangements for me to hunt on their friend Thomas Moore's land during the deer

gun season. They informed me that no guns had been fired on the property during all the years Tom owned the land. On the second day I hunted, I harvested a nice doe. Although it was deer gun season, I stayed with tradition and dropped her in her tracks using a crossbow. Everyone was just as excited as I was. As I sat in the blind looking at the color of the leaves and the beauty of the hills of Ohio, the words from one of Howie's CDs called "Family Ties" kept going through my mind. Thanks to my new hunting family I was back in the chase.

After returning home I thought about how lucky I am to live in Ohio with the beautiful hills full of deer and turkey and the many things that Ohio has to offer. After meeting the Damron's, the Dickess Family, and Thomas Moore, I think the greatest asset that Ohio has

to offer is the PEOPLE of Ohio. I made memories with these people and

I shall never forget them. I am back in the hunt from my wheelchair!



Wheelin' Sportsmen spokesman Howie Damron looks on as Ben tries out the wheelchair armrest that allowed him to bag a deer.



## Receive a Free Carabiner Keyholder!

We would like to hear from you.  
Go to to take the *Wild Ohio* Readers' Survey

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

We continue to improve *Wild Ohio* magazine, and are very interested in your opinions. As a thank you to our readers, we will send a free *Wild Ohio* carabiner keyholder to the first 1,000 readers who complete the survey.



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