

Wild Ohio

Summer 2010

M A G A Z I N E

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE





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to report poaching

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division Web site



ON THE WEB

Wild Turkey & Ruffed Grouse

online brood surveys

All right *Wild Ohio* readers! Send in your sightings of turkey and grouse! Help Division of Wildlife biologists collect important data to help monitor the success of the hatch and brood survival of these two favorite gamebirds.

During the months of June, July, and August when you see wild turkeys out feeding in a pasture or ruffed grouse along the edge of a forested road, safely pull off and take a moment to count the number of birds you observe. For turkeys, record the number of males, females, and poults (young

turkeys) in the flock. It is difficult to distinguish a male from a female ruffed grouse, so we simply ask for the number of adult grouse and chicks observed. It is also important to note the date, township, and county in which you made the observation.

The response from the public was fantastic during the first year. The Division of Wildlife received 880 observations of more than 6,500 wild turkeys from 85 counties. Sightings of 233 ruffed grouse came in from 22 counties during the months of June, July, and August.

➔ LOG ON TO WILD OHIO.COM FOR THE DATA ENTRY WEB PAGE

ON THE WEB



Not Sure What You Saw?

Visit our "A-Z Species Guide" at wildohio.com to learn more about Ohio's wildlife

The Division of Wildlife provides an easy to use Web-based guide covering a wide range of Ohio's wildlife. The guide gives in-depth information about each species as it relates to Ohio. Each species account is accompanied with a photo and in some instances a sound clip. Visit wildohio.com and click on the "A-Z Species Guide" link to learn more about wildlife around you.

WILD OHIO MAGAZINE

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Wild Ohio

M A G A Z I N E

SUMMER 2010 VOLUME 21, NUMBER 2



BLACK BEAR

COVER FEATURE



ON THE COVER: SOUTHERN FLYING SQUIRREL

The graceful gliding of Ohio's most abundant squirrel can be a memorable sight at night. To learn more see the Watchable Wildlife Section on page 12. Photos by Tim Daniel

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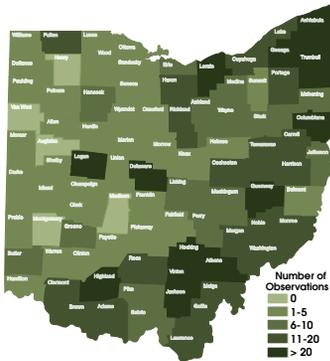
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FIREFLY/LIGHTNING BUG
PHOTO BY: KERRY COLLINS



News from Around Ohio



TURKEY AND GROUSE BROOD SURVEYS

The Division of Wildlife launched a new Web page in summer 2009 for online data entry of wild turkey and ruffed grouse sightings. Wildlife biologists use the data to monitor the success of the hatch and brood survival of these two favorite game birds. Data are also being submitted to the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas to update range distribution maps in Ohio.

The response from the public was fantastic during the first year of the new online data-entry Web page. The Division of Wildlife received 880 observations of more than 6,500 wild turkeys from 85 counties. Sightings of 233 ruffed grouse came in from 22 counties during the months of June, July, and August.

Heavy rains that occurred during the nesting season in April and May might have reduced turkey nest success and brood survival in 2009. Statewide, the reproductive index was two poults per every wild turkey hen (on average each hen successfully recruited two young to the spring population.) However, some smaller broods were observed in late summer so re-nesting might have helped offset the early season losses. Most sightings of ruffed grouse were of single adult birds, but 25 broods were observed in 11 counties in eastern Ohio.

Go to wildohio.com to record sightings of wild turkey and ruffed grouse to help biologists compile 2010 data.

WOMEN HUNTERS ON THE RISE

According to the National Sporting Goods Association, the number of women hunters is on the rise. Between 2003 and 2008, the number of women who hunted with firearms increased 3.5 percent to 2.9 million. The number of women who hunted with bows rose 1.5 percent to 600,000 during that time.

Linda Walker, central Ohio chair of the Buckeye Firearms Association (BFA), attributes the rise of women hunters to changing times. As a firearms instructor with the BFA, Walker sees more women becoming involved in the sport of shooting. "As women are getting into firearms, hunting is a natural progression."



OHIO ANGLER WINS NATIONAL SWEEPSTAKES

Chip Tierney of Wadsworth was the grand prize winner of the national Take Me Fishing Triple-A Baseball sweepstakes. Sponsored by the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) in collaboration with Triple-A and Minor League Baseball, the contest generated more than 37,000 entries from the 33 participating teams. Tierney entered the sweepstakes at an Akron Aeros baseball game.

RBFF's national campaign aimed to help families rediscover the great sports of fishing and boating. The grand prize was a Walt Disney World Fishing Trip for Tierney and his family.

OHIOAN RECEIVES N.W.F. AWARD

Kathy Lewis of Lisbon received the National Wildlife Federation's Volunteer of the Year Award. She was honored for educating hundreds of groups and individuals of all ages on wildlife and the environment.

Lewis is very active in wildlife education and conservation programs in northeast Ohio and elsewhere in the state. Besides volunteering for the National Wildlife Federation, she is president of the Beaver Creek Wildlife Education Center in East Liverpool, member of the Ohio Environmental Council and the Columbiana Conservation Partners, and also provides many activities pertaining to the outdoors for young children from preschool through second grade.

MARSH DEDICATED AT PICKEREL CREEK

The Division of Wildlife and partners dedicated the Vern Essi Marsh addition to the Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area in Sandusky County. Located in the heart of the Lake Erie marshes, the wetland will add to the already high-quality habitat at the 3,200-acre wildlife area. The 162-acre marsh will benefit a variety of wetland species, including waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, wading birds, furbearers, and the growing bald eagle population.

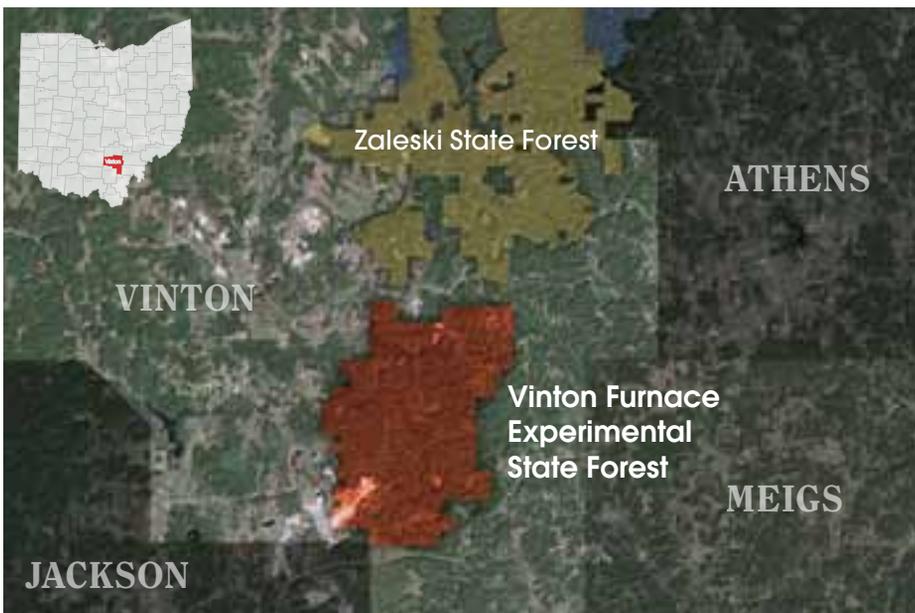
This project was funded by the Division of Wildlife, National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant Program from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, Fremont Chapter of the Izaak Walton League, and the Erie, Ottawa, and Sandusky Chapters of Pheasants Forever.



NEW STATE FOREST CREATED

The largest contiguous tract of former Mead Corporation forest lands (15,849 acres) will become Ohio's first new state forest in more than a decade. The purchase is expected to be complete this July and the area will be named "Vinton Furnace Experimental State Forest."

The Division of Wildlife contributed \$1.7 million towards the \$15.1 million purchase acquiring 3,400 acres which will belong to the Division. The entire forest will be open to hunting. Combined with nearby Zaleski State Forest, the acquisition creates a landscape-size conservation forest parcel of more than 40,000 acres. Forest research has been conducted on the property for more than 50 years. The forest is home to the state's largest known population of bobcats, along with black bears, timber rattlesnakes, cerulean warblers, and rare plant species.



Wildlife
CALENDAR

June – October
IT'S FAIR TIME!
For a list of Ohio's fairs, visit Ohiofairs.org

July 28 – August 8
THE OHIO STATE FAIR
• Ohio State Fairgrounds •
Columbus, Ohio
Ohiostatefair.com

August 6 - 8
MIDWEST NATIVE PLANT CONFERENCE
• Bergamo Center •
Dayton, Ohio
cincinnatibirds.com/munp/

wildohio.com
for up-to-date events

HUNTER DONATES WATERFOWL MOUNTS

Tom Weisenstein of Galena donated 33 waterfowl mounts to the Division of Wildlife through Ducks Unlimited. He is an avid hunter and has hunted waterfowl for 45 years throughout the U.S. and Canada. The mounts will be used for education, training, and displays.



Tom Weisenstein with a canvasback and mallard, two of the 33 mounts he donated to the Division of Wildlife.

GROWING UP WILD IN OHIO

by Jen Dennison

Finding a squiggly salamander under a wet rock. Picking up an earthworm and putting it in your pocket. Chasing sparkling butterflies and dragonflies through a grassy field. Diving into a pile of dry, earthy-smelling leaves on a crisp fall day. Catching a snowflake on your tongue. Following tracks in fresh, fluffy snow. All of these are wonderful childhood memories that many of us have experienced. The question is how many of today's children will have similar memories? And what can be done to help create those memories?

The Division of Wildlife is helping to introduce many of Ohio's pre-schoolers to the outdoors through a new program called Growing Up WILD. This new curriculum is part of the international wildlife education program, Project WILD. It is designed to help children ages three to seven experience the outdoors and get up close with wildlife and wildlife habitats. There are 27 activities that encourage children to march like ants, paint with pine needles, go on a worm walk, and eat healthy like a bear.

Children at this age learn very differently than older children. They learn primarily through their senses. There is no better place than the outdoors for a child to learn to appreciate nature and wildlife, all while learning science, math, reading, and participating in physical activity. Pre-school children also learn through play and by imitating adults and other children. Growing Up WILD sets up learning experiences in ways that children and their families can enjoy the outdoors in a safe and fun environment.

Growing Up WILD activities can be used in pre-schools and kindergarten classes, daycares, nature centers, or right in your own backyard. Each activity includes stations for children to explore individually, crafts, a nature activity to try at home with their families, a healthy snack, and of course, lots of opportunities to go outside. These activities were pilot tested through the Texas Head Start program and include Home Connections in English and Spanish, a reading list of fiction and non-fiction books that complement each activity, as well as math and music lessons to support the main activity.

Photo courtesy:
Council for Environmental Education
and Project WILD Coordinator Network



To highlight all of these features, we'll explore the activity *Wildlife is Everywhere!* Children are encouraged to make observations to help them understand that wildlife is all around us.

- ✿ They are shown a series of animal cards, which are provided in the guide, and asked to identify which ones are wild and which could be pets.
- ✿ As a group, they discuss if they've seen any wild animals lately and where.
- ✿ They then create safari hats out of paper plates and bowls, color them, put them on and go out on their own "safari" to look for signs of wildlife around their building or neighborhood.
- ✿ The children discuss what they should do when they find a young animal that they might think is lost or injured.
- ✿ Then the class sings the song found in the activity, "Watching in the Wilderness" to the tune of The Old Gray Mare.
- ✿ Finally, they are given trail mix that they can eat while they are on their safari.

Additional connections and extensions are found in the activity and illustrate how comprehensive and creative the *Growing Up WILD* guide is at helping children learn about nature.

Project Learning Tree (PLT), a sister program of Project WILD, also has a pre-school program called *Early Childhood Environmental Experiences* which, along with PLT, is sponsored in Ohio by the Division of Forestry. The Division of Wildlife and the Division of Forestry both received funding from the Environmental Education Training Partnership Program to launch these programs in Ohio this spring. To obtain your activity guides, you can attend a workshop held by one of several hundred volunteer facilitators across the state. You can find workshops

by logging onto ohiodnr.com and clicking on "Educational Resources." Most workshops are free or low cost and are about three hours long. You'll walk away with tons of ideas and resources for working with pre-schoolers in the outdoors. And you'll get to act like a kid again as you experience a sample of activities during these high-energy workshops.

The Division of Wildlife has many additional educational materials that you can use to help children explore the outdoors. There are a host of field guides to help you identify what you find and hear. The *Wild Ohio for Kids* magazine gives children a chance to learn about wildlife through games, puzzles, and brain teasers, and is designed with Ohio's Academic Content Standards in mind. You can find out more about *Growing Up WILD* and the Division of Wildlife's many educational offerings by checking out our Web site at wildohio.com.

So remember, give a child a chance to catch butterflies and to hear a wren sing by taking them outside. The Division of Wildlife is ready to help you foster those natural experiences because we believe that the best childhood lessons, and memories, are made outdoors.





SPORTSMAN'S PASSION FOR HUNTING & FISHING PROMPTS GENEROUS BEQUEST

Wallace O'Dowd Wildlife Area Recently Dedicated

by Melissa Hathaway

Most Ohio sportsmen did not know him, but they all received a special gift recently from the late Wallace "Wally" O'Dowd. In 2007, O'Dowd left a bequest of \$4.5 million to the Ohio Division of Wildlife to purchase a large tract of land to be used for public hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife conservation, and habitat management. It is the largest donation in the history of the Division of Wildlife.

Last spring, O'Dowd's dream became a reality. The 6,694-acre Wallace H. O'Dowd Wildlife Area in southeastern Ohio was dedicated in honor of the avid sportsman who traveled the world following his passion for hunting and fishing.

"I am sure Wally would be pleased that not only were we able to identify and purchase a sizeable portion of land, but that it is adjacent to an existing land holding that will result in more habitat and therefore greater opportunities for enjoyment by the state's sportsmen and women," said David M. Graham, chief of the Division of Wildlife. "We believe this is a fantastic legacy and an outstanding example of generosity to and for all Ohioans."

O'Dowd traveled the globe to hunt and fish, but his favorite hunting grounds were closer to home in southeastern Ohio. His passion was upland game bird hunting – woodcock and grouse – in this rugged hill country. This is why he requested the public land he would help purchase to be located in this area of the state.

The generous sportsman passed away in 2007. The Division in conjunction with O'Dowd's wife, Jill King-O'Dowd, began the search to fulfill his request. After exploring a number of properties, including aerial views from airplane flyovers, they agreed on a tract of land owned by the Sunday Creek Coal Company along the Athens-Hocking county line. The Division added an additional \$560,326 toward the purchase of part of the property and associated fees, and closed on the property in September 2009.

The 3,600-acre parcel, in combination with the existing and contiguous Trimble Wildlife Area, creates the 6,694-acre site now known as the Wallace H. O'Dowd Wildlife Area. It is the sixth largest wildlife area in the state. As stipulated in O'Dowd's will, the newly purchased land is open to public hunting, fishing, and trapping.



The O'Dowd family with Division of Wildlife Assistant Chief Jim Marshall and ODNR Deputy Director Anthony Celebrezze at the April 29th dedication.



"Hunting was his passion; that was his life," said Jill King-O'Dowd. "He could run his business from the telephone and so he traveled all over the world. He'd get up at two or three o'clock in the morning and drive hundreds of miles to go grouse hunting.

"You have to be an accurate shot for bird hunting and apparently he was an excellent shot. But he didn't hunt birds that were released on preserves. He wanted to be tromping through the woods in places like Athens County."

There won't be a lot of change to the property except that the Division will conduct additional management activities, according to Ken Ritchie, manager of the wildlife area. He said that there is the potential for future timber harvests to provide quality wildlife

habitat, as well as maintaining some of the large, open land areas left from strip mining activities by previous owners. New Division of Wildlife informational signage will be added and the property boundaries will be marked. Also, the access permit required by the previous owner, Sunday Creek Coal Company, will no longer be needed.

"One of the biggest bonuses that I see is that we now have one large continuous tract of land for public use by combining this donation with two adjacent existing wildlife areas," said Ritchie. "We have the Trimble Wildlife Area to the northeast and a property that we acquired a few years ago to the south to make an almost 7,000-acre public wildlife area."

White-tailed deer, wild turkey, and squirrels will provide the most popular

hunting opportunities. There is also some furbearer activity with beaver being present in many of the wetlands, ponds, and streams.

"Although grouse numbers are low in many areas of the state, this property lends itself more to grouse-type cover due to the clear-cut activity in the mid- to late 70s that produced dense successional growth. There are some portions of the area just getting into that pole/saw timber size class," he said. "There is a lot of good habitat here – with a large percentage of the forested areas being mixed oak and hickory stands."

Perhaps those Ohioans who venture to the Wallace O'Dowd Wildlife Area to hunt, trap, or observe wildlife will experience the same passion for the outdoors and this rugged terrain as the man for which it was named.



CHANGE ON

Ohio residents are likely to see some additions to the landscape in the near future. Recent legislation has mandated that 25 percent of Ohio's energy must come from alternative energy sources, such as photovoltaic, hydroelectric, wind, clean coal or nuclear by 2025. Of these, 6.25 percent must be from renewable sources (solar, wind, or hydro) and must be generated from within the state. Given Ohio's topography, and climate, wind is the most commercially viable option for electricity production.

The Ohio Power Siting Board is currently reviewing applications for six facilities comprised of up to 584 turbines and capable of providing power for approximately one million Ohio homes. These facilities are proposed for Hardin (2), Paulding (1), Crawford/Richland (1), and Champaign (1) counties. Additionally, the Division of Wildlife is currently working with developers to assess the potential wildlife and related environmental impacts of approximately 40 other proposed wind facilities in 24 counties (Fig. 1).

Today's utility-scale turbine can be more than 400 feet tall, with blades longer than 90 feet. When spinning, these blades may reach speeds of more than 130 mph. Unfortunately, given the size and speed of these turbines, there have been associated wildlife mortalities. Birds, bats, and even insects have been found struck at wind turbine facilities.

Beginning in the 1970s, large numbers of raptors (hawks, eagles, and falcons) were found struck at a wind turbine

facility in Altamont, California. These deaths were attributed to this site being located along a ridge that these birds were using as a migratory corridor. An older style lattice-work tower and high-prey abundance within the facility were also considered contributing factors. Fortunately, Altamont Pass seems to be the exception, not the rule. The most frequently struck group of birds are Neotropical migrant songbirds. These birds travel over large distances, mostly at night, and are more likely to collide with tall structures such as high-rise buildings, lighthouses, radio/cell towers, and wind turbines. Songbirds typically fly at heights above these structures, but during times of bad weather and limited visibility they will fly closer to the ground, increasing the likelihood of encountering an object. The national average is approximately two birds killed per turbine per year; fortunately, sites within agricultural regions of the Midwest have documented less mortality.

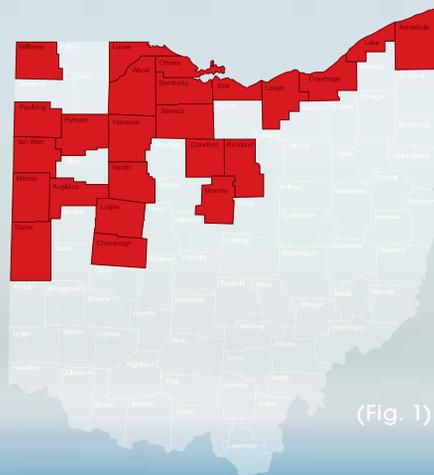


Photo courtesy: juwi / juwi Wind US Corp.

THE HORIZON

by Keith Lott

Initially, bats were not considered to be an issue at wind sites. It was thought that their echolocation abilities allowed them to avoid being struck. This notion changed as the development of wind energy proceeded eastward. Sites within the Appalachian Mountains have been found to have some of the highest mortality rates in the world, with up to 60 bats killed per turbine per year (the average mortality due to strikes by wind turbines in the Midwest is about seven bats per turbine per year). While most birds were found to be directly struck by the turbine, many of the bats found under turbines had little to no evidence of trauma. Necropsies (the animal equivalent of an autopsy) showed that the bat mortality was caused by barotrauma, which is the hemorrhaging of the lungs via explosive decompression. Essentially, as the turbine blade passes by the bat it causes a low pressure system to form behind the blade, causing the bat's lung tissue to expand or hemorrhage resulting in death.

The species of bats that are most frequently found under turbines are migratory tree bats (hoary, Eastern red, and silver-haired bats). Unlike the typical bat we might think of as using caves to over-winter, these species will head south and go into torpor (a deep sleep) in clumps of leaves or within crevasses in bark. Bats have been observed investigating, attempting to land on, even chasing the blades of wind turbines; the cause of these behaviors is poorly understood. These bats are important to humans because they can consume thousands of irritating insects like mosquitoes per night and significantly reduce the damage caused by agricultural pests. They are estimated to save the United States approximately one billion dollars per year in crop losses and pesticide usage.

In an effort to facilitate the responsible development of wind energy in Ohio, the Division of Wildlife has developed a set of monitoring guidelines to assess the potential wildlife impacts of a proposed facility. These protocols encompass a broad range of potential studies, from acoustic monitoring for bats, to radar monitoring of songbird passage rates and flight heights.

The related studies recommended by the Division of Wildlife vary to address site-specific habitat conditions, known wildlife populations, and other environmental concerns. This information is used by the Ohio Power Siting Board when the board considers whether a facility should receive a permit to be constructed and begin operation. If a wind energy facility is built, post-construction mortality studies will be recommended to document mortality rates. Ultimately, the Division of Wildlife will analyze data from the pre- and post-construction wildlife surveys and mortality studies to determine methods for minimizing impacts to wildlife. Wind energy is in Ohio's future – our job is to help the development of this renewable energy source to also be wildlife-friendly.



OHIO WATCHABLE WILDLIFE

WOODLAND GLIDERS: SOUTHERN FLYING SQUIRRELS

by Jim McCormac

All manner of interesting creatures are holed up in nooks and crannies during the day, awaiting the cover of nightfall to emerge. One of the oddest night-stalkers ranks among Ohio's most common mammals: the southern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys volans*).

These strange animals make Spider-man look like an amateur. Racing along tree trunks and branches at impossible speed, it seems as if their paws must be clad in Velcro. While our three larger squirrels – red, fox, and gray – are agile acrobats, they seem sluggish compared to the flyers.

Flying squirrels are tiny, measuring nine inches stem to stern. It would take nine of them to equal the mass of one Eastern fox squirrel. Flyers may be elfin, but they sure look good. Their fur coat is rich steely-gray, highlighted with cinnamon tints. The underpants are crisp white, creating a strongly two-toned appearance. Perhaps most striking are the squirrels' eyes: huge, round peepers that lend them a lemur-like appearance. They are a wonderful adaptation for seeing in the inky blackness of nighttime forests.

A squirrel that flies?! Not really. Flying squirrels don't "fly" (bats are the only mammals that engage in sustained flapping flight), but they do take to the air. A flap of tissue known as a patagium extends between their front and rear legs. When the squirrel launches, it stretches this specialized membrane taut, forming stiff wing-like extensions – in effect, transforming itself into a mammalian parasail.

A squirrel that jumps from high in the boughs of a tree can glide for over 200 feet. Their landing sites are usually the trunks of other trees, and as the squirrel nears touchdown, it employs its beaver-like tail. Flipping the flat, wide tail to a vertical position slows airspeed and sets the squirrel for a smooth landing. Upon alighting, the furry flyer invariably races to the far side of the trunk. This cautionary behavior is designed to thwart winged predators such as Eastern screech-owls, which may have followed the squirrel's flight path.

Should an aggressor get near enough to snatch the squirrel by the tail, the would-be predator is in for a surprise. As with certain lizards, flying squirrels sport a "snap-off" tail. Fragility is engineered into the tail's bone structure; if the animal is seized



Flying Squirrels

by this appendage, the attacker gets a brushy-tailed souvenir; the squirrel escapes to live another day.

In the air or on trees, flying squirrels are in their element. Not so when they venture to the ground. A grounded flying squirrel is clumsy and awkward, at least in comparison to their arboreal performances. They are more vulnerable to predators such as foxes and house cats when on terra firma. But ground visits are part of the cost of doing business. Like other squirrels, the flyers cache acorns and other tree nuts, some of which are buried in the soil. They are also mushroom connoisseurs; sating this fungal lust requires rooting about the forest floor.

Southern flying squirrels can be surprisingly abundant. In forested regions, they are probably our most common squirrel. Their nocturnal habits mask them from easy detection, but knowing their signs will give them away. These hyperactive sprites make distinctive scratchy sounds as they race around the trees, claws scrabbling on the bark. They often utter high-pitched squeaks unlike other nighttime forest sounds. A well-aimed flashlight can catch the beasts in action, their enormous eyes reflecting red in the light's glow.

VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES



Interested observers need not travel to remote forests to seek flying squirrels. They can be common in well-treed suburbs, sometimes in very urban areas. Many people discover them when the squirrels find their bird feeders and descend to plunder the seed. Flying squirrels are not bashful, and frequently glide into the sphere of porch lights, allowing for wonderful looks. Some enthusiasts slather peanut butter onto tree trunks, which is irresistible to the furry flyers.

Flying squirrels readily use artificial nest boxes. More than one person has tapped the side of a box, only to be startled by a goggle-eyed furry face poking out of the hole. In winter, flying squirrels often den communally – up to 50 might pack together in one cavity! Squirrel boxes can be easily built. If you live in an area with plenty of large trees, it might be possible to attract the little gliders. Visit flyingsquirrels.com/boxplans.html for instructions on how to build squirrel boxes.



WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT

Field Notes

UPDATE!

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY SHOOTING CASE

Three people were convicted and sentenced in Champaign County Common Pleas Court for charges related to the shooting of a state wildlife Officer's vehicle last October, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife.

Jesse W. Coffey, Todd M. Noel, and Jacob Shepherd, all of St. Paris, pled guilty to a total of 24 misdemeanor charges and four felonies on March 8, 2010, including hunting without a license, hunting without permission, and improper handling of a firearm in a motor vehicle. Coffey, 37, and Noel, 34, were each fined \$300 and sentenced to 65 days in jail, while Shepherd, 18, was fined \$200 and sentenced to 50 days in jail. A restitution fee of \$1,979.81 will be divided among the three suspects for damage to the ODNR vehicle and damage to approximately two acres of cropland. Each will serve 300 hours of community service and be under community control for five years, with no contact allowed between the defendants involved. Also, they shall not possess a firearm or a hunting license, and may not engage in any hunting activities.

State Wildlife Officers Jeffery Tipton and Adam Smith were in the cruiser parked in a field conducting surveillance looking for poachers. The suspects' vehicle pulled into the field and directed its headlights at the cruiser. One shot was fired hitting the cruiser in the front windshield. Officers turned on their emergency lights and the suspects fled.

The wildlife officers pursued the suspects 4.5 miles from Johnson Township to Concord Township. The three suspects were apprehended with assistance from the Ohio Highway Patrol and Champaign County Sheriff's Office.

TWO MEN GUILTY OF JACKLIGHTING

Two men pled guilty last December in Lawrence County Municipal Court for several wildlife violations, including jacklighting deer and fleeing from wildlife officers.

On November 21, 2009, wildlife officers observed a vehicle that was spotlighting deer. When officials attempted to stop the vehicle the driver fled, leading wildlife officials on a pursuit ending at a nearby residence. Officers recovered a rifle and spotlight that was thrown from the vehicle during the pursuit.

One of the violators pled guilty to charges of deterring a wildlife officer, jacklighting, and aiding another in a wildlife violation. His sentence included \$1,685 in fines and court costs, 60 days of jail time with 59 suspended, two years probation, and three years of hunting license revocation.

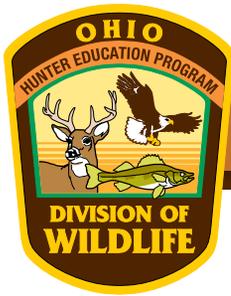
The second violator pled guilty to jacklighting, possession of untagged deer parts, failure to comply with orders of a wildlife officer, and improper handling of a firearm. His sentencing included \$1,185 in fines and court costs, 60 days of jail time with 58 suspended, two years probation, and three years of hunting license revocation.

FARMER PAYS FOR ACCIDENTAL POLLUTION

A Licking County farmer unintentionally created toxic runoff from a farm field that temporarily depleted oxygen levels in the water and killed over 49,000 aquatic organisms, including fish. Wildlife officers, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and the Ohio Department of Agriculture were called to Otter Fork Creek to investigate a fish kill last August. The Division was also notified of a second fish kill along the East Fork Rattlesnake, located just west of Hartford around that same time.

The investigation revealed that a farmer had applied approximately 530,000 gallons of corn syrup material, a by-product of ethanol production, with a mixture of cow manure to a 65-acre field. A large rainfall occurred before the mixture could be incorporated into the soil and created a runoff that drained into the two creeks. Results of water testing along the creeks indicated very low dissolved oxygen. The farmer's insurance agreed to pay \$20,213 in restitution to the Division.





Aging Fish: Managing Fish Populations

by Chris Vandergoot

In the last issue of *Wild Ohio* (Spring 2010), Chris Aman described how fisheries biologists working with the Division of Wildlife age fish. Among the many reasons why biologists age fish, he described how biologists use fish age to determine how fast they grow. In this article, we will discuss how determining the ages of fish from a particular pond, lake, or river helps fisheries biologists manage fish populations.

For example, every fall fisheries biologists sample the Lake Erie walleye population by collecting walleye from the lake with gill nets. As part of this sampling, biologists collect otoliths (ear stones) to age the fish in order to determine when a particular fish was hatched. The graph shows the number of walleye caught during the October 2008 Lake Erie gill net survey.

What is very interesting about the results of the 2008 survey is the large number of age-five walleye collected. Those age-five walleye originated from fish hatched during the spring (when walleye spawn and the eggs hatch) of 2003. This tells the fishery biologist that for whatever reason, the hatch in 2003 was pretty

strong, particularly since more fish were collected in this age group than all the previous age groups (that is age two-, three-, and four-year-olds).



A fisheries biologist with the Ohio Division of Wildlife pulls in a gill net set on Lake Erie to survey the fish population.

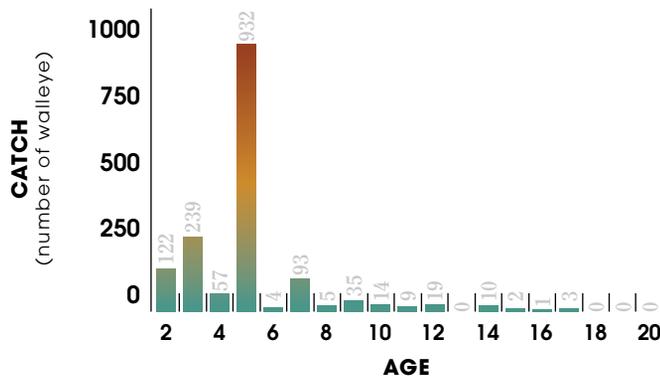
very few six and eight-year-old walleye were collected. A logical question is what was so different in 2000 and 2002 than 2003 that resulted in so few age-eight and age-six walleye being caught in the survey gill nets? Also, a few 17-year-old walleye were caught in the 2008 gill net survey. That means some walleye hatched in 1991 (17 years prior to 2008) are still swimming around Lake Erie. That's pretty amazing!

Before biologists started using otoliths to age walleye in Lake Erie in 2003, the oldest walleye they thought existed in the lake was 10 years old, but now we know that walleye as old as 24 years are swimming around Lake Erie.

Information concerning how old fish get in a particular pond, lake or river as well as what leads to a good hatch aids fishery biologists in setting appropriate fishing regulations for a particular fish population.

Fishing regulations such as the size a fish needs to be before you can keep it, or how many fish of a particular kind can be kept, ensures that the fish populations in Ohio will persist through time and future generations will be able to enjoy them just as you are today!

Information like this prompts the biologist to ask why the hatch in 2003 was so good. Were there a lot of spawner (adult) walleye in 2003, which led to the high hatch? Was there a lot of food for the newly hatched walleye to eat during the spring? Another piece of interesting information from the 2008 survey is that



A otolith, collected from a perch, can help a biologist determine when the fish was hatched

BOBCATS AND BEARS IN

West Geauga High School Teacher Mike Sustin didn't realize the impact that a research project and the outdoors would have on some of his students. What started out as curiosity soon turned into full-blown research and hands-on science.

"I THINK WE SAW A BEAR!"

The students at West Geauga High School know that Mike Sustin, the school's environmental science teacher, is an avid outdoorsman who often uses his own outdoor photos in class presentations. So he wasn't surprised when some students approached him about the possibility of seeing a black bear on their way to school.

Sustin explained, "Some kids came in hot off the bus first thing in the morning, 'I think we saw a bear, we saw a bear!' They wanted to know if it could actually have been a bear. Do bears live here in northeast Ohio or was it just lost? It really stirred their curiosity about the possibility of bears living in the area."

Reports of bears are not uncommon in northeast Ohio, including Geauga County. Sustin explained to the students that it could have been the same bear reported in the region in recent months that was roaming around trying to find a place of its own. He pointed out that the area has the right habitat for bears – located close to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, as well as huge tracts of county park preserves and protected habitat.

The students were hungry to learn more. Their discussions also turned to the possibility of bobcats because of some recent bobcat road kills in the region. From those discussions, the research project "The Return of Apex Predators to Northeastern

Ohio," was spawned. The project proposes to research and document the permanent residency of bobcats and black bears in three northeastern Ohio counties and investigate methods of managing for them. According to Sustin, it will give the students the opportunity to use real scientific inquiry skills and

technology, and possibly contribute to statewide management goals and strategies. It will also help raise awareness and respect for conservation efforts.

To fund the project, Sustin applied for and received a \$10,000 grant from the Toyota TAPESTRY Program in 2008. The grant is awarded to teachers for excellence and innovation in science education and is based on involving students in real science.

CONNECTING WITH NATURE USING REAL SCIENCE

"I hope to get the kids outside to connect with nature. And if I can teach real science and environmental education in the process, that's terrific," said Sustin.

A wide spectrum of components are part of the overall project. The first of which is land navigation with map and compass.

"Even though they will be with an adult, the kids are going to have to find their way through the woods. Most kids don't normally spend a lot of time in the woods. Even the kids who hunt, only get out on the weekend with their dads and their woodsman's skills are not that great."

GPS technology is also incorporated into the project to explore how it could be used for wildlife conservation and habitat management.

"This will be especially fun for the kids since they are very tech-oriented and it draws a whole different set of kids to the program."

The county sheriff's office calls Sustin when black bear sightings have been reported so he and students can investigate the scene of the sighting. With landowner permission, the class will visit the properties to assess the habitat quality, get landowner reports of black bear and bobcat sightings, and put up trail cameras with attractants.

"The dream picture would be a bobcat with some kittens or a sow black bear with a cub or two. That would say a lot."



NORTHEASTERN OHIO

by Melissa Hathaway



Two of the students who are very active in the project and excited to go with their teacher to investigate bobcat or black bear sightings are Jessica Herman and Katie Fielding. One such trip took them to nearby Ashtabula County to investigate a black bear sighting. They were excited to find several trees on the property that had black bear rubbings. And they were amazed that one of the rubbings was taller than themselves.



On the day of this interview, at the Geauga County West Woods Metropark in October, Sustin's environmental science class and other students involved in the project saw a

presentation on bobcats from a Cleveland Museum of Natural History researcher, followed by a hike along a park trail. Here Sustin taught an informal class identifying trees and microclimates, and pointing out areas along the trail that would make good black bear and bobcat habitat.

"I have always loved nature, and I live on a property with woods where I like to go outside and just sit under the trees and see things in nature," said Jessica. "Identifying trees is like my favorite thing in the world. I saw this program as an opportunity to learn more about the native northeast Ohio wilderness and the things in my backyard, so I am really excited to learn more about the ecology behind black bears and bobcats."

Her friend Katie also had a strong desire to get involved in the project. "I've always had an interest in wildlife and my plan is to go to Hocking College next year for wildlife management," Katie said. "I want to become a park ranger, so getting to know about bobcats and black bears

now will help me with my future ambitions. I hope to get a better understanding of the native black bears and bobcats that have been in Ohio and were extirpated and now are back in Ohio."

"What I really like about Mr. Sustin is that he doesn't act like a big know-it-all. A lot of times he's learning along with you. When we go on hikes like this one he's asking questions along with us and prompting our understanding and participation."

If more educators possessed the passion for discovering our natural world and the dedication to pass it on to their students as Mike Sustin, perhaps Nature Deficit Disorder would not be such a growing concern today.

"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in."

- Rachel Carson



BIRD COLLECTIONS OFFER

Andy Jones knows birds – especially the thousands of specimens at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Jones does not work with an aviary of live birds, but is curator of a collection of 30,000 specimens of birds from across the globe that have met their demise – some as much as 100 years ago. The collection even holds a number of extinct species such as passenger pigeons, Carolina parakeets, and ivory-billed woodpeckers.

Jones is head of the museum's Department of Ornithology and chair of the William A. and Nancy R. Klamm Endowment. As you look down the long aisles of the collection, you see a giant library of bird specimens arranged in row after row of tall file cabinets with drawers, or trays, labeled in taxonomic order. Jones' job is to oversee the maintenance, use, and growth of the collection and make it available for study.

Bird collections are used by scientists for in-depth study of past avian diversity. The specimens provide information on genetics and evolution, and help answer ornithological questions relating to topics such as ecology, conservation, anatomy, behavior, and disease.

"You save as much material as you can and you write down as much data as possible because you have no idea how the specimen might be used in the future," explained Jones. "When they established DDT as the cause of the egg shell thinning in peregrine falcons, they could look at the thickness of the modern peregrine falcon eggs and go to museum specimens and look at how thick those eggs were.

"They could look at the 1960s, 1930s, 1900s, 1870s. If they hadn't written down what day that egg from the 1870s was found, it wouldn't be useful to us. If they hadn't written down where it was found, it might not have been useful to us. That bird became important 100 years later."

THIRTY THOUSAND AND STILL GROWING

Many of the specimens in the collection are from licensed wildlife rehabilitators who donate birds that did not recover from injuries sustained in the wild. Other birds found dead along roads or that did not survive window or building strikes are also delivered to the museum. Some specimens came from an era when people collected birds as a hobby. (Today, without the proper state and federal permits, it is illegal to collect birds or any parts of birds, including nests and egg fragments).

"We occasionally will get specimens because somebody's grandfather died and they find a whole collection in the attic and don't know what to do with it. If they are in good shape with data, we will accept them. You can find some very exciting specimens that way."

The collection also includes many specimens collected during museum-sponsored expeditions from all parts of the world. Most of us have never seen, or even heard the names of some of the exotic species in the collection. "There is some cool 'eye candy' with some outstanding coloration," Jones said. He pointed out a few of his favorite trays including fruit eaters and manakins (small, tropical birds) from Central and South America. The males of these species are brilliantly colored.

Birds brought to the museum are prepared before being entered into the collection. The prep work includes two cycles of 24-hour freezing to kill any adult



Volunteers Peter and Donna Pesch



The specimen tag is the most useful part



Carolina parakeet (extinct)



A specimen from the wing collection

LIBRARY OF INFORMATION

by Melissa Hathaway



Series of the same species



Passenger pigeon (extinct)



A brightly colored specimen from South America



A common loon in the preparation room

insects that might be present, removing and examining the internal organs, and stuffing the bodies with cotton.

“But the tag is truly the important part,” said Jones. “It is very important that any specimen given to the museum includes as much information as possible. A bird without data is not very useful to us. We had a beautiful male rose-breasted grosbeak turned into us that had no data so we had to dispose of it.”

There are about 10,000 species of birds in the world and the museum has 30,000 specimens, but Jones is most interested in having a good series of the same species.

“If somebody was studying the biology of cancer, they wouldn’t just look at one person, they would look at many, many people because there can be male versus female effects, there can be age-related effects, there could be differences based on diet, there could be differences based on where you grew up. So you need dozens and dozens of people before you can understand any health issue. If I want to understand, say, Swainson’s thrush, I can’t do that by looking at one male or even 50 males. I need males and females, and adults and young birds from all over its range.”

A MONUMENTAL JOB

A group of dedicated volunteers have taken on the monumental task of cataloging the entire collection. Each specimen’s information is being entered into a computer database with whatever information was originally provided on the tag attached to each bird. About half of the collection has been cataloged in the past three years.

Volunteers Peter Pesch and his wife Donna have spent hundreds of hours diligently entering information into the database.

“It can get a bit dull so we only do two hours at a time twice a week,” said Pesch. “But we get to see birds that we would otherwise never get to see – birds from South America, Africa, India... And every so often something interesting pops up, such as a specimen from John James Audubon or Roger Tory Peterson.”

Available information on the tag might include where the specimen was collected, when, by whom, the specimen’s weight, total length, and other measurements. The volunteers say some older tags can be a challenge to decipher because of the self-styled abbreviations used by the original recorders. More present-day specimens include additional data such as the presence of mold, stomach contents, and some internal organ measurements, and the amount of skull ossification.

Jones explained that “ossified” means that it has a totally calcium-covered skull. Similar to humans who have a soft spot on the head at birth, young birds’ entire skull is soft. They start with all cartilage on the skull and it slowly ossifies, or hardens. If the skull is totally ossified, he knows that the bird was at least a year old.

During preparation of recently acquired specimens, a wing is removed and put into a separate collection of wings.

All of the collection, preparation, cataloging, and maintenance of this huge avian library is a monumental job. But the rewards and information provided could unlock the key to avian questions and present-day issues for years to come.



Lightning Bugs by Donna Daniel



PHOTO BY: WAHA

GLOW STICKS OF THE INSECT WORLD

Some of the best ideas are copied from nature. Consider the glow stick – look familiar? Probably all of us as kids caught lightning bugs and kept them in a jar.

Lightning bugs are fascinating to both adults and children. A member of the beetle family, there are about 2,000 species of fireflies worldwide, and everywhere it seems they are highly regarded. In the Smoky Mountains, lightning bugs are a tourist attraction because they light up in synchronization. Lightning bugs don't damage gardens, and they don't bite or even buzz to startle you.

Have you wondered how they glow? These beetles have light-producing organs in their abdomen. Biochemical reactions cause a greenish-yellow light. Glow sticks use the same technology. Why do they light up? We've all heard birds singing to attract mates. Lightning bugs use their lights to attract mates. If you have some in a jar you might notice they light up differently than they do when they're flying. This quick flash is more of a distress signal to warn of danger. If a lightning bug was caught in a spider web you would probably see it flash the same as it does in a jar.

It is also suspected that the glow serves as a warning to potential predators – many species of lightning bugs are poisonous to birds. A few years ago, lizards at a zoo in New York died after they ate lightning bugs.

Try luring a lightning bug with a small flashlight – males signal in the shape of a J about every five seconds. Flash an answer two seconds after you see the male's light and he might come your way.

Adult lightning bugs only live a week or so and probably feed on nectar from flowers if they eat at all. After mating, the female lightning bug lays eggs on the ground. The eggs hatch in about a month and the young live as larva in the soil for one or two years. The larvae are very predatory, feeding on snails, slugs, and other insect larvae. They are called glowworms (see left photo) and in early fall can be seen glowing on the ground in low wet areas or on the banks of ponds or streams.

Lightning bugs in our backyard is something we all take for granted, but there are some simple things you can do to make your backyard more attractive for fireflies. Leaving some areas unmowed will provide vegetation for the adults to rest on during the day. Moist, undisturbed shelter will benefit the larvae. Pesticides kill insects, so they aren't a good idea if you want lightning bugs.

No other insect evokes the mood of a dreamy, lazy summer night like the lightning bug. Enjoy these flies of fire in your backyard.



PHOTO BY: JAMES JORDAN



Fun After Dark

by Melissa Hathaway

As dusk falls, our yards come alive with an amazing diversity of wildlife that are most active at night. These “nocturnal” animals have special adaptations specially suited for seeing in the dark. The eyesight of owls is 100 times better than humans so they can see very well at night. Some animals such as bats hunt at night because their prey (primarily insects) are active once the sun goes down. Other wildlife, including skunks and coyotes, are night prowlers because their prey is also active at night.

You can do some of the best nocturnal wildlife-watching right in your own backyard. Grab a flashlight and see how many nocturnal animals you can find on an after-dark scavenger hunt. Search around gardens, soil, shrubbery, trees, rocks, water sources, porch lights, and street lights. Also listen for the calls of nocturnal wildlife. Some animals are easier to hear than see.

HEY KIDS!

You can find more outdoor activities in the newest edition of *Wild Ohio for Kids* magazine. This year’s Wild Ohio for Kids magazine is an outdoor journal for activities related to Ohio’s wildlife.

Wild Ohio for Kids is a free magazine and can be obtained by calling 1-800-WILDLIFE or by visiting one of our district offices. You can also download the magazine online at wildohio.com.



PHOTO BY: JINX ETLING

LURE A LIGHTNING BUG

Try luring a lightning bug, or firefly, with a small flashlight. Male fireflies try to attract a mate by signaling about every five seconds as they fly. A female responds by flashing from a perch near the ground, usually in the grass or bushes. Once you see a flash, wait two seconds and then flash the flashlight once. The firefly might just come your way.

FINDING WILDLIFE AMONG THE STARS

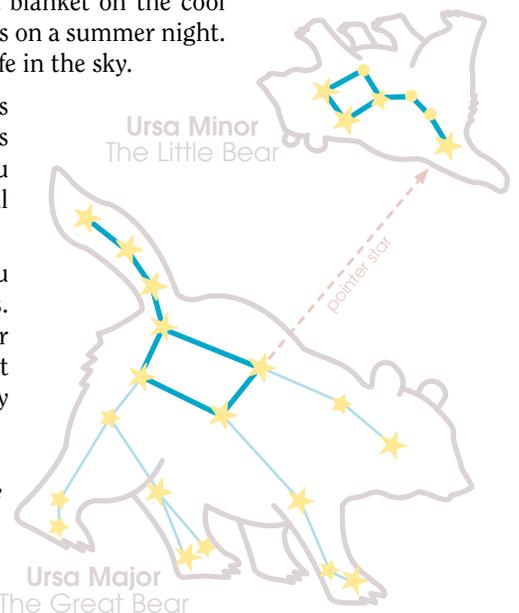
There’s nothing like spreading out a blanket on the cool grass, lying back, and watching the stars on a summer night. It’s also a great time to search for wildlife in the sky.

Shapes formed by groups of stars are called constellations. The shapes are formed by the stars when you “connect the dots.” Of the 88 official constellations, nearly half are animals.

Pick a dark, clear night and see if you can find some wildlife constellations. The easiest to find are the Great Bear and Little Bear. Try to find a spot that is away from lights. The longer you stay out, the more your eyes will adjust.

Great Bear (Hint: The Big Dipper forms the hips and tail of the bear.)

Little Bear (Hint: It is the Little Dipper.)





PHOTOGRAPHERS! You can post your photos on the Division of Wildlife's Web site Photo Gallery at wildohio.com.

READERS' PHOTOS

Wild Ohio magazine receives so many photos annually that we cannot possibly publish all of our readers' photos. However, the Division of Wildlife's online photo gallery lets our *Wild Ohio* readers and other wildlife enthusiasts post their photos. To post photos on the Web site, go to wildohio.com.



The hummingbird was very apprehensive about the wasp at the feeder, but finally shared the feeder after the wasp landed at a feeder flower.

Bill Henry



Dave Hartman with a 28-inch, 9-pound, 15-ounce walleye that he caught on Lake Erie last November.

Travis Hartman, Belleview



"Colin shot his first goose during the youth waterfowl season on an apprentice license. Nice leg band to boot!"

Dan Kunz



Garrett Wiley got his first buck last year with a crossbow.

Christine Wiley, Fairfield



Isabella Grace Quinlivan with a bluegill she caught on a Knox County pond.

Jim Quinlivan, Mt. Vernon



"I was deer hunting last October when this monster hog came in under me just before dusk."

Margaret Thompson, Logan



Jared Kreager, with his father JT, harvested this doe during a youth gun hunt from the blind in the background.



Valerie Thompson harvested her first buck during the "Youth Shotgun Season".

Troy Thompson, Milford



6 year old James Davis pictured with his drawing of a turkey.

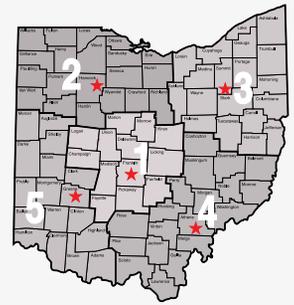
James Davis, Howard



WILD GAME GOURMET

AS SEEN ON WILD OHIO TV • hosted by Vicki Mountz

Recipes



PANFISH CHOWDER



- 4 slices bacon
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1 pound yellow perch (*or other fish*) cut in 1-inch chunks
- 1 can cooked potatoes, diced
- 1 cup water
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup milk
- 1 can creamed corn

Cook bacon and reserve two tablespoons of bacon drippings. Place bacon drippings in large pan that has a cover. Add onion, carrot, and celery to pan and cook about 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Stir in fish, potatoes, water, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer covered about 10 minutes. Blend in milk and corn. Stir and, without boiling, warm until heated through. Sprinkle each serving with crumbled bacon.

Contributed by Vicki Mountz

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TURTLE RANGOONS

- 3 ounces reduced-fat cream cheese
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1/8 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 cup cooked turtle meat
- 1 green onion, chopped
- 14 wonton wrappers

In a small bowl, combine cream cheese, garlic salt, and Worcestershire sauce until smooth. Stir in turtle and onion. Place 2 teaspoons of cream cheese mixture in center of each wonton wrapper. Moisten edges with water; bring corners to center over filling, and press edges together to seal. Place on baking sheet coated with cooking spray. Lightly spray wontons with cooking spray. Bake at 425° for 8-10 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm.

Contributed by Kathy Garza-Behr



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.



for more great wild game recipes go to wildohiocookbook.com



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John Brown,
Circleville, shows
off his newly acquired
Wild Ohio Wild Turkey Cap
and a nice spring gobbler.

Photo by: Betsy Cradlebaugh



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