

# Wild Ohio

Winter 2002-2003

M A G A Z I N E

Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



**SPECIAL ANNUAL REPORT ISSUE**



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The Division of Wildlife offers equal opportunity regardless of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex (in educational programs). If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, you should contact: The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office for Diversity and Civil Rights Programs-External Programs, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 130, Arlington, VA 22203; or, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, EEO Office, 1930 Belcher Drive, Columbus, OH 43224.

**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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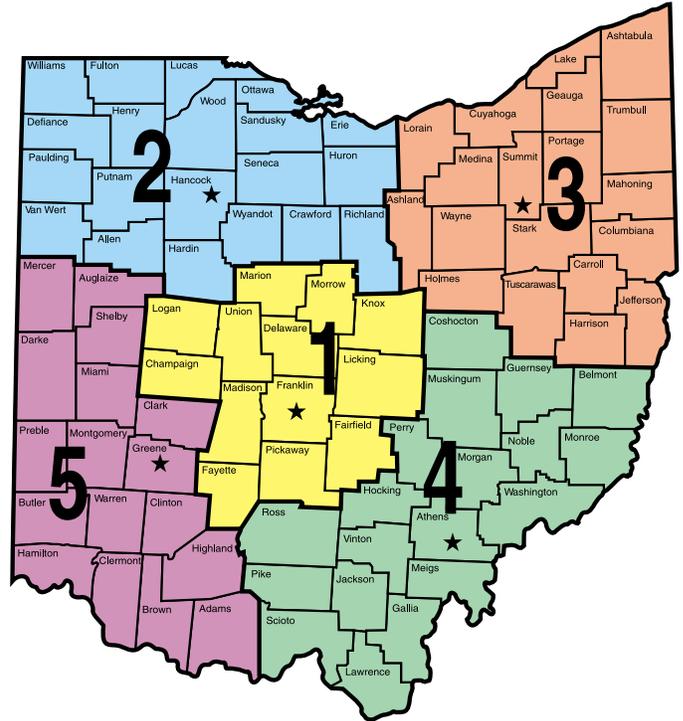
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Toll-free for a Lake Erie fishing report

**1-800-POACHER**

Toll-free to report poaching

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

Division of Wildlife Web site



**On the Wildlife Calendar . . .**

**March 2** **Canada Goose Day;** Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, Ottawa County. For information, call (419) 898-0960, ext. 31

**March 12** **Wildlife Diversity Conference, Aladdin Shrine Complex, Columbus.** This year's theme is From Shore to Shore: Lake Erie to the Ohio River. Besides informative presentations, this conference provides many opportunities to network with others interested in natural resources conservation. For details and registration materials, call 1-800-WILDLIFE to request a program brochure, or watch for details on the Division of Wildlife's Web site at [www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife).

## Features

### Annual Report—Fiscal Year 2002

6–12

*Division of Wildlife revenues and expenditures, as well as reports from the Fish Management, Wildlife Management, Law Enforcement, and Information and Education Groups.*



15

### Reader Photos

*In this issue we share with readers some of the photos sent in by Wild Ohio readers during the previous year showing just some of the ways Ohioans are enjoying the state's wildlife resources.*

#### Cover Photo:

The red-tailed hawk, Ohio's most common raptor, is commonly seen perched on fence posts, signs, utility wires, and trees along roadsides, as well as in urban areas. See our Watchable Wildlife story on pages 4 and 5. (Photo by Tim Daniel)



Jim Fofrich, Sr. (left) walleye fishing on Lake Erie with Division of Wildlife Chief Mike Budzik.

### Farewell to a Dear Friend...

#### Jim Fofrich, Sr.

Jim Fofrich, Sr., of Toledo, professional fishing guide and Lake Erie advocate, passed away October 4, 2002. Jim dedicated his professional career to promoting Lake Erie research and conservation efforts. He personally participated in fish tagging research projects to protect Lake Erie's smallmouth bass and walleye populations and helped demonstrate the importance of Maumee Bay as breeding habitat for Lake Erie fish. In addition, he passionately promoted a catch and release ethic among Lake Erie anglers and was instrumental in the creation of the Take A Kid Fishing Program, which has introduced thousands of youth to the excitement of Lake Erie fishing.

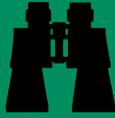
A fellow charter captain referred to Jim as a "guiding light" for conservation of fisheries and water quality in Lake Erie. Just prior to his death he was selected for induction into ODNR's Hall of Fame, which acknowledges an individual's lifetime commitment to improving Ohio's outdoors.

## Departments

<b>Watchable Wildlife</b> <i>Red-tailed Hawk</i>	4
<b>Wild Things</b>	17
<b>Outdoor Skills</b> <i>Late Season Hunting Opportunities</i>	18
<b>Wildlife Law Enforcement</b> <i>Field Notes</i>	19
<b>Backyards for Wildlife</b> <i>Q &amp; A</i>	20
<b>For Wild Kids</b> <i>The "Unique Game"</i>	21
<b>Wild Game Gourmet</b> <i>Rabbit and Grouse Recipes</i>	22
<b>Wildlife Reflections</b> <i>A Rare Find Indeed . . .</i>	23



# Ohio's watchable wildlife



## Watchable Wildlife • *Red-tailed Hawk*

by Mary Warren • photos by Tim Daniel

One day someone came into the Migratory Bird Center at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area and asked, “What are all those highway hawks that we keep seeing along the road?” I had an idea what species she was talking about, but I asked her to describe the bird.

What she was describing was a red-tailed hawk, which is the most common hawk in Ohio and the eastern United States. These roadside raptors are often seen perched along the road on fence posts, signs, and isolated tall trees. Highway and utility line rights-of-way provide clearings for them to hunt. Hawks, like owls and eagles, are birds of prey. Their diet consists of mainly rodents, but they will also eat birds, reptiles, and large insects. Some redtails will also capture birds from backyard bird feeders.

Red-tailed hawks are *buteos*, a subgroup of hawks characterized by its large size, broad wings, and rounded tail. With their habit of soaring high in the sky, this hawk embodies many people’s image of a bird of prey. Adult redtails can be identified by the rust-colored tail feathers, white breast, and a “belly band.” This dark streak across the white belly is a recognizable field mark and may also serve to camouflage the bird.

Redtails boast a wide range of plumages tailored to different regions. For example, western red-tailed hawks tend to be darker than eastern birds. There is no real explanation for this variation. A bird of many different habitats, the redtail is equally at home in woods, open areas, plains, deserts, and yes, along the highways! Their distinctive call is familiar to many—a harsh descending “keeer.”



Most red-tailed hawks in Ohio are permanent residents. In most counties, wintering numbers are greater than the breeding population. This is because the resident birds are joined by significant numbers migrating south from Canada and the Upper Great Lakes. So the next time you spot one of these roadside raptors, take some time to pull off the road and enjoy the sight as they effortlessly ride the midday thermals.

*Mary Warren is a naturalist with the Division of Wildlife at the Magee Marsh Wildlife Area.*

### Viewing Opportunities

As Ohio's most common raptor, red-tailed hawks are found in all 88 counties. It doesn't take much effort to spot one of these hawks along highways and rural roadsides. Look for them perched on fence posts, signs, and isolated tall trees along highways and utility line rights-of-way.



### Red-tailed Hawk Quick Facts

- ◆ **Weight:** about 2.4 pounds
- ◆ **Average life span:** 2 to 5 years. But there are records of a banded bird that was 28 years old
- ◆ **Nest:** a solid mass of sticks and twigs 15 to 70 feet above the ground
- ◆ **Incubation:** 1 to 5 white eggs sparsely marked with brown, 28 to 32 days



## Annual Report of the ODNR Division of Wildlife for Fiscal Year 2002

### *An Open Letter from Mike Budzik, Chief, Division of Wildlife*

This Annual Report Issue of *Wild Ohio* highlights the Division's accomplishments throughout Fiscal Year 2002. Covering the period of July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2002, the report outlines the work of our Wildlife Management, Fish Management, Law Enforcement, Information and Education, and Business groups.

Despite continuing state budget constraints, we have maintained programs and services while reducing our personnel level and holding down expenditures. This steady course is possible because the Division generates its own revenue, thanks to people who continue to support Ohio's fish and wildlife resources through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, cardinal and bald eagle license plates, and federal taxes paid on hunting and fishing equipment.

As we wrap up another year, it is an appropriate time to thank our friends, our many dedicated partners in conservation. Some of the recent contributions of funds, equipment, man-hours, and support are outlined on pages 13 and 14.

One major accomplishment in the past year came with the help of some friends and partners. The passage of HB 493, sponsored by State Representative Bob Latta, gave us an added "month of Sundays" to hunt in Ohio. Sunday hunting is now allowed in Ohio for all legal game in season without the previous restrictions. The bill also eliminated confusion in Sunday hunting requirements and provided more weekend opportunities for Ohio hunters. We owe a world of gratitude also to those organizations that made Sunday hunting possible, such as the Ohio Farm Bureau, Ohio Farmers Union, and the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance.

Wildlife resources continue to flourish in the Buckeye State. In fact, we continue to see success each year in both reintroduced and restored species of wildlife. For example; bald eagles, river otters, peregrine falcons, ospreys, and trumpeter swans all had record years of production. Fishing on Lake Erie continued to be great for yellow perch, walleyes, smallmouth bass, and steelhead trout. In addition, we enjoyed excellent hunting for many game species, especially deer, wild turkeys, doves, and Canada geese.

As we enter our Bicentennial anniversary year, we can look back through Ohio's history—from the infancy of Ohio's statehood to the present day—and we can see the changes in wildlife species and numbers through the alteration of the landscape and development of wildlife laws. Things may be different now, but wildlife is still one of our most important natural resources. In pursuit of its mission, the Division will continue to promote and manage wildlife for the enjoyment of generations to come.

Sincerely,

*Michael J. Budzik*

# Financial Report

## Expenditures

### Wildlife Management - \$10,507,610

The Wildlife Management and Research Group is responsible for managing all wildlife, assisting landowners with habitat improvements, managing land for wildlife and wildlife-oriented recreation, and conducting research to be used in improving wildlife populations.

### Law Enforcement - \$3,640,337; Wildlife Officers - \$7,161,926

Enforcement is a fish and wildlife management tool designed to protect the wildlife resource, ensure fair and equitable use, protect state property, and implement wildlife, litter, and pollution statutes. Wildlife officers are assigned to each of Ohio's 88 counties and Lake Erie.

### Fish Management - \$7,615,447

The Fish Management and Research Group maintains the aquatic resources of the state. Biologists and other fisheries personnel manage water areas by improving spawning habitat and fishing access, recommending regulations, monitoring fish populations and angler harvest, stocking, and conducting research.

### District and Statewide Operations - \$7,635,570

Expenditures in this category include money spent for fiscal and business management, licensing and permits, property management, computer services, the construction crew, environmental research and review, and wetlands habitat restoration.

### Information and Education - \$4,747,296

Money is spent for hunter, trapper, and angler education, the printing of licenses and regulations, educational materials for Ohio's school teachers, the *Wild Ohio* television program and magazine, information distribution to media and the public, and the creation and printing of maps and other publications.

### Capital Improvements - \$1,953,720

These funds are spent on land purchases and the repair, maintenance, renovation, and construction of facilities such as fishing access sites, boat ramps, hatcheries, and offices.

### Endangered Species and Wildlife Diversity

Income for these projects comes from the proceeds from the sale of wildlife license plates and donations to the wildlife checkoff program on state income tax forms. This income is used for projects in fish and wildlife management, information and education, and law enforcement. These monies are used specifically to achieve management goals established for endangered species and wildlife diversity.

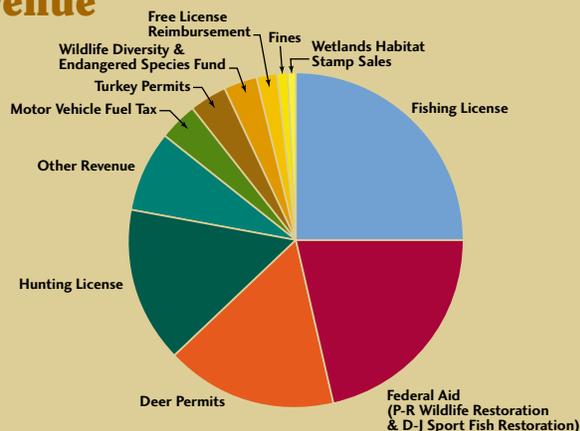
## Statement of Revenue – FY02

Fishing License .....	\$ 11,403,176
Hunting License .....	6,874,845
Deer Permits .....	7,537,855
Turkey Permits .....	1,639,530
Free License Reimbursement .....	925,900
Federal Aid (P-R Wildlife Restoration & D-J Sport Fish Restoration) .....	9,803,029
Wetlands Habitat Stamp Sales .....	358,717
Wildlife Diversity & Endangered Species Fund ...	1,486,859
Fines .....	480,343
Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax .....	1,729,163
Other Revenue .....	3,563,429
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$ 45,802,846</b>

### Non-Resident Licenses Issued in FY02

Non-Resident Fishing .....	87,815
Non-Resident Hunting .....	18,433

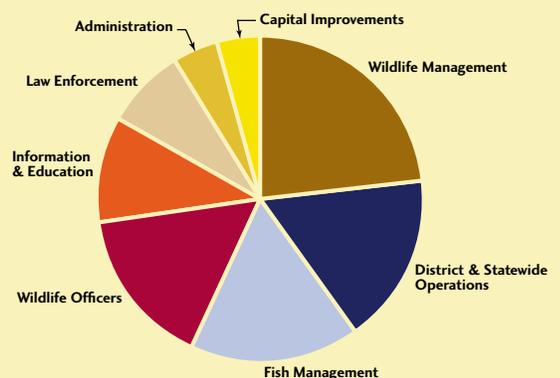
## Revenue



## Statement of Expenditures – FY02

Administration .....	\$ 2,020,072
Information & Education .....	4,747,296
Law Enforcement .....	3,640,337
Wildlife Officers .....	7,161,926
Fish Management .....	7,615,447
Wildlife Management .....	10,507,610
District & Statewide Operations .....	7,635,570
Capital Improvements .....	1,953,720
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$ 45,281,978</b>

## Expenditures



# Wildlife Management

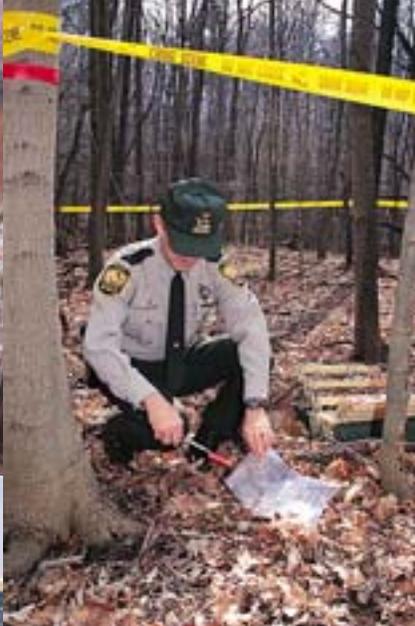
- The Division continued funding its wildlife specialist program in local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). Nearly 2,000 people attended the first annual Hunting and Trapping Expo conducted by several of the specialists in Cambridge.
- An experimental late Canada goose season was conducted in 14 counties. Hunters harvested 3,357 geese, of which 83 percent were giant Canada geese.
- Canada goose complaints in 2001 dropped for the first time in five years. A study investigating the effectiveness of laser harassment of Canada geese in urban habitats was conducted and indicated that laser harassment could be an effective additional tool in harassment programs.
- Biologists captured and radio-tagged 34 fawns in the second year of a three-year study to monitor the survival and causes of mortality of white-tailed deer fawns.
- Wild turkey range expansion efforts continued with 137 birds relocated to six sites. Since 1963, 4,510 wild turkeys have been trapped and relocated to 226 sites across Ohio. Seven more counties were opened to fall turkey hunting and the fall season was extended for archers.
- Seventy-five wild turkey hens were captured and radio-tagged in southeastern Ohio. Survival, cause of death, and reproductive success data were collected from 56 hens during the spring and summer of 2002.
- Restoration efforts continued for bobwhite quail. Ninety-six wild quail were live-captured and released in Shelby County in the first year of a pilot project for increasing the population in southwest Ohio.
- Ongoing restoration efforts for endangered wildlife species continued to show positive results.
- A record 78 pairs of bald eagles fledged 105 eaglets, 12 pairs of peregrine falcons fledged 33 chicks, 19 pairs of osprey fledged 27 young, and 21 pairs of trumpeter swans produced 46 cygnets.
- More than 100 common tern chicks from three artificial nest platforms were banded.
- In the fifth year of a Karner blue butterfly reintroduction program with the Toledo Zoo, Karner blue butterflies were observed in the wild at Kitty Todd Preserve.
- Snowshoe hare reintroduction efforts continued in northeast Ohio with a total of 291 hares from Michigan's Upper Peninsula released in the past three years.
- River otters were delisted from the state Endangered Species List, and the Division began a radio-telemetry project to refine population estimates. A graduate student project was also developed to examine habitat use, home range, and movement patterns of river otters in the Killbuck watershed, and to determine statewide reproductive output of otters through necropsies.
- As a result of a mitigation settlement, the Division received 230 acres adjacent to Big Island Wildlife Area. Mitigation wetland restoration projects included 53 acres on the Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area, 85 acres near the Big Island Wildlife Area, and 13 acres of a 40-acre project completed by Ducks Unlimited at Willow Point Wildlife Area. The Division received \$100,000 from Duke Energy in Lawrence County to purchase habitat for the spadefoot toad.
- Private Lands-Wetland Restoration Projects—65 landowners participated to restore 356 acres. Pasture-to-Prairie Projects—16 landowners participated to restore 1,089 acres. CREP Bonus—32 landowners participated to plant 252 acres of warm season grass filterstrips.



# Law Enforcement



- Ohio wildlife officers investigated 151 pollution incidents statewide. A total of 156,814 wild animals died due to pollution, the majority of which were fish. The Division collected \$52, 615.97 in damages from 11 of the settlements where claims were submitted to the violator.
- Wildlife investigators in southwest and southeast Ohio completed an investigation called "Operation Mudcat" that involved the illegal sale and taking of game fish from Ohio waters. Sixty individuals were cited with 152 charges in this operation. Charges included selling game fish, purchasing game fish illegally, selling bait without a license, and use of illegal methods of taking fish.
- Fifty-five incidents of personal injury or property damage relating to hunting were investigated.
- Officers conducted 230 special enforcement projects targeting known



wildlife violators and problem areas where on-going wildlife violations occur. A total of 5,210 individual contacts was made with 912 arrests or citations issued during these special projects.

- Wildlife investigators in District Five (southwest Ohio) concluded a two-year investigation involving the illegal taking of some 30 trophy buck deer. "Operation Bad Rack" resulted in 15 individuals being charged with 53 wildlife crimes.

- Lake Erie wildlife investigators worked six seasonal special enforcement projects involving walleye, yellow perch, and small-mouth bass sport fishing, international boundary surveillance, unlicensed charter boat operation, and license compliance. One hundred eighty-two wildlife criminal charges were filed as a result of these projects. Lake Erie Wildlife investigators conducted 135 commercial fish inspections.



- Wildlife officers conducted 39 aircraft surveillance projects.
- Wildlife officers made a total of 8,095 arrests for wildlife law violations and other criminal violations. In all, 58,954 anglers, 32,790 hunters, and 318 trappers were contacted in the field. The following table shows the total dollar amount of fines collected and the number of arrests by wildlife district:



Wildlife District	Fines Collected	Arrests
District 1 (C)	\$ 66,244.00	1,103
District 2 (NW)	\$ 132,522.50	1,951
District 3 (NE)	\$ 101,098.00	1,542
District 4 (SE)	\$ 131,940.00	1,871
District 5 (SW)	\$ 72,308.50	1,092
Lake Erie	\$ 26,965.80	536
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 531,078.80</b>	<b>8,095</b>

# Information & Education

- The *Wild Ohio* television show aired on 24 stations across Ohio. Twenty-six half-hour programs were produced for the fifth year.
- The quarterly *Wild Ohio* magazine was produced for the 12th year with an average of 140,000 copies distributed per issue. The third annual *Wild Ohio for Kids* magazine was produced and distributed to 300,000 young people.
- The Sportsman's Migratory Bird Center attracted an estimated 70,000 visitors. A new warbler identification display was added to the boardwalk, made possible by donations from a local family and the Friends of Magee Marsh.
- The Put-In-Bay Aquatic Visitor's Center continues to attract close to 20,000 visitors during the spring and summer seasons.
- A marketing project was developed to create a new Ohio Hunting Guide that was mailed to recent graduates of the Hunter Education course, as well as being distributed to course attendees last fall.
- A partnership was formed with ODNR's Division of Parks and Recreation to provide funding and training for park naturalists to incorporate conservation concepts in their programs.
- For the third year, the Division printed area-specific Ohio Fishing Guides to promote fishing. New this year was the approach of direct mail to selected individuals identified as "most likely to lapse" anglers.
- One-hundred twenty-eight hunter education and 22 trapper education instructors were certified, bringing the volunteer instructor core to over 1,400 instructors. These volunteers certified 23,264 new hunter or trapper education students.
- Our advanced hunter and shooting sports programs reached over 30,000 youths through subsidy grants to numerous youth organizations.
- The Division implemented a proficiency testing option for hunter education certification for adults. This option allows adults to use their previous hunting, shooting, or life experiences to pass Ohio's mandatory written hunter education test.
- The Division produced a new Ohio Hunter Education Manual. This manual significantly reduces the costs for hunter education and allows the Division to offer the course over the Web and in a CD-ROM format in the near future.
- Two "Becoming an Outdoors Woman" (BOW) workshops trained 207 women in a variety of outdoor skills. More than 1,600 women have attended Ohio BOW events during the last nine years.
- The Division awarded "Step Outside" grants to 62 Ohio organizations that conducted outdoor skills, hands-on events. Events reached over 7,000 youths and adults.
- The Division's "Hooked on Fishing – Not on Drugs" program certified over 200 new instructors, including formal educators, naturalists, drug counselors, and other youth organization workers. More than 1,500 instructors have now been certified, reaching over 7,000 kids annually.
- The "Fishing in the Parks" tackle loaner program expanded to 27 state parks and two local park systems. An average of 1,000 people per location used this tackle.
- The Division once again partnered with the Center for Science and Industry (COSI) to develop a traveling education program teaching conservation concepts to middle school students.
- The Division's Web page was visited by an average of 160,000 visitors per month. The site contains over 3,000 pages of information and over 6,400 files.
- Eight new lake maps were produced and are displayed on the Division's Web site.



# Fish Management



- The KH Butler Motorboat Access Facility on the Ohio River in Gallia County was completed. The facility contains a three-lane launch ramp and parking for 84 car/trailer combinations.
- The Boater – Angler Fund was created by the state legislature. This fund allows the Division to collect one-eighth of one percent of the state's motor fuels tax. Money from this fund is being spent on motorboat access construction and maintenance around the state.
- A new Inland Fisheries Management System was developed. This new system which features a lake classification scheme, standardized assessments, data analysis, and reporting will be put into place for the 2003 season. This system is expected to result in significant improvements to management efficiency and effectiveness.
- Seven state record fish were caught during the past year. New records have been established for the following species: hybrid striped bass, saugeye, freshwater drum, longnose gar, and pumpkinseed, green, and longear sunfish.
- Ohio Huskie Muskie Club data indicated that records were broken for most muskies caught (2,129), most huskie muskies (greater than 40 inches) caught (341), most honorable mention muskies (greater than 30 inches) caught (1,485), and the record was tied for the longest fish caught (54 inches).
- A new boat ramp at Nettle Lake Fishing Access near Montpelier was completed and opened to the public.
- Six state hatcheries produced 32 million fish, including: 75,000 rainbow trout, 50,000 brown trout, 400,000 steelhead trout, 700,000 channel catfish, 2 million hybrid striped bass, 25,000 muskies, 9 million saugeyes, 19 million walleyes, and 800,000 yellow perch.
- Over 66,000 steelhead trout were stocked in the Vermilion River for the first time.
- Thirty-five endangered adult shovelnose sturgeons were reintroduced into the upper reaches of the Scioto River. Approximately 3,000 fingerling shovelnose sturgeons are also being raised at Kincaid State Fish Hatchery for additional stockings.
- Staff worked with interagency partners (U.S. and Canada) to: 1) establish lakewide allowable harvest levels for walleye and yellow perch, 2) reach a sharing agreement for future yellow perch harvest, 3) further develop formal Ecosystem and Environmental Objectives for Lake Erie, and 4) examine water quality and food web parameters in the Central Basin.
- Research was funded on smallmouth bass reproduction to gain insights on the relative impacts of the exotic round goby, stormy weather, and angling on reproductive success.
- A Lake Erie Tactical Plan process was initiated to direct program research and operations through 2010 with implementation in fall 2002.
- Tagging studies continued on walleye and smallmouth bass to learn about movements, stock discreteness, and levels of fishery exploitation. A total of 2,318 walleye and 1,330 smallmouth bass was tagged.
- Various field projects were continued to monitor changes in the long-term health of fish and invertebrates in Lake Erie and to estimate the amount and composition of fish species removed by Ohio sport anglers and commercial fishermen.
- Provided technical assistance and management expertise in watershed activities, fish sampling for contaminant advisories, and environmental reviews.
- Completed renovation of the boat basin and storage facility at Sandusky.
- Developed ANS prevention signage for use at boat ramps.
- Developed a stream and watershed program to be implemented in each of the five districts.

## Meet the Ohio Wildlife Council

The Ohio Wildlife Council is an eight-member board that approves all ODNR Division of Wildlife proposed rules and regulations. Appointed by the Governor, no more than four members may be of the same political party and two of the council members must represent agriculture. Each term of office is four years.

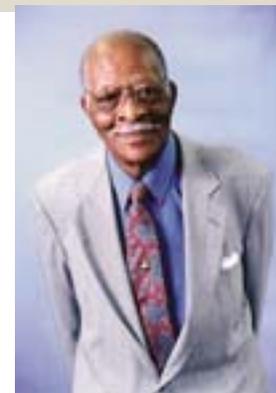
**Gary Grant, Chairman**, (Continental) has been in the insurance business for 30 years and is very active in community affairs. He is an avid hunter, fisherman, and trap shooter. "I am dedicated to serving on the Wildlife Council because I feel wildlife in Ohio is a very important natural resource."



Gary Grant



Karen Stewart-Linkhart



Jesse T. Hopkins

**Karen Stewart-Linkhart, Vice-Chairman**, (Xenia) has been active in 4-H as a member and advisor, and as a member of the Greene County Farm Bureau for many years. She is also an avid trapper and hunter. "As a person who enjoys the outdoors, people, and making an impact in my community, I was thrilled at the opportunity to be a member of the Wildlife Council."

**Jesse T. Hopkins, Secretary**, (Sandusky) has fished for just about every species Lake Erie has to offer. However, smallmouth bass fishing is his favorite pastime. "I enjoy serving on the Council because I feel I am the connection between the sportsmen and women and the Division of Wildlife."



Howard L. Calhoun



Charles E. Franks



Lee C. Howley

**Howard L. Calhoun** (Akron), an attorney, is currently serving his fifth term on the Wildlife Council. "During my tenure on the Council, I have seen a continued effort from the Division of Wildlife to improve wildlife resources. Through its efforts, Ohioans now have dove-hunting, Sunday hunting, elimination of gillnets on Lake Erie, cleanup of Lake Erie and other waters, and the return of the bald eagle, Canada goose, trumpeter swan, and river otter. And there are probably more deer and turkey in Ohio today than when the settlers arrived."

**Charles E. Franks** (Newark) is so dedicated to community service that Governor George Voinovich awarded him the "Volunteer of the Year" award for the state of Ohio in 1994. "I enjoy sharing ideas and learning from the Division of Wildlife staff. I have worked with troubled youth for 25 years and have found that by teaching hunting and fishing to these kids, they learn invaluable

lessons about the out-of-doors, themselves, and life. It's all about passing along passion and respect for the wildlife resources."

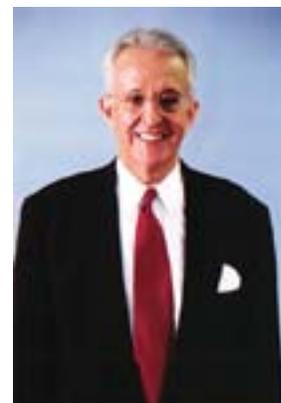
**Lee C. Howley** (Vermilion) is a prominent businessman and served at the request of President Clinton at the United Nations as this country's Public Delegate (1994-95). "I serve on the Wildlife Council because of my love for our state's and country's natural resources and the responsibility I believe our current generation has to protect and improve our natural assets. Our natural resources can only be preserved and enhanced by proactive, professional wildlife and resource management."

**Horace W. Karr** (Pomeroy) is serving his sixth term on the Wildlife Council. With a farming background, he has "a love for the land and everything that grows and lives on it." "I am proud to have this honor and to be a part of the Ohio Division of Wildlife as many people over the U.S. feel that we have the best wildlife division in the country. We are recognized as a leader in wildlife management and a pattern for other wildlife agencies to follow."

**James R. Lynch** (Upper Arlington) enjoys fishing Lake Erie, and hunting deer, upland game, waterfowl, and wild turkey. "Ohio has become one of the nation's best places to hunt and fish, and by serving on the Council I hope to help preserve and enhance those opportunities. The Division of Wildlife has done an excellent job of listening to all those interested in outdoor conservation, while making the best recommendations to the Wildlife Council. It has been a pleasure to serve the sportsmen and women of Ohio at a time when wildlife opportunities have never been so plentiful."



Horace W. Karr



James R. Lynch

# Saying Thanks to Our Friends...

Many wildlife conservation organizations and individuals make special contributions to the Division to help us carry out our mission to manage Ohio's wildlife resources. During the past year, donations included equipment, use of facilities, labor, and money. We would like to publicly say "thank you" to our friends:

- **The Ohio Huskie Muskie Club** bought two aerators worth \$1,335 for the St. Mary's State Fish Hatchery to help raise minnows used to feed muskies.
- **Central Ohio Chapter of Safari Club International** donated \$1,000 for the purchase of robotic deer decoys to be used by wildlife officers to enforce deer hunting regulations.
- **Whirlpool Corporation** of Findlay Ohio donated a large chest freezer and an upright refrigerator valued at \$1,000 to the Division for use in temporary storage of evidence.
- Staff from the **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Seney National Wildlife Refuge** in Michigan have supported the Division's snowshoe hare reintroduction project over the past several years. Refuge personnel have provided access to and use of refuge facilities as well as assistance in locating good trapping areas for snowshoe hares.
- **Edwin Todd** of Toledo donated 67 framed Federal Duck Stamps and prints and 50 State Wetland Habitat Stamps and prints to the Sportsman's Migratory Bird Center at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area.
- **Shirley Hamilton** of Wauseon donated \$35 to the Sportsman's Migratory Bird Center in memory of Marvin Ellis of Toledo, Ohio.
- **Mike Myatt** of Green, Ohio, donated 17 refurbished fishing rods for the Division's youth fishing program.
- **The Birdville Cooners** of Wren, Ohio donated 10.9 acres of land in Van Wert County for the new Whitey Case Wildlife Production Area, the first state wildlife area in that county.
- A donation by the **Northwest Ohio Chapter of Safari Club International** and a matching grant by **Safari Club International** provided three digital cameras and three video cameras (valued at \$2,800) for use in wildlife law enforcement.
- **Billy Mitchell** and **James Swartz**, commercial trap net fishermen from Port Clinton, offered the services of their vessels, nets, and crew for several day-long smallmouth bass tagging projects in western Lake Erie. They, along with several other licensed fishermen and processing facilities, also provided numerous samples of several sizes and species of fish for Lake Erie Fisheries Unit biologists to process for contaminant analyses conducted by the Ohio EPA.
- A donation of \$250 from the **Woods and Waters Club** and \$250 from the **Westlake Sports Club** provided a mooring cover for the Lorain County patrol boat. **Safari Club International, Northern Ohio Chapter, Inc.** equipped the boat with a state radio, a marine radio, a Global Positioning Sensor (GPS), and included the installation labor.
- **Safari Club International, Northern Ohio Chapter, Inc.** provided funds for a deer decoy for northeastern Ohio law enforcement.
- **Medina Farmers & Sportsmen's Club** donated \$250 for a GPS unit.
- **Wayne County Izaak Walton League** donated night vision equipment and accessories (valued at \$2,500) for the county wildlife officer.
- The following organizations and individuals donated art prints for the new District Office in Athens:  
**Appalachian Longbeards Chapter, National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF); Belmont County NWTF; Coshocton County Sportsman's Association; Gallia County Conservation Club; Guernsey County Sportsmen for Conservation; Walt Ingram; Meigs County Fish and Game Association; Meigs County Ikes; Morgan County Coon Hunters Association; New Lexington Future Farmers of America and alumni; Old Trail Hunt Club; Perry County Anglers; Perry County Coon Hunters; Perry County Longbeards; Scioto Valley Chapter, NWTF; Brian Simpson; Eric Shipman; Somerset Sportsmen's Club; Southeast Hunting and Fishing Club; South Hills Chapter NWTF; Washington County Fish and Game Association; and Wolf Creek Chapter, NWTF.**
- In addition, we would like to thank our national wildlife conservation partners for their continued support of the Division of Wildlife: **Ducks Unlimited, Izzak Walton League, National Rifle Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Whitetails Unlimited, and Pheasants Forever.**

*continued on page 14*



**C. Umhau Wolf** of Toledo donated \$9,000 in memory of his late wife **Betty Wolf** and the **Friends of Magee** donated \$2,000 for a new warbler display at the Magee Marsh Wildlife Area boardwalk.



Staff from the Toledo Zoo assisted with the daily feeding of two peregrine falcon chicks in downtown Toledo after the adult male peregrine was injured and the adult female was left on her own to feed the chicks. Nature's Nursery provided some of the quail for the initial feedings.



Members of the Ohio Decoy Carvers and Collectors Association donated two wheelchair-accessible blinds to the Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area. The club spent about \$400 in materials and 30 man-hours to construct the blinds. They were painted by Adam Grimm (2000 Federal Duck Stamp Contest Winner).

## Ohio's Youth Get Involved in Wildlife Conservation



Jacob Schaeffer (age 16) of Ravenna, a member of Boy Scout Troop #558, donated to the Division a bear trap he constructed for his Eagle Scout project. His project was funded by the Izaak Walton League.



Elizabeth Long (age 10) of Ravenna donated \$50 to the Division's bald eagle management program. She earned the money by holding a bake sale as a project she did as a member of the Rootstown Small Ones 4-H Club.



# Reader's PHOTOS



*Wild Ohio* received many wildlife, fishing, and hunting photos from readers during the past year. The following are some of the best examples of how our readers have been enjoying the state's many wildlife resources. If you take a good shot, have an extra print made and send it in. We may publish your photo here next year...



"The Cub Scouts of Powell/Olentangy Pack 428 (Den # 10), in conjunction with the Columbus Chapter of Ducks Unlimited and the Division of Wildlife, assembled wood duck boxes and stuffed them with nesting material for use at area marshes."  
— Tim Norris, Columbus, OH



"I released this screech owl after I found it on a tree branch tangled in fishing line, after it apparently tried to eat the worm on the line. Let this serve as a reminder to sports people to pick up after themselves when in the field."  
— Frank Blake, Massillon, OH



"I took this picture of regal moths perched on a wheelbarrow handle in my backyard in Meigs County."  
— Deb Moreland, Albany, OH



"This group of youths participated in a youth waterfowl hunt in Mercer County. I would like to thank the Division of Wildlife for giving these youths the opportunity to hunt by providing youth hunts."  
— Brian C. Miller, Mercer County



"While fishing the Sandusky River with his uncle last May, nine-year-old Chad Shellhouse caught this 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-inch Fish Ohio crappie."  
— Don Shellhouse, Tiffin, OH



"I've enclosed a picture of my 10-year-old son Colin with his first Ohio turkey. This past turkey season gave me and my two sons an opportunity to spend quality time together and develop memories that will last a lifetime."  
— Jim McConville, Tulsa, OK

## More Reader's Photos



"Here is a photo of our young hunting partner, 15-year-old Anthony Kincaid. He took this nice 6-pointer with a crossbow in Muskingum County in November 2001. He also got a double-bearded turkey that year."  
— Jerrod Allison and Kevin Ritchey, Norwich, OH



"In your 2002 spring issue you published a picture of the Mingo Sportsmans Club's Kids Fishing Derby held in 1952. We still hold that event annually. Here is a picture of the 2002 Derby, 50 years later."  
— Don Scott, Mingo Sportsmans Club



"My ninety-one-year-old neighbor Flavia Null caught this nice small-mouth bass from a pond using bread dough. She loves to fish."  
— Randy Darr, Fremont, OH



"That's me and my sister Judy Hogan from California with the snapping turtle I caught in my brother-in-law's pond near Wapakoneta. I didn't have the heart to kill a turtle that big (30 pounds) and that old so I released it into my pond."  
— Werner Schmiesing, Minster, OH

— Werner Schmiesing, Minster, OH



"I photographed these fawns at Sidecut Park in Toledo. What a beautiful scene in the early a.m. hours."  
— Joann Backlund, Toledo, OH



Nine-year-old Corbin Schneider caught this 5-pound, 10-ounce smallmouth bass near Kelleys Island. His catch makes him the world record holder in the "Small Fry" division (age 10 and under) as established by the International Game Fish Association.  
— Clark Schneider, Westlake, OH.

## New Southeast Ohio Wildlife Office Opens



The new Division of Wildlife District Four Office in Athens was dedicated last July. The office is part of the new southeast district office of ODNR, which also houses a Division of Forestry office. The \$2.6 million "Ohio's NatureWorks" project includes a 19,000-square foot office building, a 5,100-square foot garage, and expanded public parking. The new office is located at 360 East State Street, the site of the previous office.

## Birders Sought for Ohio Winter Bird Atlas

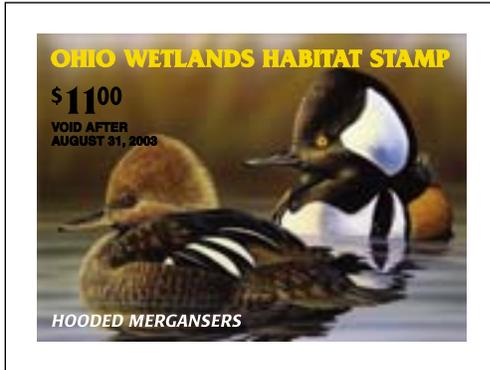
The National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count has been a major source for collecting information about Ohio's wintering birds. However, this one-day, early winter census often takes place during the active migration southwards of waterfowl, snow buntings, juncos, and other species. To get a more accurate representation of the winter range of Ohio birds, the Ohio Winter Bird Atlas project was established.

Volunteer birders are being sought for this statewide project. The atlas focuses solely on sightings during the month of January to keep to a minimum any confusion with late fall migrants and early spring migrants. This five-year project will allow for a thorough mapping of the distribution and numbers of those bird species surviving an Ohio winter.

Complete instructions on how to participate in the project can be found at [www.aves.net/winter-atlas](http://www.aves.net/winter-atlas), or contact Victor Fazio at 216-561-7651, or via e-mail at [vfazio@bright.net](mailto:vfazio@bright.net).

## Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp Design Contest Winner

Brian Blight of Pennsylvania won the 2002 Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp Design competition with his rendering of a hooded merganser. It will appear on the Ohio wetlands stamp in the fall of 2003. Blight's art of a lone canvasback previously won the competition in 2000 and appeared on the Ohio stamp in 2001.



Waterfowl hunters and collectors purchase more than 35,000 Ohio wetland stamps every year. Proceeds from the sale of the stamps fund waterfowl habitat restoration projects.

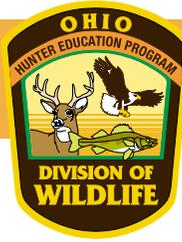
Wildlife artists interested in entering the annual Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp Design contest may call 1-800-WILDLIFE to receive an information packet.



## Newly Certified Boone and Crockett Scorers

Thirty participants, including ODNR Division of Wildlife personnel, became certified scorers of North American big game at a Boone and Crockett scoring course held at the Division's District One Office in July. The club's measurement and scoring system is recognized by sportmen's groups and the scientific community as the official scoring system for trophy big game in North America, as well as an effective means of tracking the success of wildlife conservation programs.

The Boone and Crockett Club is a non-profit conservation organization founded in 1887 by Theodore Roosevelt to address the issues that affect hunting, wildlife, and wildlife habitat. The Club's Fair Chase statement was the first document outlining a code of conduct and ethics for sportsmen, which later became the cornerstone of the game laws we have today.



## Late Season Hunting Opportunities Abound

By Matt Ortman

The hustle and bustle of the holiday season is over. The snow is flying and Ohio's deer gun season has come and gone, but this is no reason for Buckeye State hunters to hang up their guns and bows! Late season hunting opportunities abound in Ohio.

January, February, and March are great months for hunters to hit the fields and the woodlots. Late season hunters will not have to face the crowds sometimes found on public hunting areas earlier in the year. The weather may be colder, so bundle up and head out to experience some of these excellent late season hunting opportunities.

### Small Game

Numerous small game species are legal game for another month or two. Ohio squirrel hunters enjoy a very long season that started August 17 and concludes on January 31. Rabbit and grouse remain legal game until February 28, so grab your favorite beagle or bird dog and hit the fields and forests for some great late season action.



### White-tailed Deer Archery

Ohio is fortunate to have a quality white-tailed deer herd. The archery season for deer is open until January 31. Archery hunters this time of year often have the opportunity to view and maybe even harvest some great bucks as they bounce back from the pressure of the gun and blackpowder deer seasons. The late season has the bucks looking for food sources that will help them gain back the weight lost during the rut. Hunters should look to unharvested grain fields to use an unfilled deer tag this month.

### Furbearers

Some of our lesser-pursued game species also provide some wonderful hunting this time of year. For furbearer hunters the legal season for fox, raccoon, opossum, skunk, and weasel remains open until January 31. The tremendous raccoon population should make for many exciting night hunts this winter. There is no closed season on coyotes in Ohio so they are also legal game.



### Waterfowl

There also may be some waterfowl hunting opportunities available to hunters through the month of January. Please consult Publication 295, Waterfowl Hunting Seasons for a list of all waterfowl regulations before heading to the fields and marshes.

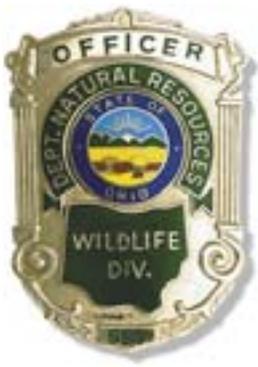
### Crows

Crows can provide wonderful wingshooting practice. The open season for crows is Friday, Saturday, and Sundays only through March 23.

Ohio hunters can extend the hunting season by taking advantage of the many late season hunting opportunities Ohio has to offer! It will make the remaining months before Ohio's spring turkey season seem much shorter. Please check Publication 85, 2002-2003 Ohio Hunting and Trapping Regulations for season length, rules, and bag limits.

### Late Season Hunting

Opportunities	Opening Date	Closing Date
Squirrel	August 17, 2002	January 31, 2003
Rabbit	November 1, 2002	February 28, 2003
Ruffed Grouse	October 12, 2002	February 28, 2003
Deer (archery only)	October 5, 2002	January 31, 2003
Fox	November 10, 2002	January 31, 2003
Raccoon	November 10, 2002	January 31, 2003
Opossum	November 10, 2002	January 31, 2003
Skunk	November 10, 2002	January 31, 2003
Weasel	November 10, 2002	January 31, 2003
Crow	June 14, 2002	March 23, 2003
Coyote	No Closed Season	
Ducks, Geese	See Publications 295 and 298 for dates and details	



# Wildlife Law Enforcement

## Field Notes

### Wildlife Officers of the Year

Eleven Ohio wildlife officers were honored during 2002 as "Officer-of-the-Year" by various conservation organizations. Officer **Rick Cooley** was selected officer of the year by the National Wild Turkey Federation.



Officer Rick Cooley

Officer **Dwight Edwards** received the officer of the year award from the Ohio Bowhunters Association. Officer **Mike Serio** was named officer of the year by Shikar Safari Club.



Officer Mike Serio

District Three; **Heath Horn**, District Four; **Jeremy Payne**, District Five; and **Matt Fisher**, Lake Erie.

Officers **Mike Custer** and **Mike Serio** received distinguished service awards from Quail Unlimited for over 30 years of service to the wildlife resource and residents of Butler and Hamilton counties.

Ohio Turn-In-a-Poacher (TIP) officers of the year included: **Mike Miller**, District One; **Jeff Collingwood**, District Two; **Jim Schuler**,



Officer Mike Miller



Officer Jeff Collingwood

### "Operation Mudcat" Sweeps 13 Counties 60 Individuals Cited for Illegal Selling and Taking of Game Fish

Sixty individuals across 13 counties were cited when ODNR Division of Wildlife officers halted an operation comprised of the illegal taking and selling of game fish last June. "Operation Mudcat" revealed the individuals involved were illegally removing game fish, most of which were catfish, from Ohio streams and illegally selling them to commercial, recreational fishing operations, often referred to as "pay lakes."

Operation Mudcat resulted in more than 150 charges being filed. Most of the charges are fourth degree misdemeanors and concern the illegal sale and purchase of game fish. Other charges included selling bait without a bait dealer license, aiding an offender, possession of game fish over the bag limit, and use of an illegal method of taking game fish.

With a few of the cases still pending, the violators have so far paid more than \$11,000 in fines, \$310 restitution for fish, and more than \$4,000 in court costs.

Wildlife investigators built the case over several years throughout the following 13 counties: Brown, Butler, Clark, Clermont, Hamilton, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Montgomery, Pike, Preble, Scioto, and Warren. Some of the waterways where violators obtained many of the fish for illegal sale included the Ohio River, East Fork Lake, Rocky Fork Lake, Little Miami River, and Great Miami River.

One investigator with knowledge about the case said, "Our public waters were being exploited by certain fishermen for personal financial gain. I believe this operation punished those who were involved, and will be a deterrent to others."

After wildlife investigators halted the illegal operation, one pay lake owner had fishermen bring him catfish for sale for seven consecutive days, a rare occurrence previously.



Glen Trueb

Darke County Wildlife Officer Dwight Edwards holds a shovelhead catfish illegally stocked in an area pay lake.

"I think this shows that the market for illegal catfish sales has dried up and poachers will no longer have anywhere to sell their fish," the investigator said.

# Backyards for Wildlife Q & A

by Donna Daniel • photos by Tim 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.** 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 know it's a good idea to leave my birdbath out during winter, but how can I keep the water from freezing?**

—Claire O'Connor, Huron OH

**A:** Fresh, unfrozen water is crucial for birds and other wildlife during the cold of winter. When other sources of water are iced over, birds will flock to an open birdbath. To keep the water from freezing quickly, some folks fill their birdbath several times a day with hot water. But the simplest and most carefree method to supply ice-free water is to invest in an electric birdbath heater available where wild bird feeding supplies are sold. Some birdbaths are made with built-in heating elements for use in the winter. Whatever method you choose though, do not use anti-freeze in a birdbath — it is poisonous!

**Q: Do monarch butterflies need milkweed to survive?**

—Norma Maurer, Dayton, OH

**A:** Butterflies aren't fussy about the type of flowers they feed on, but caterpillars definitely are. Each species of butterfly depends on a specific type of plant called a host plant that its caterpillars need for food. The only host plants for monarch caterpillars are plants in the milkweed family. Winter is a great time to plan next summer's garden, so if you want to provide for the beautiful orange and black monarch, incorporate some milkweeds into your landscaping. Non-invasive

milkweeds native to Ohio include the orange butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and the pink swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*). Both are available in many garden stores and catalogs. Besides the leaves of these plants providing food for monarch caterpillars, many species of butterflies will also nectar at the flowers.



**Q: Flying squirrels are living in the walls of our old house. What can you tell me about them?**

—Amanda Lowe, Frazeyburg, OH

**A:** Southern flying squirrels are Ohio's only nocturnal squirrel. During the day they sleep in an old woodpecker cavity or hollow tree. These squirrels can't actually fly, but glide as far as 160 feet from tree to tree in search of various nuts, seeds, insects, birds, and bird eggs. Flying squirrels are common in Ohio, but they largely go unnoticed because they are most active at night. Females bear two litters of three or four young a year, usually in April and August. If you wish to evict the squirrels from your house you must first find out how



they are getting inside the wall. After the squirrels have left the den for the night, close off the entrance so that they cannot get back in. Prevent trapping young squirrels inside by sealing the entrance in July, before the second litter is born.



# For Wild Kids

## The “Unique Game”

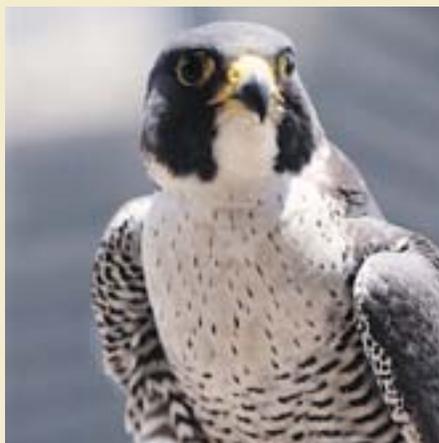
by Tammy York

**Was that a red-tailed hawk? Turkey vulture? Peregrine falcon? Who can tell when the birds are flying high in the sky? Biologists use many clues to identify wildlife.**

### Habitat

One clue is the bird’s **habitat**, which includes where that bird lives. Habitat includes food, water, shelter, and space. Some animals are picky and do not **adapt** to changes or different habitats, while others can live just about anywhere.

For example, you wouldn’t see a **peregrine falcon** perched along a busy highway because they prefer to live in areas similar to their natural habitat—cliffs! Peregrines live in cities that have tall buildings with nooks and crannies resembling a cliff face.



Another common bird is the **turkey vulture**. You may have seen a group of these large, black birds soaring in a group. They like to perch in tall dead trees.



However, **red-tailed hawks** live in wooded areas and spend much of their time perched along roadsides. They are commonly seen perched on telephone poles or wires.

### Characteristics

Another clue to identifying birds is by their markings. For example, you may have red hair, blue eyes, and plenty of freckles—**characteristics**—that make you “unique.” Birds have characteristics that make them unique too. What colors do you see in each of these birds? Look at the difference in the shape of their beaks and the shape of their bodies. How else are they different?

### Play the Unique Game with your friends.

On an index card write one characteristic that makes you unique.

**Here are some to start with:**

- Hair
- Eyes
- Favorite food
- Least favorite food
- Freckles
- Favorite place
- Favorite song

Fold the card in half. Put the cards in a hat and shake. You and your friends each pull out one clue at a time and try to discover who it is. Do any of you have the same characteristics? Does anyone have a characteristic that no one else has?

### Young Outdoor Writers Competition

The first annual *Wild Ohio* Young Outdoor Writers Competition is open to Ohio’s 4th, 5th, and 6th grade school children interested in writing about conservation topics. The competition will take place during the fall semester of the 2003 school year. Teachers from the state’s public and private schools are encouraged to hold their own writing competitions. One winner per grade level from each school may advance to the statewide competition. Awards will be given to the final winners. For more information please send e-mail to: [Mary.Warren@dnr.state.oh.us](mailto:Mary.Warren@dnr.state.oh.us) or [Tammy.York@dnr.state.oh.us](mailto:Tammy.York@dnr.state.oh.us).

# WILD GAME GOURMET

## r e c i p e s

### Sherry-Baked Rabbit

1 3-pound rabbit  
seasoned flour  
¼ cup bacon drippings (or butter)  
1 cup ketchup  
½ cup sherry  
½ cup water  
2 tbsp. lemon juice  
1 medium onion, minced  
1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce  
2 tbsp. melted butter  
1 tbsp. brown sugar

Cut rabbit into serving pieces and coat with seasoned flour. Heat oven to 325 degrees. Meanwhile, cook rabbit until evenly brown in hot bacon drippings in large skillet. Remove to 2-quart casserole dish. Combine remaining ingredients in saucepan; bring to boil, and pour over rabbit. Bake covered 1 hour, or until tender.

Serves 3 to 4.

*(Contributed by Gene Whitten)*

### Upland Stir-Fry with Grouse

1 cup buttermilk baking mix  
½ tsp. pepper  
¾ to 1 pound diced uncooked grouse or other upland game  
2 eggs, slightly beaten  
1 tbsp. peanut oil  
3 medium carrots, cut diagonally into ½-inch strips  
1 green pepper and 1 red or yellow pepper, cut into strips  
1 small onion, thinly sliced and separated into rings  
2 tbsp. water  
3 tbsp. peanut oil  
¾ cup chicken broth  
2 tbsp. teriyaki sauce  
Hot cooked rice

Combine baking mix and pepper in large plastic food-storage bag. Shake to mix and set aside. In large mixing bowl, combine grouse meat and eggs; stir to coat meat with egg. Remove grouse from bowl and transfer to plastic bag with baking mix. Shake to coat. Remove grouse from bag and set aside. In wok or large skillet, heat 1 tbsp. oil over medium-high heat until hot. Add carrots; cook and stir about 2 minutes. Add peppers and onion. Cook and stir 1 minute longer. Add water. Cover and steam 3 to 4 minutes, until vegetables are tender-crisp. Remove vegetables from wok and keep warm. Add 3 tbsp. oil to wok; heat over medium-high heat until hot. Add grouse; cook and stir until golden brown and no longer pink in center. Combine chicken broth and teriyaki sauce; pour over meat. Return vegetables to wok. Cook and stir until heated through. Serve with rice. Serves 4 to 6. *(Contributed by Vicki Mountz)*

by Vicki Mountz,

the Wild Game Gourmet as seen on Wild Ohio Video Magazine

### Late Season Recipes

Ohio hunting opportunities abound in the late season. Include these tasty late-season rabbit and grouse recipes in your winter meal menus.



## A Rare Find Indeed for a Young Hunter

by Paul G. Markel

Many readers may be aware of the 4-H Shooting Sports program that has been active in Ohio for more than a decade now. Recently, a member of the Holmes County 4-H Shooting Sports Club made quite an interesting discovery.

Thirteen-year-old Travis Wallace of Millersburg has been active with the 4-H Shooting Sports since the Holmes County Club was founded in January of 2000. In that time he has participated in a number of activities, but Travis has excelled with the shotgun. After winning the club's fall match, Travis was rewarded with a rabbit hunting trip lead by Dave Grady, the senior shotgun instructor.

Travis bagged two cottontail rabbits in the morning of the outing on a local Holmes County farm. During an afternoon break, Dave related to Travis that he had found a nice shed antler in that very area during the previous year's season. Dave only found one half of the pair however.

A short time later, Travis walked the area and saw what looked like antler points sticking up in a marshy section. Retrieving his find, Travis discovered that it was indeed the shed antler of a white-tailed deer. When he showed it to Dave, the shooting coach was amazed. He was sure this was the missing half the antler he had found a year before.

After the hunt Dave and Travis compared the two white-tail sheds and it was apparent that they were a mirror image of each other. What is even more amazing was that the second shed, though well chewed by squirrels and chipmunks, had survived. Few shed antlers last that long because forest rodents quickly chew them to pieces as a source of calcium in their diet.

The total number of points for the completed set was 17. Dave plans to have a taxidermist repair the damaged half and mount the completed set. In addition to the two rabbits, Travis took his first white-tail buck and a turkey during the 2001 season. Quite a start for a young man. Certainly a hunting season he will remember for a lifetime. As for the mysterious buck, it is believed to still be stalking the Holmes County countryside.

*Paul Markel of Millersburg, Ohio is a freelance editor for several national outdoor and gun magazines.*



Shooting instructor Dave Grady and Travis Wallace hold the set of shed antlers they found one year apart.



The two antler halves found in Holmes County a year apart totaled 17 points.

For a free subscription to *Wild Ohio*, telephone 1-800-WILDLIFE or write to:  
Wild Ohio Magazine Subscription, 4483 Industrial Parkway, Cleveland OH 44135.

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