

A close-up photograph of a fox's face, focusing on its eyes and nose. The fox has reddish-brown fur on its face and chest, with white fur on its muzzle and throat. Its eyes are a deep, warm brown color. The fur is covered with small, delicate snowflakes, suggesting a winter setting. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white, likely snow.

Wild Ohio

Winter 2008-2009

M A G A Z I N E

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

ANNUAL REPORT ISSUE



EDITORIAL STAFF

Vicki Mountz
Executive Editor

Melissa Hathaway
Editor

Lisa Smith
Technical Editor

Vicki Ervin
Associate Editor

Tim Daniel
Photographer

Chad Crouch
Designer

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Ted Strickland
Governor, State of Ohio

Sean D. Logan
Director, Dept. of Natural Resources

David M. Graham
Chief, Division of Wildlife

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Share YOUR PHOTOS Online!

Share your photos with other Ohio outdoor enthusiasts by submitting them to the Division of Wildlife's Web site. The Photo Gallery includes photo categories of hunting, fishing, wildlife, outdoor activities and events, and historic photo archives. You can browse photos posted by others and submit photos of your own.

To submit a photo, go to wildohio.com, click on Photo Gallery on the home page, then click on Submit Photo. After your photo is posted, you can email it to family and friends.

Since its launch in 2006, more than 19,000 photos have been posted! Once you visit the Photo Gallery, you'll want to visit it time and time again.



DOW ARCHIVE

the DUSTY BOX campaign

DOW ARCHIVE DONATIONS

Got an old box full of wildlife stuff you don't want to throw away, yet you're tired of moving around?

DONATE IT TO THE OHIO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

We are asking for your help in an effort to obtain memorabilia relevant to Ohio wildlife and the Division of Wildlife's history. The intent of this campaign is to develop and maintain the Division's history through cataloging, preserving, and documenting all things wildlife.

You can mail or drop off your donations at: **ODNR Division of Wildlife**
For additional questions & info: **attn: Graphics/Archives**
call 1.800.945.3543
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CORRECTION



CORRECTION • In the fall issue of *Wild Ohio*, page 10, the correct date for the second split of dove season is December 9, not December 8 as stated in the 2008-2009 Hunting Opportunities Chart.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY • 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

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Diversity Affairs Office
2045 Morse Road, Bldg. D-1
Columbus, OH 43229



Features

Annual Report

This issue of Wild Ohio Magazine includes the annual report for 2008, highlighting the year's accomplishments. As the state agency mandated to manage Ohio's wildlife resources, staff carry out the agency's many responsibilities in areas of wildlife management, fisheries management, law enforcement, information and education, administration, human resources, and other support services.

4-11

Readers' Photos

21-23

Here's a look at some of the photos sent in by Wild Ohio readers showing some of the many ways they enjoy Ohio's wealth of wildlife resources. This photo of Reid Ryan holding a largemouth bass was posted on the Division's Web site photo gallery.

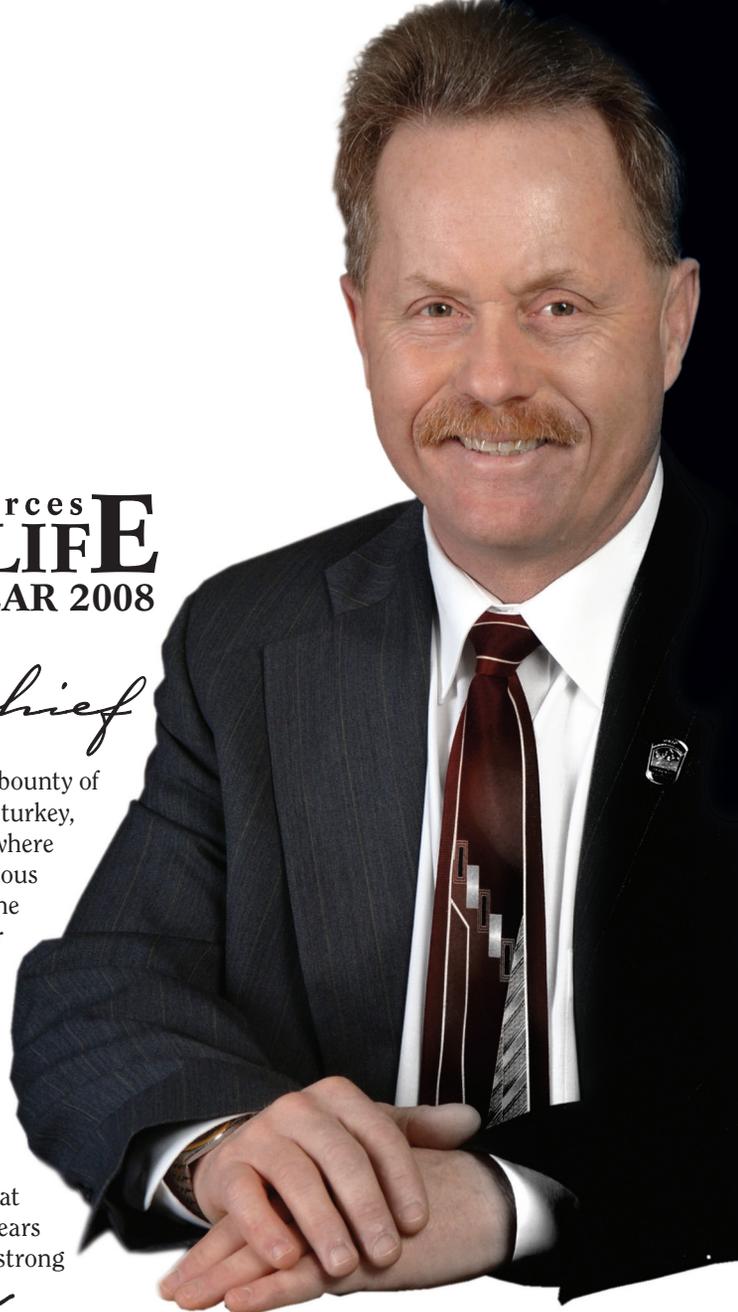


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On the Cover: Red Fox

Found in all of Ohio's 88 counties, the red fox is easily recognized by its long, lustrous red or rusty coat and black legs, feet, and ears. Cover photo by Tim Daniel.



Ohio department of natural resources DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2008

Message from the Chief

Please enjoy reviewing the annual report for 2008. Ohio is home to a bounty of wildlife today that is unequalled in the history of this great state. Deer, turkey, and Canada geese offer some of the finest hunting opportunities anywhere in the country. Lake Erie walleye and yellow perch anchor the tremendous fishing that exists in our great lake, inland waters, and the Ohio River. The success of restoration of species such as the bald eagle and river otter highlight the continued great effort in the area of wildlife diversity, which is so important to more than two million people that watch and photograph wildlife.

Maintaining this great resource that is vitally important to the quality of life for Ohioans and to Ohio's economy is a constant challenge. Shrinking budgets, high fuel costs, climate change, new invasive species, and disease all have an impact on the Division's efforts to fulfill its mission and mandate to Ohio's citizens. I am confident that we can continue to overcome these new and ongoing challenges in the years to come as we work together with our many partners to maintain our strong wildlife conservation legacy.

David M. Graham, Chief



CONTINENTAL
gary
GRANT



FARMDALE
dominic
MARCHESE



WESTLAKE
lee
HOWLEY



COLUMBUS
larry
MIXON, SR.



LAKRON
howard
CALHOUN



NEWARK
charles
FRANKS



COLUMBUS
james
LYNCH



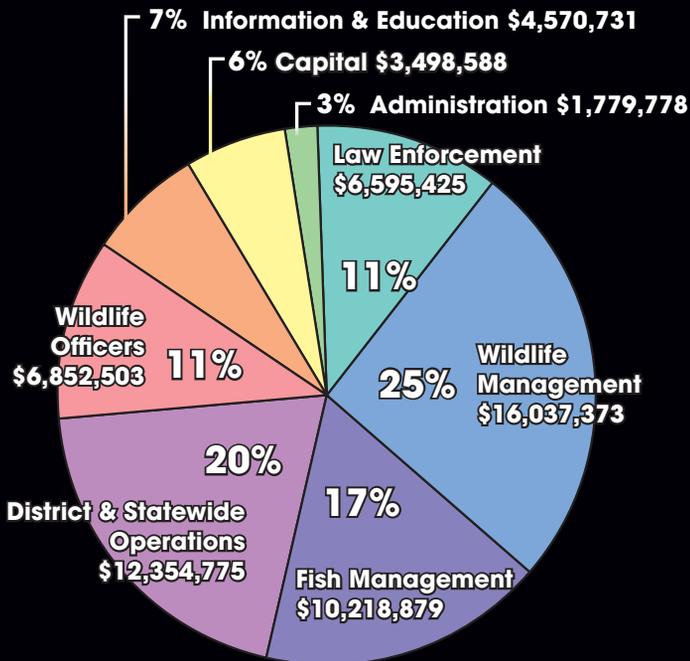
POMEROY
horace
KARR

OHIO WILDLIFE COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Ohio Wildlife Council is an eight-member board that approves all 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.

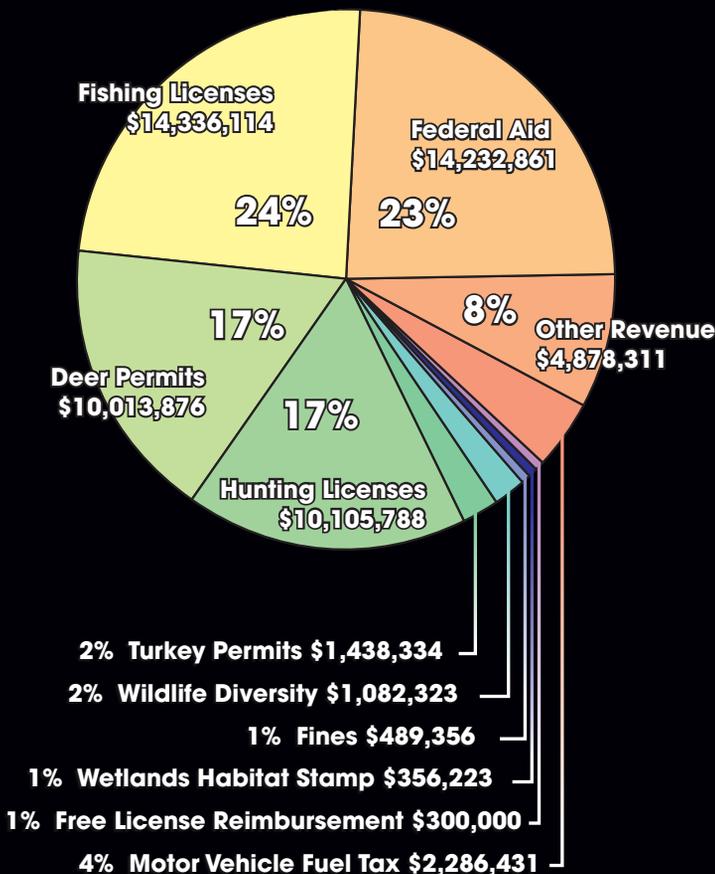
EXPENDITURES⁰⁸

TOTAL \$61,908,053



REVENUE⁰⁸

TOTAL \$59,519,618



FINANCIAL REPORT

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT - \$16,037,373

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 - \$6,595,425

WILDLIFE OFFICERS - \$6,852,503

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 - \$10,218,879

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.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION - \$4,570,731

Money is spent for hunter, trapper, and angler education, the printing of publications and regulations as well as 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 materials.

DISTRICT & STATEWIDE OPERATIONS - \$12,354,775

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.

ADMINISTRATION - \$1,779,778

Expenditures in this category include money spent for Wildlife Administration and Human Resources staff as well as statewide costs associated with employee training, recruitment, medical testing, vaccinations, medical examinations, pulmonary function testing, rabies administration, and lead testing for firearms training/shooting range employees.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS - \$3,498,588

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.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Hunters killed 232,854 deer during the 2007-08 deer season. Young hunters harvested a record 10,061 deer, 21 percent more than the previous season. Archers took a record 78,639 deer.

The Division removed bald eagles, ospreys, and peregrine falcons from the endangered species list based on population and range expansions. Bald eagle reproduction in Ohio increased to a record 184 nests.

The Division completed a joint project with The Nature Conservancy, the Division of Forestry, and the US Forest Service to produce GIS maps for the Shawnee and Zaleski state forest focus areas in southern Ohio. The Division is continuing its partnership with these groups on a Fire Learning Network project, funded by The Nature Conservancy, to increase the use of prescribed fire in the Shawnee State Forest focus area as a forest management tool.

Wildlife Management and Research completed work with The Ohio State University to determine the subspecies composition of Ohio's Canada goose harvest using genetic markers. The first publication from this study recently was issued in the *Journal of Wildlife Management*. This research has international implications and has prompted rethinking of Canada goose management throughout its range.

Staff trained 120 educators to incorporate current research and monitoring on Lake Erie and estuaries in the classroom and to use curricula focused on wildlife conservation and protection of wetlands and watersheds.

For the first time, Karner blue butterflies were released at two sites in one year. The Nature Conservancy's Mosely Barrens and Metropolitan Park District of the Toledo Area's Campbell Prairie in Oak Openings Preserve Metropark each had 250 butterflies released.

The Division, along with the states of Indiana and Michigan, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service formed a working group to develop and implement strategies to assist in the recovery of the copperbelly water snake. The best remaining population of this snake is found on the Lake LaSuAn Wildlife Area in Williams County.

Through cooperation with the ODNR Office of Coastal Management and the ODNR administration, the Division of Wildlife hired a wind energy wildlife biologist to provide technical assistance on wildlife issues associated with the development of wind energy in Ohio.

A cooperative study with Ducks Unlimited resulted in 10 black ducks being fitted with satellite transmitters for tracking to their breeding grounds.



OLD WOMAN CREEK WILDLIFE AREA
(featured in the 2008 spring *Wild Ohio Magazine*) Old Woman Creek is many things to people with a diversity of interests. The 571-acre preserve along Lake Erie's Erie County shoreline is one of Ohio's most unique natural areas and one of 27 National Estuarine Research Reserves established as living laboratories for research and estuarine study.





LAKE LA SU AN WILDLIFE AREA

(featured in the 2008 summer *Wild Ohio Magazine*) Nestled in the far northwest corner of Ohio in Williams County, Lake La Su An Wildlife Area sits unnoticed by most passersby. The 2,430-acre wildlife area is mostly known for its reputation for superb pond fishing of bluegill and largemouth bass.



2008 SPECIES GUIDEBOOKS

The Division of Wildlife continues to produce a much anticipated series of publications featuring both common and exotic species found throughout the great Buckeye State. This year was highlighted by the release of three new guidebooks: *Warblers of Ohio and Eastern North America*, *Reptiles of Ohio*, and *Amphibians of Ohio*.

Staff continued efforts to develop a roadside survey for detecting the presence of barn owls around Ohio.

Staff collaborated with numerous other agencies and organizations to develop Ohio's CP38 SAFE project. SAFE, or State Acres For wildlife Enhancement, is a Conservation Reserve Program practice that will make 11, 200 acres available to convert eligible cropland to high-quality wildlife habitat

Biologists worked with staff at the Terrestrial Wildlife Ecology Lab at The Ohio State University to develop nocturnal bird surveys for the second Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY

The Division and numerous partners, presented the Ohio Dragonfly Conference, which attracted 142 participants. It was most likely the largest event of its kind yet held in the country.

Released the *Warblers of Ohio and Eastern North America* CD and guide booklet, and entered into an agreement to market this product worldwide with birdJam, a company that specializes in the production and sale of nature-related sounds that are digitized and compatible with Apple iPods.

Released the *Common Dragonflies and Damselflies of Ohio* field guide, a photo-rich educational resource that thoroughly covers the common dragonfly species that occur in the state.

Ohio was host to the Region Three Endangered Species Conference. The event was held at Mohican State Park, and drew representatives from the seven states that make up Region Three.

In August, the first Appalachian Butterfly Conference was held in Shawnee State Forest in Scioto County, hosted by the Ohio Division of Wildlife along with our partners Ohio State Parks and the Shawnee Nature Club. About 85 participants from seven states attended, and an impressive 62 species of butterflies were found on field trips. Keynote speaker was Jaret Daniels, author of the book *Butterflies of Ohio*. Butterfly-watching is booming in popularity and the success of this event reflects this growing interest.

In September, the Ohio Division of Wildlife hosted the first Wildlife Diversity Partners Meeting at the Shawnee State Park lodge in Scioto County. About 40 invited attendees participated, representing a broad spectrum of organizations. This meeting was part of the Division's efforts to reach out to all constituents that are involved in conservation, and better understand the various perspectives of different environmental organizations.

FISH MANAGEMENT

LAKE ERIE

Working through the Commercial Fishing Task Force, the Division developed a new system for managing a sustainable commercial fishery in Ohio's Lake Erie waters.

Working with the city of Fremont and ODNR Division of Water, the Division completed an agreement to address the city's water supply and dam safety issues. Construction of a new water supply reservoir for the city will allow for the removal of the Ballville Dam in 2012, and result in ecological restoration of the Sandusky River.

The Division confirmed the presence of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia in various Lake Erie fish species, but documented no significant fish kills, suggesting that immunity to the disease is developing in Lake Erie.

The Division funded research through The Ohio State University Aquatic Ecology Lab to learn about spawning behavior of Lake Erie walleye using radio transmitters on individual fish.

The Division completed a two-year study of Ohio's shoreline anglers on Lake Erie to determine catch information and angler preferences.

Division staff in northwest Ohio designed and installed new courtesy docks for the boat ramps at the Mazurik Fishing Access area.

STREAM CONSERVATION & ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

A partnership between the Division, the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, and numerous other agencies, resulted in more than 1,700 federally endangered Northern riffleshell mussels being released into Big Darby Creek.

The Division used Wildlife Diversity Funding to restore a 1,500-foot channelized section of Mac-O-Chee Creek at Piatt Castle in Logan County to a natural meandering pattern with riffles and pools to benefit brown trout and the endangered tongue-tied minnow.

Through partnerships with several organizations, the Division assisted in protecting 958 acres of riparian corridor along Paint Creek, Little Darby Creek, Clear Creek, Pymatuning Creek, and the Chagrin and Grand rivers.

Through a partnership with Lake Metroparks, 5,000 feet of fishing access was created on the Chagrin River, which will benefit steelhead anglers.

INLAND FISHERIES

The Division launched the Muskellunge Angler Log, an online tool for anglers to report muskellunge catches. Anglers' records aid fish management staff by providing a means to measure muskie stocking success.

Division staff placed more than 300 fish-attracting structures in Burr Oak, Timber Ridge, and Seneca lakes with the assistance of local sportsmen.



AQUATIC INVADERS

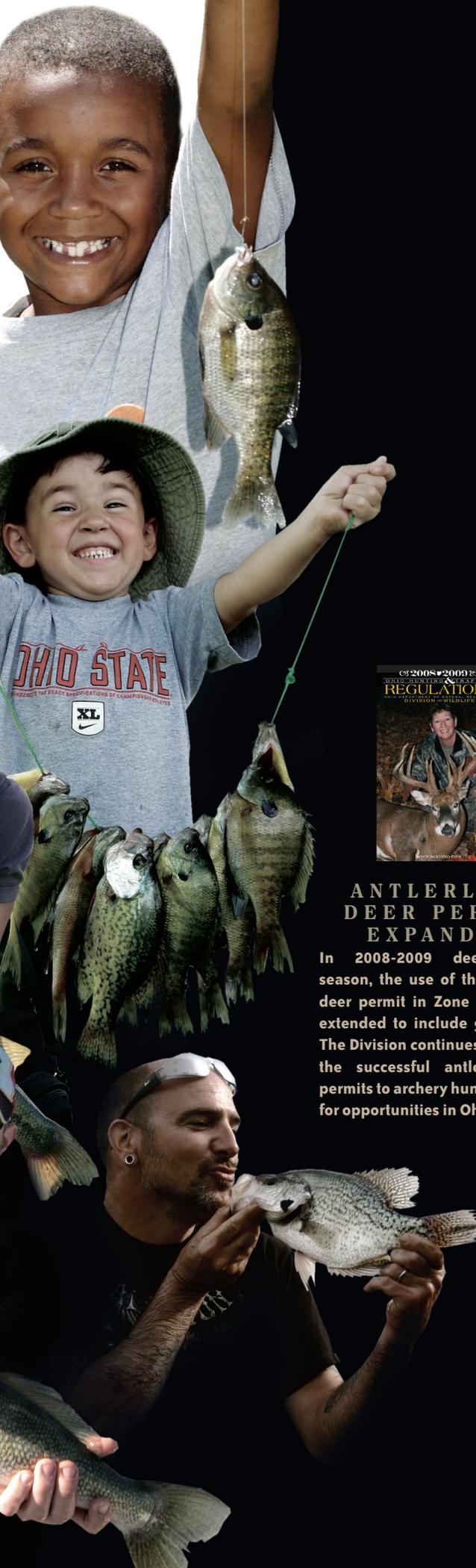
(featured in the 2008 spring *Wild Ohio Magazine*) Ohio's natural resources are under attack! No, they are not under attack by jets or tanks, but rather by invasive species that are moving in right next door. The list of aquatic invaders continues to multiply with well over 180 invasive species within the Great Lakes, which include non-native algae, plants, invertebrates, and fish.



29th ANNUAL FISH OHIO PIN

The 2008 Fish Ohio pin featured for the first time a sauger. Sauger look very similar to walleye and saugeye. They can be distinguished from walleye by the large dark spots on the spiny dorsal fin.





ANTLERLESS DEER PERMIT EXPANDED

In 2008-2009 deer hunting season, the use of the antlerless deer permit in Zone C has been extended to include gun season. The Division continues to promote the successful antlerless deer permits to archery hunters looking for opportunities in Ohio.

The Division matched a \$57,500 grant from the Ohio B.A.S.S. Federation Nation and, with the Division of Parks and Recreation, completed a project to protect 23 acres of critical game-fish spawning and shoreline habitat at Indian Lake's Blackbird Basin in Logan County.

Statewide monitoring of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia was conducted at 25 sites in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Research was also completed on disinfection techniques for muskellunge and hybrid striped bass eggs, and protocols were followed for treating fish eggs brought into hatcheries as steps to protect Division hatcheries from this disease.

The Division's six fish hatcheries raised more than 35 million fish, including 465,000 steelhead, 20,200 muskellunge advanced fingerlings, 112,000 catchable rainbow trout, 110,000 brown trout, 5.4 million saugeye fingerlings, 2.2 million walleye fingerlings, 22.9 million saugeye and walleye fry, 747,000 yellow perch, 2.9 million hybrid striped bass, and 747,000 channel catfish.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Wildlife officers made 7,288 arrests for wildlife crimes and other criminal violations resulting in \$537,137 in fines collected.

Wildlife officers conducted 47 aircraft surveillance projects, which resulted in 671 contacts and 80 arrests.

Wildlife officers investigated 86 water pollution incidents statewide where 67,821 wild animals (primarily fish and other aquatic animals) died. The Division collected \$41,806 in damages for 18 settlements.

The 1-800-POACHER phone line received more than 3,237 calls from concerned citizens reporting wildlife violations, from which 1,143 reports were taken.

Wildlife officers and investigators conducted 287 enforcement projects targeting known wildlife violators and problem areas, and state wildlife property protection. Officers contacted 5,593 individuals resulting in 1,035 arrests.

During the spring walleye run on the Maumee and Sandusky rivers, wildlife officers contacted 2,029 anglers and issued 210 summonses for littering, snagging, and possessing snagged walleye.

Wildlife officers and investigators conducted 1,240 permit inspections, 272 meat locker and taxidermist inspections, and issued 5,084 permits.

Wildlife investigators inspected and certified 3,076 pounds of the 3,126 reported pounds of ginseng for exportation.

The Division worked with the Ohio Generally Assembly on the creation of new laws which will allow the use of electric-powered all-purpose vehicles on wildlife areas by persons with severe mobility impairments. New rules were drafted to implement the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact, and the new requirements for the commercial fishing industry.

INFORMATION & EDUCATION

The Information & Education Section received five national communications awards from the Association for Conservation Information. *Mammals of Ohio* field guide earned first place honors in its category. The native bird aviary (also known as Ruthven's Aviary) located at the Ohio State Fairgrounds and the cooperative National Wild Turkey Federation Thanksgiving Wild Turkey Release placed second and third, respectively, in their category. The *Wild Ohio* Butterfly Poster received second place in the poster category. The Division of Wildlife's Web site, wildohio.com received third place honors in the agency Web site category.

Ohio's National Archery in the Schools Program added another 84 schools for a total of 267 schools. Approximately 17,600 students received archery training in Ohio physical education classes during the 2007-2008 school year.

The *Wild Ohio* television show aired on 37 outlets across Ohio. Sixteen, 30-minute programs were produced during the show's eleventh season. One segment focusing on volunteerism in Ducks Unlimited (DU) was so well received that DU is now using it as a tool to recruit new members.

Staff trained 25 new Project WILD and Aquatic Project WILD facilitators and 36 Science and Civics facilitators. There are now 335 active facilitators, and 901 participants have been trained in 55 workshops.

The Division hosted the second Annual National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) State Tournament. A total of 659 kids from 35 teams from across the state participated. Eighteen teams qualified to compete in the NASP National Tournament held in Louisville, Kentucky. Fourteen teams, with more than 300 Ohio students attended the national event.

Last year, the Fish Ohio program recognized 12,947 anglers from Ohio and 40 other states for trophy catches. About half of all the anglers use the Web-based submission process for Fish Ohio applications at fishohio.org.

The Sportsmen's Migratory Bird Center attracted an estimated 150,000 visitors. Popular events included International Migratory Bird Day, Bug Fest, and the Ohio Waterfowler's Festival.

The Ohio State Fair had a new wildlife attraction in the Natural Resources Park this year. The addition of the John Ruthven Aviary allowed fairgoers to interact with birds "in the wild." Visitors were greeted by a variety of birds inside their temporary habitat and could learn about avian behavior, identification, and backyard feeding stations. More improvements are planned for the future to expand this unique attraction.



AMPHIBIANS AND CHARLIE HARPER

The Division of Wildlife continued its production of its annual children's magazine, *Wild Ohio for Kids*. The magazine's cover featured artwork by Ohio artist Charlie Harper and highlighted a pull-out poster displaying some of Ohio's native amphibians.





MOVING THE CLASSROOM OUTDOORS

(featured in the 2008 fall *Wild Ohio Magazine*) Schools are back in session and many Ohio teachers will use Project WILD (an environmental education curriculum for grades K-12) in their classrooms. But some Ohio educators are taking it a step further by taking the classroom outdoors, creating wildlife habitat, and bringing environmental education concepts to life.

27th ANNUAL OHIO WETLAND HABITAT STAMP



The 27th annual Ohio Wetland Habitat Stamp by winning artist Jeffrey Klinefelter showed a male and female green-wing teal. The 2007 Ohio Wetland Habitat Stamp competition was held in conjunction with the annual Ohio Ducks Unlimited Convention.

ON THE WEB

The section facilitated live streaming Web video of the Columbus peregrine falcon banding, which allowed more than 1,000 viewers to watch and listen to the event in real time.

Web site visitation continues to grow with usage up 60 percent from last year. More than 6.9 million unique visitors came to the Web site for wildlife information.

Since its launch in January 2007, the eNewsletter has grown in popularity at a remarkable rate. The number of subscribers to the general eNewsletter has grown to 43,745 in less than two years. Subscribers receive monthly updates on only the wildlife information they request. Topic areas include birding, Backyards for Wildlife, educator resources, fishing, and hunting.

The Division of Wildlife began a significant design change in order to comply with ADA regulations and to be consistent with the ohio.gov Web site design. In the future, visitors will see a Web page that will be easier to navigate with little content change.

The Division has begun to make all of our publications available from our Web site. Almost all of the wildlife publications that we print are in the process of being converted into a digital format so our visitors may download and print these publications easily. The new online hunting regulations have been very popular; the improved format allows viewers to access information quickly. The wildlife area maps and the fishing maps have been enhanced to provide more complete information on location, access, facilities, and species that are available for our recreational users. Last year, more than 190,000 users searched and viewed our maps.

Many extras have been added to the Web site such as the Muskie Angler Log to report catches of muskellunge, information that is used to assist with fish management. Several wildlife management surveys for hunters to respond to have also been posted. These tools help us to access information quickly and efficiently so we can tailor our policies and regulations to manage wildlife resources better.

Last year saw a big increase in use of the Web site with over 575,000 people visiting our home page. The busiest day last year was December 3, 2007 with over 6,000 visitors. Our online photo gallery also saw an increase with users posting an average of 1,000 photos per month.

RED FOX AT A GLANCE

MATING
Monogamous

PEAK BREEDING ACTIVITY
January-February

LITTER SIZE
5 or 6 kits

NUMBER OF LITTERS
1 per year

ADULT LENGTH
22-25 inches

ADULT WEIGHT
8-15 pounds

TYPICAL FOODS
Mice, rats, rabbits, groundhogs, and other small mammals; also birds, fruits, and some grasses.



WATCHABLE WILDLIFE

By Melissa Hathaway

Many of us were introduced to the red fox at an early age through fables, tales, and legends. This animal usually appeared as a sly, crafty trickster, and sometimes a chicken thief. The red fox is the most familiar of all fox species because of its distinctive rusty or red fur. (The gray fox also inhabits Ohio.) These “canids” are members of the family of animals that includes wolves, coyotes, and domestic dogs--Canidae. Not surprising, the red fox is similar in appearance to a dog, with a slender body, long legs, and a long pointed muzzle.

In North America, the red fox is found across the United States and Canada, except along the West Coast and portions of Oklahoma, Texas, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. These adaptable animals can be found in many habitat types, including the suburbs, but they generally prefer a mixture of forest and country.

We quickly recognize the red fox by its lustrous long, red coat and black legs, feet, and ears. Its underbelly, throat, and cheeks are white. Its long, bushy tail has black hairs mixed with red and ends in a white tip. Red foxes may also appear in variations of solid black or gray; however, in all phases the tail has a white tip.

Red foxes are known for their speed, keen senses of sight, smell, and hearing, and exceptional use of cover when pursued. Perhaps their ability to elude pursuers is one reason these animals have been used in fox hunting in the United States and Europe.

These solitary creatures are generally nocturnal, feeding and moving at night, but they are also often found hunting during daylight hours. Common prey include mice, rats, rabbits, groundhogs, and other small mammals, birds, fruits, and some



VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES

Red Fox

grasses. They may be seen year-around because they do not hibernate, but may limit their activity and hole up for one or two days under extreme winter weather conditions.

Males will seek out a female between December and February. Once bonded, the female looks for an abandoned groundhog burrow as a den for her kits, or digs her own den in sandy soil. A den site may also be a cave or hollow log. Litters generally contain five or six kits. The parents bring small game to the den for the young to play with. This allows the young to learn the smell of prey and how to eat it. The adults teach the young to hunt during the summer and by fall the young are off to fend for themselves.

Red foxes are found in all 88 counties of Ohio. The best chance of seeing them is in rural areas where open space is interspersed with woods. Farmland with woodlots and brushy areas near marshes and swamps are ideal. If a den site is located, the young can often be seen playing outside the den. The red fox can be found on many of our state wildlife areas where suitable habitat exists. Good locations to search for red foxes are Blacklick Woods Metro Park, Delaware State Wildlife Area, Fowler Woods State Nature Preserve, and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. They are also occasionally seen along rural roadways.



News from Around Ohio



COMMON RAVENS FOUND NESTING IN OHIO

FIRST NEST IN 100 YEARS

For the first time in more than a century, common ravens have nested in Ohio. The nest was discovered last spring at Fernwood State Forest in Jefferson County. This largest of all songbirds was last known to have nested in Ohio during the late 1800s in a once heavily forested area of the Great Black Swamp in northwest Ohio. Once abundant statewide, the loss of nesting habitat due to the destruction of woodlands caused the population to decline. By 1900, ravens could no longer be found breeding in Ohio.

A FATHERHOOD FISHING TRIP

One-hundred sixty-five people in the Cleveland area got the opportunity to take part in the first Fatherhood Fishing Trip and Family Day Event at Voinovich Park last August. The outing was sponsored by the Cuyahoga County Fatherhood Initiative, Greater Cleveland Sport Fishing Commission, North Coast Black Bass Anglers Association, and the Division of Wildlife. Activities included a fishing trip on the Holiday Cruise and Charter Boat with fishing poles and bait provided, fishing instruction through the Division's Passport to Fishing Program, games and other children's entertainment, and lunch.

THREE NEW STATE RECORD FISH HOLDERS

Ohio's first state record blue catfish, *Ictalurus furcatus*, was landed along the Ohio River in southwest Ohio last June. According to the Outdoor Writers of Ohio, Keith Setty of Lynchburg caught the fish weighing 57 pounds, 3.2 ounces below the Meldahl Lock and Dam in Clermont County. Setty's catch was 45.5 inches in length. The fish was caught using cut shad. Setty's catch is significant because the blue catfish is a new addition to the state record fish list.

Two new state record fish in the bowfishing category entered the record books in 2008. Rich Cady of Newark landed a 47.65-pound carp (38 inches) while bowfishing on Sandusky Bay late last May. Cady uses a specially rigged Jon boat with several raised platforms for ease of bowfishing.

Jake Kerstetter arrowed a new state record longnose gar in the bowfishing category while bowfishing on the Little Miami River last July. It weighed 14.72 pounds (50.5 inches). Kerstetter, an avid bowfisherman, previously held the state record for bowfishing carp.

Ohio state record fish are certified by the Outdoor Writers of Ohio (OWO) State Record Fish Committee. Assisting in the process are fisheries biologists with the Ohio Division of Wildlife or other agencies. For more information on Ohio's state record fish program contact

Tom Cross, chairman
OWO State Record Fish Committee
1497 Cross Road
Winchester, OH 45697
(937) 386-2752 or
outdoorwritersofohio.org.

STATE RECORD BLUE CATFISH



Keith Setty of Lynchburg
57 pounds, 3.2 ounces
45.5 inches long

STATE RECORD CARP (Bowfish Category)



Rich Cady of Newark
47.65 pounds
38 inches long

STATE RECORD LONGNOSE GAR (Bowfish Category)



Jake Kerstetter
14.72 pounds
50.5 inches long

GOVERNOR STRICKLAND GOES AFIELD



(left to right) Alex Rutledge, Governor Ted Strickland, and Kayla Cowdery

Governor Ted Strickland joined the Ohio Division of Wildlife, partners, and media in two field outings over the past year. He participated in the first –ever Governor’s Annual Turkey Hunt last May. The event, which took place in Muskingum and Coshocton counties, included current and former NFL players who partnered with nationally known hunting guides on an outing with 11 area youths. The hunt highlighted Ohio’s premier wild turkey hunting opportunities and dovetailed with the kickoff of *Explore the Outdoors*, a statewide effort to promote youth and outdoor recreation.

The governor also participated in the 30th annual Governor’s Fish Ohio Day in July. The governor, members of the media, representatives of the tourism industry, conservation leaders, and wildlife officials used the outing to focus attention on the lake’s excellent boating and fishing opportunities, which make it one of the Midwest’s favorite tourism destinations.

FARMERS AND HUNTERS FEEDING THE HUNGRY

The Division of Wildlife has collaborated with Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry (FHFH) in an effort to assist with the processing costs associated with donating venison. A \$100,000 subsidy grant has been awarded to FHFH to help pay the processing fee on donated venison. The grant money is being provided in two \$50,000 allotments that are to be matched with funds generated or collected by FHFH. The Division is subsidizing this year’s FHFH operation as an additional deer management tool, helping wildlife managers encourage hunters to kill more does.

Venison that is donated to food banks must be processed by a state inspected and insured meat processor that is participating with FHFH. Hunters wishing to donate their deer to a food bank are not required to pay for the processing of the venison as long as the program has funds available to cover the cost. Hunters wishing to donate their deer and anyone interested in becoming a local FHFH coordinator or a participating meat processor should visit the “Local FHFH” Web page at fhfh.org.



Wildlife CALENDAR

March 6

National Archery in the Schools Program State Tournament

In conjunction with the Arnold Sports Festival

Ohio EXPO Center at the Ohio State Fairgrounds, Lausche Building

Watch for updates and tournament information at ohionasp.com or visit the Arnold Sports Festival Web site at arnoldsportsfestival.com

March 4

Wildlife Diversity Conference

Aladdin Shrine Complex Columbus

This year’s theme is “Wildlife in Full Color” featuring presentations on red bats, American burying beetles, honeybees, rough green snakes, cerulean warblers, indigo buntings, and violet flowers and their animal associations.

wildohio.com
for up-to-date events

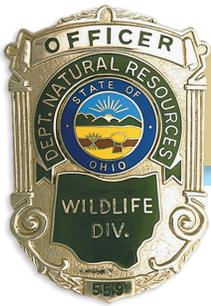
PUBLIC INVITED TO COMMENT ON WILDLIFE ISSUES

The Division of Wildlife welcomes the public to its annual open houses on Sunday, March 1, 2009. Open houses will be held from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Division’s district offices in Akron, Athens, Columbus, and Findlay, and at the Greene County Fish & Game Association in Xenia.

Input will be gathered for Ohio’s professional wildlife management process. Fish and wildlife biologists and law enforcement staff will be on hand to answer questions. A statewide hearing on all the proposed rules will be held Thursday, March 5 at 9:00 a.m. at the Division’s District One Office in Columbus. Directions for the open houses can be obtained by calling

1-800-WILDLIFE

or via the Internet at wildohio.com.



WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT

Field Notes

WISCONSIN MEN HANDED STEEP FINES AND JAIL TIME

Seven Wisconsin men paid more than \$4,600 in fines and restitution, while two of the men spent three days in jail, for taking more than the legal limit of walleye from Lake Erie during the 2008 Memorial Day weekend.

Acting on an anonymous call to the TIP hotline, Division of Wildlife investigators conducted surveillance on South Bass Island and observed a group of anglers "double tripping"--taking multiple daily limits of walleye -- during the four-day holiday weekend.

Investigators detained the men when they returned to the mainland and determined that the group possessed 67 walleyes over the legal limit. Investigators also confiscated camera equipment, photos, and videotape that allegedly depicted the over-bagging activity.

The men were ordered to pay \$50 in restitution for each walleye taken over the legal limit in accordance with new legislation that increased the value of wild animals that are unlawfully held, taken, bought, sold, or possessed. The new law reflects the present-day value of Ohio's wildlife, which can range anywhere from \$20 to nearly \$2,500 per animal.

DEER SPOTLIGHTER CONVICTED

An archery hunter in Lorain County witnessed a man killing a deer with a rifle, which is illegal. The archer immediately contacted Division of Wildlife officers who arrested the poacher just hours later. The Spencer, Ohio man was found guilty of taking a deer with a rifle from a public roadway with the aid of a motor vehicle, and hunting without permission. He was ordered by the Oberlin Municipal Court to pay \$1,575 in fines, restitution, and court costs. His hunting license was revoked for three years and the rifle was forfeited to the Division. A 60-day jail sentence was suspended.

WAYNE COUNTY MAN ARRESTED FOR KILLING HAWKS

The Wayne County wildlife officer received a complaint that led to the arrest of a Fredericksburg man for killing hawks in his yard. He was convicted of catching, killing, and possessing two Cooper's hawks, and paid \$661 in fines.

Two Cooper's hawks died as a result of being caught in the homemade cage-style trap the man was using in an effort to protect a purple martin colony. Cooper's hawks commonly prey on small birds, including purple martins.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 protects all migratory birds and helped put an end to the commercial trade in birds and their feathers that, by the early years of the twentieth century, had wreaked havoc on the populations of many native bird species. This act decrees that all migratory birds and their parts (including eggs, nests, and feathers) are fully protected.

FIVE PAY FOR SELLING SPORT-CAUGHT FISH

Five Columbus-area residents and one restaurant were convicted last May of buying and selling sport-caught fish, following a two-year investigation that stemmed from an anonymous tip. They were handed a total of \$17,167 in fines, court costs, and restitution, 780 total days in jail (suspended), and a five-year probationary period, and loss of hunting and fishing privileges. Community service and mandatory poster production and distribution were also included in the sentences. The Franklin County Board of Health and city of Columbus Board of Health assisted the Division of Wildlife in the investigation.

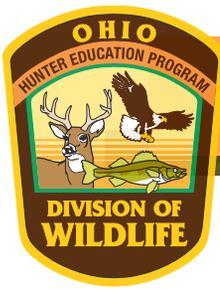
TURN IN A POACHER

The Division of Wildlife's Turn-In-a-Poacher (TIP) line continues to curtail wildlife violations across the state by encouraging citizens to report any illegal activity they observe. Tips may be phoned anonymously to 1-800-POACHER or submitted online at wildohio.com.

Turn In a Poacher, Inc.



CALL 1-800-POACHER



OUTDOOR SKILLS

What's the Right Hunting Dog for You?

by Reno "Jay" Reda

Dogs have been used as an integral part in many types of hunting activities for centuries. There are volumes written on what breed, or breed's ability, best suits a given hunting method or species. In Ohio, dogs are commonly used to

hunt upland birds (quail and pheasant), waterfowl, migratory game birds (doves, woodcock), rabbits, and raccoons. To a lesser degree squirrels and turkeys are also pursued with canines.

Whether you intend to hunt rabbits with a beagle or waterfowl with a Nova Scotia duck-tolling retriever (Yes, that is a breed), it all starts with three basic steps. The steps are pretty much identical for any game to be hunted.

1 The first step is relatively easy and only requires common sense. Before you ever look at a puppy, do research on the various breeds; better still, attend a dog show or field trial and see your potential hunting partner in the flesh and evaluate its abilities. Choose the right size and type of dog for what you intend to hunt most frequently. Hunting waterfowl on the large, sometimes rough and cold open waters of Lake Erie may not be the place for a springer spaniel, though they are excellent retrievers. Conversely, a 110-pound Chesapeake Bay retriever may not be the best choice for hunting doves on an 85-degree day. Match the breed to your most common hunting endeavor.

2 Once you've selected the breed, the second step can be an exceptionally daunting task because many breeders produce litters based on breed popularity or for life as a companion, disregarding breed function altogether.

Picking the right breeder and litter for a puppy will require a lot more research and a little understanding of what can be an alphabet soup of prefixes and suffixes on a dog's pedigree. AKC, which stands for the American Kennel Club, **only** means that the dog is a purebred of given breed. Those three letters say nothing about the ability to hunt or trainability of the breed. Below are a few (there are others) of the initials you want see before or after the name of the parents of any prospective pup. These will signify that the parents responded to training and have proven themselves in the field:

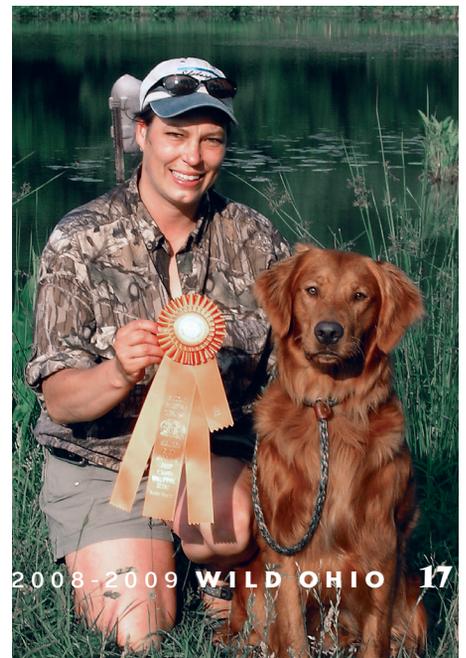
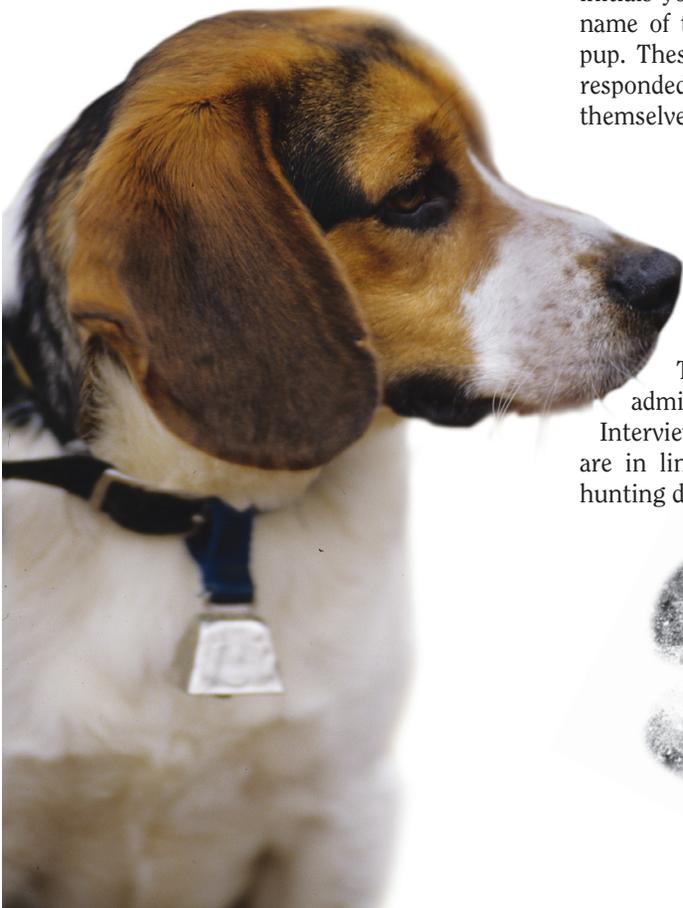
- *MH Master Hunter*
- *SH Senior Hunter*
- *JH Junior Hunter*
- *FC Field Champion*
- *AFC Amateur Field Champion*

Talk to the owners of dogs you admire and ask about the breeder. Interview breeders and see if their aims are in line with what you'd want in a hunting dog.

3 The next list of credentials will come in the form of medical clearances. Certification or screening of hips, eyes, heart, elbows, and in some cases the thyroid are among the health issues that should be checked. All of these items will raise the cost of the puppy, but will save you money in the long run on veterinary bills and possibly some heartache in the process.

A well-trained dog brings a multitude of positive aspects to the various forms of hunting. Hounds like beagles, fox hounds, and raccoon hounds do all the work of tracking, chasing and locating. Pointing dogs commonly used for quail, woodcock, and grouse can find a needle in a haystack for you. Retrievers will save long walks and cold wading.

When it comes to the hunter's responsibility to the sport, a properly trained dog is one of the best ways to insure your target is reduced to bag, demonstrating an ethical commitment to the wildlife resource. It all starts with the right puppy.



Holiday Outdoor Decor

by Donna Daniel

holiday garland for the birds



This holiday season turn a familiar decoration into something special for your backyard visitors. An edible garland is an easy way to share the holiday spirit with feathered friends while adding a festive, outdoor touch to your yard. Once hung, you'll quickly discover that this special garland – made from cuttings of white pine – will be an irresistible smorgasbord to a variety of winter birds.

Materials you will need

- Roping of white pine
- Florist's wire
- Large sewing needle
- Heavy thread
- Seed heads of native prairie grasses
- Sprays of sorghum and flaxseed
- Bittersweet berries

Other tasty treats to consider include popcorn, peanuts, orange slices, sunflower heads, and miniature Indian corn.

Begin your garland construction by gathering seed heads of prairie grasses into a bouquet. Secure the stems together with florist's wire, forming a dense bunch and attach the bunch to the pine garland with additional wire. Continue making several more bunches in the same way with the materials you chose and attach them along the length of the garland. If you have small sunflower heads or Indian corn, you can tuck those in and around the grass bunches. Popcorn and peanuts can be strung using a needle and heavy thread then wrapped around the garland.

Once completed, simply hang the garland on a fence, deck railing or other place then watch the birds flock to this easily crafted and tasty treat.

Deterring Squirrels from Bird Feeders

Besides using a squirrel-proof feeder or baffle around a pole feeder, you can reach into your spice rack for something that may deter squirrels from raiding the feeder. Add red pepper to the bird seed! (You can also purchase commercial bird seed with pepper added.) As in humans, the hot pepper will burn the mouth of a squirrel. However, the pepper won't affect the birds – they are completely immune to the hotness the pepper causes.

Coat the bird seed with corn oil, add red pepper and mix thoroughly. The idea is only to condition the squirrels. Once they stop eating the bird seed, you can switch back to plain bird seed.

Get Out and Count! February 13-16

Join thousands of other people across the country who will be participating in the annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) February 13-16, 2009. You can record your findings online, as well as post photos of the birds you see.

Participants in last year's GBBC submitted a record count of more than 85,700 checklists containing 635 species. Ohio ranked fifth of all the states in the number of checklists submitted with 3,864. Top ranking Ohio communities with the most checklists included Mentor (second nationally with 460 checklists) and Cincinnati (seventh nationally with 282 checklists.)

Sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, the GBBC provides an opportunity for people of all ages and birding skill levels to enjoy learning about birds in their backyards and communities. To learn how to participate in the GBBC visit birdcount.org.



FOR WILD KIDS

A Suet Treat! by Abby Rhodebeck

Many believe that once the cold weather sets in, much of Ohio's wildlife either goes into hibernation or migrates to a warmer place until spring. But just because the hummingbirds and warblers are gone doesn't mean it's time to put the binoculars away! Did you know that Ohio is home to many birds and other animals that are active during the winter? These wildlife, including birds such as dark-eyed juncos and chickadees, need a source of food for the winter. This is where you come in. With the help of an adult you can make your own bird feeder and food to go in it!

Homemade Suet Log

Supplies you need :



1 wooden log about 1-to 1½-feet long and 3 to 4 inches in diameter



1 screw on hook



A drill and a 1/4-inch drill bit, and a smaller drill bit for the perches



Perches (can be sticks collected outside)

- Drill three or four holes (depending on the size of your log) in various sections of the log, about ½ to ¾ inches deep for the suet.
- Drill holes for the perches. Make sure you don't drill through the log.
- Insert perches in the holes.
- Screw the hook at the top of the log for hanging.

Homemade Suet

You can attract some species of birds, such as woodpeckers and chickadees, by providing them with a source of food called suet. What is suet? Suet is a type of fat that is found in cattle and sheep. This fat is just what these birds need to stay warm in the winter. You can even mix in a variety of nuts or fruit like raisins as an added treat for the birds. Try making your own suet.

- You can buy suet from your local butcher or use lard as a substitute
- Chop or grind the raw suet into small pieces then put either in a crock pot on low or in a double boiler on the stove stirring it every so often.
- Once the suet has mostly melted, turn off the stove or crock pot and let the suet harden, (leave in the unmelted pieces).
- Then let it boil again. It is important to boil the suet twice, otherwise it will not mold properly. Once the suet has melted a second time, you can add in other ingredients.
- Pour suet into a mixing bowl and stir in a very large tablespoon of peanut butter. After the peanut butter is melted try one of the combinations to the right for your suet cake!
- For a thicker consistency and additional nutrition, add cornmeal, rolled oats and/or a mixture of wild bird seed.

When you are finished, fill the holes in your new suet feeder with your homemade suet. You can freeze the remaining suet in molds like cupcake holders. Hang the feeder and then sit back, relax, and watch the different kinds of birds visit your backyard. Keep a journal of all the birds that come to visit.



FRUIT SUET CAKE

Dried Cranberries
Dried Blueberries
Golden Raisins
Traditional Raisins
Chopped Dried Apples

NUT SUET CAKE

Peanuts
Pine Nuts
Chopped Walnuts
Pecans

WILD GAME GOURMET

recipes

Wild Game Gourmet • photos by Tim Daniel
the Wild Game Gourmet as seen on the *Wild Ohio* television show

Venison & Shells Casserole

- 1 pound ground venison
- 1 small onion, chopped
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cans beef broth
- 2 tablespoons red wine
- 6 ounces large shell-shaped pasta
- 1 (2 ounce) can sliced mushrooms, drained
- 1 cup sour cream

Brown ground venison and chopped onion in skillet over medium heat until meat is cooked through. Place cooked venison and onions in slow cooker. Stir in salt, garlic powder, Worcestershire sauce, and flour. Add beef broth and wine; mix well. Cover and cook on low for two to three hours.

Meanwhile, cook pasta according to package directions and drain. Add cooked pasta, mushrooms, and sour cream to slow cooker; stir to mix ingredients. Turn control to high. Cover and cook another 10 to 15 minutes.

Contributed by Vicki Ervin



Venison Steaks with Blue Cheese, Pecans, & Caraway Seeds

- 4 venison tenderloin steaks, 1 to 1 ½ inches thick
- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons crumbled blue cheese
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon caraway seeds
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Couple drops Worcestershire sauce
- Couple drops hot sauce
- 2 tablespoons oil
- ½ cup toasted pecans

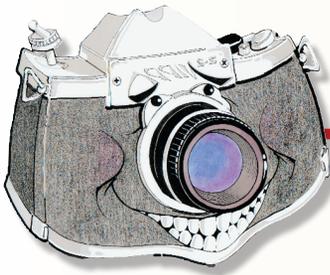
Stir together softened butter, blue cheese, parsley, caraway seeds, garlic powder, Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce, and salt and pepper. Place mixture in plastic bowl, cover and refrigerate for several hours or overnight.

Before cooking steaks, remove blue cheese mixture from the refrigerator. Pan-fry venison steaks in oil, about three minutes per side depending on thickness and desired doneness. Remove to platter and let rest for a couple of minutes. Serve each steak with a dollop of cheese mixture on top of steaks. Add toasted pecans.

Contributed by Vicki Mountz



For more great wild game recipes go to wildohiocookbook.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 new 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.

WILD ACROSS OHIO!



Young praying mantises newly emerged from their egg case.
Phyllis Steele, West Union



"Albino squirrel in my backyard." **Karla Dotson, Mansfield,**



"For two years now, we have seen what I believe to be young great horned owls on our farm."
Robert Berardi, Atwater

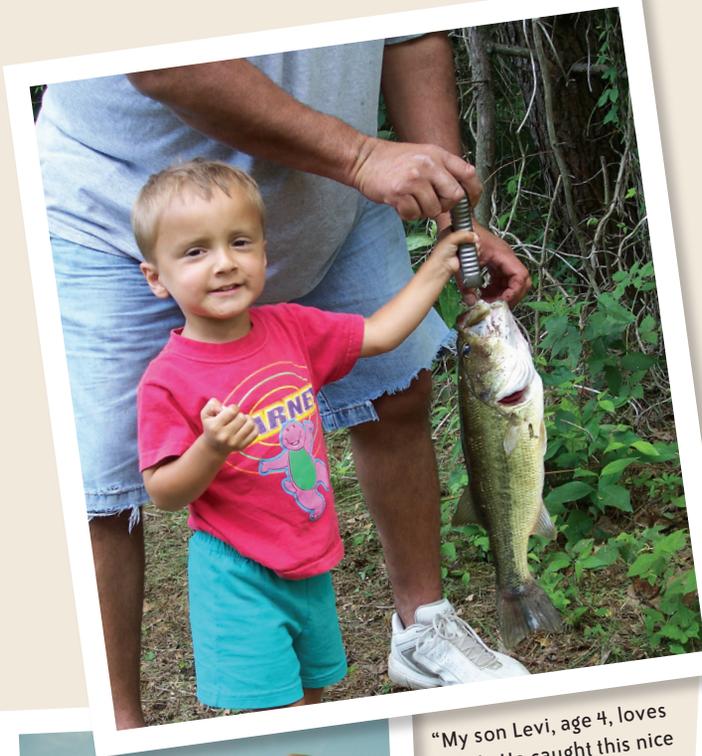


Michael Glass' first turkey hunt.
Submitted by State Representative Michelle Schneider's office, Columbus



"Abby Ferrell has sent the Division of Wildlife numerous hunting photos with her deer starting at age 13. A surprise to us was the most recent photo -- her senior picture."
**Jim Abrams
Wildlife District Two**

FEELIN' FiSHY!



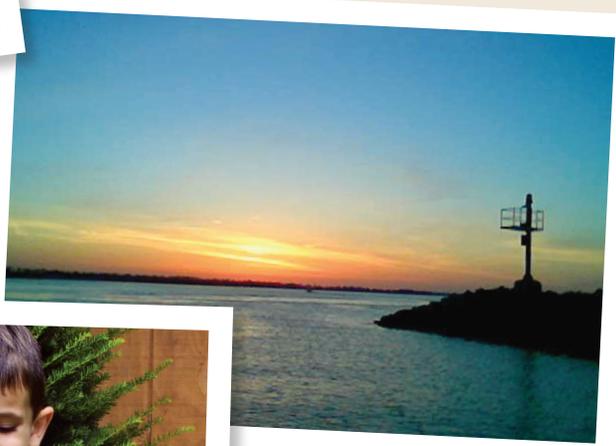
"Marcus' 28-inch catfish caught at our pond, after breaking his femur. It may have made him a fisherman for life and he plans to try his hand at hunting with me next winter."

Mike Davies, Alliance



"My son Levi, age 4, loves to fish. He caught this nice 3.5-pound bass at a pond in Jackson County."

Rhonda Woolum, Jackson



After fishing on Lake Erie, a reader caught this beautiful sunset upon returning to the Mazurik Ramp on the Marblehead Peninsula.

Carl Mindum II, Goshen

"Football" season on Lake Erie.
Steve Hathaway, Port Clinton



"Here's a photo of my grandson Dominic with his very first fish caught in a neighbor's farm pond."

Jerry Kemp, Wooster



"I was really happy with this fine 31.5-inch walleye I caught on Lake Erie off Avon Point."

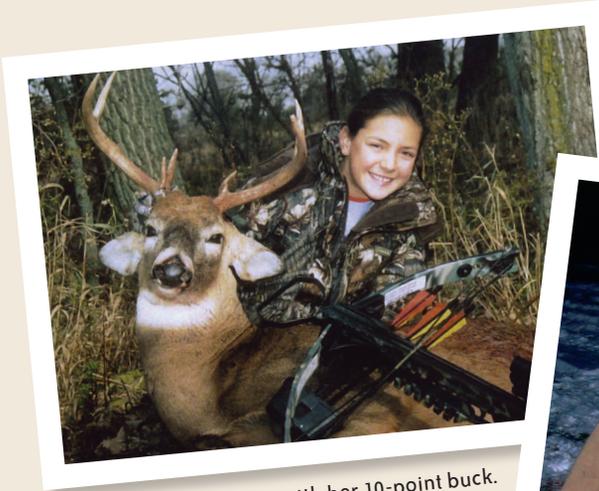
Woodie DeChant, Avon Lake



The Kekes Family with a trout catch from Castalia Fish Hatchery.

Ron Kekes, Toledo

OH, DEER!



Taylor Busse, age 11, with her 10-point buck.



Eight-year-old Kyle Bowers took his first buck with his grandfather John Miller at his side.



Greg Stapteton (right) with his brother Mike Newman Jr. (left) and his 9-point buck in Miami County. This was Greg's first buck taken with a bow.

Mike Newman, Troy



J.T. Hoeflich, at 13 years old, took this 11-point Ohio buck with a crossbow. It was his first buck ever taken while hunting with his grandfather Jerry Hoeflich.



division of wildlife HEADQUARTERS

2045 Morse Road, Bldg. G
Columbus, OH 43229-6693
(614) 265-6300 (Voice)
1-800-750-0750
(Ohio Relay TTY only)
1-800-WILDLIFE

WILDLIFE DISTRICT ONE

1500 Dublin Road
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 644-3925

WILDLIFE DISTRICT TWO

952 Lima Avenue
Findlay, OH 45840
(419) 424-5000

WILDLIFE DISTRICT THREE

912 Portage Lakes Drive
Akron, OH 44319
(330) 644-2293

WILDLIFE DISTRICT FOUR

360 E. State Street
Athens, OH 45701
(740) 589-9930

WILDLIFE DISTRICT FIVE

1076 Old Springfield Pike
Xenia, OH 45385
(937) 372-9261

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.





Essentially, hunting is a spiritual experience precisely because it submerges us in nature, and that experience teaches us that we are participants in something far greater than man.

SHANE MAHONEY

Photo by Jay Reda



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Columbus, Ohio 43229-6693



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