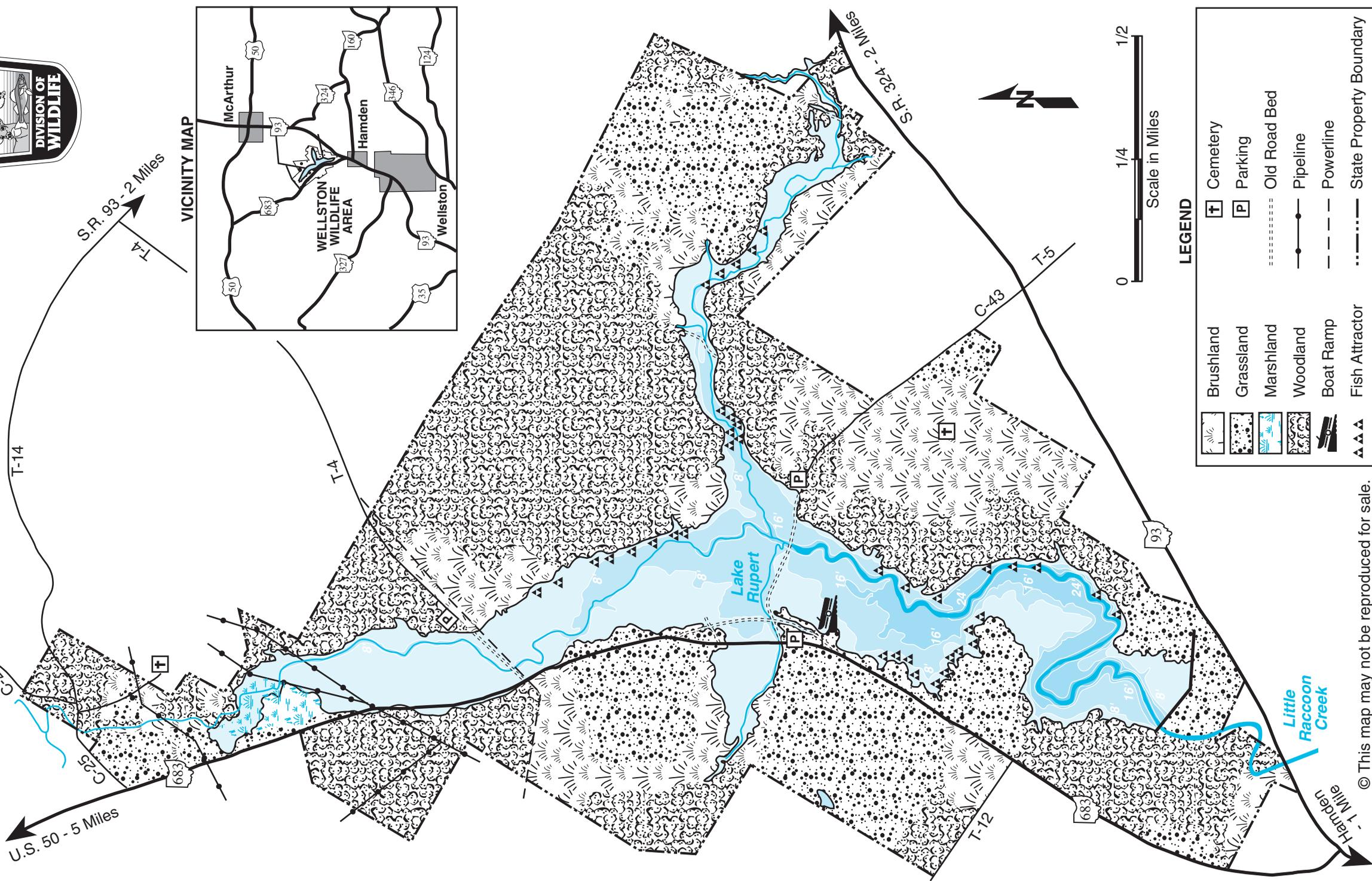


# WELLSTON WILDLIFE AREA

Vinton County





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## Vinton County

### DISTANCE FROM MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS

30 miles from Chillicothe  
75 miles from Columbus  
46 miles from Portsmouth  
32 miles from Athens

### LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

This 1,414-acre area is in Clinton and Richland townships, Vinton County, approximately one mile north of Hamden. Lake Rupert lies along State Route 683 one-half mile north of the intersection with State Route 93.

The topography includes gently rolling, reverting old fields and woodland. The 973 acres of uplands surrounding the lake provide a variety of habitats for wildlife. Forty-five percent of the land is covered by woodland, 25 percent by brushland, and 30 percent by openland. The lake encompasses 325 acres, 25 percent of the total area. At conservation pool the lake is about two miles long with a maximum depth of 28 feet. Shoreline cover includes rooted aquatic vegetation, overhanging brush, felled shoreline trees, and submerged brushpiles.

### HISTORY AND PURPOSE

Lake Rupert was built in 1969 as a cooperative effort of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and the city of Wellston to provide a water supply for the city and general public recreation. In 1979 the ODNR, Division of Wildlife, received ownership of the area from the city.

Management work has included selective cutting and mowing of brushlands, maintenance of existing open fields, planting of shrubs, and the addition of squirrel nest boxes. In the lake many submerged fish attractors, consisting of brushpiles and felled shoreline trees, have been added as fish habitat.

### FISH AND WILDLIFE

Lake Rupert has been stocked with and yields good catches of Northern pike, walleyes, largemouth bass, bullheads, bluegills, and channel catfish.

The major game species are cottontail rabbit, ruffed grouse, fox and gray squirrels, white-tailed deer, and woodchuck. Woodcock and waterfowl appear mainly as migrant visitors, but some resident wood ducks can be found. Beaver are well established on the lake and all other furbearers common to the region occur on the area. A variety of songbirds, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians also live on the area in association with the diverse mixture of habitat types.

### HUNTING AND FISHING

Rabbits and squirrels are the most sought-after game species, but hunting is also popular for waterfowl, deer, and grouse. Brushlands and meadows are prime spots for cottontails. The best hunting for deer and grouse is in the brushlands associated with oak-hickory and beech woodlands. Waterfowl are often abundant during migration, usually in the marsh at the upper end of the lake. Muskrats also frequent the marsh. Wood ducks can be found scattered throughout the area.

Early spring fishing is popular with Northern pike anglers. Action starts in March when the water temperature reaches the mid-50s. Fishing the shallow north end of the lake with a live minnow on these warm days is recommended.

As the water becomes warmer, artificial lures such as large spoons, spinners, and floating-diving plugs should produce fish when cast to weedy shorelines, edges of weed beds, and stream channels. From June to November, trolling deeper weed beds with a live minnow rig or deep diving artificial plug is the most popular fishing method.

Largemouth bass fishing also begins on early warm March days in the shallow coves close to deep water. Live nightcrawlers are especially effective then. Later, as the water temperature warms into the 60s, the shallow bays should be fished with artificial or live nightcrawlers and spinners. After the bass have spawned (normally around mid-May), long sloping points can be fished with the same lures plus deep diving plugs. During the summer, productive fishing results from working the shore during early morning and evening hours with top water plugs and then fishing deeper structures such as dropoffs or old creek channels during mid-day with bottom bouncing lures.

Walleyes generally are caught in the deeper water from mid-lake to the dam. Trolling or drifting through the deep water along the east shoreline with Junebug spinners baited with minnows or live nightcrawlers or working deep diving minnow imitation lures should provide some action.

Bluegill fishing with worms is productive from May through July. Fly fishermen using small poppers and rubber spiders should have lots of action also. Fishing the old road beds during the spawning season is very effective.

Bullhead catfish in Lake Rupert are of exceptional quality. May and June are the best months. Fishing with nightcrawlers, shrimp, or small crayfish on the bottom in the upper end of the lake is usually productive.

Fishermen should note that outboard motors may not exceed 10hp. However, larger outboard motors may be operated at no wake or idle-speed only.

### PUBLIC USE FACILITIES

Two parking lots and a boat launching ramp are located on the west side of the lake off State Route 683. Parking lots are also available on County Road 43 and Township Road 4 on the east side of the lake.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The nearest wildlife district office is located at 360 East State Street, Athens, Ohio 45701-1895; phone (740) 589-9930. Further information may be obtained from the Cooper Hollow Area Manager, 5403 C.H. & D. Road, Oak Hill, Ohio 45656; phone (740) 682-7524.

### TURN IN A POACHER

Ohio's TIP, "Turn In a Poacher," program is helping to curtail poaching throughout the state. TIP is designed to involve the public in reporting wildlife violations. Citizens who observe wildlife violations should call the TIP toll-free hotline, 1-800-POACHER.