

# Wild Ohio

Fall 2002

M A G A Z I N E

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

**DIVISION OF WILDLIFE**





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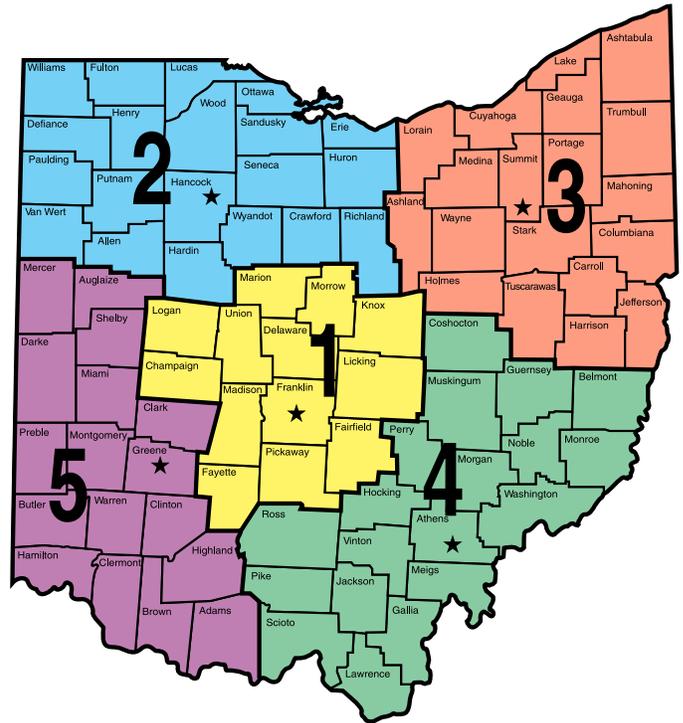
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**On the Wildlife Calendar for Fall . . .**

- September 28** National Hunting and Fishing Day
- September 28-29** Lake Erie Waterfowlers' Festival, Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, Ottawa County (419) 898-0960; 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
- October 18** Night Hike, Sportsman's Migratory Bird Center at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, Ottawa County (419) 898-0960, ext. 31; 8 p.m.
- November 24** Wooden Feather Day, Sportsman's Migratory Bird Center at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, Ottawa County (419) 898-0960, ext. 31; noon–4 p.m.

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#### On the Cover:

"Wood Ducks" by John Ruthven is Ohio's first Wetland Habitat Stamp issued in 1982. The wood ducks in the print are flying in front of a sycamore tree. To read more about sycamore trees and how they benefit wildlife, see our feature story on page 6.

Sycamore photo by Randy Sanders.

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Tim Daniel



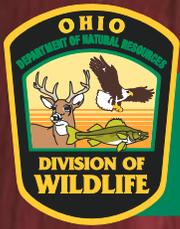
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### Ohio's 2002–2003 Hunting and Trapping Seasons Set

New Regulations Expand Hunting Opportunities in Ohio.

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## Ohio's watchable wildlife



# Barn Owls: Ghostly Sightings



## Watchable Wildlife • *Barn Owl*

*By Hazel Freeman • photos by Tim Daniel*

In years past, it wasn't uncommon in many Ohio counties to find the shadowy recesses of a dusty barn loft haunted by a white-feathered ghost. Eluding the hours of daylight, this denizen of the night hunted the landscape on silent wings in a shroud of darkness. Today it's a rare treat to catch a glimpse of the barn owl, sometimes referred to as the monkey-faced owl or white owl.

Prevalent in Ohio farming communities in the early 1900s, the barn owl now clings with a tenuous grasp to its existence. Why such a major decline in this species? Like many wild animal populations, the barn owl is finding it difficult to adapt to widespread habitat loss and the lack of suitable nest sites.

You need only take a drive along a country road to see the relics of an age gone by—dilapidated piles of rubble where majestic old barns and silos once stood, favorite nesting sites of barn owls. The transition from towering hardwood forest to farmland, with many acres of hay and grass pastures in the early 1900s, is what attracted the barn owl to Ohio. Barn owls readily accepted the nooks and crannies of barns and silos as replacements for natural tree cavities. Today, that same farmland is

gradually disappearing, while sprouting in its place are housing developments, industrial sites, and shopping areas, leaving less and less barn owl habitat.

Unlike the great horned owl whose diet varies widely, the barn owl is a more selective hunter. Meadow voles make up the largest part of its diet, but rats, mice, and shrews are also eaten. The conversion from grassy fields to intensive row-crop farming, which provides little cover for these small rodents, has been a set back for the barn owl as well.

The ODNR Division of Wildlife monitors the status of the barn owl population in Ohio. Nest boxes are placed in likely locations and checked on an annual basis. In recent years, there has been little or no activity in many counties that had previously supported nesting pairs. But every once in a while a glimmer of hope arises.

For example, in May 2000 Division of Wildlife biologists were pleasantly surprised to find that a pair of barn owls had taken up residence in a nest box atop an old barn that for 10 years had fledged no young owls. Larry and Patty Brobst, owners of the small farm in northeast Ohio, had almost given up hope that their nest box would ever be used by anything



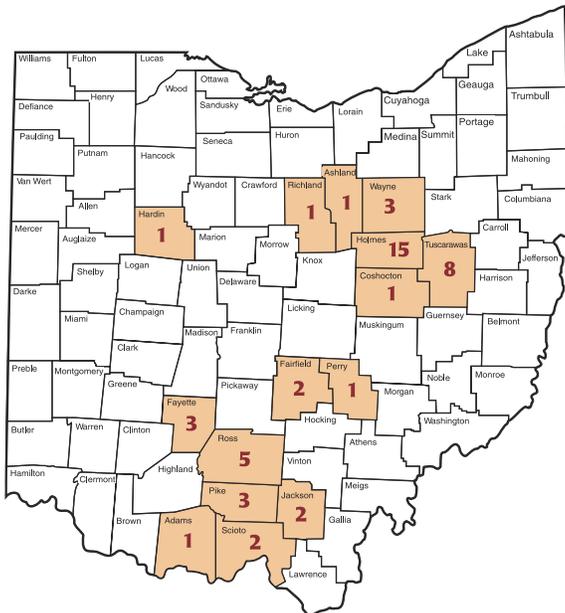
but pigeons. But the eerie sounds that drifted through their bedroom window at night kept them wondering what was haunting the neighborhood. Never having heard these screams, shrieks, and hisses before, the couple finally discovered that the sounds were coming from newly settled boarders in their old barn.

Keeping the news under wraps so that the owls wouldn't be disturbed by over-zealous birdwatchers proved to be a test of the couple's willpower. But keeping the secret to themselves, they spent many warm summer evenings watching and listening to wild sights and sounds that few have the thrill to experience.

The pair of adult barn owls successfully hatched six healthy owlets in June. Unfortunately, mortality for young owls is high during their first year of life, including predation by great horned owls and raccoons, and sometimes deadly encounters with motor vehicles. The adults did not return to the nest site during the 2001 and 2002 nesting seasons, but there is hope that this box will house barn owls again in the near future.

To help the Division of Wildlife protect and manage Ohio's barn owl population, please contact the Division if you believe you have barn owls nesting on your property. In addition, a donation can be made to Ohio's Wildlife Diversity Fund through the state tax check-off program or you may simply write a check.

*Hazel Freeman is a freelance writer and wildlife enthusiast from Woodsfield, Ohio.*



An endangered species in Ohio, barn owl populations have declined in the state since the 1930s. Shown are counties of confirmed barn owl nest sites in 2001.

If you would like to try attracting barn owls to your property, the Division of Wildlife has free barn owl nest box plans. Just call (toll-free) 1-800-WILDLIFE and ask for Publication 346, *Nest Boxes for Barn Owls*.

The best chance of seeing a barn owl is from May through August, at dusk and dawn, in areas where nesting has been recorded by the Division of Wildlife. (See adjacent map.) They nest in tree cavities and made made structures such as barns, silos, church steeples, and nest boxes close to pastures and hayfields, where they hunt for meadow voles and other small rodents. Most active barn owl nests are located on private property so please do not trespass or disturb nesting owls.



# Sycamores, Streams, and Wildlife



Tim Daniel

As the number of bald eagle nests continue to increase throughout Ohio, large old sycamore trees like this one in the Scioto River floodplain are often selected for a nest site.

by Randy Sanders

**W**hat do wood ducks, smallmouth bass, freshwater mussels, and streamside landowners have in common? They all do best where mature American

sycamores (*Platanus occidentalis*) grow. Why? Because sycamores provide preferred nesting sites, cool deep pools, stable stream channels, and less bank erosion. And their massive roots and towering white trunks also provide Ohioans cleaner drinking water and scenic views of stream valleys during the winter months.

Our native sycamore has the largest circumference and leaves of any hardwood tree in North America. Early writings of the Ohio country leave little doubt of the natural occurrence and huge size of the sycamores growing on our stream banks and floodplains.

*“The banks of this stream (Muskingum River) were thickly clothed with large sycamore trees whose lofty tops and pendant branches leaned over the shores, obscured the outlet (mouth) so much, that a boat in the middle of the Ohio (River), on a cloudy day, might pass without observing it all and that the roots of the trees acted as so many ligatures and fillets of net-work in protecting the earth from the wash of waters.”* (Fishes of Ohio, M.B. Trautman).

*“It seems that the lower Scioto valley in that early day was a celebrated “big tree” region and the giant “Scioto Sycamore” was located on the farm of one — Abram Miller. It was a forked hollow tree measuring 21 feet in diameter and 60 feet in circumference at its base and 42 feet in circumference at the height of five feet. On June 5, 1808, a party of 14 persons mounted on horseback attempted to advance into the cavity. Thirteen men rode into the hollow, the fourteenth did not enter, his horse being skittish, but there was room enough for two more (The Natural Vegetation of Ohio in Pioneer Days, R. B. Gordon; History of Scioto County; The Navigator, Cramer & Spears 1824).”*

## Stream Benefits

Sycamores benefit streams in many ways. During the summer months, their naturally leaning trunks and large leaves provide an abundance of shade, which results in cooler water temperatures, higher dissolved oxygen levels, and less nuisance algae. During the autumn and winter months, their leaves become an important link in the stream food chain.

Huge sycamores like this one (23.3 feet circumference and 7.1 feet diameter) along the Olentangy River are usually older than you would think. A similar size tree located in southeastern Indiana was determined to be 430 years old.



Randy Sanders



Randy Sanders

The strong massive roots of sycamore trees are nature’s way of helping to form stable stream channels and exceptional warmwater habitat like that of Big Darby Creek.

Their massive roots help provide stable stream banks and channels, consume large amounts of nutrients and water, and filter out sediments and other surface pollutants.

### Wildlife Benefits

From the tips of their leaves to their mighty roots, sycamore trees are beneficial to many wildlife species in a variety of ways. More than 1,000 aquatic species (fish, mussels, and insects) are directly benefitted by the way sycamores improve a stream's habitat and water quality.

During floods, their trunks create eddies, which provide important fish resting areas from strong currents. They increase the diversity of stream habitats by stabilizing islands and gravel bars and create deep pools and undercut banks which are important habitats for fish during summer droughts. Even their branches, bark, and trunks after falling into streams create woody debris that increases the diversity of habitat, provides cover and food, and helps reduce downstream flooding.

Mature sycamore trees also provide important habitat for many terrestrial species as well. Their great height, open canopy, strong limbs and numerous cavities provide preferred nesting sites for great blue herons, wood ducks, bald eagles, yellow-crowned night-herons, ospreys, great-crested flycatchers, and many woodpeckers.

When it comes to supporting a 2,000-pound bald eagle nest, sycamores are one of the best! And for wood ducks, hollow cavities overhanging a stream allow for a safer landing as their young fall from the nest. Yellow-throated warblers, formerly known as the sycamore warbler, also favor riparian sycamores throughout Southern and Central Ohio. Their cavities are often used as den sites by raccoons and other mammals.

### Landowner Benefits

When it comes to protecting streamside property, landowners should view sycamores as one of their favorite plants. Why? Because they are one of the few plant species that can hold a naturally meandering stream channel together during seasonal floods and frequent high flows. Their massive roots and ability to grow next to a stream's low water level make sycamores one of the best natural plants to prevent stream bank erosion.

*continued on page 8*



smallmouth bass—Al Staffan

photos by Tim Daniel

**Pictured are some Ohio species that benefit from sycamore trees: mussels, smallmouth bass, red-bellied woodpecker, wood ducks, yellow-throated warbler.**

### Sycamore Facts

- **Distribution:** Only Ohio tree found in all 88 counties.
- **Preferred habitat:** Streambanks, islands, and floodplains.
- **Size:** Grows to a larger diameter (greater than 10 feet) than any other hardwood in North America. Mature trees range from 80 to 140 feet tall. Grows the largest leaf of any native Ohio tree (greater than 10 inches wide).
- **Age:** A long-lived tree species. A living tree (22 feet circumference and a little more than 7 feet in diameter) cut down in southeastern Indiana in 1970 was 430 years old.
- **Seeds:** Produces the most seeds between 50 and 200 years of age. A large "sycamore ball" has about 800 seeds.
- **Ohio's current State Champion Sycamore (ODNR Big Tree Program)** located in the Grand River watershed (Ashtabula County, Austinburg Twp.) is 29 feet 3 inches in circumference (4.5 feet above the ground), 119 feet high, and has an average crown of 93.5 feet.



Randy Sanders

**Severely eroding stream banks often occur in Ohio after the sycamores and other riparian trees are removed.**

## Sycamores, Streams, and Wildlife *continued*

The deep pools they help form will also make fishing better for smallmouth bass and other sportfish! Sycamores improve the scenic qualities a stream has to offer from the dense overhanging canopy during the summer to the distant view of a wintertime stream valley filled with towering white giants. And what landowner wouldn't be proud to take friends down to the creek to show off the largest and oldest tree in the neighborhood that's in his or her backyard?



Randy Sanders

Many stream banks are naturally lined with a dense growth of sycamore trees. This picture shows one of Ohio's best old growth stands of streamside sycamore trees (Scioto River, Pike County). The Division of Wildlife is working with the landowner to permanently protect it with a conservation easement. Lee Crocker, an ODNR state forester named the corridor "The Land of the White Giants."

Quoting from *The Fishes of Ohio*, "...the roots of the trees acted as so many ligatures and fillets of net-work in protecting the earth..." Riparian sycamores create a chain of benefits that affect the world around them. From natural stream channels to wildlife, to humans, their benefits are so far reaching, landowners are encouraged to protect these mighty giants along rivers and creeks for future generations to enjoy.

Randy Sanders is a program administrator for the Division's Fish Management and Research Group. 



Chip Gross

# How Much Does My Deer Weigh?

by Mike Reynolds

As onlookers line up to admire a massive buck that a lucky hunter has bagged, someone inevitably asks the question, "How much does that deer weigh?" Everyone standing around the magnificent animal quickly offers up his or her opinion, but eventually all eyes turn to the wildlife biologist for an "official guess." Estimating the live weight of deer can be tricky, as people usually think that deer are heavier than they are. However, with a simple measurement, hunters can usually settle the debate within a few pounds of the animal's actual live weight.

How can you determine the live weight of a deer without a scale? Certain body measurements are indicative of an animal's weight. Chest girth is the most commonly used measurement to predict deer weight. Years ago, ODNR Division of Wildlife biologists measured chest girth from a sample of deer and compared these measurements to both field-dressed (entrails, heart, lungs, and liver removed) and live body weights. From these data, mathematical models were calculated to predict the weight of a deer for any chest girth. Simple tables were developed so that a hunter can measure the chest girth of a field-dressed deer and easily determine the deer's live weight.

## Here's how to do it:

Take a piece of string (you can also use a thin, flexible tape measure) and wrap it around the girth of a deer's chest directly behind the front legs (use light tension). Measure the length of the string (in inches) and consult the Chest Girth Measurements table on page 9 to find the approximate weight of the deer. That's all there is to it! This hunting season, you can impress other hunters with your ability to accurately guess the weight of deer!



Tim Daniel

Certain body measurements are indicative of an animal's weight. Chest girth is the most commonly used measurement to predict deer weight.

Chest girth measurements (inches), field-dressed weights (pounds), and live weights (pounds) of Ohio white-tailed deer from the Division of Wildlife.

Chest Girth (inches)	Field-dressed weight <sup>1</sup> (lbs.)		Live weight (lbs.)	
	Fawns	Adults	Fawns	Adults
20	27		36	
21	30		40	
22	33		44	
23	37		48	
24	40		52	
25	43		57	
26	46	46	61	60
27	50	52	65	68
28	53	58	69	75
29	56	64	73	83
30	59	70	77	90
31	63	76	81	98
32	66	82	85	106
33	69	88	89	113
34	73	94	93	121
35		101		128
36		107		136
37		113		144
38		119		151
39		125		159
40		131		166
41		137		174
42		143		182
43		149		190
44		155		197
45		161		205

<sup>1</sup>Weight of the carcass with viscera, heart, lungs, and liver removed.



Division of Wildlife research has shown few changes in body weight of deer sampled during the 1960s, early 1980s, and late 1990s, indicating that Ohio's deer herd continues to be healthy and productive.



## Field-dressed Body Weights of Ohio White-tailed Deer

The Division of Wildlife annually collects age and condition data from thousands of deer during the deer gun hunting season at 23 check stations throughout the state. These data provide a snapshot of the composition and age of the deer herd and are used by biologists to predict how much the deer herd will grow next year. Although the Division doesn't weigh every deer that is brought to a check station, periodically we do weigh a sample of deer to determine body condition.

### Field-dressed body weights (pounds) of white-tailed deer in two regions of Ohio, 1996-1998.

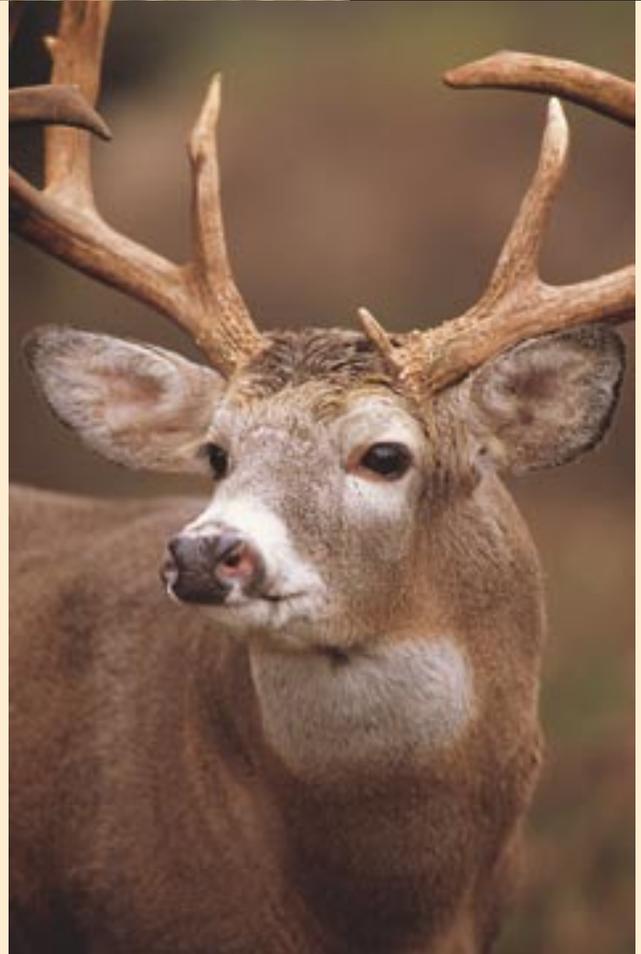
Age	Farmland Region		Hill Country Region	
	Bucks (lbs.)	Does (lbs.)	Bucks (lbs.)	Does (lbs.)
Fawn (6 mo.)	76	68	68	62
Yearling (1 ½ yrs.)	122	102	110	96
Adult (2 ½+ yrs.)	156	115	141	103

During the 1996–1998 deer gun hunting seasons, Division staff weighed 6,355 bucks and 5,299 does to compare field-dressed body weights of deer among regions and to see if changes had occurred in Ohio. As expected, we found that

bucks of all age classes were heavier than does. Deer from the farmland region were several pounds heavier than deer from the hill country. This was likely due to the availability of farm crops for food and lower deer densities in the farmland region. We found few changes in body weight of deer taken during the 1960s, early 1980s, and late 1990s, indicating that Ohio's deer herd continues to be healthy and productive.

*Mike Reynolds, deer biologist for the Division of Wildlife, is stationed at the Waterloo Wildlife Research Station near Athens, Ohio.*

photos by Tim Daniel



# The Grand River Lowlands

## Protecting What Remains

by Bill Beagle

**"Y**ou came at a good time to see this area," said Gary Hoskins, manager of the Grand River Wildlife Area. Occasionally glancing out the side window of his pickup truck, he carefully navigates through a flooded portion of Northeast Ohio known as the Grand River lowlands. But I'm not so sure about my timing once we stop. Opening the passenger door I find swamp water lapping at my feet.

Up ahead a pair of Canada geese actually swims on the road that bisects the lowlands. Known locally as "Frog Alley," the road is definitely an amphibian artery at the moment. Hoskins is right, of course. Spring is an excellent time to view the geological features and seasonal flooding phenomenon of the lowlands. Nature's glacial chisel carved these lowlands and as the glacier receded it left a lake and eventually just the Grand River flowing through the basin. The Grand rises in southern Geauga County and meanders through four counties before emptying into Lake Erie over 100 miles later. Along the way it is fed by tributaries with names such as Coffee Creek, Dead Branch, Mud Run, and Swine Creek.

This ecological region encompasses some 455,680 square acres. The area is so rich in wildlife, so imbued with beauty, that the river running through it is one of only two in the state to receive both "wild" and "scenic" designations.

Bob Fletcher, an environmental specialist with the Division of Wildlife, calls the lowlands an incredible mosaic. "Any place where you have river otters, black bears, massasauga rattlesnakes, bobcats, and a great freshwater mussel population, you have something special. This is one of the most biologically diverse areas in Northeast Ohio."

To Phil Hillman, a fish management supervisor with the Division, the lowlands are a secret too well kept. "Most people don't even know they exist," says Hillman.

More than three million people live within 35 miles of the lowlands. With the pressure a human population like that can exert, there is concern that only about seven percent of the 712 square miles of lowlands is currently protected from development. The Grand River Partnership hopes to reduce the pressure on this unique environmental area.

### Grand River Partnership

Described as a "loose confederation," some of the partners include the ODNR Division of Wildlife; The Nature Conservancy; park districts of Ashtabula, Geauga, and Lake counties; Grand River Partners, Incorporated; the Cleveland Museum of Natural History; and the ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. All of the partners agree that the diversity of the membership is the strength of the organization. "If you check around the state, there are only a handful of other watersheds

that have such a diverse group of members united to address a wide range of environmental issues," said Fletcher.

One of the members is Chuck Ashcroft, executive director of Grand River Partners, Incorporated. He says, "the consortium of partners is the key to our success. There are no turf wars."

According to Hillman, "It has to be a partnership because there are so many different fronts to be covered—forestry practices, storm water restrictions, and conservation easements."

Under the terms of an easement, a property owner agrees to sell the development rights to their property to a conservation organization. Such arrangements are far less expensive than buying land outright. "We can protect a lot more acres in this way," said Hillman.

Much of the treasure Hillman refers to is underwater in the form of rivers, streams, swamps, and ponds. "As an angler, the great thing is that you can catch everything from catfish to walleye to muskellunge in the lowlands." Even this experienced biologist gets wide-eyed recalling one particular survey that turned up about a dozen different fish species in just 20 minutes.

In addition to fish, the lowlands are teeming with white-tailed deer and wild turkeys. There are also waterfowl hunting opportunities, although most of the land is privately held and written landowner permission is required. Bird watchers will find their binoculars filled with everything from wood ducks



Bill Beagle

**The diverse partnership of landowners and local organizations and agencies is key to the success in protecting the Grand River watershed. Division of Wildlife Chief Michael Budzik and Phil Hillman, fish management supervisor, talk with Nathan Paskey of the Ashtabula County Soil and Water Conservation District, one of the Grand River partners.**



Bill Beagle

**Nature's glacial chisel carved these lowlands and as the glacier receded it left a lake and eventually just the Grand River flowing through the basin.**

and songbirds to great blue herons and bald eagles. The lowlands are also home to state-endangered plants and Ohio's last swamp forest.

Canoeists can put in along U. S. Route 6 and paddle all the way to Lake Erie. Don't curse the portaging; that logjam in your way provides important habitat for muskrats, beavers, river otters, and fish. Paddlers now have easier access to the river from a parking lot developed adjacent to the U. S. Route 6 bridge, two miles west of State Route 45. "Building access sites helps build public awareness," said Phil Hillman. "When there's an appreciation for the beauty of an area, people will want to protect it."

Hoskins says, "Corridors like the Grand River Lowlands are important because wildlife populations become isolated when land is developed. When populations of certain species become fragmented there is a greater danger of the young being killed by predators. Linking these areas together is especially important for species like neo-tropical migrating birds."

Ashcroft sums it up in very simple terms. "I create memories for kids and families. When I see people fishing along the Grand River or I go down to the river and see that the water is clear, that's why I do this. That's what keeps me going."



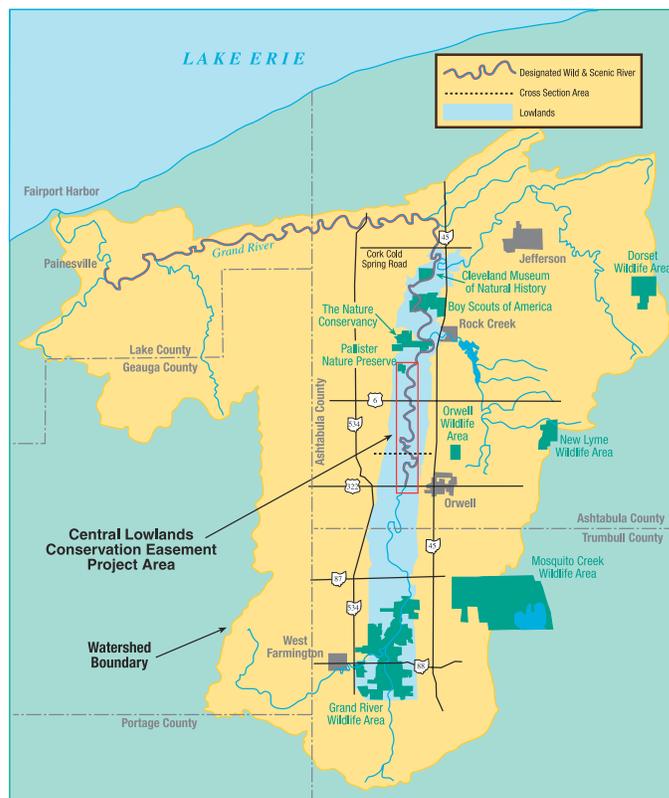
Bill Beagle

## How You Can Help...

Land conservation projects require much time and money, but you don't have to have a lot of either to get involved. Grand River Partners, Inc. has received donations of as little as \$25 and volunteers are always welcome. There are regularly scheduled clean-up projects and volunteers can also help monitor water quality through their local soil and water conservation districts. Landowners can help by agreeing to conservation easements or by simply keeping an eye on any adjacent, protected areas and reporting easement violations such as trespassing.

Anyone interested in getting involved with this project to protect the Grand River Lowlands can contact the Division of Wildlife at 1-800-WILDLIFE or the Grand River Partners, Inc., 391 West Washington St., Painesville, Ohio 44077; Telephone: 440-639-4773.

## A map of the Grand River Lowlands project area.



### Typical Cross Section of Grand River Lowlands



The lowlands are home to Ohio's last remaining swamp forest.





**FALL WILD TURKEY:** Open second Saturday in October (12) through the third following Sunday, October 27, for hunters using a shotgun with shot, a longbow, or a crossbow, **and through the Sunday after Thanksgiving, December 1, for hunters using a longbow or a crossbow.** See map for counties open to hunting. **Ashland, Richland, and Scioto counties are open for the first time.** Limit one turkey of either sex per fall season. Hours: one-half hour before sunrise to sunset from October 12 through October 27, and **one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset from October 28 through December 1.**

**RABBIT:** Open first Friday in November (1) through February 28. Hours: one-half hour before sunrise to sunset on private lands **and from sunrise to sunset on public hunting lands.** Daily bag limit 4.

**PHEASANT:** Open first Friday in November (1) through January 1. Hours: one-half hour before sunrise to sunset on private lands **and from sunrise to sunset on public hunting lands.** Daily bag limit 2. Cocks only.

**QUAIL:** Open first Friday in November (1) through December 1. Hours: one-half hour before sunrise to sunset on private lands **and from sunrise to sunset on public hunting lands.** See map for counties open to hunting. Daily bag limit 4.

**FOX, OPOSSUM, SKUNK, AND WEASEL TRAPPING:** Open November 10 through January 31. No restriction on hours. No daily bag limit.

*continued on next page*



**FOX HUNTING:** Open November 10 through January 31. Daytime hunting of fox closed during deer gun season. No other restriction on hours. No daily bag limit.

**RACCOON TRAPPING:** Open November 10 through January 31. Season extends through March 15 in Erie, Ottawa, and Sandusky counties and Lucas County east of the Maumee River. No restriction on hours. No daily bag limits.

**RACCOON AND OPOSSUM HUNTING:** Open November 10 through January 31. No daily bag limit.

**MINK AND MUSKRAT TRAPPING:** Open **November 10** through February 28. Season extends through March 15 in Erie, Ottawa, and Sandusky counties and Lucas County east of the Maumee River. No restriction on hours. No daily bag limit.

**BEAVER TRAPPING:** North Zone (the area north of Interstate 76 and east of Interstate 77) opens January 11, 2003 through February 28 and South Zone (rest of state) opens December 26 through February 28. Nonresidents may trap beaver only if the state of their residence permits Ohio citizens to trap beaver. Beaver trapping on state public hunting areas without a special beaver trapping permit from the ODNR Division of Wildlife is prohibited.

**SPRING WILD TURKEY:** Open statewide (except on designated youth hunting areas) on the fourth Monday in April (28) (2003) through the fourth following Sunday, May 25. Hours: one-half hour before sunrise to noon. Public hunting areas will be open to youth hunters (17 years old and younger) for turkey hunting on the Saturday and Sunday immediately prior to the regular spring wild turkey season (April 26 & 27, 2003). Limit 2 bearded turkeys per hunter per spring season.

**CROW:** Open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from June 14, 2002 through March 23, 2003. Hours: one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. No daily bag limit.

**FALCONRY:** **Seasons for all non-migratory small game species will open on the third Saturday in August and extend through March 10.**



*When Daniel Boone goes by, at night  
The phantom deer arise  
And all lost, wild America  
Is burning in their eyes.  
— Stephen Vincent Benet*



**Special permission for trappers to use snares will no longer be required on private lands.  
Fur dealers will be required to provide a copy of their daily log of transactions along with their annual summary.**



## Early Migratory Bird Hunting Seasons Set

Early migratory bird hunting season dates and regulations approved by the Ohio Wildlife Council include an increase in the bag limit for doves. Ohio's mourning dove, early Canada goose, rail, moorhen and snipe hunting seasons opened state-wide September 1.

**DOVES:** Open September 1 through October 20, and November 21 through November 30. **The daily bag limit increases from 12 to 15 this year and possession limit increases from 24 to 30 birds.**

**EARLY CANADA GOOSE:** Runs September 1 through September 15 with a daily bag limit of five and a possession limit of 10, except the daily bag and possession limit is two Canada geese within the Crane Creek/Ottawa, Mosquito Creek, Mercer, and Killdeer Plains mandatory reporting zones.

**EARLY TEAL SEASON:** Teal may be hunted statewide September 7 through September 15 with a daily bag limit of four and possession limit of eight birds.

**SORA AND VIRGINIA RAILS:** May be hunted September 1 through November 9 with a daily bag and possession limit of 25 birds. Moorhens (gallinule) may be hunted September 1 through November 9 with a daily bag limit of 15 and a possession limit of 30.

**SNIPE:** Open September 1 through December 1, and from December 9 through December 22 with a daily bag limit of eight and a possession limit of 16.

**WOODCOCK:** May be hunted October 18 through December 1 with a daily bag limit of three and a possession limit of six.

The hours for hunting rails, moorhens, snipe, woodcock, teal, doves and Canada geese will be from sunrise to sunset during the open season, except for the hours for hunting doves on public hunting areas, which is from noon to sunset September 1 through September 10. Season dates and regulations for the regular Ohio waterfowl hunting season had not been finalized at the time this issue of *Wild Ohio* went to print. Check the *2002–2003 Waterfowl Hunting Seasons* brochure (Publication 295) for specific dates and regulations.

People planning to hunt any migratory birds, including all waterfowl, are required to answer several questions for the Harvest Information Program (HIP) survey when purchasing their hunting license. A state wetland habitat stamp endorsement and a valid and signed federal duck stamp are required in addition to a hunting license when hunting waterfowl such as Canada geese and teal. The 2002–2003 hunting licenses, wetland stamps, and permits are on sale now and remain valid through February 28, 2003.

## Hunters and Anglers Spend \$55 Billion in 2001



Tim Daniel

Spending by America's hunters and anglers totaled \$55 billion last year according to preliminary results from the 2001 National Fish and Wildlife Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation produced by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Respectively, hunters spent \$20 billion on trips and equipment, while anglers spent \$35 billion. The preliminary results revealed that in 2001, 34 million Americans 16 years and older took to the waters, each fishing an average of 16 days and spending \$1,046 each. Americans taking to the fields and woods 16 years and older totaled 13 million individuals, who hunted on average 17.5 days each and spent \$1,581 apiece.

## Shovelnose Sturgeon Reintroduced

A five-year project of the Division of Wildlife to reintroduce the shovelnose sturgeon to Ohio began this past spring. The species was last seen in the state in 1957, but is still common in states downstream in the Ohio River drainage. The U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service assisted in netting fish from the Ohio River near Paducah, Kentucky, which were released in the Scioto River near Circleville, Ohio. State income tax check-off funds and wildlife conservation license plate sales proceeds are being used to fund this reintroduction project.



Tim Daniel

## Sunday Hunting Restrictions Lifted

Sunday hunting is now allowed in Ohio for all legal game in season without the previous restrictions. HB 493, which became effective August 14, makes adjustments to regulations and eliminates limitations on Sunday hunting, including the requirement that private landowners of at least 100 acres be enrolled in a hunter access program before Sunday hunting would be permitted on the property. The bill eliminates confusion in Sunday hunting requirements and provides more weekend opportunities for hunters.



Joining Governor Taft as he signs House Bill 493 are (from left to right) Steve Gray, assistant chief of the Division of Wildlife; Rob Sexton, U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance manager of government affairs; State Representative Bob Latta; Bill Liermann, government affairs representative with the Ohio Farmers Union; Sam Speck, ODNR director; Mike Budzik, chief of the Division of Wildlife; and Scott Zody, ODNR deputy director.



Tim Daniel

## Migratory Bird Hunters, Get HIP!

All migratory bird hunters are required to be certified in the Migratory Bird Harvest Information (HIP) Program before legally hunting any kind of migratory birds in the U. S. Hunter participation in this program is free, but critical for the conservation of migratory bird resources and protection of the hunting heritage. When you buy an Ohio hunting license you will be asked if you hunt migratory birds. If you answer yes, you will automatically be signed up in the federal HIP program. For more information, go online to [hip.fws.gov](http://hip.fws.gov).



Tim Daniel

## River Otters Removed from State Endangered Species List

The Ohio Wildlife Council has approved a list of Ohio's endangered wildlife species, which includes the removal of the river otter. Now found in 52 counties of the state, river otters are known to be reproducing in at least 10 watersheds.

"We are especially proud to see our years of effort to reintroduce the river otter back into Ohio's waterways have resulted in their removal from the state endangered species list," said Mike Budzik, chief of the Division of Wildlife. Other animals' status has changed on the state's endangered species list, including barn owls, dark-eyed juncos, hermit thrushes, least bitterns, and yellow-crowned night-herons, all moving from endangered to threatened status. Sedge wrens were moved from endangered to a species of concern. Canada warblers, little blue herons, magnolia warblers, Northern waterthrushes, and winter wrens were moved from endangered to special interest status.

## Fish Cemetery?

You might think that this cemetery was located along the shores of Lake Erie in commemoration of the millions of walleyes that have died there. Instead, the cemetery is actually located in northwest Ohio's Wood County. Terry Sunderhaus, district law enforcement supervisor for the Division of Wildlife, shot the humorous photo during his rounds.



Tim Daniel

## Ohio to Monitor Deer CWD

The Division of Wildlife is taking a proactive step by adding chronic wasting disease (CWD) to the list of diseases it routinely tests for in the state's white-tailed deer population. CWD has **not** been found in Ohio's deer herd.

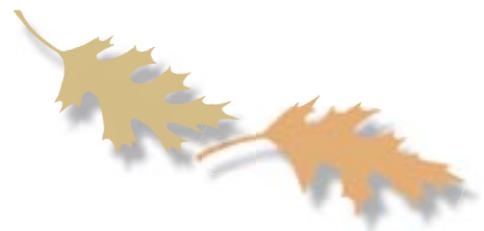
The first cases of CWD were found in wild deer and elk in the western United States during the 1960s. It was recently found for the first time east of the Mississippi River when four whitetails in Wisconsin were diagnosed with the disease.

CWD is a degenerative disease of the brain that affects elk, mule deer, and white-tailed deer, and believed to be caused by abnormal proteins. No scientific evidence shows that CWD can infect humans, according to the World Health Organization.

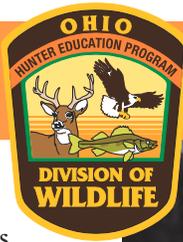
There is no CWD testing method for live deer, so Division biologists will be looking for deer exhibiting excessive salivation, trouble swallowing, or difficulty in moving about. Animals displaying these symptoms will be euthanized and tested. Samples will also be collected from deer brought to a selected group of deer check stations during Ohio's hunting season in November and December.

Biologists also test for other possible diseases such as bovine tuberculosis, which has been found in Michigan deer, but not found in Ohio deer. They also look for deer ticks, which can carry lyme disease.

Ohio's deer population is estimated at 500,000 animals; whitetails can be found in all 88 Ohio counties.



# How Safe is Hunting?



## OUTDOOR SKILLS

by *Matt Ortman*

Each year, more than 500,000 hunters enter Ohio's fields and forests in pursuit of wild game. Of these hunters, only a very small percentage will be involved in a hunting incident. In fact, only one out of every 15,625 hunters was injured in a hunting incident in Ohio in 2001. There were 32 hunting-related shooting incidents in 2001, four of those fatal.

In Ohio in 2001, 23 of the 32 hunting-related incidents were not self-inflicted. That means an Ohio hunter had a .0046 percent chance of being shot by another hunter. Hunting injury incidents can be separated into two categories: intentional discharge (23 incidents) and accidental discharge (9 incidents).

An intentional discharge is when a hunter purposely pulls the trigger of a firearm. The leading cause of intentional discharge incidents in 2001 was victim covered by shooter swinging on game (when a hunter swinging his or her gun to follow running or flying game shoots and injures another hunter). Ten of these incidents occurred, with one fatality during the primitive weapons deer hunting season. Failure to identify target was the second leading cause of an intentional discharge incident. Six of these occurred, with one fatality during the deer gun hunting season. Accidental discharges resulted in only nine incidents in 2001. The leading factor in this type of incident was shooter stumbled and fell (3 incidents).

The National Safety Council Injury Facts Report provides additional insight on accidental firearms fatalities. Seven hundred accidental firearms-related deaths were reported in 1999 nationally, the lowest figure since record keeping began in 1903. That figure shows a decrease of 50 percent since 1989. In 1999 nationally, there were 41,300 fatal motor-vehicle accidents; 17,100 deaths from falls; 4,000 drowning deaths; 3,100 deaths as result of fires or burns; and 3,200 deaths from ingestion of food or other objects.

In addition, hunting required less than eight hospital visits per 100,000 participants (most of which were unrelated to the hunting implement, such as falls, sprains, cuts, etc.). Recreational football, on the other hand, required 2,200 visits, baseball over 2,000 visits, tennis 119 visits, golf 104 visits, and swimming 93 visits. If you're still unconvinced that hunting is one of the safer outdoor pursuits, following are more safety facts from 1998:

- 52 deaths due to lightning
  - 85 deaths due to recreational underwater diving
  - 87 deaths due to hunting
  - 1,500 deaths due to recreational swimming
- \*Source: National Safety Council's Accident Facts

*Matt Ortman is the hunter education specialist in the Division's Outdoor Education Section.*



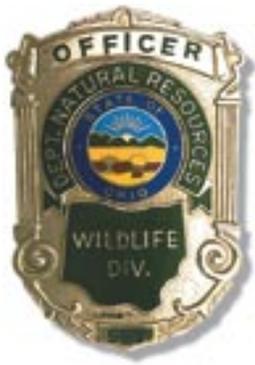
photos by Tim Daniel

**Only one out of every 15,625 hunters in the state was injured in a hunting incident in 2001. That translates into an Ohio hunter having a .0046 percent chance of being shot by another hunter while afield.**



### Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety

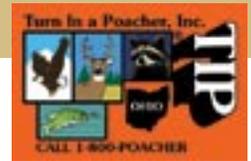
1. Treat every gun as if it is loaded.
2. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.
3. Be sure of your target and beyond.
4. Never point a gun at anything you don't want to shoot.
5. Unload guns when not in use.
6. Store guns and ammunition separately.
7. Be sure the barrel and action are clear of obstructions.
8. Never climb a fence or tree, cross a log or a stream, or jump a ditch with a loaded gun.
9. Never shoot a bullet at a flat, hard surface or water.
10. Never use alcoholic beverages or drugs when handling firearms.



# Wildlife Law Enforcement

## Field Notes

By Jeff Collingwood, Ohio Wildlife Officer, Huron County



### Tips from Hunters Helped Nab Deer Poachers in Huron County

Once again, callers reporting poaching activity and local law enforcement helped wildlife officers in apprehending violators.

On opening day of the small game season (November 2, 2001), I was notified by an anonymous hunter of a possible deer poaching violation in Huron County. He advised me of two to three deer that were allegedly shot with a shotgun and hanging in a garage at a residence in the eastern part of the county.

The information provided was very detailed including the names of those involved. I contacted Division of Wildlife Investigator Chester Shroyer and a Huron County sheriff's deputy, who was familiar with the suspect. We went to the suspect's residence and were given permission by the suspect's brother to look in the garage. Upon opening the door to the garage, we found the carcasses of two freshly butchered white-tailed deer along with several types of butchering tools. A freezer in the garage was loaded with ground venison. Lead slugs were also found in the deer remains.

The suspect, Kenneth L. Krishna of Collins, Ohio, arrived home shortly after we began our investigation. After being told of the large amount of evidence collected, Mr. Krishna admitted his part in the poaching operation. He had loaded the deer into his vehicle and helped in the butchering.

The next day we interviewed the shooter, James P. Mitchell of New London, Ohio. Mr. Mitchell gave a written statement of how he had shot both deer with a shotgun the day before, and then called Mr. Krishna for help. A total of five citations were issued and \$590 in fines and costs were paid. A scoped Mossberg shotgun and all the deer meat was forfeited to the state.

### A Wildlife Officer's Job is Never Done

As Investigator Shroyer and I were finishing our investigation in the previously discussed case, we received a call from the Huron County Sheriff's Office of another deer poaching situation. A deputy had stopped a vehicle during a trespassing call, and found that the passengers in the vehicle had been hunting and may have shot a deer.

With help from three witnesses, we eventually determined that three men in the car had been hunting rabbits along a set of railroad tracks and had jumped a deer from heavy vegetation. Two of the suspects, a juvenile and Bryan S. Clime of New London, Ohio, had taken several shots at the deer at very close range; the deer fell dead in a nearby bean field. The juvenile and Bryan Clime gave written statements admitting to

the violation. They said that the third suspect, Richard H. Clime, also of New London, didn't shoot because they were in his way as he took aim.

Richard and Bryan Clime were both charged with hunting without written permission.

Bryan Clime was also charged with taking a deer by shotgun during the archery season. Richard Clime was also charged with providing false information to an officer. He had continued to deny that any of the three were involved, even with the written statements. The juvenile was not charged in adult court.

The four charges resulted in \$610 in fines and costs and both of the Climes were placed on two years probation. Richard Clime broke his probation just two months later by failing to tag a deer he had taken and attempting to take another deer. He was fined again and spent 10 days in jail.

These cases were made only because of the concern of other hunters. The callers had identified themselves as law-abiding hunters who do not like their image tarnished by the actions of poachers. Appreciation is also extended to the Huron County Sheriff's Department, whose deputies never hesitate to lend a hand to keep Ohio hunting safe and legal.



Jeff Collingwood

### When Does a Buck Cost \$1,500? When Someone Doesn't Play by the Rules

During the 2001 deer gun season, Jason Kopf of Avon Lake, Ohio bagged a button buck that turned out to be an 8-pointer, because that's exactly the number of wildlife violations racked up by Mr. Kopf.

Acting on numerous complaints, Lorain County Wildlife Officer Dave Shinko observed Kopf taking a deer into a barn. Shinko's subsequent investigation resulted in the following charges: possession of an untagged deer, hunting without a deer permit, hunting deer with another hunter's deer permit (2 counts), hunting without written permission, hunting deer with an unplugged gun, hunting after legal shooting time, and hunting deer with an illegal firearm in violation of a city ordinance.

In addition to the fine, Kopf also lost his hunting privileges through March 2003. The deer was given to a needy family.

# 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 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: Is it true that hummingbird feeders should be taken down by Labor Day so that the birds will know it's time to migrate?**  
—Linda Bailey, Cincinnati, OH

**A:** Leaving your hummingbird feeder(s) up late in the year will not deter hummingbirds from migrating south. Migration of most birds is triggered by the amount of daylight; the shorter days of late summer tell them when to depart. You can keep your feeder up into fall as long as you keep it clean and the sugar solution fresh. Rufous hummingbirds—a western species—occasionally visit Ohio and will use feeders that remain up into November and December.



**Q: Last fall a deer ruined a small pine tree in my yard by rubbing its antlers on the trunk and branches. How can I prevent more damage?**  
—Scott Buckingham, Huron, OH

**A:** White-tailed bucks rub trees in fall and winter to remove the velvet from their antlers and leave scent. Shield an individual tree by encircling it with four-foot or higher welded wire or other heavy-duty fencing material. Tree plantations can be protected with electric fencing or a dog contained by an electronic invisible fence. For more ideas, refer to the Division of Wildlife's Publication 138: *Deer Damage Control*.

**Q: Cottontail rabbits feed in the grass just outside of our neighbor's invisible fence while their dog is barking just a few feet away. How do the rabbits know the dog won't chase them?**

—Christine Griggs, Brunswick, OH

**A:** Over time, the rabbits have been able to approach closer to the dog without being chased because the dog is contained by the electronic fence. By this simple trial and error, the rabbits have learned how far out into the yard the dog will go. Once the rabbits have figured out the limits of the dog, they then know where they can safely travel, feed, and rest. The dog's barking may startle the rabbits at first, but it is not a threat if it's not followed by a chase.



## BACKYARDS FOR WILDLIFE – FALL TIPS:

- Don't deadhead or cut back plants in your flower gardens once things die back from frost. Throughout the winter birds and other small animals will hide from predators in the tangle of stems, branches, and leaves. The leftover seed heads provide food.
- Clean out and winterize bluebird boxes—discard nesting material and fill the vents of the box with foam-rubber insulation. Bluebirds may use the boxes for roosting on cold winter nights.



- Share your fall decorations with wildlife: carve a jack-o-lantern with an extra wide mouth and fill it with birdseed. Place it near your bird feeders and watch the birds hop inside the pumpkin to get a treat.





## Make a Fall Sun-Catcher

by Laura Sturtz

Trees are an important part of **habitat** for many wild animals. Can you think of ways that trees are used by wildlife? Many animals use trees for shelter and food. Squirrels, birds, and other animals use leaves to make their nests soft and warm. While we don't use leaves to make our homes cozy, we can decorate with leaves. One way is to make a beautiful fall sun-catcher.

### Things You'll Need:

- 3 or 4 colorful leaves
- 2 paper towels
- Heavy book
- 2 pieces of wax paper
- Iron
- Tape

To make a sun-catcher, you'll need to gather some colorful leaves. The best ones are leaves that have fallen, but can still be bent without crumbling. While collecting your leaves, look for birds, insects, and other animals. How are they using trees? If you see an animal you can't identify, remember its color, size, shape, and any sounds it makes. Then ask an adult to help you identify



Tim Daniel



it. Or go to the library and look through identification books for the animals you saw. You might even go online and check the Internet!

Once you have gathered your leaves, they need to be pressed. First, place them between two paper towels. Next, lay a heavy book on top of the towels and leaves. This will flatten and dry the leaves. Let your leaves dry under the book for several days.

Once dry, place your leaves on a piece of wax paper. Put another sheet of wax paper on top of the leaves. Finally, ask an adult to help you iron over the wax paper. The iron should be on a "low" setting with no steam. Let the sun-catcher cool before you pick it up. Then, tape it to a window. You now have a colorful, home-made fall sun-catcher!



illustrations by Justin Ritter

# WILD GAME GOURMET

## r e c i p e s

by Vicki Mountz,

the Wild Game Gourmet as seen on Wild Ohio Video Magazine

### VENISON BUNDLES

#### Ingredients:

1-1½ pounds venison loin, sliced thin  
3 tablespoons butter or margarine  
½ cup fresh mushrooms, chopped  
½ green pepper, chopped  
½ yellow pepper, chopped  
½ red pepper, chopped  
½ onion, chopped  
1 cup frozen hash browns, thawed  
garlic powder to taste  
2 sheets refrigerated pie pastry  
1 egg, beaten



1 can cream of mushroom soup  
½ cup milk

#### Pesto Sauce:

5 tablespoons olive oil  
½ cup each tightly packed fresh basil leaves and fresh parsley leaves  
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese  
⅛ teaspoon salt

In food processor or blender, combine 3 tablespoons olive oil, ½ cup fresh parsley, ½ cup fresh basil, ½ cup Parmesan cheese, and salt. Process until smooth and set aside. *continued*



Tim Daniel



Remove pie pastry from refrigerator and allow to come to room temperature. In large skillet, brown thin-sliced venison loin in 3 tablespoons butter and 2 tablespoons oil. Remove and keep warm. In skillet, sauté mushrooms and onions for several minutes. Add garlic powder. Add peppers and hash browns and sauté until liquid is absorbed.

Unfold refrigerated pie pastry and place layer of venison in middle. Spread venison with about 1 tablespoon pesto and top with mixture of onions, peppers, mushrooms, and hash browns.

Fold opposite corners of pastry over and pinch seams to seal tightly. Repeat with other pie pastry.

Place bundles in greased 15 x 10 x 1 inch baking pan. Brush egg over pastry and bake at 450 degrees for 18-20 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Add ½ cup milk to can of mushroom soup, heat and stir until smooth.

To serve, slice bundles and pour mushroom soup mixture over bundles.

You may vary meat type or vegetables or delete pesto sauce if basil isn't your favorite herb. This makes a very elegant presentation! (Serves 4-6)

(Contributed by Billie Norris)



Tim Daniel



## “The Bear”

by William Faulkner

(Contributed by Chip Gross)

If you'd like to read a good hunting story sometime, may I suggest one of my favorites, “The Bear,” by William Faulkner. This classic hunting tale is part of Faulkner's book, *Big Woods*, first published in 1955. The following is an excerpt to whet your appetite. We join the story as young Isaac McCaslin is learning to hunt deer from the old Indian, Sam Fathers.

**I**t seemed to him that at the age of ten he was witnessing his own birth. It was not even strange to him. He had experienced it all before, and not merely in dreams. He saw the camp—a paintless six-room bungalow set on piles above the spring high-water—and he knew already how it was going to look. He helped in the rapid orderly disorder of their establishment in it, and even his motions were familiar to him, foreknown. Then for two weeks he ate the coarse, rapid food—the shapeless sour bread, the wild strange meat, venison and bear and turkey and coon which he had never tasted before—which men ate, cooked by men who were hunters first and cooks afterward; he slept in harsh sheetless blankets as hunters slept. Each morning the gray of dawn found him and Sam Fathers on the stand, the crossing, which had been allotted him. It was the poorest one, the most barren. He had expected that; he had not dared yet to hope even to himself that he would even hear the running dogs this first time. But he did hear them. It was on the third morning—a murmur, sourceless, almost indistinguishable, yet he knew what it was although he had never before heard that many dogs running at once, the murmur swelling into separate and distinct voices until he could call the five dogs which his cousin owned from among the others. “Now,” Sam said, “slant your gun up a little and draw back the hammers and then stand still.”

But it was not for him, not yet. The humility was there, he had learned that. And he could learn the patience. He was only ten, only one week. The instant had passed. It seemed to him that he could actually see the deer, the buck, smoke-colored, elongated with speed, vanish, the woods, the gray solitude still



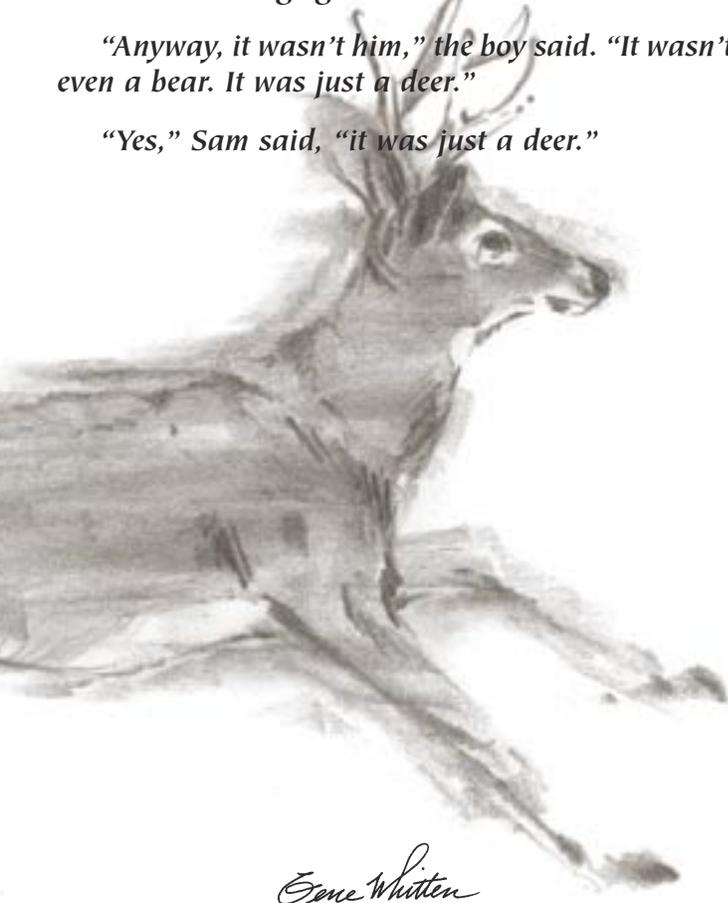
ringing even when the voices of the dogs had died away; from far away across the sombre woods and the gray half-liquid morning there came two shots. “Now let your hammers down,” Sam said.

He did so. “You knew it too,” he said.

“Yes,” Sam said. “I want you to learn how to do when you didn't shoot. It's after the chance for the bear or the deer has done already come and gone that men and dogs get killed.”

“Anyway, it wasn't him,” the boy said. “It wasn't even a bear. It was just a deer.”

“Yes,” Sam said, “it was just a deer.”



*Gene Whitten*

Gene Whitten

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

# NATIONAL HUNTING & FISHING DAY

Marks Its 31st Year  
Saturday, September 28, 2002



**Each day, 71 million Americans are working to conserve and improve our natural resources. They are America's hunters and anglers.**

Hunters and anglers pay for conservation by:

- Purchasing hunting and fishing licenses, and duck stamps
- Supporting the excise tax on sporting equipment, such as fishing tackle, firearms, and ammunition
- Contributing to some 10,000 private conservation organizations nationwide
- And spending hours of personal time doing vital conservation work.

Virtually every species of wildlife, from songbirds and bald eagles, to waterfowl and wild turkeys, to walleyes and trout, benefits from programs supported and financed by hunters and anglers.



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