

# Wild Ohio

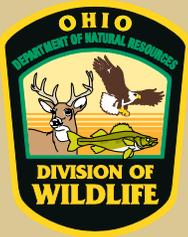
Winter 2005-2006

M A G A Z I N E

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

**DIVISION OF WILDLIFE**

**SPECIAL ANNUAL REPORT ISSUE**



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The Division of Wildlife offers equal opportunity regardless of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex (in educational programs). If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, you should contact: The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office for Diversity and Civil Rights Programs-External Programs, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 130, Arlington, VA 22203; or, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Diversity Affairs Office, 2045 Morse Road, Bldg. D-1, Columbus, OH 43229-6693.

**Division of Wildlife Mission Statement**

*We are dedicated to conserving and improving the fish and wildlife resources and their habitats, and promoting their use and appreciation by the people so that these resources continue to enhance the quality of life for all Ohioans.*

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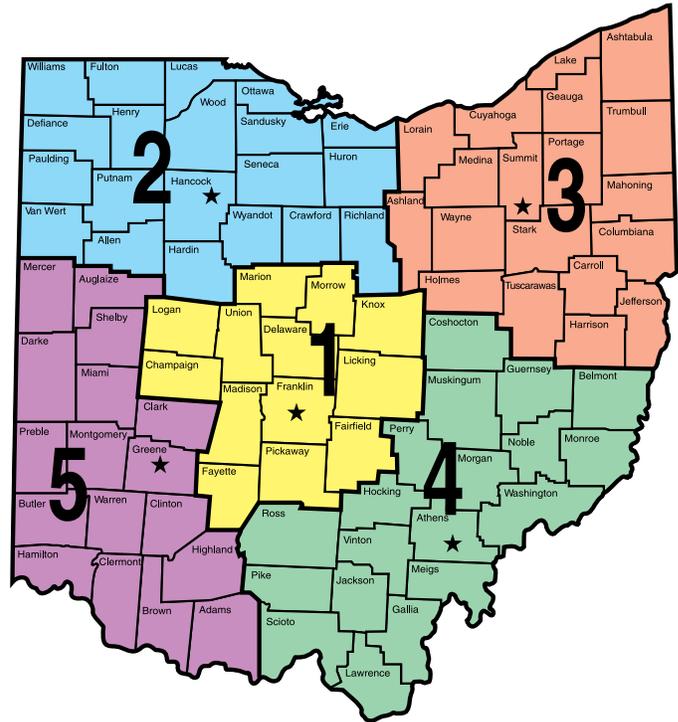
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Toll-free for a Lake Erie fishing report

**1-800-POACHER**

Toll-free to report poaching

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

Division of Wildlife web site



**Winter Wildlife Calendar . . .**

- February 25** **Wetland Habitat Stamp Competition**, Radisson Hotel, East Lake. Open to the public 1-4 p.m..
- March 5** **Division of Wildlife Open House Forums**, District Offices, noon to 3 p.m. Proposed 2006-07 hunting and trapping regulations and other topics will be discussed.  
**Canada Goose Day**; Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, Ottawa County. For information, call (419) 898-0960, ext. 31.
- March 8** **Wildlife Diversity Conference**, Aladdin Shrine Complex, Columbus. This year's theme is "Look Beyond the Surface" and highlights such species as woodrats, fox snakes, hellbenders, and bobcats. Watch for details on the Division of Wildlife's Website.

## Features



### Annual Report - Fiscal Year 2005

6–12

Division of Wildlife revenues and expenditures, as well as reports and photos highlighting wildlife diversity, wildlife management, fish management, law enforcement, and information and education projects are detailed in this issue.

**Cover Photo:** Cottontail rabbits are known for their prolific breeding habits. Read the Watchable Wildlife article on page 4 to find out more about this native species in Ohio. Photography by Maslowski Productions.



### Readers' Photos

13–15



Juvenile bald eagle taken at Tappan Lake by 16-year-old John Martin, Jr., Wintersville, Ohio.

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

(See more reader's photos on pages 13–15.)

## Departments

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# Ohio's watchable wildlife



## Watchable Wildlife

## • *E a s t e r n*

by **Melissa Hathaway**

Cottontail rabbits have entertained us for centuries in folklore and children's literature through such characters as the Easter Bunny, Peter Rabbit, Br'er Rabbit, and Bugs Bunny. Cottontail rabbits can also be entertaining as "Watchable Wildlife."

Although eight species of cottontail rabbits occur in the United States, the Eastern cottontail is the most widely distributed and is the only cottontail that inhabits Ohio. The most distinctive features of the Eastern cottontail are its long ears, long hind legs, and short white tail resembling a cotton ball. Hence, the name "cottontail." It should not be confused with the snowshoe hare that was recently introduced to northeast Ohio. The snowshoe hare has a larger body and longer hind feet (up to 7 inches). Unlike the snowshoe hare that turns white in the winter, the Eastern cottontail keeps a brownish-gray body year-round.

The Eastern cottontail rabbit is native to Ohio, but was not as widespread prior to European settlement as it is today. Clearing of forests and the establishment of more open areas along wooded borders provided an ideal environment for cottontails.

These year-round residents live in open areas, preferably overgrown fields bordered by thickets or brushy areas. Nearby burrows are used as protection from predators and harsh weather. Eastern cottontails may also use open woods with nearby brush piles or fields. They are also found living in cities and suburbs as long as there are adequate borders of shrubbery and other plantings for food and cover.

Eastern cottontail rabbits prefer to eat near cover for protection. They typically eat a variety of plant material including clover, dandelion, plantain, lamb's-quarter, and ragweed, as well as garden vegetables. Winter foods may include ear corn, dry hay, and bark of tree saplings, raspberry, blackberry, and multiflora rose.

And, yes, it is a fact that cottontail rabbits are prolific breeders. It has been estimated that if no young rabbits were lost from a litter, one pair of rabbits could produce 350,000 offspring in five years. However, this is highly unlikely to occur because rabbits have a high mortality rate with few surviving



photo by: Maslowski Productions



photo by: Maslowski Productions



photo by: Maslowski Productions

# Cottontail Rabbit

more than a year. The high reproductive rate is kept in balance mostly by predators, such as foxes, skunks, coyotes, owls, hawks, cats, and dogs. Humans play a part as well: Eastern cottontails are a popular game animal of hunters of all ages and experience levels.

Peak mating activity is April through May. In an unusual courtship “dance,” the male and female sit and face each other and the male leaps straight up into the air, making a 180-degree turn. This behavior continues for a period of time with both sexes leaping and spinning into the air. Male cottontails mate with more than one female, and play no role in rearing the young.

Nesting sites include a variety of field types ranging from pastures to pine plantations to mowed lawns. For a nest, the female makes a shallow depression in the ground and lines it with dry grass and fur from her body. A litter can include two to seven offspring, but a female may produce as many as five litters a year.



## Viewing Opportunities

Cottontail rabbits are most active at dusk and dawn, but can be seen at any time of the day or night. They are found in all of Ohio’s 88 counties, and are quite often seen in backyards where there is adequate cover for food and shelter. The best location to see cottontails is at an open field adjacent to brush piles, thickets, or other dense cover. They are often seen along fence rows and roadsides. State wildlife areas that are good choices to observe cottontail rabbits include Delaware Wildlife Area (Delaware County), Woodbury Wildlife Area (Coshocton County), Pickerington Ponds Metro Park (Franklin and Fairfield counties), Big Island Wildlife Area (Marion County), Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area (Wayne County), and Magee Marsh Wildlife Area (Ottawa County).



# Ohio department of natural resources DIVISION OF WILDLIFE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2005

## *Message from the Chief*

The many programs conducted by the Division of Wildlife continue to benefit Ohio's fish and wildlife and enhance the quality of life for Ohioans. The popularity of hunting continues to grow, including the number of youth and nonresident hunters, adding to the legion of conservationists who support Ohio's wildlife resources.

The sustainability of Lake Erie and its fabulous fishing continues to provide a great place for families and vacationers to fish, relax, and enjoy. Bald eagles, our majestic national symbol, continue to soar throughout the Buckeye State with record hatches and numbers of young fledging each year.

This Fiscal Year 2005 annual report highlights many other accomplishments and how they support Ohio's wildlife heritage and diversity.

Steven A. Gray, Chief



Steve Gray with Skeeter and a pheasant in Ross County



Standing, L to R: James R. Lynch (Columbus), Gary Grant, Chairman (Continental), Howard L. Calhoun (Akron), Larry B. Mixon, Sr. (Columbus). Seated, L to R: Charles E. Franks (Newark), Karen Stewart-Linkhart (Xenia), Horace W. Karr (Pomeroy), Lee Howley (Vermilion)

# Financial Report

FY2005 Expenditures

## Wildlife Management - \$11,926,548

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 - \$4,620,334

### Wildlife Officers - \$7,554,435

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 - \$9,689,684

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

## District and Statewide Operations - \$9,733,855

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

## Information and Education - \$4,870,478

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

## Capital Improvements - \$4,225,935

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.

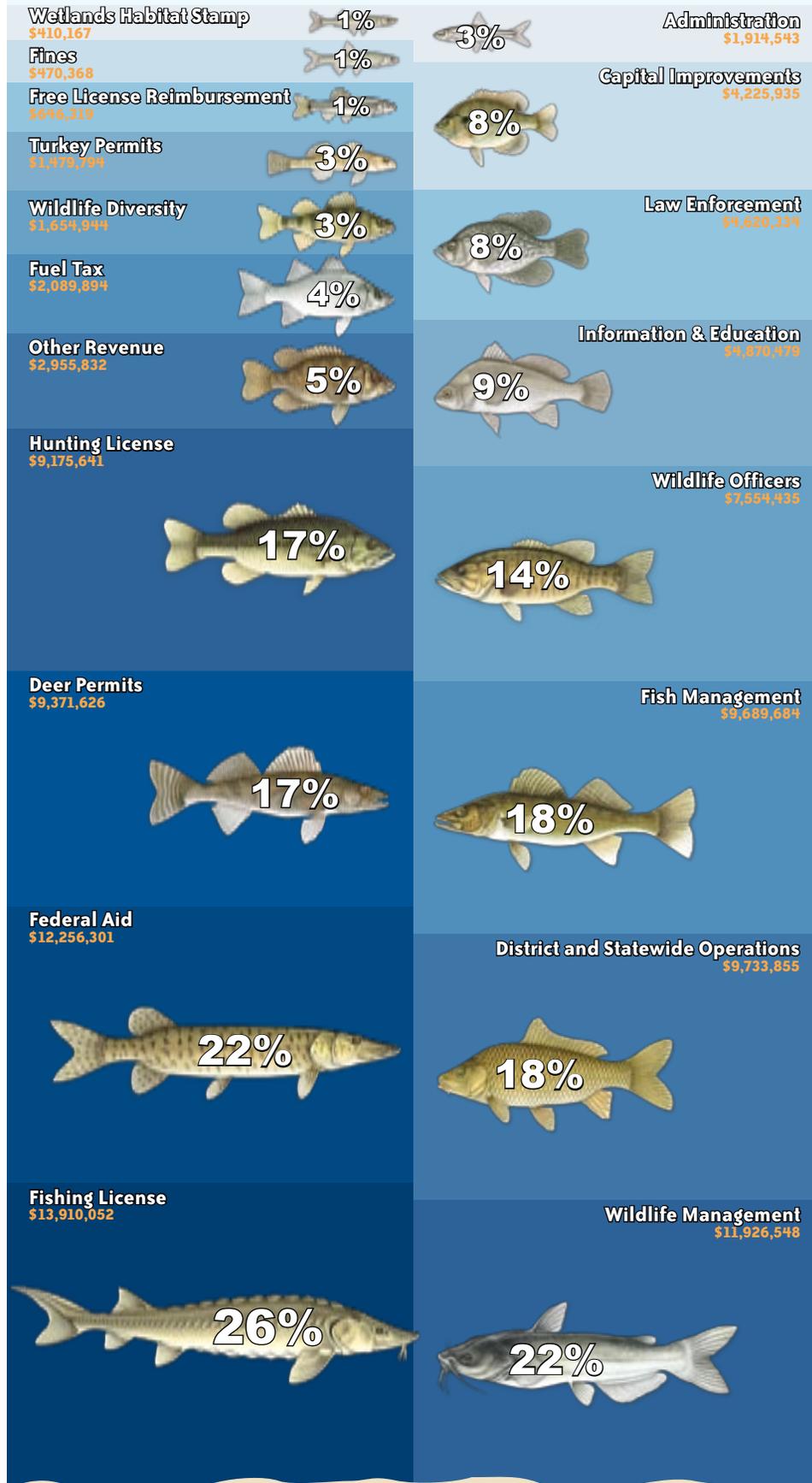
## Endangered Species and Wildlife Diversity

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.

## Revenue



## Expenditures



Revenue Total \$54,420,938

\$54,535,813 Total Expenses

# Wildlife Diversity



▲ Thirty-seven pairs of osprey nested in Ohio and hatched 60 chicks. Eleven osprey chicks were obtained from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia with eight hatched at the Wilds in Muskingum County and three fostered into natural nests. First Lady Hope Taft (center) holds an osprey that was banded by Division biologists.



photo by: Andrea Myers / Farm and Dairy newspaper

▲ Ohio's bald eagle pairs set yet another record with 125 pairs producing 136 eaglets. A record 366 eagles were observed during the Mid-Winter Eagle Survey, including 247 adults and 119 juveniles.

▶ The Division received additional snowshoe hares through a three-year agreement with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to continue wildlife diversity restoration efforts. As part of the agreement, 123 hares were captured and used to establish a second hare population in Ashtabula County.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Besides the reproductive success of the Ohio's bald eagles and ospreys, 55 cygnets hatched from 18 trumpeter swan nests, 57 young peregrine falcons fledged from 19 active peregrine sites, and a record 225 common tern chicks were banded at artificial nest platforms at four established colonies. A fifth colony was initiated at the Winous Point Marsh Conservancy.
- The Division awarded \$141,735 to eight recipients in the State Wildlife Grant program for wildlife diversity projects. Species that will benefit from these projects include the Eastern massasauga rattlesnake, Lake Erie watersnake, Karner blue butterfly, lark sparrow, Eastern sand darter, rare turtles, American burying beetle, and several bat species.
- Results of annual mark-recapture surveys show the Lake Erie watersnake population has exceeded 5,555 every year since 2001. If similar results are documented through 2007, the snake will have reached the population level needed to warrant consideration for delisting from the Federal Endangered Species List.
- The Division's annual Wildlife Diversity Conference in Columbus attracted more than 650 people. The theme was "Big, Bold, and Beautiful," and covered such topics as Ohio's bald eagles, the use of reclaimed mine lands by grassland birds, ant colonies, and the impact of bullfrogs on other amphibians.



photo by: Jamey Graham

## HIGHLIGHTS

- A record 216,443 deer were killed during Ohio's 2004-05 deer seasons. Archery hunting continues to be a fast growing segment of our deer harvest with over 60,000 deer taken by longbows and crossbows.
- The Division continued its tradition of buying more land for Ohioans to enjoy wildlife-related recreation and provide critical wildlife habitat. Last year the Division purchased over 3,100 acres of wildlife habitat, all available for public use, with the help of Ohio's sportswomen and sportsmen and numerous partners.
- Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve was transferred to the Division from the ODNr Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. The Reserve is part of a national system of estuarine research reserves designated to serve as field labs and coastal wetland ecology education centers.
- The Division secured a \$50,000 North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant for Mosquito Creek and Grand River wildlife areas. Projects to enhance 369 acres of wetlands and restore 52 acres of grassland are completed.
- Through a partnership with Ducks Unlimited for wetland habitat restoration on private land, 47 landowners received financial assistance to help restore 219 acres of wetlands across the state.
- The Division completed the second year of the National Mourning Dove Banding project by banding 2,683 doves.



▲ The importance of providing new or expanded opportunities for our young hunters continued. Young hunters killed 6,944 deer in Ohio's second youth season last fall and 1,612 turkeys during the youth spring season.



▲ In an effort to restore bobwhite quail in Ohio, 167 wild bobwhite quail were trapped in Kansas and released on the Tri-Valley Wildlife Area. The Division also worked closely with the Farm Service Agency for implementation of the new federal bobwhite quail initiative which will provide funding to develop 14,200 acres of field border habitat in 35 Ohio counties by 2007.

◀ River otters are an excellent example of endangered species management, recovering to the point where Division biologists determined that a limited, highly regulated season was warranted. River otters are present in two-thirds of Ohio's watersheds with a population estimated to be about 5,000 animals. Ohio is holding its first-modern day otter trapping season during the 2005-06 season.



# Fish Management



▲ The Kokosing River Water Trail, Ohio's first water trail, was dedicated in June. The new Ohio Water Trail Program will increase access and opportunities on navigable streams via local sponsorship.



◀ Lake Erie fisheries biologists continued to collaborate with other state agencies to rehabilitate the lake sturgeon population. They will soon implement a sturgeon sampling program on Lake Erie tributaries similar to that developed by Michigan DNR.



▼ Lake Erie research staff sampled numerous bass and walleye tournaments to characterize tournament effort, harvest, and population characteristics.



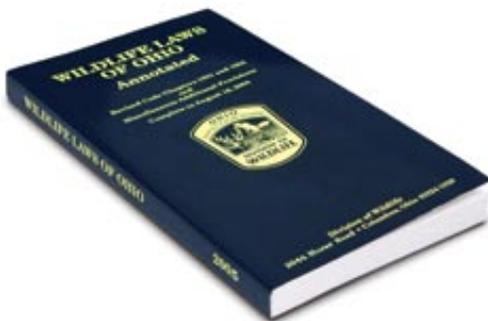
▲ The Division's six state hatcheries raised more than 28 million fish, including 403,000 steelhead smolts, 122,000 catchable rainbow trout, 42,000 brown trout, 8.2 million saugeye, 1.9 million walleye, 301,000 million yellow perch, 256,000 channel catfish, 20,000 muskellunge, and 306,000 hybrid striped bass.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Obtained a grant from the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act to conduct an interagency tagging project on Lake Erie walleye to learn more about annual survival rates.
- Implemented new interagency harvest policy on Lake Erie walleye and developed new regulation proposals for Ohio walleye fisheries in 2006.
- Assisted in completion of first lakewide acoustic survey of pelagic forage fish.
- Increased river sampling capabilities during spring walleye spawning runs with the acquisition of new electroshocking vessel.
- Used new angler survey design to collect catch statistics and angler demographics from 33 bodies of water.
- Finalized plans for over \$5.2 million dollars worth of motorboat access construction and maintenance at Deer Creek Lake, C.J. Brown Reservoir, Portage River, and Metzger Marsh access areas, the Ohio River at Racine, and Paint Creek Lake.
- A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant was obtained for the Pymatuning Creek conservation easement initiative, which will help protect critical riparian habitat for the federally-endangered clubshell mussel.
- The vernal pool mitigation initiative was begun with Ohio EPA and a workshop was conducted for Division personnel to use appropriate mitigation for wetland impacts permitted under Ohio's isolated wetland permit program.
- Worked with Ohio EPA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other ODNR divisions to assemble mitigation for Middle Bass Island State Park, East Harbor dredging, and Middle Harbor restoration.
- Initiated new projects to assess and restore endangered species such as Hind's emerald dragonfly and clubshell mussels.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Wildlife officers conducted 50 aircraft surveillance projects, including nine nighttime projects.
- Wildlife officers investigated 100 water pollution incidents statewide where 19,032 wild animals (primarily fish and other aquatic animals) died. The Division collected \$23,972.34 in damages for 14 settlements.
- The 1-800-Turn-In-a-Poacher phone line received 3,274 phone calls from concerned citizens reporting wildlife violations, of which 1,249 TIP reports were written with 610 reports assigned to an officer to investigate.
- Fifty-one incidents of personal injury or property damage related to hunting were investigated by wildlife investigators.
- Lake Erie wildlife investigators worked seasonal special enforcement projects involving walleye, yellow perch, and smallmouth bass sport fishing, international boundary surveillance, and license compliance. The unit also conducted 70 commercial fish inspections and issued 954 permits.
- During the spring walleye run on the Maumee and Sandusky rivers, wildlife officers made 1,254 contacts and issued 223 summons for litter, snagging, and possessing snagged walleye.
- Wildlife officers and investigators conducted 1,712 permit inspections, 817 meat locker and taxidermist inspections, and issued 5,800 permits.
- Wildlife investigators inspected and certified 3,900 pounds of ginseng for exportation.



▲ Wildlife officers and investigators conducted 304 special enforcement projects targeting known wildlife criminals, known problem areas, and state wildlife property protection. Individual contacts totaled 6,899 with 1,108 arrests or summons issued.

◀ Wildlife officers made 7,295 arrests for wildlife crimes and other criminal violations resulting in \$506,902.50 in fines collected.

# Information & Education

► The Division trained over 200 new Aquatic Education Instructors. More than 4,000 students participated in a “Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs” workshop. Another 100,000 students received aquatic education materials.



▲ The Division recorded 25,000 visitors at the Put-in-Bay Aquatic Visitor's Center, 3,000 at the Hebron Fish Hatchery, and 1,000 at the St. Mary's Fish Hatchery.



▲ After the first full year of Ohio's National Archery in the Schools Program, Ohio has over 100 teachers trained at more than 60 schools. School districts and one university received grants totaling \$22,484 for implementation of the program or supporting activities.



photo by: Frank Robertson / Chillicothe Gazette

photo by: Melissa Hathaway

photo by: Kevin Dixon

## H I G H L I G H T S

- The Division trained 572 trapper education students, 25,084 hunter education students, and 117 new volunteer hunter education instructors.
- In its eighth year, the *Wild Ohio* television show aired on 27 outlets across Ohio.
- The Division distributed an average of 145,000 copies per issue of the quarterly *Wild Ohio Magazine*, and 440,000 copies of the *Wild Ohio for Kids* magazine.
- Over 1,100 educators were trained in 62 Project WILD workshops. Sixty educators were trained in the new Science and Civics—Sustaining Wildlife high school curriculum.
- The Division provided the Ohio State Trapshooting Association with \$150,000 for trapshooting equipment for their new site in Morrow County.
- A marketing campaign launched in the spring of 2005 promoted the new deer, turkey, walleye, and smallmouth bass license plates.
- The Division provided two \$50,000 grants for the traveling programs “What’s WILD?” for elementary students and “Nature in the Balance” for middle school students.
- The Division continued to fund the ODNR Division of Park’s naturalist program with a \$90,000 grant.
- The first ever combined Project WILD, Project WET, and Project Learning Tree Correlations database was completed through an Ohio EPA grant.
- The Division reached over 450 educators with the monthly e-mail newsletter.
- Ten new WILD School Sites each received \$500 start-up grants.
- The Sportsmen’s Migratory Bird Center attracted an estimated 150,000 visitors.
- The Division purchased five trailers with a grant from the Archery Trade Association and converted them into mobile archery ranges for use at local events across the state.
- The Division awarded 127 Step Outside Grants totaling more than \$72,000 that reached over 14,374 participants.

# Readers' PHOTOS



Many *Wild Ohio* readers sent us photos during the past year to show how much they enjoy Ohio wildlife. We regret that there is only enough space to print a few of the best photos we received. If you take a good quality photo, we may publish your photo next year. **Please note, we cannot return photos so if sending a print photograph, please have an extra copy made before sending it.** Mail print photos to Editor, *Wild Ohio* Magazine, 305 E. Shoreline Drive, Sandusky, OH 44870, or e-mail digital photos to [melissa.hathaway@dnr.state.oh.us](mailto:melissa.hathaway@dnr.state.oh.us) Please include your name and city. Also, check out the Division's Website at <http://ohiodnr.com/wildlife> for submitting hunting and fishing photos for our Website.

**"This tree frog was using a bird feeder for a jungle gym."**  
Vicki Mountz, Centerburg, Ohio



**"I found this Eastern box turtle near the woods of my house."**  
Thomas J. Solanics, Columbia Station, Ohio



**Fred Cole of Huber Heights shot this large buck with a compound bow in Miami County during the 2004 season.**  
Rick Busse, Piqua, Ohio



**Seeing nesting bald eagles on the Oak Harbor Golf Course provided golfers a special treat last spring.**  
Mark Jenkins, Oak Harbor

## More Readers' Photos

### Kids and the Outdoors



"I shot this tom bearing an award tag last May. Division of Wildlife biologists had captured the four-year-old bird in Highland County and released it in Clark County the previous January."

Gene Emond, Marblehead, Ohio



"My husband Steve took Max and Eric MacKay hunting for their first time during the 2005 Youth Turkey Season and they both got a turkey!"

Sally Biancone, Glenford, Ohio



Hummingbirds on the Chester Collins Farm in Vinton County.  
Chester Collins, Eagle Twp., Vinton County



Chuck Perroud caught and released this 25-pound endangered paddle fish on the Ohio River.  
Chuck Perroud, Gallipolis, Ohio



The Division of Wildlife salutes Ethan Passoa for his years of volunteer work at the Butterfly House at the Ohio State Fair.



“Mitchell, Aidan, Austin, and Joshua helped track down a buck I got during the archery season. While looking for the deer, they also found two box turtles.”  
Nathan Niekamp, New Bremen, Ohio



“Our two grandsons made a bird blind out of a large box like the one shown on the “Wild Kids” page in the fall 2004 issue of Wild Ohio Magazine.”  
Thomas Moss, New Philadelphia, Ohio

Kevin Shuler got up close and personal with a blue jay while visiting the Ohio Bird Sanctuary in Mansfield.  
Priscilla Shuler, Findlay, Ohio



Jessica Sandford helps her grandpa with a trap line.  
Neil Garman, Wayne County.



“I am 15 years old and love to photograph wildlife, particularly birds.”  
Kyle Carlsen, Vincent, Ohio



### 4-H Club and NWTf Reforest Wildlife Area

Submitted by Richard E. Sorg, NWTf

For the past five years, a 4-H Club has teamed up with the Y-Bridge Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) in Zanesville to plant hardwood trees to benefit wildlife on the Tri Valley Wildlife Area. Last May the Norwich Stovetop Stitchers and Critters 4-H Club and NWTf members planted several hundred white, red, and Burr oak and persimmon tree seedlings on an area that was once forested, but cleared several years ago to drill an oil well.

### Wetlands Habitat Stamp Art Selected

The artwork of a Northern pintail by Bowling Green, Ohio native Gregory Clair won first place at the Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp design competition. Clair's painting will appear on the Ohio wetlands stamp for the fall of 2006.

Clair also won the Ohio competition in 1991 with his painting of a greater scaup. He also placed fourth in the federal duck stamp competition in 2004. Clair was the 2005 Artist of the Year for Ohio Ducks Unlimited.

More than 35,000 wetland stamps are purchased annually, with proceeds used to fund vital wetland habitat restoration projects in Ohio.



### Division Hosts Midwest Conference

The Division of Wildlife hosted the Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) annual conference in Huron last July. Priority topics of discussion and decision making included the conservation provisions in the Federal Farm Bill, over-abundant cormorants, Great Lakes fishery issues, hunter/angler recruitment and other hot topics of the day.

Among the 120 people in attendance were agency directors and leaders in fish and wildlife management including the acting U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service director and director and president of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

### Quail Forever Created to Benefit Quail Conservation

Pheasants Forever announced in August the expansion of its habitat focus to include quail, forming a new organization Quail Forever. Quail Forever will be dedicated to quail conservation and education and will be instrumental in continuing and expanding the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative.



To learn more about starting a Quail Forever chapter in your area, please contact the Quail Forever national office toll free at (866)45-QUAIL.

### Division of Wildlife Administrators Recognized

Vicki Mountz, communications administrator, received the national Communicator of the Year Award from the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) for her years of exemplary work with the NWTf, and the promotion of turkey hunting and conservation through video, TV, magazine, Website, and other media.



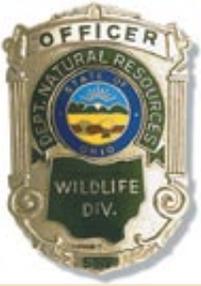
photo by: Luke Miller

Vicki Mountz (left) with Tammy Sapp, vice president of communications for NWTf.



photo by: Steve Gray

Dave Risley, wildlife management administrator, received the 2005 Conservationist Partner of the Year Award from Ducks Unlimited recognizing his efforts over the years on numerous wetland restoration and management projects. Heather Braun of Ducks Unlimited presented the award



# Wildlife Law Enforcement

## So You Want to Be an Ohio Wildlife Officer...?

by Chip Gross, former editor, *Wild Ohio Magazine*

The Division of Wildlife will begin accepting applications in the spring of 2006 for its next wildlife officers' training school. Potential officers must be at least 21 years of age; have at least a two-year college degree in fish and wildlife management, criminal justice, environmental law enforcement, or related fields; have a valid driver's license; be able to swim 100 yards in five minutes and tread water for five minutes. If an applicant passes the civil service examination, interviews, and pre-employment evaluations, the cadet will attend the Division's pre-service training school lasting about six months. Cadets study wildlife law enforcement, fish and wildlife management techniques, and information and education skills. Upon receiving their commission, wildlife officers may be assigned anywhere in the state. For more information contact the Division's personnel office at 614-265-6342.

Anyone who enjoys the out-of-doors may have at one time or another daydreamed about being a wildlife officer. Arresting poachers is a big part of the work, but law enforcement is only a portion of an Ohio wildlife officer's job responsibilities.

The day might begin with an early morning call-out concerning people hunting on private land without permission of the landowner. That might

be followed by a stop at the county courthouse to testify in a court case concerning an arrest made several weeks previous for deer poaching. After that, it's a trip to the district headquarters to meet with supervisors, file reports, and pick up supplies.

Since it is winter, some of Ohio's hunting seasons are open and you spend most of the afternoon checking hunters in the field for licenses and bag limits. After that, you meet with a landowner interested in improving the wildlife habitat on her farm. You make it home just in time for supper, but your day is not yet over.

You might head out again to speak to students attending a hunter education course, followed by a stop at a local conservation club meeting to fill members in on the latest happenings with the Division of Wildlife.

Once home again, there are still telephone calls to return from the public. And if you're lucky, after you go to bed, maybe the phone won't ring again until morning. But there are no guarantees - you are on call 24 hours each and every day.

In addition, wildlife officers serve warrants, conduct pollution investigations, and make arrests for not only fish and game law infractions, but nongame wildlife law violations as well.

Their jurisdiction is statewide, and they often work alone.

The Division of Wildlife is always looking for exceptional men and women to wear the uniform of an Ohio wildlife officer. Could that be you?



Stark County Wildlife Officer Tim Jordan was awarded the prestigious George Stockert Memorial Award from the Stark County Federation of Conservation Clubs. The award is given to an individual who works hard to promote the Federation and its ideals, programs, activities, and success. (Left to right: Wildlife District Three Manager Jeff Herrick, Tim Jordan, and James McNemar, president of the Stark County Federation of Conservation Clubs.)



Division of Wildlife Officer Class of 2005



# OUTDOOR SKILLS Youth Events

## Youth Events Give Fun, Hands-On Experience

Many local conservation clubs and organizations and the Division of Wildlife in conjunction with many conservation partners conduct hundreds of outdoor education events for youth each year. Events cover a wide range of outdoor skills including youth shooting sports, archery, fishing, and trapping, as well as special youth hunts. These two pages show just a few events that took place throughout the past year (FY 2004-2005).



photo by: Melissa Hathaway

▲ Youth Fly Fishing Clinic along Cold Creek at the Castalia State Fish Hatchery (Erie County) sponsored by the Division of Wildlife and the Clear Fork Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

▼ The United States Sportsmen's Alliance's (USSA) Boy Scout Trailblazer event at Camp Beaumont (Ashtabula County). Over 350 Boy Scouts experienced outdoor activities such as shooting sports, archery, fishing, and trapping.

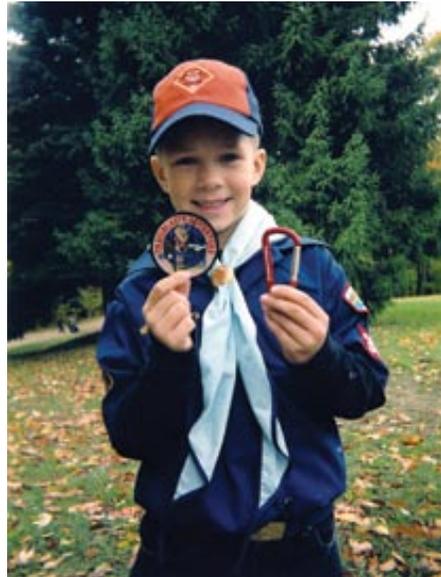


photo credit: U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance

▼ Youth Pheasant Hunt at Berlin Wildlife Area (Stark and Portage counties) sponsored by the Division of Wildlife and Pheasants Forever. It is one of two upland game youth events held in October.



photo credit: U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance

▲ Besides the many youth-attended events held throughout the state, women's outdoor events are very popular as well. One such event was the "Women in the Outdoors" event sponsored by the United States Sportsmen's Alliance at the Hilltop Sportsman's Club in which women got hands-on experience in 11 different activities.



photo by: Jimmy Duckworth

▼ **The Waterfowl Festival at Dillon State Park (Muskingum County) sponsored by the Zanesville Area Ducks Unlimited Chapter.**



▼ **Annual Educational Youth Event at the Fairfield Fish and Game Club (Fairfield County) sponsored by the Southeast Ohio Chapter of Pheasants Forever and several other conservation organizations.**



***A letter from a happy hunter in the first annual Farmer Youth Initiative Day sponsored by the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)...***

Dear Ms. Moore (Wildlife Specialist, Washington County SWCD):

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your part in making last weekend the best weekend of my life. I will never forget the feeling of harvesting my very first deer. I also want to tell you thanks for your part in all the gifts, supplies, hunting licenses/tags, ammo, food, place to hunt, and processing of the deer. Before taking this class my mom and I tried to figure out how much money we would have in the hunt. You folks gave me a gift and opportunity that mom and I are very grateful for. There was never a doubt that I was going to hunt, you just made everything come together easier.

I hope that you and your family have a wonderful Holiday Season. We hope that someday we can be a blessing to someone like you and the rest of the folks were to us.



photo by: Rebecca Moore

God Bless,  
Cameron Weckbacher

***A letter of thanks from a dad...***

To the Division of Wildlife:

I just wanted to drop you a note of appreciation for the good day my son Brennan and I had at the youth hunt at Old Woman Creek in Erie County in November. The hunt was well run and your people were very professional in their handling of the event, the kids, and the deer.

I hope it proved successful for you. My son and I have been fortunate enough to be on several youth hunts over the years. They have been special times and have created many special memories for both of us. You should be proud of the program. I encourage the Division of Wildlife to continue them as they can be very special days indeed.

Unfortunately, Brennan will turn 17 this year and thus no longer eligible for the special youth hunts. I suppose it had to happen sooner or later.

Keep up the good work.



photo by: John Madison

Sincerely,  
John Madison

# Backyards for Wildlife

## Q & A

by Donna Daniel • photos by Tim Daniel

Do you have a question that you've always wondered about concerning wildlife in your backyard? If so, send your questions to: **Wild Ohio Magazine, Attention: Melissa Hathaway, Editor, 305 E. Shoreline Drive, Sandusky, OH 44870, or e-mail [melissa.hathaway@dnr.state.oh.us](mailto:melissa.hathaway@dnr.state.oh.us)**. 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: How can you tell the age of a snapping turtle?**

**Tim Copperman, Chippewa Lake, Ohio**

**A:** Unfortunately, it is very difficult to tell the age of snapping turtles. Because they are cold-blooded, growth rates vary depending on the quality of habitat and how much the animal is eating. In Ohio, snappers can grow to be upwards of 35 pounds or more. With a young turtle the rings on its shell can be counted. However, once a turtle reaches about 7 years old, growth slows down and the rings become harder to count and an unreliable indicator of age.



**Q: I didn't think woodpeckers came to birdfeeders. Is this common?**

**John Beach, via email**

**A:** Like songbirds (cardinals, finches, etc.), woodpeckers will also visit birdfeeders in search of seed. It is more common to see them at feeders in winter when natural food sources are scarce, but if the offerings are good they'll visit all year 'round. Popular foods to attract woodpeckers are sunflower, peanuts, and suet. Red-bellied woodpeckers are also fond of fruit.



**Q: We notice that the herons that feed on our wetland during the day leave by evening. Meanwhile, we don't see egrets in the daytime, but notice several roost in our trees overnight. Can you provide some insight into the habits of these wading birds?**

**Greg Grey, Millbury, Ohio**

**A:** Both great blue herons and great egrets are diurnal hunters—meaning they feed during the day. Both species will gather at dusk in roost trees where they spend the night in groups. The egrets that roost on your property must hunt elsewhere, but prefer your woods for roosting while the herons hunt your wetland, but roost elsewhere.

## Winter bird feeding recipe:

### Home-Made Suet Cakes

*Beef suet (from your grocer's meat counter)*

*Chunky peanut butter*

*Cornmeal*

Chop or grind the suet into small pieces. Melt in a crockpot set on low. There will be some chunks that don't melt. Let the suet cool completely then melt again. Remaining chunks can be strained using cheesecloth, but it is easiest to leave them in.

For each pound of suet, mix in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of cornmeal and 1 cup of peanut butter; mix well. Let the mixture cool slightly then pour into molds and freeze.

**Hint:** Save the plastic trays from store-bought suet cakes to use as molds. The size is perfect to fit into a suet cage. Just be sure the melted suet mixture has cooled before filling. If it is too hot it will melt the mold!

**Variations:** Just about any food that birds typically eat can be added to the suet mixture. Mix in raisins or other dried fruit, sunflower seed, chopped walnuts, even roasted mealworms!



## HOW DOES WILDLIFE KEEP WARM IN WINTER?

by Susie Matthews



Each animal has a unique way to survive colder seasons.  
See if you can match these winter adaptations to the animals that use them.

**migrate diapause hibernation adapt**

A. Groundhogs enter \_\_\_\_\_ in winter.

B. Squirrels \_\_\_\_\_ in winter.

C. Many birds \_\_\_\_\_ in winter.

D. Some insects go through \_\_\_\_\_ in winter.



Answers: a. hibernation b. adapt c. migrate d. diapause

Winter in Ohio is a time of short days and long, cold nights. Temperatures can drop to freezing, cold winds blow, snow falls...feeling frigid? Just turn up the heater a few degrees or curl up in front of a fire!

What about the wildlife around us? How do animals live in extreme weather when food is in short supply? How do they keep warm without the extra blankets and wool socks that people depend on? Animals have special adaptations that help them survive the weather changes that we call winter.

Some animals move to warmer climates during the blustery months of winter. Many different animals from birds to butterflies **migrate** to find better food sources and warmer places to live.

Other animals, like groundhogs and chipmunks, have the ability to lower their heart rates and body temperatures in a state of **hibernation**. This allows them to get through the winter using up very little of their energy supply.

Insects have to survive the cold, too. Some insects slow down or stop growing and moving during winter months. This is called **diapause**.

Animals that stay active throughout the winter and **adapt** have developed ways to make it through until spring. Birds and mammals have feathers and fur that are good insulators, trapping warm air close to their bodies. Squirrels will use their large, fluffy tails as windbreaks to protect their backs and heads. Foxes wrap their long, furry tails around their faces to keep them warm while they sleep. Birds fluff up their feathers to allow for a larger area of warm air around their bodies.

# WILD GAME GOURMET

## r e c i p e s

### Wild Game Gourmet

the Wild Game Gourmet as seen on Wild Ohio Video Magazine

#### Venison Taco Ring

2 canisters refrigerated crescent rolls  
3/4 pound ground venison  
1 medium onion, chopped  
1 tablespoon minced garlic  
Salt and pepper to taste  
2 cups shredded taco-flavored cheese  
1-2 tomatoes, diced  
1 cup chopped lettuce  
1 can black olives, sliced  
Sour cream  
Guacamole

Combine venison, onion, garlic, salt, and pepper in pan, and heat until venison is cooked and onions are transparent. Remove crescent rolls from canisters and separate dough pieces. Arrange dough pieces in a circle on a cookie sheet or baking stone by overlapping pieces with the long part of the dough pieces pointing outward and a circle is formed in the middle. Spoon the venison onto the dough circle. Top with 1 cup cheese. Fold long part of each dough piece over the venison mixture and tuck under the dough inside the open circle. (It should resemble a ring or wreath when finished.) Bake 20 minutes in 350-degree oven. Garnish with cheese, tomatoes, lettuce, olives, sour cream, and guacamole.

Contributed by Vicki Ervin

#### Holiday Venison Meatballs

1 pound ground venison  
2/3 cup bread crumbs  
1/3 cup Parmesan cheese  
1/2 onion, diced  
2 teaspoons dried parsley  
1 teaspoon garlic powder  
1/3 cup milk  
2 eggs  
salt and pepper to taste  
Cranberry chili sauce

#### Cranberry Chili Sauce

16-ounce can whole cranberry sauce  
12-ounce bottle chili sauce  
1/2 onion, diced  
2 tablespoons brown sugar  
1 teaspoon lemon juice

In a large mixing bowl, beat eggs with milk. Add bread crumbs, Parmesan cheese, parsley, and garlic powder; mix well. Add ground meat and knead with your hands until well blended. Form into 3/4 inch diameter meatballs. Brown the meatballs on all sides and drain on paper towel. Place in a pan of cranberry chili sauce and simmer 30 to 45 minutes.

Contributed by Melissa Hathaway

Ground venison makes for easy and delicious appetizers for holiday entertaining or a Bowl party.

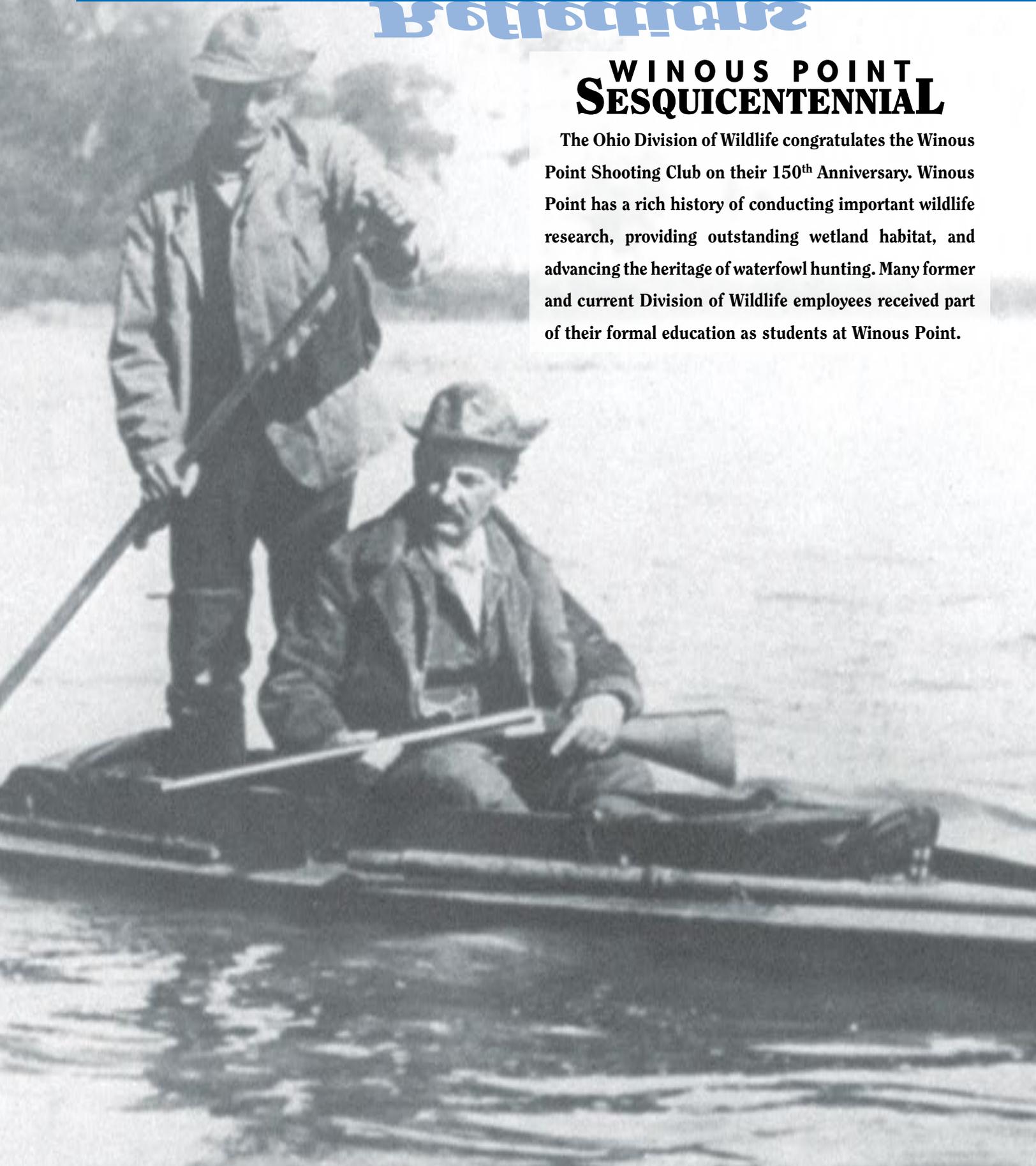


# **WILDLIFE Reflections**

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## **WINOUS POINT SESQUICENTENNIAL**

The Ohio Division of Wildlife congratulates the Winous Point Shooting Club on their 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Winous Point has a rich history of conducting important wildlife research, providing outstanding wetland habitat, and advancing the heritage of waterfowl hunting. Many former and current Division of Wildlife employees received part of their formal education as students at Winous Point.

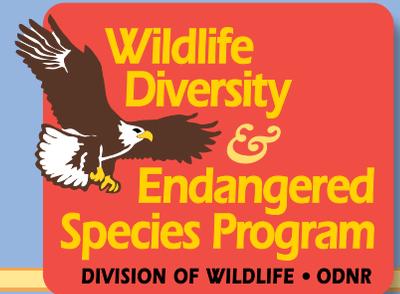


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**Wild Ohio Magazine Subscription, 4483 Industrial Parkway, Cleveland OH 44135.**

*Remember wildlife at tax time . . .*

# **Do Something WILD!**

*Donate all or part of your Ohio Income Tax refund to the  
Ohio Wildlife Diversity and Endangered Species Fund.*



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