

Wild Ohio

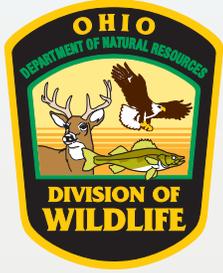
Winter 2006 - 2007

M A G A Z I N E

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



ANNUAL REPORT ISSUE



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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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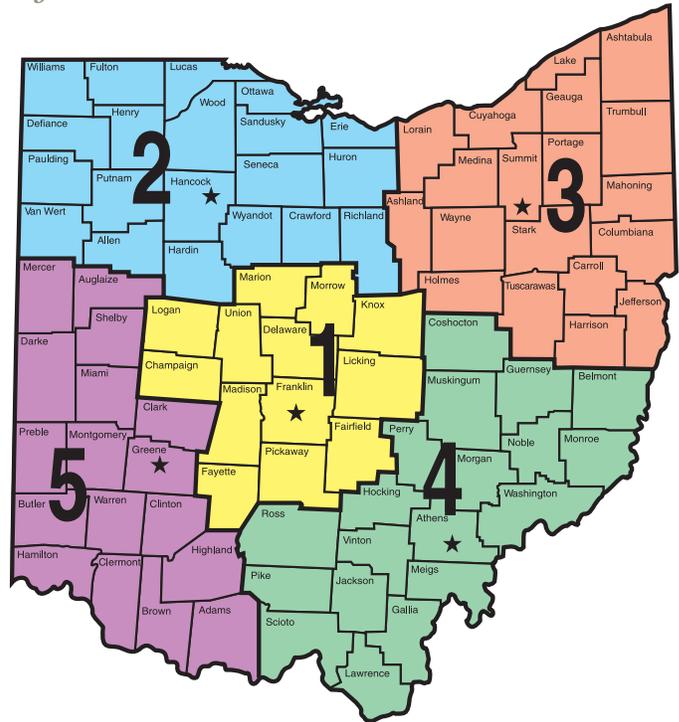
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1-800-WILDLIFE
Toll-free for general wildlife information/publications

1-888-HOOKFISH
Toll-free for a Lake Erie fishing report

1-800-POACHER
Toll-free to report poaching

The Wildlife Calendar will now be featured in the "Wild Things" section.

FEBRUARY 24
Wetland Habitat Stamp Competition
Radisson Hotel, Eastlake.
Open to the public 1- 4 p.m.

for more events around Ohio see page 17 or log onto
<http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife/calendar>.





Features

PEOPLE OF THE DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

“The Division of Wildlife recognizes that customer service is critical to the long-term stability and success of the agency. The Division will continue to make quality customer service a top priority and will employ new technologies and methods to ensure that all customers receive timely, accurate, and efficient services.”



Left to right: Matt Wolfe, fisheries biologist • Kevin Newsome, wildlife officer • Emma Suber, human resources manager
Jim Lehman, district manager • Scott Phillips, wildlife area supervisor • Billie Norris, business service officer • Susie Matthews, communications specialist.

2006 Annual Report

4-10

This issue of Wild Ohio Magazine includes the annual report for fiscal year 2006 highlighting the year's accomplishments. As the state agency mandated to manage Ohio's wildlife resources, Division personnel located throughout the state wear many hats. Staff carry out the agency's many responsibilities in areas of wildlife management, fisheries management, law enforcement, information and education, administration, human resources, and other support services.

Reader Photos

11-13

Many Wild Ohio readers sent us photos during the past year to show how much they enjoy Ohio wildlife. From large cities to small villages we have compiled photos from areas such as Chillicothe, Amelia, and Chagrin Falls. This year we feature a wide variety of wildlife ranging from hawks and cicadas to catfish and fawns.

Departments

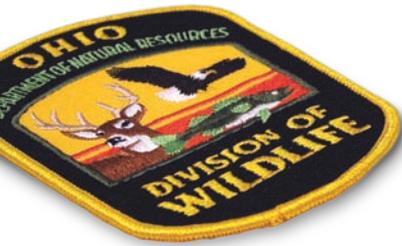
On the Cover:

Ring-necked Pheasant

Thanks to the Conservation Reserve Program and unmowed land, pheasants and other birds associated with grasslands and field borders are steadily recovering in several regions of Ohio. Photo by Tim Daniel.



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Ohio department of natural resources
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE
 ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2006

Message from the Chief



Steven A. Gray

This 2006 Annual Report provides a year in review from the Division of Wildlife. I invite you to take a look back at the past year with us by browsing the pages of this annual report. With decades of continued fish and wildlife research, management, enforcement, and education programs, Ohio's wildlife populations are flourishing. These wildlife resources are providing a multitude of wildlife diversity and wildlife recreation for Ohioans today and for generations to come. And it is you, the anglers, hunters, trappers, bird watchers, naturalists, and all our customers, whose support helps the Division achieve these wildlife accomplishments.

Steven A. Gray, Chief

Steve A. Gray

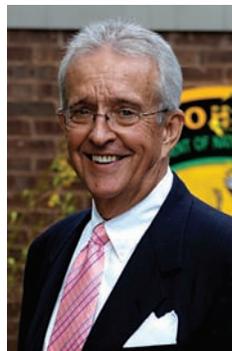
OHIO WILDLIFE COUNCIL MEMBERS



Charles E. Franks
NEWARK



Gary Grant
CONTINENTAL



James R. Lynch
COLUMBUS

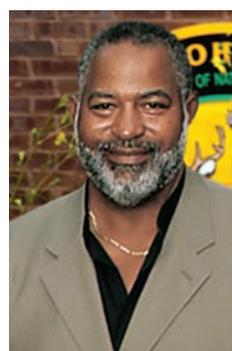


Howard L. Calhoun
AKRON

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



Lee Howley
VERMILION



Larry B. Mixon, Sr.
COLUMBUS



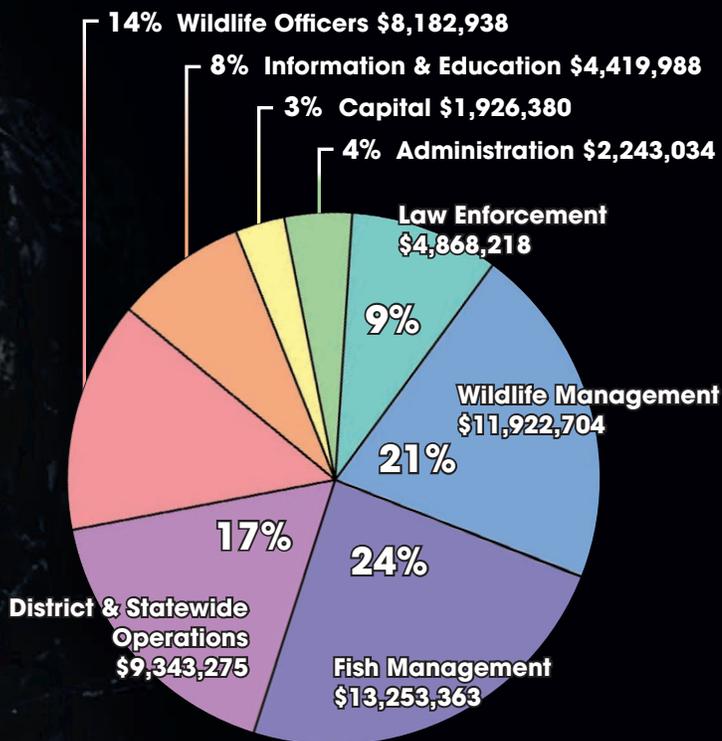
Karen Stewart-Linkhart
XENIA



Horace W. Karr
POMEROY

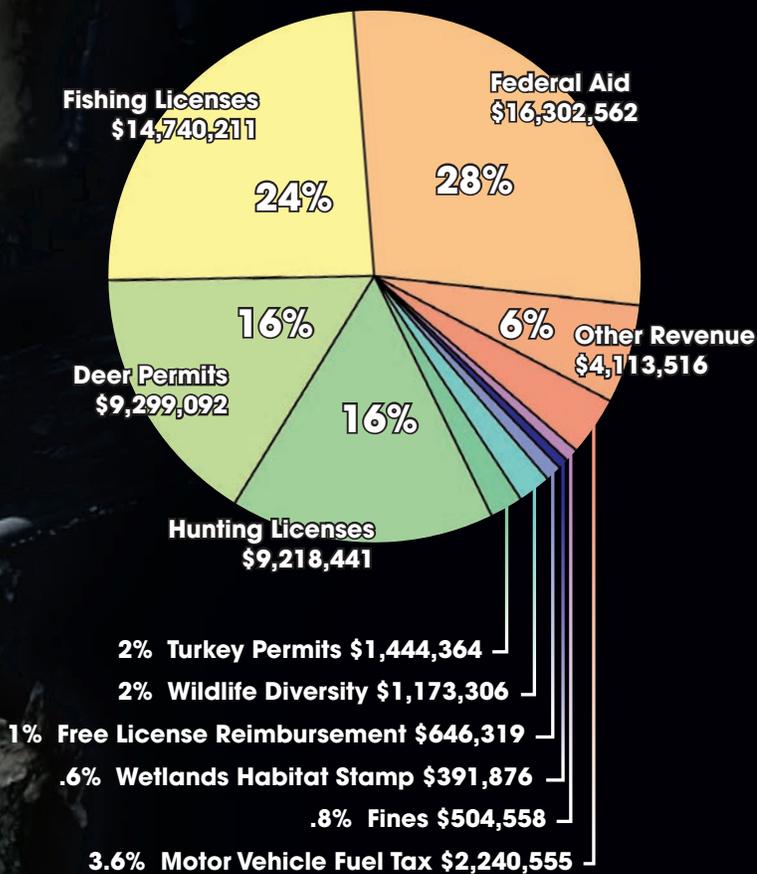
EXPENDITURES⁰⁶

TOTAL \$56,159,900



REVENUE⁰⁶

TOTAL \$60,074,800



FINANCIAL REPORT

Wildlife Management - \$11,922,704

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 - \$4,868,218

Wildlife Officers - \$8,182,938

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 - \$13,253,363

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 - \$9,343,275

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 \$4,419,988

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

Capital Improvements - \$1,926,380

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

Endangered Species and Wildlife Diversity

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

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Hunters took a near record 209,513 deer last year; second only to 2004's 216,443.

Division staff worked closely with the Department of Agriculture on Chronic Wasting Disease and TB testing by testing nearly 700 animals. Neither disease was found.

The Division continues to monitor for numerous other diseases that could potentially impact wildlife populations or humans, including work with The Ohio State University in monitoring migratory birds for avian influenza.

Trappers caught 221 otters during Ohio's first modern river otter trapping season.

The Division continued to provide technical assistance to county U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies through contacts with landowners enrolled in the numerous federal agricultural conservation programs. Additional financial assistance was offered to hire six Pheasants Forever Farm Bill biologists for the Bobwhite Quail/Upland Bird initiative.

Division personnel assisted the state Farm Service Agency (FSA) with a recently approved proposal from the Washington FSA office to amend the Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

Division staff participated in a number of working groups and committees developing policy direction documents for the Conservation Title of the next Farm Bill.

The Division continued its partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on land management, forest management, and wildlife management on TNC's Ironton Unit and the Edge of Appalachia Preserve.

The Division continued its work to restore Lake Erie coastal wetlands using a National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grant to restore wet sedge meadow habitat at Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area.

FAMILIES AFIELD

(As featured in the 2006 Fall Wild Ohio Magazine) Families Afield is designed to remove barriers to hunters. Ohio's new Apprentice Licenses now allow new hunters and trappers, both youth and adult, to enjoy hunting and trapping under the guidance of a mentor. Families Afield is supported by the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, National Wild Turkey Federation, and National Shooting Sports Foundation.



OHIO'S WHITETAIL

Ohio continues to be a national leader in trophy whitetail bucks. Mike Rex killed this trophy buck in Athens County the first morning of Ohio's 2005 deer archery season. The 17-point buck scored 218 6/8 non-typical.





BALD EAGLES

Bald eagles seem to be everywhere! Ohio had yet another record year of eagle production as the population continues to soar.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY

Ohio had a record 150 bald eagle nests and a record production of 205 eaglets. Eaglet production was an amazing 50 percent increase from the previous year.

The Division awarded \$58,389 to four recipients in the State Wildlife Grant program for wildlife diversity projects. Species that will benefit from these projects include the Eastern hellbender, Karner blue butterfly, lark sparrow, and flushing escarpment crayfish.

The Division's annual Wildlife Diversity Conference in Columbus attracted 741 people. The theme was "Looking Beyond the Surface," and covered such topics as Ohio's largest amphibians—hellbenders, secretive bobcats, migration of ospreys, and the Eastern fox snake.

Populations of the state endangered Eastern spadefoot today exist in seven counties. Our knowledge of the distribution of this frog has greatly increased in the past year thanks to Ohio Frog & Toad Calling Survey volunteers, herpetologists intensively surveying for breeding populations, and the public who call and e-mail the Division with possible sightings of this unique frog.

The Division's Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve continued to partner with the Ohio Sea Grant College Program, and the ODNR Office of Coastal Management in the Ohio Coastal Training Program, a national initiative to offer technical, science-based training to professionals through a grant primarily funded by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration.

25th ANNUAL WETLAND HABITAT STAMP



Artist: Gregory Clair • Bowling Green, Ohio

FISH MANAGEMENT

Implemented radio telemetry study to explore movement patterns and habitat utilization by Sandusky River walleyes.

Provided fish habitat and other ecological information to city, state, and federal officials involved with potential removal of the Ballville Dam on the Sandusky River in Fremont, Ohio.

Initiated Lake Erie shoreline creel surveys to assess the fishery and gather socio-demographic information on anglers.

Worked with various interagency partners to map relevant fish habitat characteristics in west and central Lake Erie using hydro-acoustic technology.

Began work on a new interagency plan for the management of yellow perch fisheries in Lake Erie.

The Muskingum River Water Trail, Ohio's second water trail, was dedicated in July 2006.

Through partnerships with other organizations, assisted with riparian corridor protection efforts along the Grand River, Pymatuning Creek, Clear Creek, Scioto River, and the Kokosing River.

For the first time in Ohio history, a federally listed mussel was released to the wild. Northern riffleshell were raised at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium's Freshwater Mussel Conservation and Research Facility and released at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park.

Designed a template for the Division's Website for public access to fishing information that provides a "one stop shop" for lake maps, facilities locations, fish population information, stocking records, local amenities, and weather.

The Division's six state hatcheries raised more than 34 million fish, including 491,000 steelhead smolts, 129,000 catchable rainbow trout, 35,000 brown trout, 7.5 million saugeye, 1.8 million walleye, 615,000 yellow perch, 165,000 channel catfish, 22,000 muskellunge, and 556,000 hybrid striped bass.

Purchased 20 acres of land at the mouth of the Huron River in Huron for the future development of a fishing and boating facility. This \$3.25 million dollar acquisition will provide much needed access to Lake Erie between Sandusky and Vermilion.

Using our Angler-Boater Fund, completed \$3,599,130 worth of motorboat access capital improvements projects across the state.



L A K E E R I E W A L L E Y E

Walleye fishing in Lake Erie was incredible during 2006 thanks to a large year class of walleye hatched in 2003. Ongoing research and interagency management will ensure that Lake Erie walleye continue to support a world-class fishery. The forecast for 2007 and beyond is fantastic.



S M A L L M O U T H B A S S

The tag on the lower lip of this smallmouth bass helps biologists monitor the movement and life span of these fabulous fish. Other techniques used to monitor fish populations besides tagging include radio telemetry, trolling, gillnetting, electroshocking, and creel surveys.

O H I O W A T E R T R A I L S

(As featured in the 2006 Summer Wild Ohio Magazine) A water trail is simply a route along a waterway with strategically located access points.

Water trails are similar to hiking trails and bikeways, but with one huge difference – the trail already exists; we just need to provide the access. However, as simple as this may sound, there are challenges.



LAW ENFORCEMENT

Lake Erie wildlife investigators successfully completed a three-year investigation, which led to the conviction of eight commercial fishermen for violations related to the illegal reporting and selling of yellow perch catches. There are five individuals with pending indictments. This historic case documented over 40 tons of illegal perch taken from Lake Erie. The majority of the cases have been processed through the court with over \$365,000 of fines and restitution imposed.

Wildlife officers made 7,525 arrests for wildlife crimes and other criminal violations resulting in \$510,442 in fines collected.

Wildlife officers conducted 57 aircraft surveillance projects, including 18 nighttime projects, which resulted in 202 arrests.

Wildlife officers investigated 106 water pollution incidents statewide where 95,374 wild animals (primarily fish and other aquatic animals) died. The Division collected \$33,897 in damages for 11 settlements.

The 1-800 Turn-In-a-Poacher phone line received 3,402 phone calls from concerned citizens reporting wildlife violations, of which 1,412 TIP reports were written.

Wildlife officers and investigators conducted 279 special enforcement projects targeting known wildlife criminals, known problem areas, and state wildlife property protection. Individual contacts totaled 7,168 with 1,047 arrests or summons issued.

During the spring walleye run on the Maumee and Sandusky rivers, wildlife officers made 2,372 contacts and issued 376 summons for litter, snagging, and possessing snagged walleye.

Wildlife officers and investigators conducted 1,317 permit inspections, 352 meat locker and taxidermist inspections, and issued 658 permits.

Wildlife investigators inspected and certified 3,311 pounds of ginseng for exportation.

27th ANNUAL
FISH OHIO PIN



The yellow perch is the featured species on the 2006 Fish Ohio Pin. This is the third time the yellow perch has been selected in the 27-year history of the Fish Ohio Pin series. The previous two were in 1986 and 1996.

INFORMATION & EDUCATION

The Division implemented the new Apprentice License Program that allows new hunters and trappers, both adults and youth, to go afield with a mentor (licensed adult) prior to completing a hunter or trapper education course.

The Division trained 23,049 students in 747 hunter education courses, 515 new trapper education students, and 138 new Hunter Education instructors.

The quarterly *Wild Ohio Magazine* was produced for the 17th year. The seventh *Wild Ohio for Kids* magazine was produced and distributed to 300,000 young people.

The Website visitation continues to grow with usage up 42% from last year. Over 3.5 million people came to the Website last year for wildlife information. The most popular pages include peregrine falcon Web cam, the deer hunting photo gallery, hunter education course options, and the Ohio hunting regulations.

The Division added 67 schools to the National Archery in the Schools Program for a total of 132 schools, and trained 124 new instructors for a total of 308.

The *Wild Ohio* television show aired on 34 outlets across Ohio. Twenty-six half-hour programs were produced for the ninth year.

Education training included 37 new Project WILD and Aquatic Project WILD facilitators and 35 Science and Civics facilitators.

A total of 125 new instructors were trained in "Hooked on Fishing" and 93 trained in the agency's new Passport to Fishing program.

Division staff coordinated the annual Wetland Habitat Stamp Competition.

Approximately 175 news releases on various wildlife topics were provided to local, state, and national media outlets.

The Division continued to fund the Ohio State Parks' naturalist program with an \$80,000 grant.

The Sportsmen's Migratory Bird Center attracted an estimated 150,000 visitors.

Over 21,000 visitors toured the Aquatic Education Visitor Center on South Bass Island.

SHOOTING SPORTS OUTREACH

In a continuing effort to encourage and educate Ohio youths who are interested in shooting sports, but lack the opportunity, the Division has recently provided each district (5) a shooting sports trailer. These trailers will provide a controlled environment, with officer guidance, to offer youths and adults a chance to explore their interests.

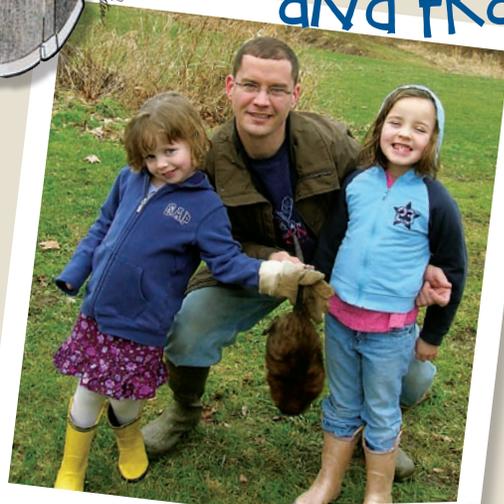


Readers' PHOTOS



HAPPY HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS

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 Please include your name and city. You can also post your photos on the Division of Wildlife's Website Photo Gallery at www.downs.org/wildlife/Photos/Default.aspx.



Young trappers: "My girls, Natalie and Katie, and I have been trapping muskrats out of our pond this winter."
Tracy L. Engle, Auburn Township, Geauga County



"I was so excited to get my first deer!"
Stacie Melick, Glenford



Kelly Kline, age 13, took this nice 20-pound turkey during the youth turkey season at Ross Lake Wildlife Area.
Bill Kline, Chillicothe



"I took my twin sons Austin and Robert hunting for the first time after successfully completing their Hunter Safety Course."
Tom Finch, Vandalia



"I shot this pheasant after getting interested in hunting after taking my son to a hunter safety course."
Lynn Grimm, Canal Fulton



"This is my son Elijah, age seven, with his first turkey, a hen taken in Gallia County during fall turkey season."
Rhonda Woolum, Jackson

WHAT A CATCH!



My five-year-old Andy with his first catch, a largemouth bass.
Tim Gifford, Zanesville

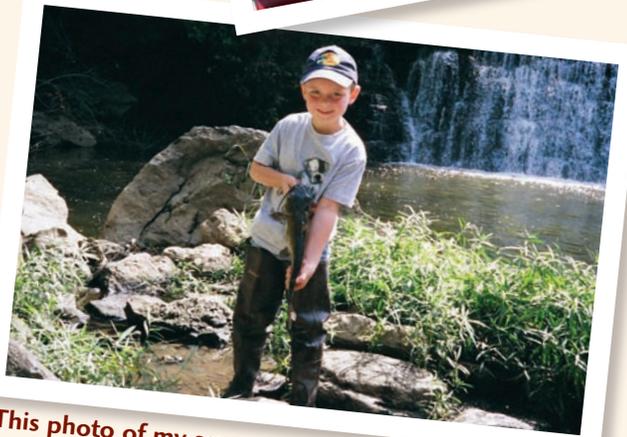


Jordan Latta, age eight, caught this 14.25-inch catfish in the family pond.
Jeff Latta



This 40-inch muskie was caught and released by Pat Brown at Caesar Creek.
Steve Morse

George Wolfe caught this hybrid striped bass on the Willow Island Pool of the Ohio River.
Sonia Wolfe



"This photo of my seven-year-old grandson Tanner captures the essence of a truly devoted fisherman."
Karen Privett, Milford



"I photographed this cicada as it emerged and dried its wings." -- Richard Emmer, Bay Village



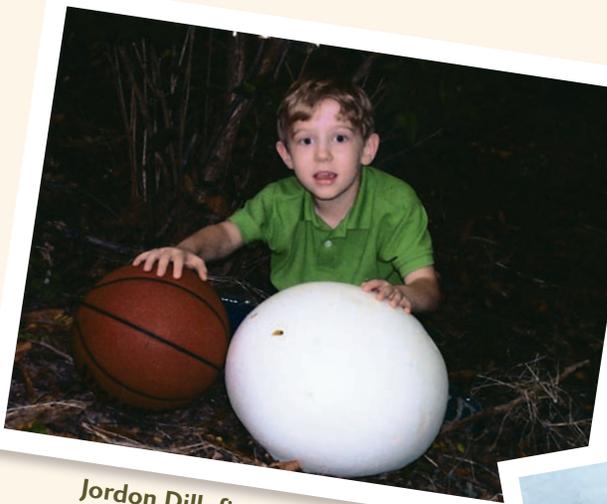
"A friend and I were turkey hunting in Lawrence County when we came across this fawn."
Nicholas M. Peters, Loveland

Fawn in clover.
Wilbur Baker, Mentor



"The birds knock some of the seeds out on the ground and the turkeys eat it."
Harold "Sam" Bryan, Mogadore

wild and wonderful!



Jordan Dill, five, found this "larger than a basketball" puff ball mushroom in Darke County.
Brad Dill, Greenville



"This red-tailed hawk used our parking lot and adjacent areas for a lookout at the Miami Township Police Department in Montgomery County."
Major John DiPietro, Miamisburg



"The birds had a 'safe haven' during an April snow storm that caused tremendous damage in our area."
Peggy Hannan, Chagrin Falls



Box turtle -- Brenda Ernst, Hamersville



Squirrel at feeding station
Betty Scott, Jackson



"This swarm of bees stayed on the limb for three days in May while looking for a home."
Clarence Roller, Amelia



Blackburnian warbler -- Scott Wright, North Olmsted



Watchable Wildlife • *Northern*

by *Jim McCormac*

Of the 12 species of owls recorded in Ohio, three are common year-round residents – barred, great horned, and Eastern screech-owls. Several other species invade during the winter months and migrate through the state. Two species, snowy and short-eared owls, can be quite conspicuous because they are at least partly diurnal (day-flying).

One owl that visits the Buckeye State in migration and winter is the tiny Northern saw-whet owl. Saw-whet owls are a poorly understood owl species because they are quite secretive and very rarely seen. They are strictly nocturnal and hide in dense grapevine tangles or thick conifers during the day. Despite their secrecy, researchers are discovering that Northern saw-whet owls are more abundant than previously thought, including right here in Ohio.

This micro-owl is the smallest of our hooters – indeed, the smallest owl in eastern North America. Tipping the scales at a whopping 2.8 ounces (the weight of a small cell phone), a saw-whet is about the size of an American robin. Its curious name is derived from the sound it makes – a monotonous series of *who whoo* notes said to be reminiscent of a saw being sharpened.

A curious quirk of Northern saw-whet owl behavior is their habit of “incubating” mice. Occasionally, an observer will stumble upon a roosting owl that is holding a perfectly intact mouse nestled against its belly, as if it were an egg. As saw-whets often winter in cold, snowy climates where food may only be readily available for short periods interspersed with long periods of poor hunting, they engage in a stock and cache strategy. In times of abundance, they will catch as many mice as possible, and hide the overstock in trees and shrubs. Later, they return to their hoard and thaw it out against their body before consuming it.

Project Owlnet

In an effort to advance our scientific knowledge of the numbers and migratory movements of this poorly known owl, Project Owlnet was begun in the 1990s. Today, Project Owlnet encompasses over three dozen banding stations in the U.S. and Canada, and each banding station employs specialized techniques that enable them to safely capture, place marked leg bands, and collect physiological data on Northern saw-whet owls. Researchers have documented far more of these little owls



Saw-whet Owl Invasion

than anyone expected, and in some places that weren't even on ornithologists' radar screens as places to look.

One of these unexpected sites of saw-whet abundance is right here in Ohio. In 2003, licensed bird banders Kelly Sieg and Bill Bosstic of Chillicothe began a Project OwlNet operation near their city in Ross County. They caught only a few owls that inaugural year, as they learned the process and worked bugs out of the system. Their efforts paid off in October and November 2004 when they netted an amazing 45 owls! This number far exceeds any other documented single-season total of these little owls in Ohio. This eye-opening discovery is causing people to wonder how many saw-whet owls could be scattered around the state. Not only that, but two of the owls already wore bands – someone else had captured them previously. One had been caught in Michigan's Straits of Mackinac on April 2, 2004, and the other in Timiskaming, Ontario, Canada on September 22, 2004. These birds were about 450 and 700 miles away from Chillicothe when they were first captured; in the latter case only about a month after its original capture far to the north.

Sieg and Bosstic captured another 33 owls in 2005, suggesting that large movements of saw-whets are regular occurrences, at least in the Chillicothe area.

This fascinating study of our tiniest owls emphasizes that much remains to be learned about our natural world, even in groups of organisms that are relatively well known, such as birds. So, the next time you are near thick tangles of grapevines, or dense conifers, take a closer look. You never know what might be looking back at you!

VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES

Saw-whets have long been known to visit several Ohio locales - Killdeer Plains (Wyandot County) and Magee Marsh (Ottawa County) wildlife areas, and Green Lawn Cemetery near downtown Columbus. The only real way of locating one is to carefully search through the densest of vegetation for a roosting bird, a method that is haphazard at best and generally requires great luck. March, April, October, and November are the best months to look. Only a scant few birds are ever detected in any year so stumbling into one is a real treat.

News from around Ohio

DOW SUPPORTS ONTARIO DU PROJECT

Division of Wildlife staff joined Ducks Unlimited Inc., (DU) and DU Canada in dedicating the Jeanette's Creek Wetland Project last July. The project involves restoring a key coastal marsh located at the confluence of the Thames River and Jeanette's Creek along the southeasterly shoreline of Lake St. Clair in Ontario. This is one of several projects that the Division has helped fund in Ontario using Ohio Wetland Habitat Stamp dollars and other funds since 1965. The wetland habitat in this region is very important to the life cycle of waterfowl, shorebirds, and passerines that pass through Ohio.



John Daugherty, Division of Wildlife district manager for northwest Ohio (left) and Gildo Tori, director of Public Policy, Great Lakes/ Atlantic Regional Office for DU, at the dedication of the Jeanette's Creek Wetland Project.

700 MUSKIES AND STILL TROLLING

Muskie angler Don Weaver with the Ohio Huskie Muskie Club (OHMC) landed his 700th muskie last June. Weaver, an avid muskie fisherman for 23 years, served as president of OHMC for a number of years. He was trolling with a brown tiger Sisson lure on Clear Fork Reservoir when he hooked the 35-inch muskellunge.



ARCHERY ROCKS IN OHIO SCHOOLS

The Division's National Archery in the Schools Program continues to enroll schools throughout the state. Eighty-one students represented Ohio at the fourth National Archery in the Schools Program's (NASP) National Tournament in Louisville Kentucky last March. Students were from six Ohio schools who participate in Ohio's Archery in the Schools Program sponsored by the Division of Wildlife: Maysville 6-12 (middle school and high school team) in Zanesville, Sidney Middle School, Sidney High School, Sidney Elementary, Northwood Elementary, and Sidney Christian Academy, all from Sidney, Ohio.

The Ohio Division of Wildlife will hold the first Ohio National Archery in the Schools Program State Tournament on March 2, 2007 at Vets Memorial, North Hall, 300 West Broad Street in Columbus. The tournament will be held in conjunction with the Arnold Classic Sports Festival. Ohio NASP participating schools will compete for individual and team awards in High School, Middle School, and Elementary School divisions. The top finishing team in each Division will get to represent Ohio and their school later that year as they challenge for a national title at the NASP National Competition. For more information on the Ohio National Archery in the Schools Program or the Ohio NASP State Tournament go to www.ohionasp.com

GOVERNOR TAFT ATTENDS HURON ACCESS CEREMONY

Governor Taft joined the Division of Wildlife, City of Huron officials, and other agencies at a signing ceremony to seal the Division's purchase of a parcel of land in Huron in July. The 20-acre parcel, located on the east side of the Huron River adjacent to the city, was purchased for \$3.25 million with sport angler dollars through the state Angler-Boater Fund and the federal Sportfish Restoration Fund. The Division intends to deed the northern half of the property to the city of Huron, and partner with the Division of Watercraft on the construction of a fishing and boating access facility on the southern half.



Left to Right: ODNR Director Sam Speck, Governor Taft, Division of Wildlife Chief Steve Gray (standing), and Huron Mayor Terry Graham

A GUARANTEED CATCH! WIN A FREE LURE

Ohio youths can win a FREE Rapala lure just for entering the 2007 Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest! Join the fun by illustrating your favorite state-fish. Enter by March 31st to compete for fishing tackle and prizes! To participate, visit www.statefishart.com for entry forms and details. Contact Wildlife Forever at (763) 253 - 0222 for additional information.



Wildlife CALENDAR

February 24

Wetland Habitat Stamp Competition

Radisson Hotel, Eastlake.
Open to the public 1- 4 p.m.

March 1

2007-08 hunting and fishing
licenses go on sale.

March 4

Division of Wildlife Open House Forums

Noon to 3 p.m.

Proposed 2007-08 hunting
and trapping regulations and
other topics will be discussed.
Call 1-800 WILDLIFE for locations.

March 4

Canada Goose Day

Magee Marsh Wildlife Area
Ottawa County.

For information, call
(419) 898-0960, ext. 31.

March 14

Wildlife Diversity Conference

Aladdin Shrine Complex, Columbus.
This year's theme is "Wild at Night"
featuring nocturnal wildlife including
coyotes, owls, and salamanders.

Keynote speaker is Kenn Kaufman
speaking on night sounds of birds.

Watch for details on the
Division of Wildlife's Website.

www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife/calendar.



WILDLIFE MATTERS!

Purchase conservation and sportsmen's license plates to help support Ohio's wildlife. Go to www.wildplates.com. Do you have an Ohio conservation or sportsmen's license plate that displays a unique message? If so, send a print photo to *Wild Ohio Magazine*, Ohio Division of Wildlife, 305 E. Shoreline Dr., Sandusky, Ohio 44870, or e-mail a digital photo to melissa.hathaway@dnr.state.oh.us. It might be published in a future issue of *Wild Ohio Magazine*.

GRASSLAND BIRDS SPOTLIGHTED

The second annual birding excursion for media and naturalists was held last June at Tri-Valley Wildlife Area in Muskingum County. Guests toured the grassland habitat at Tri-Valley where they saw or heard Henslow's sparrows, grasshopper sparrows, bobwhite quail, blue grosbeaks, and several other grassland species. Some species were captured in a mist net for close-up viewing and photography, then released.



Kendra Wecker, the Division's wildlife diversity coordinator, displays a Henslow's sparrow for close-up photographs.



PARTNERSHIPS CREATE HABITAT IN TRUMBULL COUNTY

Conservation agencies, and local residents and officials joined the Division of Wildlife last June to celebrate the establishment of grassland and wetland habitat in Trumbull County. The Division acquired a 496-acre parcel at Mosquito Creek Waterfowl Management Area with the assistance of the National Wild Turkey Federation, Grand River Partners, and Ducks Unlimited (DU). Over 150 acres of native grasslands were also established to provide nesting habitat for mallard ducks, ring-necked pheasants, bobolinks, and many other grassland nesting species thanks to the Western Reserve Chapter of Pheasants Forever. The Mahoning Valley Chapter of DU made a significant contribution towards this project in memory of their former committee chairman, Dan Gilboy. An observation deck is located on the Greenway Bike Path overlooking the wetland.

27-POINT BUCK IS FINALLY MEASURED

After 31 years on display in the Adams County Court House, a huge buck found dead in 1975 by four young boys was finally scored. Buckeye Big Buck Club (BBBC) scorers scored the buck last February. The final score was 246 non-typical, which would rank it in fifth place in the BBBC record book if it had been legally harvested. After the deer was scored, Adams County Wildlife Officer Kevin Behr coordinated a "guess the score" contest at the Adams County Fair. Travis Smith, 12, of Seaman, Ohio, won the contest with the closest score.

The boys found the buck in a frozen creek in the winter of 1975. The county

wildlife officer could find no marks or broken bones and concluded it died from natural causes. It will remain on display at the Court House.



Left to right: BBBC scorers Gary Trent, Ron Perine, and recently retired Division of Wildlife Field Supervisor Tim Schlater display the huge antlers which they scored at 246 non-typical.



Wildlife Law Enforcement

Field Notes

FIVE MEIGS COUNTY MEN PAY HEFTY FINES FOR POACHING DEER

An 18-month investigation of white-tailed deer poaching in Meigs County resulted in the convictions of five individuals. Seventeen bucks were illegally killed, nine of which were spotlighted and taken with a rifle. The others were improperly tagged or taken with a hunting implement not legal for the particular season.

Charles B. Williamson paid \$2,320 in fines and \$1,260 in court costs and served 14 days in jail. Charles B. Williamson, Jr. paid \$1,000 in fines and \$700 in court costs, and served 10 days in jail. Each lost their hunting rights for five years and were ordered to serve 150 hours of community service. Danny Gheen paid fines totaling \$365. Ryan Rowe paid \$370 and Charles E. Williamson paid \$590 in fines and court costs. They also forfeited three mounted bucks and 13 racks.



CUYAHOGA COURT STAFF HONORED

The Division honored the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Bill Mason and his staff at the Cleveland Woods and Waters Club banquet for their efforts in convicting commercial netters for poaching yellow perch from Lake Erie.



Division of Wildlife Chief Steve Gray, Lake Erie Investigator Mike Tetzlaf, Paul Soucie and Nick Gigerich from the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office, Division Law Enforcement Administrator Dan Schneider, and Lake Erie Enforcement Unit Supervisor Kevin Ramsey. Not in the photograph is Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Bill Mason.

PUTTING THE MUSSEL ON POACHERS

Three men from Tennessee paid steep fines for poaching freshwater mussels from the Muskingum River last May. Officers seized 17 bags containing 2,386 mussels (1,763 pounds). Two of the defendants paid fines of \$3,000 plus court costs, forfeited equipment including a new 2005 truck, and served 11 days in jail. The third man paid \$2,000 fine plus court costs, and served 33 days in jail.



WILDLIFE OFFICERS RECOGNIZED



Jeff Collingwood
Huron County
Wildlife Officer
Mississippi Flyway
Council
Officer of the Year



Brad Kiger
Franklin County
Wildlife Officer
Ohio Bowhunters
Association's
Officer of the Year



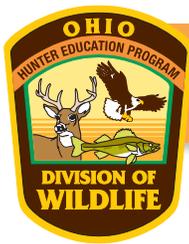
Tom Kochert
Williams County
Wildlife Officer
Williams County Chapter
Daughters of the
American Revolution
*Outstanding Public
Service Award*



Terry Sunderhaus
District Two
Law Enforcement
Supervisor
Assoc. of Midwest
Fish and Game Law
Enforcement
Officer of the Year



Lee Van Allen
Jackson County
Wildlife Officer
National Wild Turkey
Federation's
*Officer of the Year
for Ohio*



OUTDOOR SKILLS Late Season Afield

A 2006-2007 Ohio Hunting and Trapping Regulations Glance by Matt Ortman

The hustle and bustle of the holiday season is over. The snow is flying and Ohio's deer gun season has come and gone, but this is no reason for Buckeye State hunters to hang up their guns and bows! January, February, and March are great months for hunters to hit the fields and the woodlots.

Late season hunters will not have to face the crowds often found on public hunting areas earlier in the year. The weather may be colder, so bundle up and head outdoors for some excellent late season hunting. Please check the 2006-2007 Ohio Hunting and Trapping Regulations for season lengths, rules, and bag limits.

Waterfowl

Winter Waterfowling: Waterfowl season is open in the South Zone December 16 through January 28. A late Canada goose season is open January 13 through February 3. Consult Publication 295, Waterfowl Hunting Seasons for regulations.



Small Game

Numerous small game species are legal game for another month or two. Ohio squirrel hunters enjoy a very long season that started September 1 and concludes on January 31. Rabbit and grouse remain legal game until February 28. So grab your favorite beagle or bird dog and hit the fields and forests for some great late season action.

White-tailed Deer

Continued Deer Hunting Opportunities: Ohio is fortunate to have a quality whitetail deer herd. The archery season for deer is open until February 4. Archery hunters this time of year often have the opportunity to view and maybe even harvest some great bucks as they bounce back from the pressure of our gun and blackpowder deer seasons. The late season has the bucks looking for food sources that will help them gain back the weight lost during the rut. Hunters should look to unharvested grain fields to use an unfilled deer tag.

Other Opportunities

Try These Hunting Options: Some of our lesser-pursued game species also provide wonderful hunting this time of year. The legal season for fox, raccoon, opossum, skunk, and weasel remains open until January 31. There is no closed season on coyotes in Ohio. Crows can provide wonderful wingshooting practice. The open season is Friday, Saturday, and Sundays only through March 18.

Late Season Hunting

Deer Archery

September 30 - February 4

Deer Muzzleloader

December 27 - December 30

Squirrel

September 1 - January 31

Cottontail rabbit

November 3 - February 28

Ruffed grouse

October 14 - February 28

Ring-necked pheasant

November 3 - January 7

Fox, raccoon, opossum, skunk, and weasel

November 10 - January 31

Groundhog

Closed only during deer gun season

Coyote

No Closed Season for
hunting or trapping

Crow

June 9, 2006 - March 18, 2007
(*Fri., Sat., Sun. only*)

Second Seasons of Split Waterfowl Seasons

Ducks, Coots, and Mergansers North Zone

December 23 - December 31

Ducks, Coots, and Mergansers South Zone

December 16 - January 28

Lake Erie Canada Goose Zone

December 9 - January 1

Canada Goose and Brant North Zone

December 23 - January 7

Canada Goose and Brant South Zone

December 16 - January 28

Special Late Season Canada Goose

(*In select counties*)

January 13 - February 3

Backyards for Wildlife

by Donna Daniel



Q & A

Q: I take down and clean my bird houses in early winter. When is a good time to put them back up?

Joe Comrade, via email

A: Sounds like you are being a responsible landlord by keeping your bird houses in tiptop shape. It is a great practice to clean them out in the fall and make necessary repairs. I would recommend you put them back up as soon as the work is complete, as some birds will use a nest box as a place to roost at night or during bad weather. For example, wood duck nest boxes are often used by screech owls in winter. Otherwise as a general rule, bird houses should be put up in February. Actual nesting may not begin until later into spring; however, having the boxes up sooner gives the birds ample time to know they are available when nesting season starts



Q: These birds show up at our feeder about mid-February. We assume the one with black is the male and the browner one is the female. Could you give us some information on these birds?

The McFee Family, Guysville, OH

A: This is a pair of Eastern towhees. This species used to be called the rufous-sided towhee. You are correct that the darker one is the male and the female is brown. Towhees are common occupants of brushy habitats statewide during the summer, usually raising two clutches of young each year. Their diet consists of insects, seeds, and berries. They are less numerous in winter, but it is at that time of the year when they may be more noticeable because their tendency to visit backyard bird feeders. Away from a feeding station they are not usually seen because of their fondness for thick, scrubby cover; however, their distinctive song is noticeable. Spring turkey hunters no doubt have heard the slow, clear, musical trill “drink your teeeee” of the towhee.

Q: Last May this garter snake made a habit of eating goldfish from our backyard pond. If I bought live crickets from the pet store do you think the snake would leave our fish alone?

Ronda and Tom Daiello, Painesville Twp., OH

A: Snakes are opportunistic predators and will feed on what is readily available. Garter snakes, in particular, eat insects, worms, frogs, grubs, slugs, and as you discovered, small fish. Since that particular snake has keyed in on the fish in the pond as a good food source, it probably will continue to eat them regardless of what other food is available. Any crickets you let go are likely to die or crawl away. And, since it would take such a large number of crickets to equal the food value of a single fish, releasing store bought crickets probably isn't the most feasible course of action to take. If the snake becomes too much of a nuisance you might consider relocating it to another part of your property. The remaining fish may also wise up and avoid the part of the pond where the snake frequents.



Do you have a question that you've always wondered about concerning wildlife in your backyard? If so, send your questions to: address on the right. 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.

Wild Ohio Magazine, Attention: Melissa Hathaway,
Editor, 305 E. Shoreline Drive, Sandusky, OH 44870,
or e-mail melissa.hathaway@dnr.state.oh.us.





THE FUNCTION OF A FEATHER

by Susie Matthews



Bird Brained Quiz:

1. Feathers are made of

_____,
similar to finger nails or
reptile scales.

2. _____

feathers provide warmth
and insulation.

3. The process of losing and
replacing feathers is called

_____.

4. The vein-like markings
of a feather that come
from the central shaft:

_____.

answers along feather on right side of page

What is the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about birds? It might be the brilliant red of a cardinal, a fluffy duckling, or an eagle soaring in flight. You might see or think about birds in one way or another every day, but how often do you think about a bird's feathers?

Every bird has feathers. Feathers provide protection and insulation, coloration in different species, and in most species, allow for flight.

Feathers are made of keratin, the same material that makes up nails on a human and scales on a reptile. The phrase "light as a feather" is not always correct – sometimes a bird's feathers alone can weigh twice as much as its skeleton. The bigger the bird, the heavier the feather can be.

Birds have different types of feathers. Contour feathers provide coloration, protection from the elements, and give a bird its smooth shape and streamlining for flight. Down feathers provide warmth and insulation. Flight feathers help a bird to fly.

Flight feathers, found mostly on the wings and tail, are usually long, slender, and strong. On both sides of the feather's central shaft there are hundreds of tiny filaments called barbs. Barbs can be seen with the naked eye. The next time you look at a feather notice the vein-like markings. These are the barbs. The individual barbs are lined with more individual filaments called barbules (barbules are hard to see without a microscope!). The barbules of a flight feather and some contour feathers are hooked, holding each of the feather's filaments together creating a strong continuous vein that air can travel around allowing for flight. The central shaft of the flight feather is off center, reinforcing the feather to prevent buckling from constant air pressure during flight.

Similar to a mammal shedding its hair, a bird will lose its feathers. The process is called molting. For most birds, molting occurs once a year in late summer. For some birds, molting can also occur in early spring when a bird changes from dull to bright colors for the breeding season. Most birds lose and replace a few feathers at a time over a period of weeks, and the ability to fly is not lost. Some birds, including waterfowl, rails, and diving birds, lose enough feathers at one time that they are unable to fly during their molt.



Bird Brained Quiz Answers: 1. keratin, 2. down, 3. molting, 4. barbs

WILD GAME GOURMET

r e c i p e s

Wild Game Gourmet • photos by Tim Daniel
the Wild Game Gourmet as seen on **Wild Ohio** Video Magazine

Oven Fried Squirrel

One squirrel cut into pieces
4 eggs - beaten
1/2 cup Frying Magic
1/2 cup flour
Olive oil
Canola oil or vegetable oil
Several pats of butter

Rinse squirrel pieces and pat meat dry with paper towel to remove any moisture. Combine Frying Magic with flour. Dip squirrel in egg then dip in flour mixture. Cover bottom of skillet with half olive oil and half canola oil and add butter. Brown meat well (about 10 minutes per side). Place squirrel in baking dish and pour contents of skillet over meat. Cover with aluminum foil and bake at 375 degrees for one hour. (Note: If squirrel pieces are de-boned, baking time should be reduced.)

Contributed by Jamey Graham



Brown Sugar Pecan Crusted Venison Tenderloins

Brown sugar
Pecans
Melted butter
3/4-inch thick venison tenderloins, soaked in milk overnight
Flour

Soak venison tenderloins in milk overnight. Take tenderloins and dip in flour, then brown sugar. Pat the brown sugar down to help it stick to the tenderloins. Cook with melted butter for 2½ minutes on each side. In a separate saucepan, mix brown sugar and pecans into melted butter; cook until pecans caramelize. This mixture will be the glaze for the venison tenderloins. Place cooked tenderloins on a plate and pour pecan mixture over tenderloins.

Contributed by Rob Montgomery



For more great wild game recipes go to www.wildohiocookbook.com

WILDLIFE Reflections

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES TO THE WILD OHIO READERS' SURVEY

What Our Readers Had to Say!

We continue to improve *Wild Ohio Magazine* and are very interested in our readers' opinions. An invitation to take a readers' survey was posted on the back cover of the summer 2006 issue of *Wild Ohio* and 2,130 readers responded. The highlights of the results of the survey include:

Our readers enjoy Ohio's wildlife resources in a wide variety of ways and most do something to attract wildlife to their property.

Our readership continues to be from small towns and rural areas (76%). Almost half live in a rural area.

- 99 percent our readers said it is a good or excellent state wildlife publication.
- 92 percent said they were very happy with the information in the articles regarding the amount of technical information provided.
- 87 percent said they were happy with the length of the articles.
- 35 percent of the survey respondents said they liked the current mix of articles, but other topics they want to see more of in the magazine include outdoor education, attracting wildlife to their property, and Watchable Wildlife.
- The "Wild Things" section is the most popular regular column that appears in each issue at 71 percent.
- "Backyard Q & A" followed with 55 percent.
- "Law Enforcement Field Notes" came in a close third with 52 percent.
- And the "Outdoor Skills" page totaled 44 percent.
- 57 percent responded that someone in their household prepares recipes from the "Wild Game Gourmet" column.



The survey appeared in the Summer 2006 Wild Ohio Magazine

BY THE NUMBERS 12345678910

Survey readers interests and interaction with wildlife

- 86 percent Watch wildlife
- 78 percent Fish
- 69 percent Feed wildlife at home
- 56 percent Hunt
- 51 percent Photograph wildlife
- 42 percent Plant gardens to attract wildlife
- 34 percent Maintain nesting boxes for wildlife
- 20 percent Plant food plots for wildlife
- 8 percent Trap

- 67 percent of our readers or their children read the "For Wild Kids" page.
- When finished with their copy, readers either give it away or saved it. Only 12 percent said they throw it away.

- 94 percent said they still want to receive a hard copy of the magazine in the mail versus reading it on-line.

Two open-ended questions allowed survey respondents to comment on what they like or dislike about the magazine, and what they would like to see changed. Some of the most frequent requests for articles included:

- "How to" articles on fishing and hunting (including bow hunting)
- Where to go to hunt and fish
- Law enforcement cases

- Attracting wildlife to your yard
- Outdoor skills articles showing youth in the field
- By-gone days of hunting and fishing with historic photos
- Where to go for good bird watching

Other frequent comments from readers included:

- Keep up the good work!
- Keep it free!
- Many readers use the magazine as a teaching tool for youth in school classrooms, 4-H programs, and scout troops
- Parents and grandparents go through the magazine with kids

A number of readers indicated that they would like to see more articles about Ohio's State Parks. A sister division of the Division of Wildlife, the ODNR Division of Parks and Recreation, publishes a great magazine that highlights Ohio State Parks. You can request a free subscription to this publication at Ohio State Park's Website at <http://www.ohiodnr.com/parks>, or by calling (614) 265-6561.



Visit WILDohioCOOKBOOK.COM



Step outside of the kitchen.

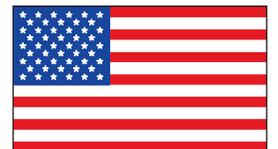
Have you been looking for creative new ways to prepare your wild game? Then it's time to visit www.wildohiocookbook.com where you'll find a variety of fish and game recipes from this magazine and our *Wild Ohio* television show. This is not your everyday cookbook. Check it out!

OHIO



DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

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