

News from our Crawford County Environmental Partners

About The Ohio Division of Wildlife

By: Jason Parr, Crawford County Wildlife Officer

The Division of Wildlife is a direct descendant of the Ohio Fish Commission, which was created by the General Assembly in 1873 to deal with declining fish populations in Ohio's inland lakes and streams. In 1949 the Division was joined with other state conservation agencies under the mantle of the newly created Department of Natural Resources.

The Division manages or cooperates in managing over three-quarters of a million acres of diverse wildlife lands throughout the state, plus more than 2 ¼ million acres of water. On the basis of biological data and public input, it issues regulations that supplement long-term statutes to protect wildlife and to provide the public with opportunities to benefit from wildlife for recreational, scientific, and other purposes.

Division of Wildlife projects are carried out by a team of nearly 500 trained personnel. Moneys from Ohio sportsmen and women provide 95 of every 100 dollars, which pay for all these activities.

Fish Management

The Division of Wildlife manages the fisheries of 124,000 acres of inland water, 7,000 miles of streams, 2 ¼ million acres of Lake Erie, and Ohio's portion of 481 miles of the Ohio River. For the benefit of approximately 2 million anglers and other resource users, the Division manages water areas by improving spawning habitat, installing fish attractors, stocking, implementing fishing regulations, and incorporating structural features to improve fish habitat. Management also includes monitoring fish populations and angler harvest by conducting electrofishing, netting, and creel censuses. The Division also operates five hatcheries that annually propagate up to 30 million fish.

Wildlife Management

Wildlife management consists of projects that affect wildlife populations and wildlife recreational users. These projects usually involve habitat manipulation, management of wildlife populations, land acquisition, research, or the creation of opportunities for people to enjoy wildlife. Healthy wildlife populations depend on good habitat, so habitat maintenance and improvement receive a lot of emphasis. On private lands, efforts are geared toward incentive programs to improve habitat, especially for agricultural and woodland landowners. Management of wildlife populations is also a vital program area. Biologically based seasons are necessary for both the protection and control of some wildlife populations, and these seasons provide the framework for countless hours of wildlife recreation.

Wildlife Law Enforcement

Wildlife management requires effective enforcement of laws and regulations. Enforcement is a wildlife management tool designed to protect the wildlife resource, ensure fair and equitable use of the resource, protect state property, and enforce the litter and pollution statutes. Wildlife officers in each of Ohio's 88 counties, wildlife agents in the five administrative districts, and wildlife officers at Lake Erie enforce all laws pertaining to wild animals. They also enforce Ohio's stream litter law and state criminal laws on property owned or controlled by the Division of Wildlife. Annually, wildlife officers contact thousands of Ohio sportsmen and women in the field, perform fish and wildlife surveys, work with nuisance wildlife, and teach classes on wildlife management, hunter education, trapping, and fishing.

Information and Education

The Division of Wildlife actively participates in a variety of education projects designed to increase the knowledge of all Ohioans who have an interest in wildlife resources. Wildlife education officers and other personnel conduct many of these education projects statewide. They also work in cooperation with Ohio's news media-radio, newspaper, and television-to explain wildlife management to the public.

Personnel from all four of these sections make up the Ohio Division of Wildlife. Personnel for the Ohio Division of Wildlife are proud to work hard towards fulfilling the 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.”***