

**Ohio Division of Wildlife**  
**State Report**  
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**Administration**

**2009 Accomplishments**

- Seventeen new wildlife officers were hired, trained, and assigned to the field in 2009 as a part of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Wildlife Officer Training Academy.
- The Ohio Supreme Court in a 7-0 decision upheld the Ohio law that gives authority for wildlife officers to go onto private property to enforce game and fish laws (*State v. Coburn affirms right to enter private property*).
- Participated in both agency-specific and statewide contract negotiations for the 2009-2010 OCSEA and FOP/OLC contracts, respectively.
- Improved the applicant screening process for the fish management technician position by using our internal expertise to develop a state proficiency test to be implemented in 2010.
- Submitted and received approval for our State Wildlife Grant, Pittman-Robertson (Wildlife Restoration), and Dingell-Johnson (Sport fish Restoration) federal aid grants.
- We finalized our wind energy guidance document, “On-Shore Bird and Bat Pre-and Post-Construction Monitoring Protocols for Commercial Wind Energy Facilities in Ohio” – this document is being used to assess pre-construction risk for proposed wind energy facilities. A similar document for offshore Lake Erie wind energy facilities was drafted and addresses potential impacts to birds and bats as well as fish and benthic communities.
- The Division of Wildlife received a grant through the Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Restoration Act to conduct pelagic bird surveys across the extent of Ohio’s waters of Lake Erie. Results of these surveys will be used to facilitate the development of offshore wind energy facilities in regions that will hopefully have a minimal effect on migratory waterfowl and other birds using the lake.
- We have worked with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, The Ohio State University, and the wind industry to better assess activity patterns of both endangered and migratory bats. This information will be used to protect both local and migratory bats from being struck at future wind energy facilities proposed for Ohio.
- The Division of Wildlife received the 2009 Agency of the Year Award from the Quality Deer Management Association.

**2010 Initiatives**

- Explore hiring 12-15 wildlife officer cadets for a 2011 Training Academy
- Review and make necessary revisions to the Division’s Comprehensive Management System, including the new strategic plan
- Assess Absence Management and Risk Management policies and training needs to reduce employee injury and employee workers’ compensation liability.

- Pilot test the WOCRMS Automated License System (ALS) at approximately 100 license agent sites in October 2010.
- Finalize monitoring protocols for offshore Lake Erie wind energy facilities and continue to provide timely wildlife surveying recommendations and related technical assistance to wind energy developers and the Ohio Power Siting Board.
- Design and implement an evaluation of electronic game checking as part of WOCRMS to assess data quality, ease of use by hunters, and potential impacts on regulatory compliance.
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### **Access and Opportunities**

#### **2009 Accomplishments**

- Nearly 260,000 deer were harvested during the 2009-10 season, including more than 75,000 deer harvested by archers and 9,300 deer harvested by youth hunters. Almost 20,000 deer were harvested during the extra weekend of deer gun season. Ongoing analyses of the \$15 antlerless permit have demonstrated a significant change in hunter behavior that increased the harvest of does. We also completed a communications plan and provided publicity for the Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry Program. As a result of these activities, the donation of venison more than doubled from 2008-09 to the 2009-10 seasons
- Purchased the Wallace O'Dowd Wildlife Area comprising 3,631 acres in Athens and Hocking counties.
- Completed construction of a field trial facility at Tri-Valley Wildlife Area.
- The Division of Wildlife, in partnership with the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Whitetails Unlimited, and the Quality Deer Management Association, launched a new Web-based deer hunter access program. A special Web-site, [www.huntohiofarms.com](http://www.huntohiofarms.com), was designed to aid in this two-year pilot project focused in Harrison, Jefferson, Tuscarawas, and Carroll counties with a goal of linking deer hunters with farmers seeking responsible hunters to help lower deer densities and reduce potential damage on their private lands.
- The newly constructed Racine Boat Ramp in Meigs County on the Ohio River was dedicated in May. The Huron River Boat Access on Lake Erie became operational in late November, with an official dedication to follow in the spring of 2010.
- Construction of the city of Fremont's new 100-acre water supply reservoir and boat ramp continues. To date, \$3.5 million from the Boater-Angler Fund has been spent to help build this reservoir. This partnership with the city will provide fishing access for boat and shoreline anglers.
- Wingfoot Lake in Portage County was purchased from the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company through a partnership with The Trust for Public Lands. A total of 690 acres was purchased, including the 371-acre lake. A 128-acre portion will be managed by the Division of Parks. The remaining 562 acres will be known as the Wingfoot Wildlife Area. Two boat launch facilities will be developed on the lake.

#### **2010 Initiatives**

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the four-county pilot study designed to match potential deer hunters with farmers and other landowners with an interest in increasing deer harvest on their properties. Work with the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation to increase the acceptance and effectiveness of the program and expand the program if warranted.
- Continue to work with the Division of Watercraft on boat ramp projects at Buckeye Lake, Grand Lake St Marys, and Cleveland Lakefront state parks.

### **Communication**

#### **2009 Accomplishments**

- Finalized marketing plans for the March 2010 introduction of the Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp. Conducted

a wildlife photography contest open to the public that focused on Baltimore orioles during which a photo was selected for the inaugural stamp. Produced a variety of marketing tools to promote sales of the stamp including publications, an eNewsletter (Wild Stamp Connection), and a Web-page.

- Our Fish Ohio program was inducted into the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame for 2009. The program was the only honoree for 2009 and joins a prestigious group of 36 past winners in its category.

#### 2010 Initiatives

- Seek partnership opportunities to promote and sell the 2010 Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp, including appearances at special events like the Wildlife Diversity Conference and International Migratory Bird Day. Manage and promote a photo contest to select the 2011 stamp design.

### **Education**

#### 2009 Accomplishments

- Co-Hosted the In Depth Environmental Awareness (IDEA) Institute with the Division of Soil and Water at Hiram College. Coursework was provided by a variety of natural resources experts on wildlife, field research methodologies, water quality and natural resource management. IDEA was attended by over 60 educators from across Ohio throughout the course of a week. College credit was provided to attendees.

#### 2010 Initiatives

- Complete an Ohio Environmental Literacy Plan for No Child Left Inside (NCLI) national legislation that will focus on grades K-12.

### **Forestlands**

#### 2009 Accomplishments

- Partnered with the Division of Forestry and assisted The Nature Conservancy in securing a \$1.5 million dollar grant to allow acquisition of the 15,857-acre Raccoon Ecological Management Area and Vinton Furnace Experimental Forest within the Zaleski Forest Focus Area in Vinton County.

#### 2010 Initiatives

- Secure grant funding from conservation partners to conduct timber inventories on select wildlife areas to facilitate development of forest management plans.

### **Grasslands**

#### 2009 Accomplishments

- An agreement was signed by the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Division of Wildlife focused on completing habitat monitoring and vegetative assessments for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) contracts across Ohio. NRCS will provide 50 percent of the cost of Division staff time to complete this work which will improve habitat conditions on private lands. Approximately 6,000 acres of CRP assessments and 5,400 acres of WRP easement monitoring were completed and reported to NRCS as part of the agreement.

#### 2010 Initiatives

- Begin converting the former Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area field trial area into grassland habitat as guided by the Killdeer Plains-Big Island Grassland Focus Area Tactical Plan.

## **Inland Waters**

### **2009 Accomplishments**

- The Division of Wildlife and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission partnered to address a downturn in the walleye population in Pymatuning Lake. A new management strategy that involved stocking fingerling walleye rather than fry was employed. Survey results have confirmed that first-year survival of these stocked walleye is the best that it has been since 2000 and a rebound of the fishery is anticipated.
- The evaluation of over 10 years of fisheries information and recent angler opinion surveys resulted in expanding existing nine-inch minimum length limits for crappie to 38 new reservoirs, increasing the total number of reservoirs with crappie length limits to 44. All reservoirs with these crappie length limits will also have 30-fish daily (bag) limits.
- The Division's six fish hatcheries raised more than 33 million fish, including 458,000 steelhead, 18,200 muskellunge advanced fingerlings, 105,000 catchable rainbow trout, 90,000 brown trout, 6.94 million saugeye fingerlings, 1.5 million walleye fingerlings, 22 million saugeye and walleye fry, 323,000 yellow perch, 2.2 million hybrid striped bass, and 250,000 channel catfish. In addition, our hatcheries raised triploid saugeyes for the first time, and 24,000 of these fingerlings were stocked into Grand Lake St Marys.

### **2010 Initiatives**

- A pilot project will be launched to determine the potential of raising blue catfish in Ohio hatcheries and stocking them in reservoirs to expand catfish fishing opportunities and create trophy fisheries. The initial group of blue catfish will be raised in the Hebron Hatchery and stocked in Dillon Lake in September 2010.
- Work continues on two of the three state fish hatchery capital projects. A new production building at Kincaid Hatchery is scheduled to be completed in March 2010. An earthwork base layer has been completed for a new production building at Castalia Hatchery and the production building is scheduled to be bid out in February 2010.

## **Invasive Species and Diseases**

### **2009 Accomplishments**

- Provide input and recommendations for various issues impacting Ohio's wildlife resources including proposed ballast water regulations by the U.S. Coast Guard and Asian carp control in the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal.

### **2010 Initiatives**

- To further enhance our abilities to maintain fish production at state fish hatcheries while preventing the introduction of fish disease into our facilities, the Division of Wildlife is partnering with The Ohio State University to develop a fish quarantine facility at their Aquatic Ecology Lab where potential brood fish can be held while waiting for results of fish health tests.

## **Lake Erie**

### **2009 Accomplishments**

- Developed a decision framework to determine sport fishing regulations necessary to comply with inter-jurisdictional quotas for walleye and yellow perch on Lake Erie. Using this new framework, Lake Erie walleye and yellow perch daily bag limits will be set after quota allocations are made in March. The walleye and perch bag limits will then become effective on May 1 of each season.

## 2010 Initiatives

- Develop new research to further our understanding of factors affecting various walleye spawning stocks to identify opportunities to enhance their contributions to our Lake Erie walleye fisheries.

## **Ohio River**

### 2009 Accomplishments

- Angler surveys were conducted at New Cumberland, Pike Island, and Greenup tailwaters during March through June in conjunction with an experimental drop-box postcard survey at several locations. A total of 941 anglers were interviewed at the tailwater access areas, and over 200 anglers reported their catch results using postcards. Survey results will be used to assess sport fisheries for sauger, walleye, bass, catfish and hybrid striped bass.

### 2010 Initiatives

- The Division will work with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and West Virginia Division of Natural Resources to further align fishing regulations throughout the Ohio River.

## **Recruitment and Retention**

### 2009 Accomplishments

- Hosted the third annual National Archery in the Schools (NASP) State Tournament. More than 800 kids from 34 teams participated from schools across the state. The NASP National Tournament in Louisville, KY drew 19 teams and 430 kids from Ohio. Added 38 new schools to the Ohio NASP program for a total of 305 participating schools throughout the state.

### 2010 Initiatives

- Develop a communication plan and implement the rollout and training of existing hunter education instructors and staff on the new WOCRMS Hunter Education Module through several instructor training workshops in each district.

## **Streams and Watersheds**

### 2009 Accomplishments

- Through partnerships with The Nature Conservancy, Grand River Partners Inc, Knox County Park District, and Lake Metro Parks, protected 476 acres of riparian corridor on the Grand River and 30 acres of riparian corridor along the Kokosing River.

### 2010 Initiatives

- The Division will continue efforts to remove the Ballville Dam on the Sandusky River, Panhandle Dam on the Olentangy River, Euclid Creek Dam in Cleveland, Six Mile Dam on the Walhonding River, German Farm Dam on the Auglaize River, and Williamsport Dam on Deer Creek.
- Provide environmental review for various projects impacting Ohio's wildlife resources including fish entrainment and impingement at the Bayshore Power Plant, land-and-water based wind power development, Lake Erie dredging and disposal activities, Cleveland lakefront development, and stream relocations at Deer Creek and Lake White.

## **Unique Habitats**

### **2009 Accomplishments**

- During 2009, significant progress was made developing the post-delisting monitoring plan and other materials necessary for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to propose removing the Lake Erie watersnake from the federal list of threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

### **2010 Initiatives**

- Complete the delisting process for the Lake Erie watersnake in partnership with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

## **Wetlands**

### **2009 Accomplishments**

- The National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant project at Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area was completed in February 2009. This five-year project included acquisition of 282 acres and restoration of 179 acres of coastal wetlands in the western portion of Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area.
- In cooperation with Ducks Unlimited, the Division of Wildlife used funds from a North American Wetlands Conservation Act small grant to redesign and implement a new water delivery system to the Abraham Greentree Marsh at Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area. The Division also partnered with Ducks Unlimited and used grant funds from the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act to restore 50 acres of wetlands on the Boggy Bottoms tract of Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area.
- Restored 35 acres and enhanced >150 acres of wetlands at Killbuck Marsh Wildlife Area. Enhancements were realized through greater management capability of the Wright Marsh following installation of an electric marsh pump and other water control structures.

### **2010 Initiatives**

- Partner with key Mississippi and Atlantic Flyway states to capture and band black ducks in January and February as part of the Black Duck Joint Venture's winter banding project.

## **Wildlife Regulation Compliance**

### **2009 Accomplishments**

- Received the highest restitution to date for a single illegally killed wild animal, \$13,277.60 for a white-tailed deer that green scored 186 inches. Restitution values significantly increased after the recent passing of HB 186.
- In the first full year of participation, Ohio made over 150 entries in to the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact database of persons who have had their hunting, trapping or fishing privileges revoked. In addition, over 7,000 entries of violators by other states were reviewed and ratified, making their suspension effective in Ohio as well.
- Ninety-five pollution reports were received, resulting in a record \$112,802.63 in restitution.

### **2010 Initiatives**

- Wildlife officers will be outfitted with cellular wireless cards to aid with communication.