STRATEGIC PLAN | 2021-2030
THE NEXT GENERATION OF OHIO’S CONSERVATION JOURNEY:
BUILDING ON THE PAST TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE
TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED .................................................................................3
LETTER FROM THE DIVISION OF WILDLIFE ...............................................................4
WILDLIFE..........................................................................................................................5
HABITAT ...........................................................................................................................6
PEOPLE ............................................................................................................................7
OUR VALUES ....................................................................................................................8
OUR VISION ......................................................................................................................8
FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES ..........................................................................................9
STEWARDSHIP ..............................................................................................................10
STEWARDSHIP TIMELINE ............................................................................................ 11
OPPORTUNITIES ...........................................................................................................12
OPPORTUNITIES TIMELINE ..........................................................................................13
CONNECTIONS ..............................................................................................................14
CONNECTIONS TIMELINE ............................................................................................ 15
ENGAGEMENT ...............................................................................................................16
ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE .............................................................................................17
EXCELLENCE ...............................................................................................................18
EXCELLENCE TIMELINE ...............................................................................................19
How the Plan Was Developed

This version of the strategic plan was refreshed with language intended to be more inclusive. The original was created in 2010 by Division of Wildlife employees with input from leaders in Ohio’s conservation community, academic experts, and wildlife enthusiasts. This plan reflects a shared vision to address the challenges, issues, and opportunities related to fish and wildlife conservation in Ohio.
LETTER FROM THE DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

The Division of Wildlife is pleased to present a 2021 update to our strategic plan. We invite all Ohioans to join us on the next generation of Ohio’s conservation journey. The plan gives a bird’s-eye view of five fundamental principles of Ohio conservation, our desired objective for each, and paths to accomplish these objectives. These include: 1) stewardship of our resources; 2) opportunities for participation in fish and wildlife recreation; 3) connections we make with all fish and wildlife enthusiasts; 4) active public engagement in outdoor recreation and wildlife conservation; and, 5) a standard of excellence in the work we do for you. From this broad perspective, the Division of Wildlife can consider where Ohio’s fish and wildlife resources have been, where they are today, and how we can work together to secure their future.

Since our beginning in 1873 as the Ohio Fish Commission, our agency has been at the forefront of Ohio’s fish and wildlife conservation through our commitment, passion, and statutory authority. As we consider where we stand today and look to the future, we embrace a rich history of experiences and the strong support of anglers, hunters, and trappers – the historic foundation of our success. We also welcome all conservation enthusiasts who share an appreciation of these resources and the contributions that fish and wildlife make to the quality of life in Ohio. However you appreciate fish and wildlife, we encourage all who care about Ohio’s fish and wildlife to travel together on this conservation journey to promote healthy ecosystems, protect recreational opportunities, and ensure that the values we share today will be there for the next generation. Just as you plan your next trip outdoors, this strategic plan helps the Division of Wildlife prepare for the years ahead. It is our hope that everyone who values healthy, natural environments for people and wildlife join us on this journey to conserve and improve Ohio’s fish and wildlife and their habitats for sustainable use and appreciation by all.

Sincerely,

Your Ohio Division of Wildlife
WILDLIFE

- Populations of bald eagles and peregrine falcons have rebounded, bringing these and other species back from the brink of extinction, ensuring their place among Ohio’s rich diversity of wildlife.

- Native wildlife species continue to be stressed by non-native invasive species. International commerce on Lake Erie and its variety of habitats makes this region particularly vulnerable to invasions.

- Habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation influences species diversity, population densities, and their susceptibility to disease. Collaboration with partners to help preserve corridors and protect important habitat minimizes impacts to pollinators.

- Ohio has generated record white-tailed deer and walleye harvests in recent years.

- Low-density suburban development increases edge habitat species such as white-tailed deer but can also increase conflict between people and wildlife.

- The Division of Wildlife produces more than 40 million fish that are stocked in Ohio’s public waterways annually.
HABITAT

• With nearly 45,000 square miles of land, 2.25 million acres of Lake Erie, 60,000 miles of streams, more than 120,000 surface acres of inland lakes, and 451 miles of the Ohio River, outdoor enthusiasts can explore a diversity of opportunities.

• More than 90% of Ohio’s land is privately owned. The Division of Wildlife manages less than 2% of our state’s land area to enhance habitat and provide opportunities for fish and wildlife recreation. Habitat quantity and quality are the largest factors influencing wildlife populations.

• Environmental changes could impact many of Ohio’s valuable land and water resources in Lake Erie and Ohio River watersheds. Warming temperatures and shifting precipitation patterns may alter habitats, species composition, and ecosystem function. Growing season changes may increase invasive plant species, also impacting Ohio’s wildlife.
PEOPLE

- In Ohio, outdoor recreation results in $24.3 billion in annual consumer spending. This in turn generates 215,000 direct jobs amounting to $7 billion in salaries and wages as well as more than $1.5 billion in local and state tax dollars. More specifically, Ohioans annually take part in more than 170 million outdoor recreational trips to Ohio’s natural areas, with more than 29 million of these trips directed towards hunting and fishing.

- The most commonly recognized barrier for fishing and hunting participation is time and the associated priorities for family and work commitments.

- Hunting participation nationwide has declined steadily in the last few decades, however, participation in other outdoor-related activities such as wildlife watching, trail running, biking, and hiking is growing.

- Our nation’s population has never been more diverse, urban, educated, or dependent on technology.

- Urban areas are home to four out of five Ohioans.

- Many Ohioans are moving to exurban areas, just outside core metropolitan areas, reducing farmland around cities.

- North Americans are more diverse in their values, perspectives, and interests relative to fish and wildlife.
OUR VALUES

THE DIVISION OF WILDLIFE BELIEVES THAT:

- Input from a broad public audience and open lines of communication are essential.
- Fish and wildlife recreation provide essential social, economic, and human health benefits.
- Sustainable consumptive use of fish and wildlife through hunting, fishing, and trapping is vital to effective conservation.
- Fish and wildlife management must be based on the best available science.
- Partnerships are necessary for effective fish and wildlife conservation.
- Conservation is our priority when managing lands and waters.
- A dedicated and professional workforce is key to achieving long-term success.
- Diverse fish and wildlife populations benefit everyone.
- Providing quality customer service is critical to achieving our mission.
- Diverse and dedicated funding is necessary for fish and wildlife conservation.
- Fiscal responsibility is crucial to the future of Ohio’s fish and wildlife management.

OUR VISION

THE DIVISION OF WILDLIFE’S IDEAL FUTURE INCLUDES:

- Healthy ecosystems that support thriving fish and wildlife populations for all to enjoy.
- Recognition as the authority on all fish and wildlife-related issues in Ohio through science-based management with strong support from sportsmen and women, fish and wildlife enthusiasts, as well as conservation partners.
- Stable funding through multiple sources representing all who value fish and wildlife conservation.
- A highly qualified, well trained, and dedicated staff who understand and respect the importance of fish and wildlife conservation in Ohio and seek to build upon it to create a better future.
- Enhanced conservation through broader engagement of the public.
THE FUTURE OF OHIO’S WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

STEWARDSHIP
FOSTER HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS FOR THE BENEFIT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

EXCELLENCE
MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL AGENCY OPERATIONS

OPPORTUNITIES
IMPROVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE RECREATION

ENGAGEMENT
PRESERVE AND PROMOTE PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR RECREATION AND INTEREST IN FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

CONNECTIONS
CREATE, EXPAND, AND IMPROVE PUBLIC AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING, AND APPRECIATION OF OHIO’S FISH AND WILDLIFE
STEWARDSHIP FOSTER HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS FOR THE BENEFIT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE:

Protecting and fostering healthy ecosystems to benefit Ohio’s fish and wildlife is critical to conservation amid social, political, and economic changes of the 21st century. Ohio faces new and continuing challenges to maintaining healthy ecosystems. With more than 11 million people living in Ohio, balancing the needs of fish and wildlife with impacts from development and economic growth are central to these efforts. The Division of Wildlife must lead by example when managing public land and water and encourage the protection, conservation, and management of private land and water. Threats to healthy ecosystems include habitat loss, invasive and nuisance species, pollution, disease, and other challenges. The Division of Wildlife maintains diverse fish and wildlife populations and habitats while identifying and minimizing threats to ecosystems.

STEWARDSHIP ★ GOALS

- Diverse and sustainable fish and wildlife populations and habitats representative of healthy ecosystems and sustainable use
- Minimize impacts from habitat loss, invasive and nuisance species, pollution, disease, climate change, and other challenges

STEWARDSHIP ★ OBJECTIVES

1. Balance the needs of fish and wildlife with the needs of people by mitigating incompatible ecosystem uses
2. Manage and evaluate fish and wildlife populations and their habitats through the best available science
3. Reintroduce and restore species and habitat where appropriate
4. Protect and sustain fish and wildlife resources through regulations, enforcement, partnerships, and education
5. Protect land and water resources through strategic acquisitions, easements, and partnerships
6. Identify ecosystem- or population-level threats through research, surveillance, monitoring, and inventory
7. Strive to prevent the introduction and control the spread of harmful species through legislation, regulation, policy, management practices, education, and partnerships
1873 Ohio legislature created the Ohio Fish Commission, now known as the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

1913 Ohio residents first required to purchase a hunting license.

1973 The Ohio Endangered Species Law passed which expanded authority for the Division of Wildlife to protect and manage diverse wildlife species.

1976 The Great Lakes Fishery Commission initiates inter-agency management to rebuild fish stocking in the Great Lakes, including restoration of the walleye fishery in Lake Erie.

1977 Ohio joined 26 other states in the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact.

1996 Initiated reintroduction of trumpeter swan with the release of 15 birds at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area.

1972 The Clean Water Act is enacted to address point source pollution in the U.S.

2007 Ohio joined 26 other states in the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact.

2012 Osprey delisted with 105 nests producing 180 chicks in that year.

2002 The river otter was first mammalian species delisted. This species was added to the first state endangered species list in 1974.

2008 The bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and osprey populations rebound from being state-endangered species to state-threatened species.

2011 The bald eagle is delisted and now found throughout most of the state during breeding season.

2014 Bobcats delisted, and hellbender repatriation efforts begin with nearly 200 animals released into three eastern Ohio watersheds.

2015 The peregrine falcon delisted with populations steadily growing and more than 30 pairs at this time.

2018 Governor Dewine’s H2Ohio initiative was launched by the Ohio General Assembly to support statewide initiatives for clean and safe water.

2020 Removal of Six-Mile Dam.

2018 Long-term effort initiated to restore Lake Sturgeon in Lake Erie.

2019 Governor Dewine’s H2Ohio initiative was launched by the Ohio General Assembly to support statewide initiatives for clean and safe water.

2018 Removal of Ballville Dam.

2015 Governor Dewine’s H2Ohio initiative was launched by the Ohio General Assembly to support statewide initiatives for clean and safe water.

2008 The bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and osprey populations rebound from being state-endangered species to state-threatened species.

2002 The river otter was first mammalian species delisted. This species was added to the first state endangered species list in 1974.

2011 The bald eagle is delisted and now found throughout most of the state during breeding season.

2014 Bobcats delisted, and hellbender repatriation efforts begin with nearly 200 animals released into three eastern Ohio watersheds.

2018 Governor Dewine’s H2Ohio initiative was launched by the Ohio General Assembly to support statewide initiatives for clean and safe water.

2019 Governor Dewine’s H2Ohio initiative was launched by the Ohio General Assembly to support statewide initiatives for clean and safe water.

2018 Removal of Six-Mile Dam.

2018 Removal of Ballville Dam.

2015 Governor Dewine’s H2Ohio initiative was launched by the Ohio General Assembly to support statewide initiatives for clean and safe water.

2018 Long-term effort initiated to restore Lake Sturgeon in Lake Erie.
OPPORTUNITIES

IMPROVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE RECREATION:

Ohio provides world-class opportunities for fishing, hunting, trapping, bird watching, wildlife viewing, and other forms of outdoor recreation. Diverse populations of fish and wildlife are key to providing these opportunities. However, challenges to ecosystems and fish and wildlife populations limit recreational opportunities. In addition, many barriers to recreation and participation limit the quantity, quality, and accessibility of these opportunities. Many Ohioans are passionate about fish and wildlife recreation, and the Division of Wildlife supports and encourages participation of these pursuits. Opportunities may be improved in a variety of ways, such as carefully managing fish and wildlife populations and their habitats and removing barriers to participation.

OPPORTUNITIES • GOALS

- Sufficient fish and wildlife populations to accommodate sustainable recreational opportunities
- Minimized barriers to participation in fishing, hunting, trapping, bird watching, wildlife viewing, and other related pursuits
- Increased participation in fishing, hunting, trapping, bird watching, and other fish and wildlife pursuits

OPPORTUNITIES • OBJECTIVES

1. Increase and promote opportunities for fish and wildlife recreation near population centers
2. Increase and promote urban opportunities for fish and wildlife recreation
3. Provide timely, up-to-date, and accurate information about recreational opportunities
4. Conduct research to better understand how and why people value wildlife
5. Increase access to land and water through purchases, easements, agreements, and partnerships
6. Increase, improve, and maintain public access areas
7. Use special events to provide unique opportunities and improve wildlife recreation skills
8. Implement clear and concise policies and protections that are easily understood and effectively enforced
9. Stock fish and wildlife where appropriate to create, enhance, and diversify recreational opportunities
10. Use science-based management to maintain and enhance fish and wildlife populations for public use and recreation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Ohio's first wildlife areas established as game refuges, now part of Shawnee State Forest, was purchased in 1920.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Ohio's first modern wild turkey hunting season opened after decades of reintroduction and recovery efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Acquired Hebron State Fish Hatchery from USFWS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Acquired Senecaville State Fish Hatchery from USFWS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Purchased the Castalia State Fish Hatchery to provide a world-class steelhead fishery in the tributaries of Lake Erie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>The General Assembly created the Wildlife Boater-Angler Fund to support the development and maintenance of boating access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Mobility accessible walkways, parking lot, shooting lines and target paths along with a wooded course with 14 targets were added to the Indian Creek Archery Range.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Ohio's DNR signs a purchase agreement with American Electric Power to acquire 31,000 acres in Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, and Guernsey counties in eastern Ohio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Ohio's first modern statewide white-tailed deer hunting season occurred after decades of population recovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Ohio's first modern mourning dove hunting season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Sunday hunting in Ohio legalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Ohio established apprentice hunting and trapping licenses through the Families Afield Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Two class A ranges at Spring Valley and Delaware wildlife areas were updated to add shooting positions at various distances for gun and archery target practice, incorporated improved health and safety measures, and added indoor education and training facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONNECTIONS

CREATE, EXPAND, AND IMPROVE PUBLIC AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING, AND APPRECIATION OF OHIO’S FISH AND WILDLIFE:

The future of fish and wildlife resources depends on informed conservation actions by citizens. As technologies change and channels for outreach and education continue to evolve, the Division of Wildlife must stay at the forefront of these changes to deliver products and programs that connect people with fish, wildlife, and habitat. The Division of Wildlife has the responsibility to educate and inform Ohioans about fish and wildlife resources and promote the values of fish and wildlife recreation. Collectively, these actions can foster awareness, increase understanding, inform decisions, create a desire to participate in fish and wildlife recreation, and enhance skills and behaviors associated with these activities.

CONNECTIONS  •  GOALS

- Increased public knowledge and understanding of the relationship between people, wildlife, and habitat
- Increased public appreciation of Ohio’s fish and wildlife

CONNECTIONS  •  OBJECTIVES

1. Expand the Division of Wildlife’s role as the source of fish and wildlife information and education
2. Provide a variety of fish and wildlife exhibits, programs, and experiences
3. Develop and maintain partnerships to better deliver the Division of Wildlife’s conservation message and promote opportunities to experience fish and wildlife
4. Maintain a corps of partners and Division of Wildlife-trained volunteers to assist, lead, and promote special programs
5. Develop and promote educational materials and programs that address fish and wildlife management principles, outdoor skills, and other conservation concepts
6. Provide accurate fish and wildlife information using current communication technologies
7. Provide information and guidance to reduce conflicts and improve human interactions with fish and wildlife
8. Identify and address customers’ evolving information needs
1930s
The wildlife display at the Ohio State Fairgrounds is established as one of the Division of Wildlife’s largest annual public information efforts.

1978
First Fish Ohio Day to promote the Lake Erie fishery.

1990
Creation of the Information & Education Section of the Division of Wildlife.

1997
The Division of Wildlife created a website.

2003
Youth hunting season established to help recruit new hunters.

2004
Ohio became the 10th state to introduce the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP).

2010
Customer engagement is expanded with the use of social media.

2017
Landowners are invited to create habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

2018
Free Range Day organized to allow new shooters to gain hands-on experience with firearms from certified instructors at no cost.

2019
The first Inland Fish Ohio Day was held at Cowan Lake State Park.

2017
The Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp is launched, providing a way for all Ohioans to invest in wildlife conservation.

1978
First Fish Ohio Day to promote the Lake Erie fishery.

1990
Creation of the Information & Education Section of the Division of Wildlife.

1997
The Division of Wildlife created a website.

2003
Youth hunting season established to help recruit new hunters.

2010
Customer engagement is expanded with the use of social media.

2017
Landowners are invited to create habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

2019
The first Inland Fish Ohio Day was held at Cowan Lake State Park.

2018
Free Range Day organized to allow new shooters to gain hands-on experience with firearms from certified instructors at no cost.
ENGAGEMENT

PRESERVE AND PROMOTE PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR RECREATION AND INTEREST IN FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION:

The active engagement in outdoor recreation and support of wildlife conservation in Ohio is an important part of our culture, both socially and economically. However, social, economic, and political changes create potential barriers to outdoor recreation participation, which can create challenges to engaging the public in wildlife conservation efforts. Many Ohioans are at risk of disconnecting from the outdoors because of changing priorities in society. Participation in fishing, hunting, and trapping is decreasing, but more people than ever appreciate wildlife through activities such as bird watching, wildlife viewing, and photography. Guided involvement in recreational pursuits is critical to continued participation, and improved engagement is a necessary link in establishing a lasting conservation ethic. In order to retain and increase Ohio’s active support of conservation in future generations, we must continue to promote and engage the public in a variety of outdoor recreation activities and encourage wildlife appreciation.

ENGAGEMENT ▶ GOALS

- Consistent active participation of fish and wildlife enthusiasts
- Devoted participants and conservation organizations that are the critical link to retaining active support of wildlife conservation

ENGAGEMENT ▶ OBJECTIVES

1. Promote customer-oriented events and information to engage participants in fish and wildlife recreation activities
2. Partner with conservation organizations to develop conservation engagement programs
3. Create skill-building opportunities through mentoring, hands-on participation, and memorable outdoor experiences
ENGAGEMENT MILESTONES

1936
First publication of the Ohio Conservation Bulletin

1956
Hunter education courses were first offered; hunter education became mandatory in 1978

1963
The Ohio Wildlife Council changes authority to a directory and advisory body for fish and wildlife conservation in Ohio

1978

1980
Fish Ohio Pin program began

1981
Information and Education section was created

1985
The Wildlife Education Curriculum Project Wild introduced to Ohio

1985
The first Wildlife Diversity Conference was held

1990
Wild Ohio magazine first published

2008
First Wildlife Diversity Partners meeting was hosted by the Division of Wildlife for Conservation leaders in the Wildlife Diversity Conservation community

2010
Established a stakeholder-based advisory group to recommend harvest management strategies for walleye and yellow perch through a structured decision-making process

2017
Conducted a stakeholder-based advisory process to recommend strategies for white-tailed deer management through a structured decision-making process

2017
An online learning option is employed to provide hunter education to aspiring hunters

2020
Huntfish OH app launched

2020
707 bald eagle nests confirmed in 85 Ohio counties

2020
Huntfish Oh app launched

707 Bald Eagle nests confirmed in 85 Ohio Counties
EXCELLENCE

MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL AGENCY:

To ensure effective management of Ohio’s fish and wildlife, the Division of Wildlife must maintain secure funding, workforce excellence, and public accountability. It is important to preserve support for the dedicated funds generated from the sale of fishing and hunting licenses, permits, and federal excise taxes on related equipment to sustain agency operations; however, an ever-expanding role in conservation requires additional funding sources.

A work environment that promotes employee satisfaction and productivity attracts, maintains, and retains a diverse, knowledgeable and innovative staff. Ohio’s conservation journey requires creative alignment of staff and skills to meet emerging challenges. Career development and quality training also helps ensure professional and dedicated employees and builds leadership, and efficient business practices are critical to responsibly manage programs. The Division of Wildlife continually strives to improve these practices to further strengthen Ohioans’ confidence that funds are appropriately spent on conservation priorities.

EXCELLENCE › GOALS

- Expand sources of funding dedicated to fish and wildlife conservation
- Outstanding services provided by a high-performance staff
- Efficient, responsible, and accountable business practices

EXCELLENCE › OBJECTIVES

1. Protect Division of Wildlife revenue generated from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and equipment, while continually seeking new sources of revenue
2. Recruit and retain a broad range of fish and wildlife enthusiasts to enhance support for the Division of Wildlife’s mission
3. Use partnerships to leverage fish and wildlife conservation funding
4. Recruit, train, and retain a highly qualified diverse workforce
5. Continually improve our business practices to ensure the most efficient use of funds
6. Report allocation of fiscal resources annually to provide accountability to the public
7. Information technology services that are up-to-date with current private sector standards
EXCELLENCE | MILESTONES

1886  The Ohio's first game warden appointed; in 1888 legislation was passed calling for a game warden in every county.

1937  Pittman-Robertson legislation created a federal excise tax on hunting and shooting equipment, annually generating millions of dollars for wildlife conservation across the country.

1939  The Ohio Wildlife Fund was established to ensure that hunting and fishing license monies are used for fish and wildlife conservation.

1950  Dingell-Johnson legislation created a federal excise tax on fishing equipment, annually generating millions of dollars for sport fish conservation across the country.

1983  State income tax check-off program was established to allow Ohio taxpayers to donate a portion of their tax refund to the Division of Wildlife for diverse wildlife species management programs.

1993  Ohio's "Way of Doing Business" or comprehensive management system is approved for wildlife and sport fish restoration funding by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

1987  An executive planning group comprised of senior staff members was established to discuss major planning issues and provide leadership within the Division of Wildlife.

1993  The Ohio Wildlife Fund was established to ensure that hunting and fishing license monies are used for fish and wildlife conservation.

2001  State wildlife grant program is enacted, providing federal funding for "species of greatest conservation need."

2011  An improved focus on customer service revamps online license sales transactions and record keeping.

2013  An enhanced game-check system allows hunters to check game with their smartphones.

2011  State wildlife grant program is enacted, providing federal funding for "species of greatest conservation need."

2018  Law enforcement expands to adopt a wildlife K-9 program.

2037  Pittman-Robertson legislation created a federal excise tax on hunting and shooting equipment, annually generating millions of dollars for wildlife conservation across the country.

2050  Dingell-Johnson legislation created a federal excise tax on fishing equipment, annually generating millions of dollars for sport fish conservation across the country.

2083  State income tax check-off program was established to allow Ohio taxpayers to donate a portion of their tax refund to the Division of Wildlife for diverse wildlife species management programs.

2093  Ohio's "Way of Doing Business" or comprehensive management system is approved for wildlife and sport fish restoration funding by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

2087  An executive planning group comprised of senior staff members was established to discuss major planning issues and provide leadership within the Division of Wildlife.

2001  State wildlife grant program is enacted, providing federal funding for "species of greatest conservation need."

2011  An improved focus on customer service revamps online license sales transactions and record keeping.

2013  An enhanced game-check system allows hunters to check game with their smartphones.

2018  Law enforcement expands to adopt a wildlife K-9 program.
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife is responsible for management of fish and wildlife resources as mandated by Ohio law. The specific powers and duties of the Division of Wildlife are found in three documents: 1) the Ohio Constitution; 2) the Ohio Revised Code, Sections 1531 and 1533; and 3) the Ohio Administrative Code.

The Division of Wildlife holds ownership to all wild animals in trust for the benefit of Ohio’s citizens. Fish and wildlife management practices, regulations, and enforcement are based on wildlife being a usable and renewable resource.

The chief of the Division of Wildlife has broad authority, with approval of the Ohio Wildlife Council, to adopt rules and regulations for managing lands and waters that ensure sound management of fish and wildlife, to conduct management activities and acquire property to develop and conserve the wildlife resource, and to promote programs to educate Ohio citizens about conservation, fishing, hunting, and trapping.

Revenue from the sale of licenses, permits, and products is deposited into the Wildlife Fund to be used solely for future fish and wildlife management. These funds are protected by state and federal legislation that prevents their diversion for purposes other than fish and wildlife conservation.