OXBOW LAKE WILDLIFE AREA
Defiance County

Public Hunting & Fishing
416 Acres

Division of Wildlife
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Publication 159
(R597)

LEGEND
- Parking
- Fishing Piers
- Water
- Shotgun Area
- Marshland
- Boat Ramp
- Brushland
- Latrine
- Woodland
- Foot Trail
- Grassland

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LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION
The Oxbow Lake Wildlife Area is located in northwestern Ohio near the city of Defiance. The 416-acre area is situated in the glaciated lake plain of Ohio and has a slightly rolling topography. Some steep land lies adjacent to Mud Creek, which bisects the area. Large cottonwoods and sycamores are found along Mud Creek. The upland woods consist mostly of oaks and hickories. Substantial amounts of brushland and meadow are maintained by the Division of Wildlife for upland game habitat. Oxbow Lake and Little Oxbow Lake provide habitat for fish, furbears, waterfowl, and other interesting birds such as great blue herons, belted kingfishers, tree swallows and pied-billed grebes.

HISTORY AND PURPOSE
Originally, the entire area was forested. During the latter part of the last century, the virgin woods were cut down to utilize the moderately fertile soil for agriculture. The wildlife area was purchased by the state of Ohio in 1948. The 38-acre Oxbow Lake was constructed in 1953. In 1954, the area headquarters was established. A smaller, 4.5-acre impoundment, called Little Oxbow Lake, was constructed in 1958.

FISH AND WILDLIFE
Oxbow Lake and Little Oxbow Lake have both been stocked with largemouth bass, Northern pike and brown bullheads. Oxbow Lake was also stocked with smallmouth bass, rock bass, redear sunfish, and channel catfish. Both lakes contain bluegills. To maintain fishable populations of these species, Division of Wildlife personnel employ fish management techniques such as chemical control of aquatic vegetation, removal of undesirable fish and maintenance stocking of largemouth bass and Northern pike.

Northern pike are taken during early spring and late fall, but winter ice fishing is best. Pike fishing techniques involve the use of tip-ups and large minnows. Largemouth bass fishing is best during the spring, using spinners, artificial worms, and minnows for bait. Summer and fall bass fishing is especially good with top-water baits. Bluegills are taken throughout the year on worms, insect larvae and artificial flies. Bass and bluegill fishing is most productive in the fallen tree and stump areas. Bullheads are caught throughout the year, especially during April and May. Good bullhead baits are nightcrawlers and cut baits fished on the bottom.

Boat fishing with electric motors is permitted on both lakes. Gasoline motors are not allowed. Gasoline motors are not allowed.

PUBLIC USE FACILITIES
There are three parking lots on the area: two adjacent to Oxbow Lake and one adjacent to Little Oxbow Lake. Drinking water, latrines and a boat launching ramp are located at Oxbow Lake. A shotgun range for paper and clay targets only is also located on the area. For more information contact the Wildlife District Two Office, 952-A Lima Avenue, Findlay, Ohio 45840; telephone (419) 424-5000.

WATCHABLE WILDLIFE
Migrating shorebirds and songbirds can be observed utilizing the lake edges and woodlots during spring and fall. Other types of wildlife such as tree swallows and great blue herons make Oxbow Lake their home territory for the summer months.

TIP IN A POACHER
Ohio's TIP, “Turn In a Poacher,” program is helping to curtail poaching throughout the state. TIP is designed to involve the public in reporting wildlife violations. Citizens who observe wildlife violations should call the TIP toll-free hotline, 1-800-POACHER.