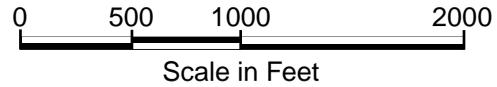
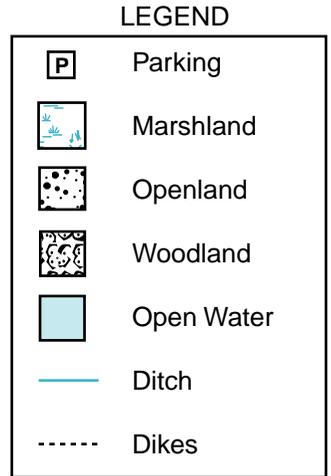
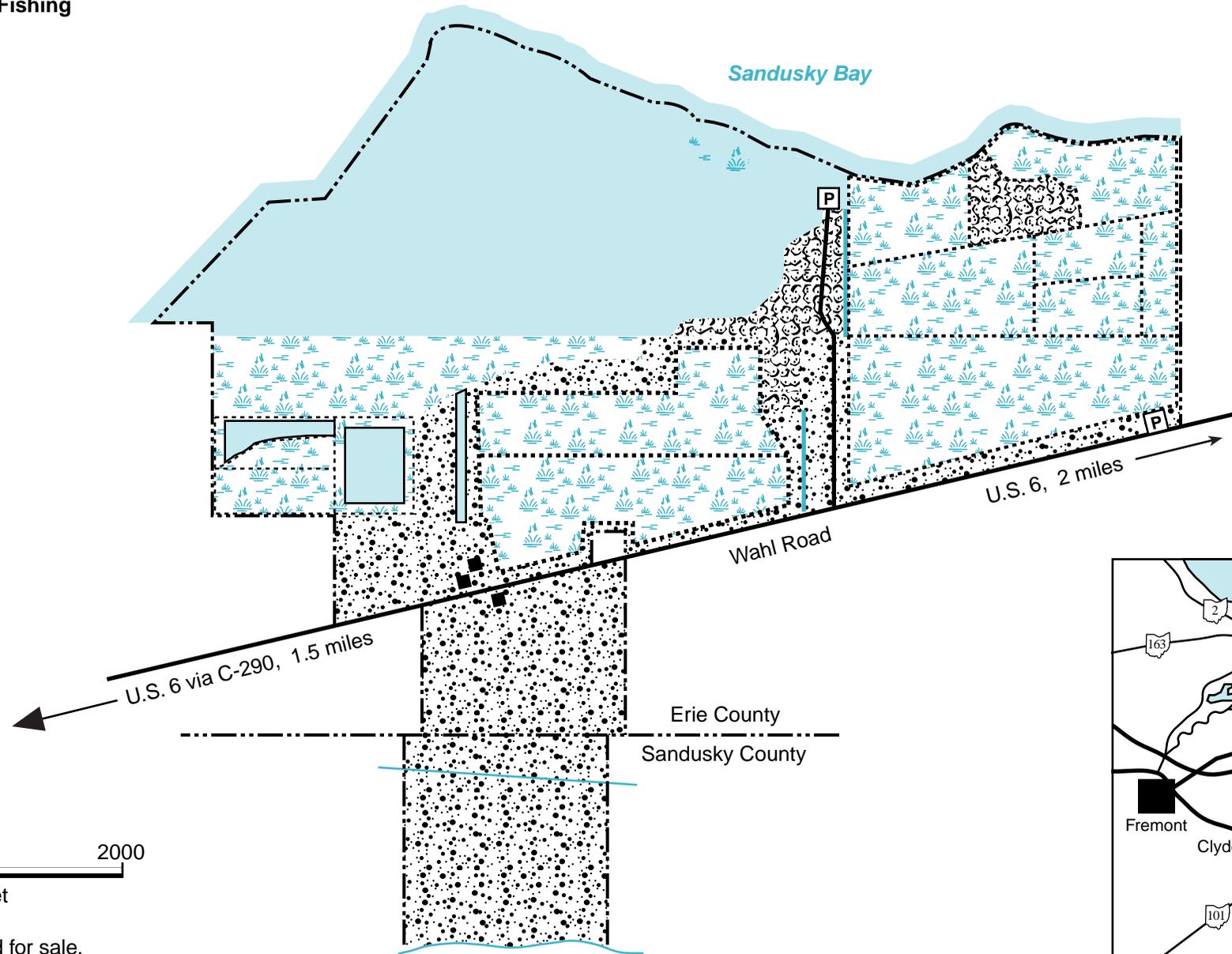


WILLOW POINT WILDLIFE AREA

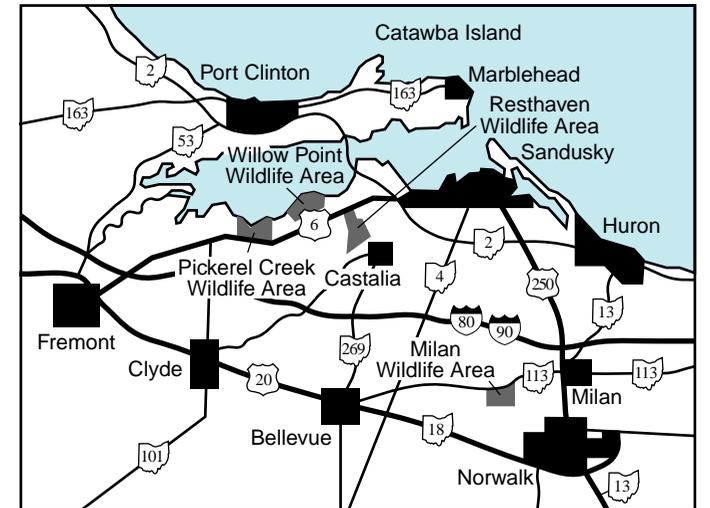
Erie County
Sandusky County

Public Hunting & Fishing
645 Acres



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VICINITY MAP





WILLOW POINT WILDLIFE AREA

Erie and Sandusky Counties

DISTANCE FROM MAJOR
POPULATION CENTERS
117 miles from Columbus
63 miles from Cleveland
55 miles from Toledo

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

This 645-acre wildlife area is located in Erie and Sandusky counties, seven miles west of the city of Sandusky. The area can be reached from U.S. Route 6 by traveling north on Sandusky County Road 290 or by going west on Erie County Road 35 (Wahl Road).

The area lies on the southern shore of Sandusky Bay. The general topography is flat, and about two-thirds of the area is open water and marshland. Cattails are the primary vegetation in the marshes. Much of the remaining acreage is openland.

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

Early records indicate an extensive wet prairie in this vicinity. These accounts relate that prairie grasses grew to seven feet in height, and were so thick and bound together with pea vines as to make travel almost impossible. During this period, the vast prairies were surrounded by oak-chestnut woodlots. The same accounts describe tremendous numbers of waterfowl. Wild rice and other waterfowl foods grew in abundance in the clear waters of Sandusky Bay. After 1850, as the land was settled, cleared, and drained for agriculture, waterfowl habitat was seriously damaged. The turbid waters of the bay no longer supported the huge beds of wild rice and other aquatic vegetation, and waterfowl numbers decreased.

From approximately 1920 to 1972 a group of sportsmen from Columbus, Ohio leased the marsh for their private use and called it the Willow Point Duck Club. When high water levels in the early 1970s caused severe problems with maintaining the marsh, the club disbanded.

The Willow Point area was acquired by the Division of Wildlife in 1975. This region continues to support a good waterfowl population and it is presently managed as a public hunting and fishing area, with emphasis on waterfowl and rabbits.

FISH AND WILDLIFE

The Willow Point Wildlife Area harbors a number of waterfowl species during spring and fall migrations. Mallard, wood duck, black duck, blue-winged teal, and green-winged teal are the more abundant species, with widgeon, pintail, gadwall, and shoveler appearing in smaller numbers. Canada geese also use the area. Other bird species

include the tundra swan, common tern, great blue heron, common egret, black-crowned night heron, woodcock, common snipe, sora and Virginia rail, and mourning dove. Some of the best birding in Ohio is found in this region. The geographic location of Willow Point, along the southern shore of Lake Erie, accounts for high numbers of waterfowl, songbirds, shorebirds, and hawks during the spring and fall migrations. Rarities such as little blue heron, king rail, black tern, short-eared owl, and yellow-headed blackbird are possible at Willow Point. Bald eagles nest in the vicinity and both adults and immatures are frequently seen year-round. Upland game animals and furbearers are also plentiful on the area. Cottontail rabbit, white-tailed deer, woodchuck, muskrat, raccoon, and mink occur in varied numbers throughout the year.

A diverse fishery occurs in adjacent Sandusky Bay. Shore anglers can take yellow perch, channel catfish, white bass, freshwater drum, bullhead, crappie, Northern pike, largemouth bass, bluegill, and carp. Occasionally, walleye and coho salmon are taken from the bay. Additional species that are sometimes taken by anglers include dogfish and longnose gar.

HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND FISHING

Waterfowl hunting can be productive in the marsh units. Populations of rabbits inhabit the higher ground on the area. Good numbers of muskrats, raccoon, and mink are available to trappers.

Fishing is best in Sandusky Bay, beginning with bullheads in late March and continuing throughout the year. Crappie fishing is best during April, May, and October. Channel catfish and freshwater drum are taken throughout the year, but the best fishing occurs from June through September. White bass and walleye are taken in the early spring, from late March to early May. Good winter ice fishing occurs in the area of Sandusky Bay, primarily for yellow perch and crappies.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Further information may be obtained from the Wildlife District Two Office, 952 Lima Avenue, Findlay, Ohio 45840; telephone (419) 424-5000.