



## 2007 Status of Selected Terrestrial Wildlife Species and Projects

This is a brief overview of the status of selected terrestrial wildlife species and several projects. For more detailed information consult the "2007-08 Wildlife Population Status Report" available on the Division of Wildlife's website.

- ✓ Sixteen pairs of **sandhill cranes** nested and successfully fledged a record 22 young.
- ✓ An estimated 6,500 **river otters** occupy at least 67 counties. The first modern day trapping season occurred in 2005-06. One hundred thirty-seven otters were harvested with mandatory check-in and tagging during the 2007-08 trapping season.
- ✓ 113 **black bear** sightings representing an estimated 67 individuals were reported during 2006.
- ✓ **Cerulean warblers** nest high in the tree canopy adjacent to small openings within large, contiguous deciduous forest. Annually monitored as part of the Breeding Bird Survey, the long-term trend indicates a 3.4% annual decline in Ohio even though mature forest cover has been increasing.
- ✓ The worldwide population of the **Lake Erie water snake** is confined to the Lake Erie islands and portions of the Canadian mainland. The number of adult snakes on the Lake Erie islands has annually exceeded 5,500 over the past six years. Researcher Kristin Stanford was featured in 2007 on a Discovery Channel's *Dirty Jobs* episode for her work with the snakes.
- ✓ Clearing of forests allowed **crows** to increase in number and, as a result, this species is more abundant today than in pre-settlement times; nesting in all 88 counties.
- ✓ **White-tailed deer** were extirpated by the early 1900s due to habitat loss and a lack of hunting regulations. Due to the increase of forestland, the establishment of hunting regulations, and quality wildlife management, in 2007 there were an estimated 675,000 deer.
- ✓ Extensive loss of forest acreage coupled with unregulated hunting also led to the extirpation of the **wild turkey** by 1904. The return of forestland, establishment of turkey hunting regulations, and turkey trap and release efforts have resulted in the successful re-establishment of wild turkeys in all 88 counties. The spring 2007 wild turkey population was estimated at 186,000 birds (down 7% from 2006).
- ✓ **Beaver** were extirpated by 1830 because of unregulated trapping and forest removal. In 1936, beaver re-occupied portions of Ashtabula and Belmont counties. Since then, forest habitat has increased, trapping regulations were established and gradual growth and westward expansion of the beaver population and range has taken place. This furbearer is found in nearly every county with a population estimate of 27,000 animals.
- ✓ Division of Wildlife personnel and volunteers monitor **peregrine falcons**. Nineteen successful peregrine nests fledged 56 young. This falcon is proposed to be down-listed to a state threatened species in 2008.
- ✓ The Division of Wildlife received 37 confirmed **bobcat** sightings and 134 additional but unverified reports in 2006.
- ✓ Annual road-kill survey routes provide information on the population trends of **muskrat, raccoon, mink, fox, opossum, and skunk**. Long-term trends indicate that all of these species have stable and widely distributed populations throughout the state.
- ✓ There were a record 68 **barn owl** nests. In recent years, barn owl nesting activity has been centered in Wayne-Holmes and the Ross-Pike areas.
- ✓ Efforts continue in the restoration of the state and federally endangered **American burying beetle**. Since 2002, the captive colony of beetles at The Ohio State University has produced approximately 1000 adult beetles. In 2007, 127 beetle pairs were released into the wild from the St. Louis Zoo colony.
- ✓ Although **common terns** occur statewide during migration, nesting colonies have always been restricted to the western basin of Lake Erie. Four artificial tern nesting colony platforms are maintained at Willow Point Wildlife Area and at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. A total of 185 pairs fledged 281 young (a 95% increase from 2006).

- ✓ The **scarlet tanager's** preferred habitat is medium to large tracts of mature deciduous forest, but it can also be found in riparian corridors and second-growth woods. This species is annually monitored on North American Breeding Bird Survey routes throughout the state. Long-term data indicate the population has increased an average of 1.4% per year in Ohio since 1966.
- ✓ 2007 marked the ninth successful season of recovery efforts of the **Karner blue butterfly**. The Toledo Zoo has reared and released more than 2,700 adult butterflies. Butterflies have been released at The Nature Conservancy's Kitty Todd Nature Preserve and Toledo Metro Parks in Lucas County. There are eight organizations and agency partners involved in this effort.
- ✓ 2007 marked the last of a three-year statewide survey of the **Eastern massasauga** rattlesnake. A genetic distinctiveness and functional genetic variation evaluation is also being conducted in collaboration with OSU.
- ✓ West Sister Island National Wildlife Refuge hosts nearly 40% of the nesting herons and egrets in the Great Lakes. It is the largest colony site for **great blue herons, great egrets, and black-crowned night-herons**, and 1 of 3 locations for **snowy egrets** in the Great Lakes. In 2007, the number of great egret nests declined 29%; snowy egret nests were stable; and **cormorant** nests declined 51% on West Sister Island.
- ✓ To date, 613 **species of spiders** have been documented in Ohio through statewide surveys.
- ✓ Division personnel and volunteers monitored 164 **bald eagle** breeding territories; total production was 194 eaglets fledged. The eagle was de-listed from the federal Endangered Species Act in 2007 and is proposed to be down-listed to a state threatened species in 2008.
- ✓ **Eastern spadefoot toads** have been discovered in fifteen townships from eight Ohio counties. Substantial rain events and the efforts of volunteers conducting Frog & Toad Calling Surveys have bolstered our knowledge of breeding locations for this species.
- ✓ Two statewide monitoring efforts, the "**Ohio Frog & Toad Calling Survey**" and the "**Long-term Butterfly Monitoring Program**," continue to have high interest and support by volunteer participants. During 2007, the frog and toad survey had routes located in 68 counties; and there were 62 active butterfly monitoring transects located in 29 counties.
- ✓ An **osprey** restoration program which included releasing young into the wild was initiated in 1996. Forty-four natural nests fledged 78 young in 2007. This raptor is proposed to be down-listed to a state threatened species in 2008.
- ✓ A **trumpeter swan** restoration effort was undertaken in 1996 as part of the International Restoration Plan for the Interior Population of Trumpeter Swans. Twenty-three pairs successfully hatched 48 cygnets.
- ✓ The Ohio population of the **Eastern plains garter snake** is restricted to Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area in Wyandot County. Captive breeding colonies at the Columbus and Cleveland Zoos are continuing to be utilized to augment the wild population.
- ✓ **Marsh wrens** occur in cattail marshes across Ohio, but are most numerous in the Lake Erie marshes. The number of breeding pairs reported on the Ohio Wetland Breeding Bird survey indicated a slight increase recorded over the past decade with a slight increase noted in 2007.



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