



WATERLOO WILDLIFE AREA

Athens County

DISTANCE FROM MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS

75 miles from Columbus
200 miles from Cleveland
175 miles from Akron
162 miles from Cincinnati
10 miles from Athens

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

This rugged, heavily forested wildlife area is located 10 miles west of Athens at the junction of State Routes 56 and 356. The Waterloo Wildlife Research Station occupies the entire wildlife area.

Although this is essentially a forested area, scattered small openings occur on the ridgetops. Larger reverting fields occur along Hewett Fork, which parallels the eastern edge of the wildlife area. Major forest types include oak-hickory on the ridgetops and slopes, with lesser amounts of beech-maple in ravine bottoms. Important forest subtypes include scarlet oak, chestnut oak, white oak-red oak-hickory, white oak, yellow poplar-white oak-red oak, maple, and sassafras-persimmon.

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

Purchase of land for this wildlife area began in 1944. Before 1940, portions of the area were cultivated and grazed. The woods were selectively cut prior to the state's first purchase of land.

The office and laboratory of the Division of Wildlife's forest wildlife research and management project are located here. The wildlife area has been used for squirrel research. Findings from these studies have served as a partial basis for recommending the time and length of the squirrel hunting season in Ohio.

A 5,146-acre walk-in wild turkey management unit, mostly on the adjacent Zaleski State Forest, but including 664 acres of the Waterloo Wildlife Area, is managed to provide high quality turkey range and hunting opportunity. Management of this unit is designed to meet these requirements by providing a minimum of 60 percent trees of mast producing size and limited access.

FISH AND WILDLIFE

Abundant native game species include the gray squirrel, wild turkey, and white-tailed deer. Lesser numbers of fox squirrel and ruffed grouse are found on the area. Cottontail rabbits occur in small numbers in the reverting fields. All of the furbearers common to southeastern Ohio are found on the area.

Approximately 80 species of birds can be seen or heard on the area in a year's time. Included are cedar waxwing, white-eyed vireo, red-eyed vireo, blue-winged warbler, prairie warbler, yellow warbler, hooded warbler, indigo bunting, Northern mockingbird, wood thrush, Acadian flycatcher, mourning dove, and red-tailed hawk.

Bluegills, largemouth bass, redear sunfish, crappies, and bullheads inhabit the three small fishing ponds. Hewett Fork does not support aquatic life because of pollution from abandoned coal mines in the upper watershed.

HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND FISHING

Squirrels are the most popular game species on the area. Hunting of ruffed grouse, white-tailed deer, wild turkey, cottontail rabbit, and raccoon is also popular. Muskrat, mink, and fox trapping may also be pursued.

Hook-and-line fishing for bluegills, largemouth bass, redear sunfish, crappies, and bullheads may be enjoyed in the three ponds.

UNUSUAL FEATURES

Rock outcrops are in the Pennsylvania system of the Conemaugh and Allegheny series. Massive outcrops of Lower Freeport sandstone can be seen at the east end of the area.

PUBLIC USE FACILITIES

Public facilities are limited to three miles of gravel roads, 35 walking trails, and widely distributed parking areas.

TURN 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.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Information about the wildlife area and research station is available at: Waterloo Wildlife Research Station, 360 E. State Street, Athens, Ohio 45701; telephone (740) 589-9930.