



MARCH 1955: WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT THROUGH TIME

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About a decade before the beginning of the modern environmental movement, the March 1955 issue of THE OHIO CONSERVATION BULLETIN looked at what Ohioans were doing for wildlife resources in their home state. In *Winter Sleepers*, a companion of the author remarked, nature “didn’t foresee all the changes that man has made to once good wildlife habitat. We have to give nature a helping hand in wildlife management.” Indeed, good habitat management continues to be the cornerstone of Ohio’s environmental health, as well as a priority for the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

Home state habitat restoration projects were starting to be of major interest to the public and were featured in *Some Highlights of 1954*. That year, the first reintroduction of wild turkeys to the state took place, and future releases were planned for the upcoming season. Wild turkeys were absent from Ohio for about 50 years, and interest was high to bring back this popular native bird species. The article also supported continued tree plantings and restoration of cover and food plants for wildlife on converted farmlands. A study had just come out that revealed the serious impacts of acid mine drainage on Ohio streams, and the article emphasized the need for “corrective legislation.”

Seventeen years before the Clean Water Act was passed, *Our Pollution Problem* revealed that Ohioans were very much aware of the issues facing their waters. The negative impacts of deforestation and siltation on rivers were beginning to be recognized. The Pollution Council Board, a prede-

cessor of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, began regulating industrial pollution and requiring treatments for sewage, acid mine drainage, and other toxins dumped into waterways. While Ohio’s waters would have several trials ahead, the state was on track for cleaner waters.

A project of the League of Ohio Sportsmen was to **Adopt a Stream for Better Fishing**. This program taught anglers how to manage their properties to improve habitat for fish. This included controlling stream bank erosion with vegetation and riprap while providing foraging and spawning habitat for fish species. This type of comprehensive stream management benefits not only game fish, but insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and forage fish. These conservation measures are still widely used to protect river and stream habitats today.

In 1955, white-tailed deer had returned to the state only 11 years prior. At the time *Wanted: More Deer Hunters* was published, the deer population in Ohio was about 24,000. Managers were calling for more deer hunters to help manage the deer population, which was expected to peak at around 75,000 deer by 1971. To control the deer population, an estimated 150,000 deer hunters would be needed. Today, however, Ohio has a robust deer population, with about 300,000 deer hunters. Too many deer can be a danger for motorists, a nuisance for farmers, and have negative impacts on the environment. Where these impacts are evident in Ohio today, the same deer population management strategy remains — wanted: more deer hunters.