



MARCH 1954: THIS ISSUE IN HISTORY

by RYAN WAGNER | CONTRIBUTING WRITER, DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

The March 1954 issue of *The Ohio Conservation Bulletin* discussed conservation issues and efforts of the day. **Ohio's White-headed Monarch** examined Ohio's dwindling bald eagle population. In 1954, just four nesting bald eagle pairs could be found in the state, all in Ottawa County. Years of persecution, hunting, and chemical pollution had nearly driven our national symbol to extinction. Just over a decade earlier, the bald eagle was given full protection by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This was the first major step in the bald eagle's long road to recovery. Today, Ohio is home to over 800 bald eagle nesting pairs.

A **Report on Pollution Control** focused on the Ohio River and stated it had "ceased to be a flowing river. It was merely a long row of putrid pools from Pittsburgh to the Mississippi." After years without pollution regulations, a group of conservationists, sanitary engineers, health officers, industrialists, and people living along the river were ready for a change. In June 1948, eight states, including Ohio, banded together to form the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission. This commission had the legal power to order any municipality, industry, or individual to stop dumping sewage or industrial waste into the Ohio River. It also cooperated with its member states to draft stricter water pollution control laws.

Ohio has a long history of tracking wildlife populations and movements. **Save the Tag** describes these efforts by Ohio biologists. First, biologists would use tags to mark large num-

bers of their study species, which often-included game birds, mammals, fish, frogs, bats, and even insects. Then, they retrieved tags from hunter harvests or by resighting the animal. Scientists could then use the number and location of recaptures to calculate population size, how long animals live, how far they travel during their lifetime, and at what age stocked animals should be released to increase survival.

Sometimes, early conservation efforts unintentionally created more work for the conservationists of today. **Does it Dig Ditches?** introduced a mechanical tree planter that was primarily used to plant multiflora rose, a shrub now known to be highly invasive and destructive. In a single day, this machine could plant 16,000 multiflora rose plants. Today, thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours are spent removing multiflora rose from the landscape.

In 1954, conservationists were in hot pursuit of new ways to spread their environmental message. **Calendars for Conservation** proposed using yearly calendars to promote conservation education, which contained information about the importance of good land management, reforestation, hunter safety, farmer-hunter relationships, and pollution prevention. The author stated, "this technique will bring a conservation message to thousands of persons, young and old alike, who otherwise would not be reached." Today, the Ohio Division of Wildlife still uses calendars to communicate the importance of our natural world.