CFAES

Promoting Positive Relationships Between Human and Wildlife Communities Through Partnerships, Stakeholder Engagement, and Science

Impact Statement 2018

INVESTIGATORS
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SUMMARY
Over 5.1 million people engage in wildlife-based recreation in Ohio, contributing $3.3 billion to the economy. Wildlife promote physical and spiritual well-being and are sensitive indicators of environmental quality and ecosystem health. As wildlife conservation increases in scope and complexity, **SENR faculty and staff provide research and facilitate collaborations that help ensure sustainable wildlife populations and habitats are valued and conserved now and in the future.**

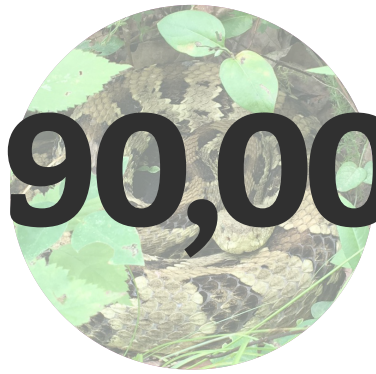
SITUATION
Human-wildlife relationships arise from interactions of natural and social systems. Problems develop as natural and cultural environments change. Government agencies and NGOs are challenged by competing interests of stakeholders, and scientific uncertainties about the systems they manage. **Biodiversity loss, invasive species, species endangerment, a changing climate, sustainable use of wildlife resources, and human-wildlife conflicts are among the most pressing concerns faced by wildlife managers**. Fulfilling the land grant mission of The Ohio State University requires science-based research and training for current and future wildlife professionals, community leaders, and private landowners, and strong collaborations and partnerships between researchers, management agencies, and stakeholders.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

RESPONSE

Through the Terrestrial Wildlife Ecology Lab, Ohio Biodiversity Conservation Partnership, and Ohio State Extension, **our faculty and staff focused on public access to private lands for recreation, sustainable use of natural resources, human-wildlife conflicts, and conservation of wildlife diversity on public and private lands across Ohio.** We worked with the Ohio Division of Wildlife to improve the state's private lands recreational access program, and to develop a socially and ecologically sustainable plan for deer harvest management. Our research on river otters, a former extirpated species, was used to set sustainable recreational harvest levels. **We identified more ecologically sustainable approaches to forest management that use fire, and studied tree harvest to restore habitat for rattlesnakes, amphibians, and woodland birds; and how water quality in rivers and streams impacts aerial insect-eating birds**. We disseminated information through extension programs, workshops and conferences.

presentations made by the Wildlife Extension team



viewers engaged in multimedia pertaining to rattlesnakes and coyotes

visitors of the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park educated on human impacts on wetland wildlife

IMPACT

The recreational access program opens 250,000 acres to Ohio users, and complementary incentive structures to retain critical habitat and increase public access are being evaluated. Deer conservation and management seeks to strike a balance between approximately 500,000 hunters that contribute $853 million to the Ohio economy, and Ohio farmers whose crops are depredated. River otter management seeks to balance population and harvest goals while minimizing human-wildlife conflicts in 42 counties. Considering impacts of forest restoration on rattlesnakes and other wildlife will affect use of fire and tree harvest on 3.3 million acres of public land in southeast Ohio. Studies of imperiled aerial insect-eating birds in 7 central Ohio counties demonstrated effects of land use and water quality. Research impacts were amplified by disseminating findings though Ohio State Extension. The Wildlife Extension team delivered 57 presentations on human-wildlife conflicts to 4372 professionals, volunteers, and homeowners. Multimedia pertaining to rattlesnakes and coyotes received around 290,000 views. The Ohio Community Wildlife Cooperative facilitates networking and communicates science-based knowledge through an annual conference attended by community leaders, city planners, and resource managers from 96 Ohio municipalities and park districts. Over 2,000 visitors to the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park learn about human impacts on rivers and wetlands inhabited by aerial insect-eating birds.

CONTACT

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