



In Ohio, Thirty Years of Success

For more than 30 years, the Endangered Species Act has helped prevent the extinction of our national treasures. Because of the act, beloved symbols of America such as the bald eagle and the peregrine falcon are thriving and native species to Ohio, such as the Karner blue butterfly and walleye, are recovering in our forests and rivers due to habitat conservation efforts.

Only nine of the 1,800 species protected by the act have been declared extinct since its passage in 1973. Such an astonishing success rate makes the act a true symbol of our nation's commitment to protecting our natural heritage for future generations. It is also an example of the progress that can be made when communities work together to conserve their local wildlife and habitat. With the participation of communities, business and government, less than one percent of development projects reviewed under the act have been halted, proving that we can conserve wildlife without sacrificing progress. With the creation of jobs from tourism and outdoor recreation related to endangered species, it can truly be said that people all over Ohio benefit from the act.

Ohio currently has 31 endangered and threatened species (26 animals and 5 plants).

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Karner Blue Butterfly

Karner blue butterflies are generally associated with oak savannas. Oak savannas are primarily limited to a small region of northwest Ohio known as the "Oak Openings," which extends through Lucas County and into a portion of Fulton and Henry counties. Last seen in Ohio in 1988, the butterfly has declined substantially throughout much of its range. The Karner blue's habitat has been dwindling as a result of residential and commercial land development and the lack of natural disturbances, such as wildfires. Such disturbances help to maintain the butterfly's habitat by controlling forest succession and encouraging blue lupine and other prairie plant species. Blue lupine is key to Karner blue butterfly survival. It is the only food that Karner blue caterpillars will eat, and habitat destruction has reduced its availability, further jeopardizing the butterfly's future. Indeed, the Karner blue has declined to less than one percent of its previous population abundance of over 100 years ago, with



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Bald eagle

most of the decline occurring in the last two to three decades. In 1992, Karner blue butterflies were listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

In 1993, the Ohio Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Team was formed to develop a plan to return the Karner blue to the state. The team consists of representatives from the Ohio Divisions of Wildlife, Natural Areas and Preserves and Forestry, the Toledo Zoo, The Nature Conservancy, Ohio Lepidopterists, Toledo Metropolitan Parks and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. As a result of the team's efforts, ongoing research and habitat management activities were initiated and a population of Karner blue butterflies has been identified in Michigan to serve as brood stock for their reintroduction in Ohio.

The Toledo Zoo began breeding the Karner blue in 1998, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and its Kitty Todd Preserve, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Through this program, more than 1,700 Karner blues have been released in Kitty Todd Preserve, and the butterfly continues to make a comeback in the Buckeye State.

Bald Eagle

When Europeans first arrived in North America in the 1600s, an estimated 100,000

bald eagles called the continent home, but populations declined throughout the United States due to habitat destruction, illegal shooting, and the deadly effects of pesticides like DDT. By 1963, only 417 nesting pairs were found in the lower 48 states. In 1973, the bald eagle was listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. However, due to the banning of DDT, success of reintroduction programs, habitat and nest protection measures and other efforts to restore bald eagle populations, the Fish and Wildlife Service reclassified the bald eagle from endangered to threatened in the lower 48 states in 1995 and have since proposed removing it from the list altogether.

The Ohio eagle population reached a low of four nesting pairs in 1979. That same year, the Ohio Division of Wildlife began a bald eagle restoration project that included placing eaglets from captive breeding programs into nests where eggs had failed to hatch. Additional actions to restore the population focused on education about the importance of the eagle to the state's ecosystem and rehabilitation of injured birds. All of these efforts have contributed to the continued expansion of the bald eagle population in the past 20 years. In 2003, there were a reported 88 nesting pairs of eagles throughout the state, surpassing the Northern State Bald Eagle Recovery Plan goal of 20 nesting pairs by the year 2000. The bald eagle restoration project continues today and is funded by

the sale of the Ohio Bald Eagle License Plate and contributions from the state income tax check off program for Wildlife Diversity and Endangered Species.

Economic Benefits of Protecting Wildlife and Habitat

Ecotourism represents a huge economic force in the country. Each year, millions of Americans travel and pay to view wildlife and take in all that nature has to offer. Much of this activity takes place on the hundreds of national wildlife refuges spread across the country. Nationwide, visits to wildlife refuges generated more than \$1.3 billion in income for local and state economies and an additional \$150 million in tax revenues. Indeed, national wildlife refuges received nearly twice as many visitors in 2004 than Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Yellowstone, Acadia, Grand Teton, and Statue of Liberty national parks combined. And the vast majority of these refuge visitors came from outside the area, further testament to the ability of these special places to draw people and dollars to a region. In Ohio alone, the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge in the northern part of the state generated \$4.3 million in economic activity for the local area.

For more information on the success of the Endangered Species Act, please visit www.saveesa.org.



Defenders of Wildlife

1130 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-4604

tel 202-682-9400 | fax 202-682-1331

www.defenders.org

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