



focus on  
**Fish & Wildlife**

## *Wild turkey restoration*

### *Gobbler range now extends across Indiana - growth of turkey population slows*

Prior to settlement, the eastern wild turkey commonly inhabited the eastern United States. Eastern wild turkeys, one of five subspecies, have always been forest birds, but populations once extended west of the Mississippi River into prairie fringes along riparian corridors and oak savannas. With increasing settlement, forest habitats were cleared. As humans pushed westward, not only did habitat for wild turkeys decline, it also made the remaining birds more vulnerable to unregulated subsistence hunting. Frequently, homesteading families relied on game animals for food and more settlers meant the need for more food. By 1900, wild turkeys were eliminated from much of their historical range, including Indiana. Remnant populations survived only in the most inaccessible forested habitats of the Appalachian and Ozark mountain ranges and the deep swamps of the southern states. Reforestation programs and protective game laws of the 1930s eventually provided the protection that made wild turkey reintroduction possible.

Initial attempts to reintroduce wild turkeys involved the use of pen-reared birds. At the time, remnant wild turkeys existed in very low numbers. They inhabited the most remote areas and there were no effective techniques to trap and transplant these wild birds. Agencies raised and released thousands of pen-reared birds at staggering expense with little or no success. The advent of the cannon net, followed by the more efficient rocket net, provided the tool to trap and transplant wild turkeys from remaining wild populations to forest habitats. Success was immediate. As turkeys were reestablished, their availability increased and soon trade agreements developed between state conservation agencies.

Turkeys trapped in other states, and released in the larger public forests of southern Indiana, provided the initial stock for future trap-and-transplant efforts in Indiana. Between 1956 and 1979, 212 wild turkeys were transplanted to 17 sites. While the initial restoration efforts were meager, they were successful in establishing populations sufficient enough to support the first modern spring hunting season in 1970. That year, 62 hunters harvested six

>pg 3



## **Topics this issue. . .**

*Bobcats in Indiana*

*Bigger, better bass*

*Supershack Skamania steelhead*

*Antlerless deer limits*

*Squirrelishing with Bayou Bill Scifres*

# Director of *Fish & Wildlife*



**Gary Doxtater**  
**DFW Director**

Every so often we like to take a hard look at where the Division of Fish and Wildlife is going, what our priorities are, and what they ought to be.

Many of you already know that only about three percent of our Hoosier landscape is publicly owned. And, only about one percent of Indiana lands are publicly maintained to provide wildlife-related recreation for Hoosier sportsmen and women.

What does this mean for the future of wildlife management in Indiana? We believe that if hunters, anglers, wildlife-watchers, hikers, and the like, hope to be able to share wildlife-related recreation with their families and friends in the years to come, then we must form partnerships with our private landowners. We owe them every courtesy, our respect, and our assistance in order to achieve the stewardship of our wildlife resource. The restoration of the wild turkey in Indiana is one example of a successful partnership between the Department of Natural Resources, conservation organizations, and our private landowners.

We have made it our goal to turn our attention to assisting Indiana's private landowners. Opportunities abound to make positive strides in improving wildlife habitat. Our upland gamebirds, the bobwhite quail and the ring-necked pheasant, and other farm game animals such as the cottontail rabbit, are excellent examples. Conservation provisions of the farm bill present real opportunities to make conservation efforts feasible for Indiana's farmland owners. By sharing our expertise, the buffer strips we plant to conserve topsoil can be made to provide habitat for quail, pheasants, and cottontails while improving water quality in Indiana streams at the same time. Opportunities do abound. We have the experience. Now we must direct our attention to where it is needed most - Indiana's private lands.

We will continue our goal of increasing the availability of wildlife-related recreation on public lands. Our public lands are an Indiana treasure. But, we know we cannot neglect the contribution of our private landowners to wildlife conservation. The landowner that is a conservationist deserves not just our assistance, but our thanks as well.

*“the health and future of our wildlife resource depends upon Indiana’s private landowners.... We owe them every courtesy, our respect, and our assistance in order to achieve the stewardship of our wildlife resource”*

## Division Mission

*“To manage fish and wildlife for present and future generations, balancing ecological, recreational and economic benefits.”*



*Focus on Fish & Wildlife* is a quarterly publication from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Fish and Wildlife. *Focus on Fish & Wildlife* seeks to educate sportsmen and women, conservationists, wildlife recreationists and all Hoosiers on topics related to the management of Indiana's fish and wildlife resources.

**Larry D. Macklin, Director**  
*Department of Natural Resources*

**David Vice, Deputy Director**  
*Bureau of Resource Management*

**Gary Doxtater, Director**  
*Division of Fish and Wildlife*

**Clark McCreedy, Editor**  
*Focus on Fish & Wildlife*

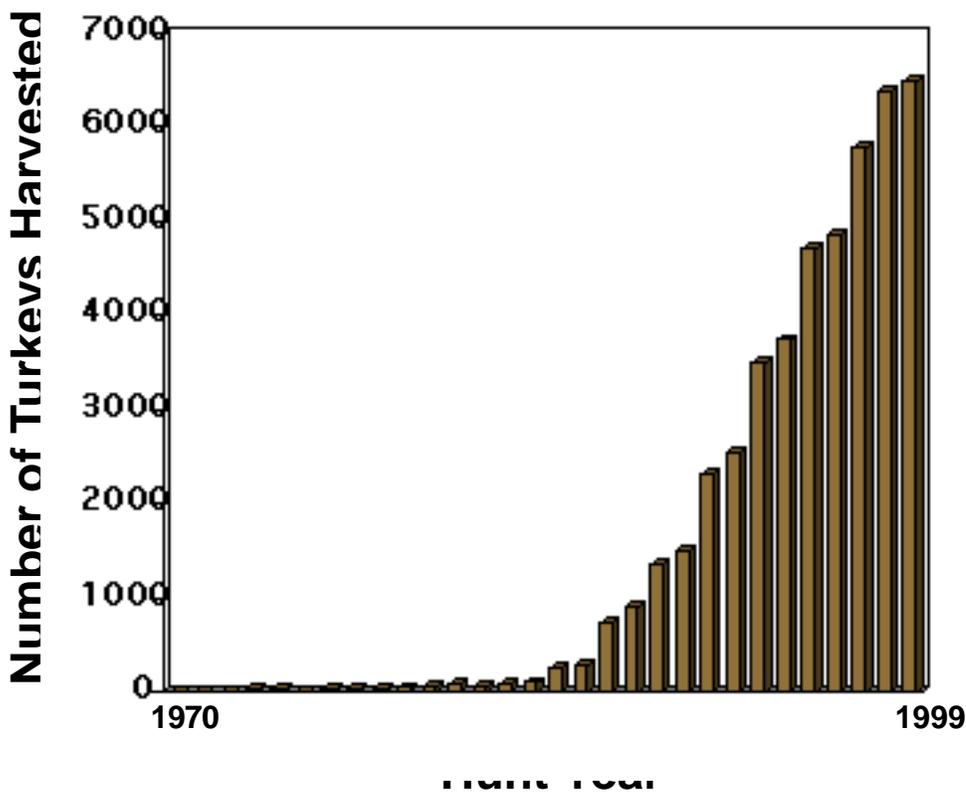
*Focus on Fish & Wildlife* is distributed free of charge. To subscribe, send name, complete address, city, state and zip code. SEND address changes or subscription requests to the following:

Focus on Fish and Wildlife  
402 W. Washington St., Room W273  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

If you have questions about the Division of Fish and Wildlife, please write to the above address or call 317/232-4080.

Visit the DNR  
Division of Fish & Wildlife  
website:  
[www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/index.htm](http://www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/index.htm)





gobblers in the three counties open to hunting. In 1979, 19 counties were open to spring turkey hunting and 48 birds were harvested by 860 hunters during a 12-day season. The seed of interest in turkey hunting had been planted and it would soon grow past its novelty stage.

The success of releases in the agricultural Midwest, especially in landscapes connected by forested drainages, pointed to new opportunities to reestablish turkeys. Habitat criteria were soon developed to shape restoration priorities. Birds were first established in the best habitats. As flocks developed, birds were trapped and transplanted into unoccupied habitats. Turkey restoration programs throughout the country snow-balled forward with more and more birds available for restoration. During the 1980s, Indiana's restoration program kicked into high gear with 1,718 turkeys released at 112 sites. During the 1989 hunt season the spring harvest finally broke the 1,000 mark; over 6,000 hunters, in 39 counties, harvested 1,359 birds during a 15-day hunt.

During the 1990s, releases were directed at marginal habitats

containing less interconnected forest cover. Population growth in many of these marginal areas was slower than areas previously restocked. Biologists monitored the growth of these marginal populations to identify habitat gaps that needed to be considered for restoration.

With the best habitats restocked, the era of successful turkey restoration is approaching closure. To date, 2,618 wild turkeys have been released at 175 sites. Wild turkeys now exist in 80 of 92 counties in Indiana. A little over a generation ago, there were no wild turkeys to be found in Indiana. Now, Hoosiers can view or hunt wild turkeys throughout the state. In 1999, Indiana turkey hunters harvested 6,482 birds with a little over 40,000 hunters taking to the woods in a 19-day hunt that now occurs in 74 counties.

In recent years, hunter success has waned due to the sudden increase in hunter numbers and several years of subpar brood survival during cool and wet Junes. Soon, hunter interest will probably begin to level off. Eventually, additional hunting range in six counties will provide new opportunities to hunt wild turkeys. However, lesser quality habitats will

not produce the substantial jumps in harvests observed in previous years.

While the 1999 turkey season is projected to be the 17th consecutive record harvest, there are signs that turkey population growth is starting to level off across the state. Indiana's turkey program is in the transition of maturing from the restoration era to that of turkey population monitoring and long term management of harvests and habitat.

Rapid population growth and high survival, such as we have seen during the restoration of turkeys in Indiana, are characteristics of a wildlife population as it colonizes new habitats. As habitats are filled, the growth of most wildlife populations slows. In most Midwestern states, biologists have found that the bulk of turkey population growth generally occurs within 12-15 years after the initial release of wild turkeys. Growth of some populations slows in half that time while others struggle initially, taking up to 20 years to reach their full potential.

While several factors influence turkey population growth, the amount and quality of habitat will be the final factor that determines population growth, population density, and the extent of the birds' distribution across our landscape. Human development and areas of intense agriculture can either retard or effectively block turkey population growth and expansion of their range. Future land use changes, such as increased human development of rural lands, will reduce turkey habitats. Turkey populations will eventually decline or disappear again in some areas of the state.

Indiana has a fairly liberal permit and season structure with a conservative bag limit. This has allowed our turkey population to grow while maintaining satisfactory hunting success. Frequent jumps in hunter numbers have coincided with periodic increases in hunting range. Season structure has evolved over time to provide opportunities for Indiana hunters within the constraints needed to protect our wild turkeys. Anyone who wants to can purchase a turkey hunting permit.

Hunters make the choice as to when they want to hunt within a 19-day season. This flexibility allows hunters to avoid high hunter use periods, such as during the first five days and weekends of the hunt season. The length of our season also allows hunters to adjust their hunting days due to inclement weather or changing family and work schedules. As the season progresses, there is a general attrition of successful hunters, or hunters who have grown weary of continual early mornings, allowing more ardent turkey hunters to have the woods to themselves.

As a result of Indiana's accelerated restoration program, turkey hunters have grown accustomed to annual increases in spring turkey harvests over the last 17 years. As the restoration program winds down and the growth of our turkey population levels off, hunters can expect to see some up and down modulations in the annual harvest. It is hoped that these fluctuations will not be drastic.

This sort of periodic fluctuation is already evident in annual hunter success rates and in the annual harvests of some Indiana counties where turkey numbers are now in balance with available habitat. As turkey population growth levels off in more counties, the statewide annual spring harvest will begin to stabilize, signaling a balance between turkey numbers and turkey habitat.

As Indiana's turkey population begins to stabilize, our conservative spring bag limit may become an increasingly important management tool. We know that soon there will be fewer new areas to add to Indiana's turkey hunting range. While some new hunting range will eventually be added as a result of recent restoration work, it will be limited in both its quality and extent. At the same time, hunter numbers continue to increase as new range opens. While there is some indication that hunter interest is beginning to slow, we do not yet know where hunter numbers will level off. The conservative bag limit provides a safety net to buffer these

factors as well as the frequent ups and downs in annual brood production, such as the last several years of subpar production.

In populations of hunted wild turkeys, hunting is the primary source of mortality of adult gobblers. A more liberal spring bag limit could reduce the carry-over of adult gobblers to future years with juvenile (jakes) gobblers making up a larger proportion of the harvest. During the

## Turkey Hunter Success

<u>Year</u>	<u>Success%</u>
1980	8.1
1982	10.5
1984	8.6
1986	17.8
1988	19.4
1990	19.1
1992	19.3
1994	20.1
1996	22.6

last decade, juveniles have composed only about 30 percent of the annual spring harvest. If the proportion of juveniles in the harvest were to substantially increase after several years of high adult gobbler harvests, or several years of poor brood production, hunter success would be increasingly dependent on the previous year's jake crop. Hunter satisfaction would then likely decrease.

An objective of Indiana's turkey harvest management program is to attain an average spring hunter success of at least 20 percent on a sustainable basis. In the future, this objective will be used to evaluate harvest strategies and to assess the opportunities provided to Indiana hunters.

While wildlife managers cannot control the weather and its potential impacts on turkey populations, their expertise can be used to enhance habitat conditions to support and increase the density of wild turkeys. Wildlife managers try to provide a diversity of habitats to support a wide array of species. On large tracts of forest, the amount of potential brood habitat provided by early successional field openings and woodland meadows may be limited. These forest openings provide critical protective cover in which young turkey poults can find adequate insects and invertebrates for food. Protective cover and abundant food greatly improve the chances that more poults will survive those fragile first six weeks of life. Maintaining a small proportion of forest openings or woodland meadows as potential turkey brood habitat is often the catalyst that allows an area to support a high turkey population. In agricultural areas, potential brood habitat may be found in some crop set-aside lands and idle field borders that are allowed to grow into sufficient grassy cover.

Wild turkeys are nearly restored throughout much of their historical range in Indiana. Occasionally, among hunters and non-hunters alike, opinions differ regarding turkey management.

Sound decisions need to be based on a thorough understanding of the population biology of wild turkeys and an over-riding concern for safeguarding our wild turkey resource from over-utilization. Conservation of this resource, commitment to wiseuse, and our management direction ought to be safeguarded with the best science and management technique available. This is the best way to make sure that springtime remains turkey-time in Indiana. ✧

prepared by **Steve Backs**, grouse and turkey research biologist



focus on  
***Natural History***

***Bobcats are among the most secretive of native Hoosiers***

Hidden among the forests, swamps and fields of Indiana is one the most secretive and elusive animals in the Hoosier state: the bobcat. Because bobcats are nocturnal and avoid contact with humans, they can go virtually unnoticed. Most people would be fortunate to catch a brief glimpse of one before it springs out of view.

Bobcats are a medium-sized member of the cat family but remain one of the largest wild mammals in Indiana. Adults are about twice the size of a domestic cat and stand 20 inches high at the shoulder. Body weights range from 15 to 25 pounds. Appropriately named, bobcats sport a 'bobbed' tail about 5 to 6 inches in length. Other characteristics include a spotted reddish brown coat, prominent ears with short black tufts, and facial ruffs along the cheeks.

Unlike most predatory mammals that have disappeared from Indiana, the bobcat is a resilient survivor, well-adapted to a landscape modified by man. They range over much of the United States, southern Canada, and Mexico, but are less common in the agricultural Midwest. Bobcats inhabit a variety of environments throughout North America including deserts, forested

swamps, wooded uplands, high mountain ranges, and grasslands. Reasonable cover in which to hide, an adequate prey base, and denning sites are the bobcat's basic needs. In Indiana, a mix of second growth woodland, brushy areas with thick undergrowth, and oldfields that support high rabbit and rodent populations provide ideal bobcat habitat. Brush piles, caves, and rocky ledges are favorite daytime resting sites. Bobcats are opportunistic predators that rely on their camouflaged body, keen vision and hearing to ambush rabbits, squirrels, mice and birds.

Territorial and solitary, bobcats lead a limited social life. Mating generally occurs in late winter, and two to three kittens are born in April or May following a 62-day gestation period. The young remain with their mother during the first year while they learn predatory skills; they disperse before the female enters another reproductive cycle.

Bobcats once ranged throughout Indiana prior to human settlement, but declined in number as the Hoosier state was developed. Conversion of native

habitats to intensive agriculture use, urban areas, and other developments rendered the bobcat a rarity in the state. They were first listed as endangered in 1969 and granted legal protection with the passage of the Indiana Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act in 1973. Bobcats were rarely reported in the following 20 years, but populations appear to have rebounded recently,

a trend observed in other Midwestern states. Once limited to the southern third of the state, bobcats have now been found in northeast and northcentral Indiana. Of the 28 confirmed reports of bobcats in Indiana, 18 have occurred since 1995. A combination of factors is likely responsible for the sharp increase in sightings. The long-term benefits of protected status, reduced trapping pressure, and the adaptable bobcat's ability to survive in a variety of habitats have probably all contributed to the return of bobcats to Indiana. Regardless of the reason, the return of this native cat to its former haunts adds to the diversity of wildlife found in the Hoosier state. ♡

prepared by **Scott Johnson**, mammal research biologist.

The tracks of bobcats can be distinguished from canines by their round shape and lack of impressions left by claws. The tracks of canines appear somewhat oval in shape and impressions left by nails are almost always evident.

focus on  
***Fish and Wildlife Research***

***Bigger, better bass are the focus of lake management and research effort***

By just about any measure, Indiana's largemouth fishing holds its own when compared to that of our neighbors. Indiana has just as many, or more, largemouth bass per acre of surface water as do Missouri or Ohio waters. Not surprisingly, the fish that most frequently commands the attention of Indiana anglers, preferred over any other, is the largemouth bass.

Several years ago fisheries biologists asked those questions about fishing preference and practices of Indiana sportsmen and women. They decided to put the information to use by improving largemouth bass fisheries in a selected group of lakes. They hoped to produce bigger, better bass. Biologists set their mark at 18 inches or bigger and made it their goal to increase the number of these large fish per acre of surface water.

The tools proposed to accomplish the job were familiar ones: changes in bag limits and minimum size limits. Perhaps more important than the goal of improving fishing for bass, though, was the decision of where to improve bass fishing. Largemouth may lead the way in interest among anglers, but panfish aren't far behind. It wouldn't serve anyone's interest to

grow bigger bass at the expense of somebody else's panfish. The real question wasn't so much the biology of bass, as it was the biology of the lakes they live in. In other words, the goal became to produce better bass in lakes where fisheries biologists could maintain a quality fishery for panfish. Ball Lake in Steuben County, Robinson Lake in Whitley and Kosciusco counties, all lakes on the Tri-County Fish and Wildlife Area in Noble and Kosciusco

counties, and Dove Hollow Lake on the Glendale Fish and Wildlife Area in Daviess County will be the focus of the research project.

Robinson, Ball, and the lakes of Tri-County FWA will be managed with an 18-inch minimum size limit for bass with a daily bag limit of two. Dove Hollow Lake became the state's first catch and release largemouth fishery.

The projects are long-term, multi-year, and each started within the last two to three years. Indiana's fisheries biologists have used the first year of their studies to gather their baseline information before changes in management. It's far too early to come to a solid conclusion, but it looks like in certain lakes this strategy may be worth the effort.

Stu Shipman, north region fisheries research biologist, oversees the Tri-County project and describes local bass anglers as "excited" about what they've seen. And, he says, "it looks like our bluegill are holding their own."

On Turtle Creek Reservoir, where a 20-inch minimum size limit has been in effect, anglers frequently cross paths with larger fish, bass and bluegill. For the most part, bass anglers seem to have responded by pitching in, that is, by returning what most would regard as a trophy fish, back to the water. In lakes that support a diversity of forage fish, it looks like anglers might well be able to have their bass, bigger bass, and bluegill too. ♡

John Maxwell, an Indianapolis angler, boated this largemouth this spring while fishing Turtle Creek Reservoir in Sullivan County. Minimum size limit for bass on Turtle Creek Reservoir is 20" with a daily bag limit of one. Anglers seem to consistently catch larger bass on the reservoir. Photo by Paul Ehret.



prepared by **Clark McCreedy**, editor of *FOCUS on Fish & Wildlife*

focus on  
***State Park White-tailed Deer***

***Priority placed on safety: preference in draw for State Park deer hunts to be given to applicants with hunter education***

Future deer herd reductions in Indiana state parks will emphasize safety by requiring hunter education certification for participants.

"Hunters who have participated in state park deer herd reductions have established an extraordinary safety record over the years. It is my sincere hope that our hunter education

program will help us to continue that fine record," DNR Director Larry Macklin said.

Since 1993, more than 8,500 hunters have helped the DNR to restore a healthy balance to park ecosystems damaged by overabundant deer. It has not yet been determined which parks will need to reduce deer herds this year.

Vegetation studies are currently underway within state parks. Decisions to conduct hunts will be made later this summer or in early autumn based upon analysis of the research.

Participants in state park deer herd reductions are selected in random drawings. This year, hunters who do not have a hunter education certificate will only be eligible to fill open hunt positions after all hunter education certificate holders have been selected. In 2000, hunters will be required to have completed a hunter education course in order to participate in state park firearms hunts. Participants in state park deer herd reductions must be Indiana residents age 18 and older and

possess a valid deer hunting license.

One year ago, hunters who participated in the archery-only hunt at Clifty Falls were required to complete the International

Bowhunter education course. DNR staff and representatives from the Indiana Deer Hunters Association and Indiana Bowhunters Association were

so impressed with the process that emphasizing hunter education for all park hunt participants was a natural.

"We at the DNR support the efforts of these groups to increase hunter education and safety," Macklin said.

About 12,000 people take hunter education classes in Indiana each year. The 10-hour class

provides basic instruction on ethics and responsibilities of hunters, wildlife management, firearms safety, identification of wildlife, and first aid.

If you have not yet completed a hunter education course, there is still time to sign up. You can find details about hunter education classes on the Internet at [www.state.in.us/dnr/lawenfor/hunt-edu.htm](http://www.state.in.us/dnr/lawenfor/hunt-edu.htm) or by contacting the DNR Law Enforcement office nearest you. Check the *1999-2000 Hunting and Trapping Guide*, available free at sporting goods retailers, for local phone numbers, or call 317/232-4010. ♦

**For 1999:** Firearm hunters with Indiana Hunter Education certification will be given preference in selection. Bowhunters will need International Bowhunter Education certification to participate.

**For 2000 & after:** Firearm hunters will have to be certified through the Indiana Hunter Education program to participate. Bow hunters will need International Bowhunter Education certification to participate.

---

## Upcoming Hunter Education Courses

---

**Bartholomew County**  
September 11 & 18  
Contact: 812/988-9761

**Cass County**  
August 27 & 28  
Contact: 219/664-9952

**Huntington County**  
September 18 & 19  
Contact: 219/468-2165

**Lake County**  
August 13 & 14  
Contact: 219/793-1700

**Lake County**  
September 3 & 4  
Contact: 219/793-1700

**Monroe County**  
August 7 & 8  
Contact: 812/988-9761

**Noble County**  
September 18 & 19  
Contact: 219/347-1223

**Porter County**  
November 6  
Contact: 219/996-2697

**Wayne County**  
August 7  
Contact: 765/962-4463

---

## Upcoming Bowhunter Education Courses

---

**Lawrence County**  
August 29  
Contact: [ghelton@smithville.net](mailto:ghelton@smithville.net)

**Putnam County**  
July 31  
Contact: [dallas1894@aol.com](mailto:dallas1894@aol.com)

focus on  
***Fish & Wildlife Management***

***Indiana's steelhead program  
launched from the 'Supershack'***



Indiana's start in the business of steelhead began in 1969 when biologists from the Indiana DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife made a call to the State of Washington. Biologists were interested in Washougal River steelhead that naturally began their spawning run in early summer. From among these fish, Washington biologists had successfully bred a genetic strain of these fish known for early egg development. These traits made them an excellent candidate for a hatchery rearing program. The next year, eggs from Washington's west coast Skamania hatchery were on their way to the Hoosier state.

The air-freight arrival of 156,000 steelhead eggs accelerated a scramble

among Indiana's fisheries biologists to come up with a cold-water fish hatchery. The days-old eggs found their first home within the fisheries display tanks at the Indiana State Fair. Weeks later, the newly hatched steelhead were transferred to the Curtis Creek Trout Rearing Station in Howe, Ind. where they were grown until stocked. With no more in hand than the success of their first effort, Indiana's fisheries biologists began to build their own Skamania hatchery on the grounds of the Kingsbury Fish and Wildlife Area in LaPorte County. Soon thereafter, the 'Supershack' was in full steelhead-producing operation.

Ed Braun, now one of Indiana's district fisheries biologists, was the first full-time manager, and part-time

construction worker, assigned to the Supershack. Ed quickly became known as 'Mr. Gadget' by his colleagues for his ability to manufacture the working machinery of a fish hatchery from little more than orphaned materials rescued from a salvage yard.

The Supershack, birthplace of what many consider Indiana's most striking sportfish, began its service as the lowliest of utilities: the camp pit toilet. It was the plywood from two-holers constructed for a camping jamboree at the Atterbury Fish and Wildlife Area that formed the roof and walls of Indiana's first steelhead hatchery. With a roof overhead, the next challenge was to deliver a constant water supply. The Supershack needed a super tank.

It is no exaggeration to say that Indiana's first steelhead were launched into Trail Creek and the Little Calumet River. Once plumbed and fitted, a surplus missile transport container became the recirculating tank for the Supershack.

Supershack Skamania began to appear in Indiana's two Lake Michigan tributaries by 1973. These fish have always lived up to their Supershack heritage. They explode from the water when hooked and can peel line from a reel with bullet-like speed.

The Supershack was retired in 1975 when the Mixsawbah hatchery near Walkerton came on line. In 1983, the Bodine hatchery started operations in Mishawaka to provide steelhead and salmon for the St. Joseph River. Management has since become a multi-state effort in order to protect the health of a Lake Michigan salmonid fishery now enjoyed by thousands.

Though hatchery managers and fisheries biologists appreciate their better facilities, every worthwhile achievement still requires the same surplus-salvage-yard-ingenuity and refuse-to-fail effort that cobbled together the Supershack. And, if the whole truth were known, there is probably a roll of duct tape somewhere in that photo as well. ✧

prepared by **Clark McCreedy**, Editor of *FOCUS on Fish & Wildlife*

focus on  
***Outreach in Fish & Wildlife***

***Volunteers take the lead in maintaining fishing access through the Adopt-an-Access program***



The Division of Fish and Wildlife has developed more than 330 public access sites to provide a way for Hoosiers to find their way to our state's waters. Every year about eight new access sites are added

to the inventory of places where Indiana sportsmen

and women can find a place to fish, boat, or otherwise enjoy Indiana's waters. It might come as no surprise that the task of maintaining these access sites is above and beyond the resources of the Division of Fish and Wildlife. However, an exceptional group of outdoor enthusiasts has taken on the task of ensuring that some of these sites are maintained through the Adopt-an-Access program.

The more use our access sites receive, the more they require attention and clean up. Individuals, families, youth groups, conservation clubs, civic organizations - anyone willing to help protect Indiana's natural resources - can lend a hand by adopting an access site at one of two levels of maintenance. Site sponsors maintain public access by either removing trash or by volunteering to remove trash and to maintain grassways by mowing. Those volunteering to adopt an access site are asked to maintain their adopted site for one year.

Volunteers receive special recognition for their work. The name of the site's "sponsoring caretaker" is posted at the site.

Youth groups, such as scouts and 4-H, can take advantage of the educational and service opportunities available through the site maintenance program. Young participants can learn first-hand about Indiana's natural resources and man's impact on the environment through their Adopt-an-Access experience.

DNR public access sites are listed in the *1999 Indiana Fishing Guide*, which is available wherever sporting licenses are sold. If you or your group is interested in adopting one of Indiana's public access sites, write to The Adopt-an-Access Program, Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife, R.R. 2, Box 477, Mitchell, IN 47446, or call 812/849-4586. ✧

---

prepared by **Clark McCreedy**, Editor *FOCUS on Fish & Wildlife*

Michiana Steelheaders Leo Frawley, Joe Kamor, and Bill Bauer at work maintaining the Frank Zappia Public Access Site in Mishawaka.



focus on  
***People in Fish & Wildlife***

***"Bayou" Bill Scifres***

"Bayou" Bill Scifres is king of the combo.

Bill's outdoor-oriented articles, published for 45 years in the *Indianapolis Star* under the heading of *Lines and Shots*, often described ways to combine outdoor activities to achieve maximum enjoyment no matter what the season. Among the thousands of articles that Bill published, he wrote about combination opportunities for smallmouth fishing/mushroom hunting, chopping wood/dove hunting, and catfishing/blackberry picking.

Last September, Bill and his younger brother Jack introduced John Maxwell and me to squirrelishing - the quintessential outdoor combo sport. We fished and hunted along the Muscatatuck River where Bill and Jack stomped around as kids.

If you are like most hunter/anglers, every now and then your stringer comes up empty on days when hordes of bushytails have bounded from limb to limb and barked their disapproval from the leaves above. Later, with .22 in hand, the trees are frustratingly silent.

Bayou Bill makes sure he is prepared for any outdoor opportunity, so he conceived and refined the sport of squirrelishing. Bill first tried to carry along a .22 rifle while wading streams, but found it awkward pulling his gun into position to get off a shot at a loafing gray.

The act usually resulted in a reel

plummeting to the river bottom, a great deal of splashing, and a squirrel running safely to cover. Bill solved the wet-reel problem by creating a stance in which he balances the reel-end of the fishing pole on his shoulder, extends the rod out onto his hand, and steadies the barrel of the gun along with the rod. Bill executes the move from casting to shooting with amazing grace and speed.

If you decide to try squirrelishing, keep your gun unloaded with the safety on while fishing. Safe gun handling is important while scrambling along wet banks and wading through holes. Check the barrel for mud before firing and be prepared to give your gun a good cleaning when you are done. My .22 was covered with Muscatatuck muck at the end of the day.

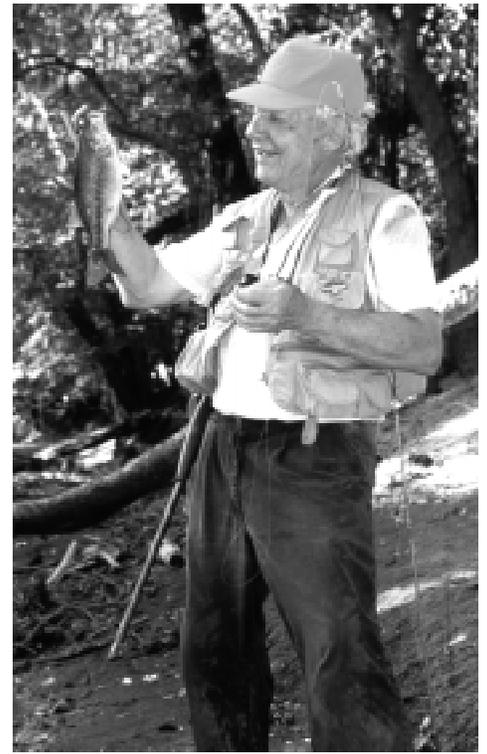
When we hit the river last fall, the fishing was slow and the squirrels were nonexistent, but I enjoyed the day more than the times when I have come home with a full bag.

Bill is truly a naturalist. His knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the outdoors extends far beyond hunting and fishing. His enthusiasm is invigorating. He speaks to the outdoors - literally - and it seems to speak back to him.

"Come here beautiful. Let me look at you. Come sit on my arm," Bill coaxed to a blue admiral butterfly that sat on the wet sand along the riverside while he took a break from fishing. I have never been with

someone who enjoyed the outdoors

as much as Bill seems to. When he hooked a small "red belly" he laughed as he reeled it in saying, "come here little guy." After landing the 3-ounce fish, he admired it for a few seconds before gently returning it to the water. I didn't expect this fascination



from someone who has caught hundreds of thousands of fish in his 70-something years.

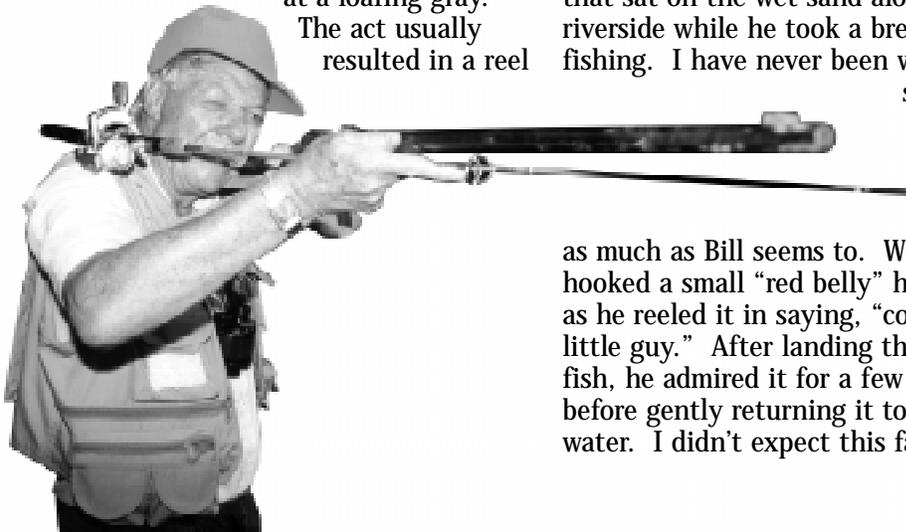
Bill caught the finest fish of any of us on that day. John Maxwell and he hooked a few crappie and a half dozen bass just under keeper size. Bill prophetically recognized what he called "bassy lookin' spots" that produced the best catches. Bill used a wooden minnow called a "Tiny Ashley." He had acquired a dozen of these 1 1/4-inch sunfish-like lures a couple of decades ago, but was down to his last one.

"If this thing gets snagged, I'm going to have to strip down to my Skivvies to get it," said Bill. All of us were thankful that he avoided any serious snags that day.

Bayou Bill resigned his position as outdoor columnist with the *Indianapolis Star/News* earlier this year. Though the Indianapolis paper no longer publishes his work twice each week, Bill's column is still widely published. At last count his weekly column was syndicated in 15 papers throughout the state.

If your local paper doesn't offer a regular source of outdoor information, you might suggest the editor contact Bayou Bill Scifres (bayou@gte.net or 317-849-6016). ✧

prepared by **Jon Marshall**, natural science manager - public affairs.



## Turn your radio on and tune in to the best of Indiana Outdoors

Hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation take to the air every Saturday morning when Bryan Poynter broadcasts *Indiana Outdoors* throughout the state. The new radio show, which premiered June 12, features a full hour of conservation related discussion, tips, tactics, how-to and where-to-go information for everyone interested in enjoying life out-of-doors in the Hoosier state.

"We want to take listeners where the action is," said Poynter, *Indiana Outdoors* host. "We have reports coming in from across the state about where the fish are biting and where the hunting is hot."

Before you head out this Saturday, tune in to hear what's happening outdoors in Indiana – or call the show to talk about your outdoor experiences.

*Indiana Outdoors* is broadcast every Saturday from 5 to 6 a.m. on these stations:

WBIW-AM	1340	Bedford
WZBD-FM	92.7	Berne
WGCT-FM	105.1	Bloomington
WCSI-AM	1010	Columbus
WTRC-AM	1340	Elkhart
WHWD-AM	1380	Fort Wayne
WREB-FM	94.3	Greencastle
WIBC-AM	1070	Indianapolis
WIOU-AM	1350	Kokomo
WNVI-AM	1460	North Vernon
WRIN-AM	1560	Rensselaer
WKVB-AM	1490	Richmond
WSKT-FM	92.7	Spencer
WAOV-AM	1450	Vincennes



Bryan Poynter, host of the weekly radio show *Indiana Outdoors*

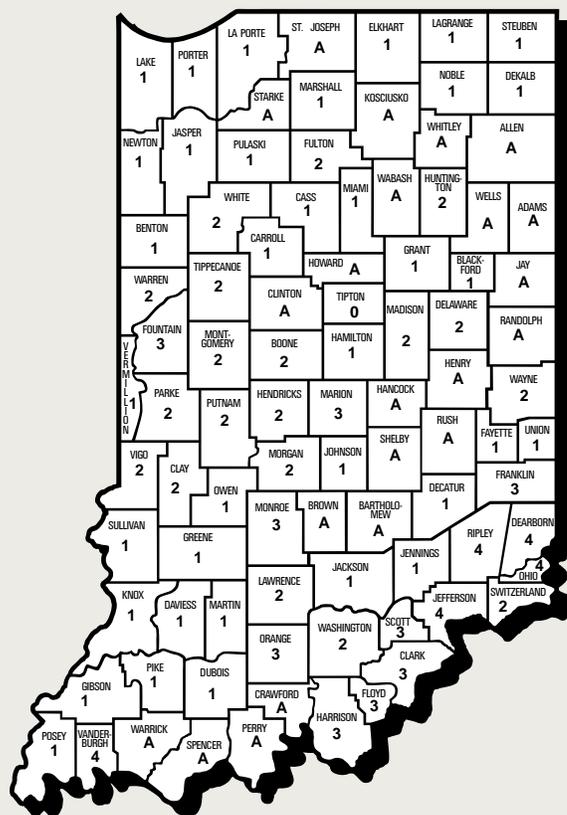
## Early season bowhunters needed to participate in wildlife survey

If you plan to bowhunt in the early archery season, wildlife researchers want to borrow your eyes and ears. Division of Fish and Wildlife biologists are looking for 1,500 deer archery hunters to record the wildlife they see while hunting from Oct. 1 through Nov. 13. Biologists use sightings by bowhunters of wildlife such as red fox, rabbits, coyotes, squirrels, quail, and ruffed grouse to monitor wildlife population trends from year to year.

If you would like to be considered to participate, send your name and address no later than Sept. 15, 1999 to:

**Archer Survey**  
**Division of Fish and Wildlife**  
**R.R. 2 Box 477**  
**Mitchell, IN 47446**

Participants will be selected for the 1999 season based on county of residence and will be uniformly distributed throughout the state.



## Antlerless deer bag limits set

Antlerless deer bag limits for the coming season will change in 17 Indiana counties. Bag limits have decreased in Clinton, Crawford, Hancock, Perry, Posey, Spencer, Starke, Switzerland, Union, and Warrick counties. Bag limits have increased in Dekalb, Delaware, Greene, Jefferson, Marshall, Monroe, and Owen counties. All other county bag limits will remain the same as last season.

Hunters will be allowed to harvest up to four antlerless deer, either does or immature bucks, statewide. A bonus deer license is required for each harvested deer and hunters must honor county bag limits. For example, hunters that harvest an antlerless deer in a county with a bag limit of one may harvest up to three additional deer in other counties as long as they do not exceed individual county bag limits. Hunters may take one antlerless deer during a restricted season in counties that receive an 'A' designation. Harvest of antlerless deer in 'A' counties will be allowed from Nov. 25 to 28 during the muzzleloader season and during the late archery season from Dec. 4 to Jan. 2.

For additional information on bonus antlerless deer harvest, call the DNR's Deer Hotline at 812/334-3795 or visit the Division of Fish and Wildlife web page at [www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/index.htm](http://www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/index.htm).

**Black-crowned  
night heron**    **Tippecanoe darter**

**Blanding's turtle**

**Lake Sturgeon**

**Hellbender**

Smooth green snake

**Orange-foot  
pimpleback**

Golden-winged warbler

**Smoky shrew**

Swamp rabbit

**Wavy-rayed lampmussel**

**Blue-spotted salamander**

Over 550 species of Indiana birds, mammals, fishes, molluscs, reptiles and amphibians do not receive the benefit of research and management due to lack of funding; 138 of these species are classified as endangered, threatened, or of special concern. Title III of the **Conservation and Reinvestment Act**, now pending before Congress, would provide \$6 to \$8 million annually for conservation and education in Indiana.

Funds for the Conservation and Reinvestment Act will come from offshore oil and gas revenues. Not since the Pittman-Robertson Act, or the Dingell-Johnson Act, has there been legislation with greater potential to protect and conserve wildlife and wildlife habitats. For more information, contact the Division of Fish and Wildlife at 317/232-4080.

Address Service Requested

Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Department of Natural Resources  
402 W. Washington St., Room W273  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317/232-4080



BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
INDIANAPOLIS, IN  
PERMIT #7429