

# focus on *Fish & Wildlife*

## Winter birds, wildlife watching

### Winter birds in Indiana

American crow  
American goldfinch  
American kestrel  
American tree sparrow  
Barred owl  
Black-capped chickadee  
Black duck  
Blue jay  
Canada goose  
Carolina chickadee  
Carolina wren  
Cedar waxwing  
Cooper's hawk  
Dark-eyed junco  
Downy woodpecker  
Eastern screech-owl  
European starling  
Evening grosbeak  
Golden-crowned kinglet  
Goldeneye  
Great horned owl  
Hooded mergansers  
House finch  
House sparrow  
Mallard  
Mourning dove  
Northern cardinal  
Northern flicker  
Northern mockingbird  
Pileated woodpecker  
Pine siskin  
Purple finch  
Red-bellied woodpecker  
Red-breasted nuthatch  
Ruby-crowned kinglet  
Sharp-shinned hawk  
Snow goose  
Song sparrow  
Tufted titmouse  
White-breasted nuthatch  
White-throated sparrow  
White-crowned sparrow  
Winter wren  
Yellow-bellied sapsucker  
Yellow-rumped warbler

The air is crisp and frost paints the ground. The wind has left the trees bare and all the animals appear to be hibernating. But, wait! If you look closely, you can see a small movement in a tree. Moving from branch to branch is one of nature's signs of winter, the white-throated sparrow. It leaves the shelter of the branches and lands on the ground to eat some seeds. The time for winter birdwatching has begun.

Birdwatching is a hobby enjoyed by millions of people across the country. It is not just a warm weather sport. In a survey completed in 1996 by the U.S. Bureau of Census for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 60.8 million people said they observed, fed or photographed wildlife around their homes. Of this number, more than half fed wild birds and 44 percent observed wildlife. Birds were reported as the most frequently viewed wildlife by survey participants.

Indiana has numerous bird species that are either permanent year-round residents or winter visitors. "During the winter months, birds are mainly concerned with finding food, water and shelter," said John Castrale, biologist for the Division of Fish and Wildlife. "The behavior you see while birdwatching is linked to meeting these needs."

Birds tend to flock together in the winter to gain more protection from predators and more eyes for finding food. The food resources change as fruit, berries and seasonal insects disappear from the landscape. Winter



birds rely on seeds and insects to keep their metabolism running high. Supplemental high energy food sources, such as suet and black oil sunflower seeds, help birds keep their internal temperature high enough to

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### *Topics this issue. . .*

*Nongame program funding*

*Deer collisions*

*Nuisance animal control*

*The facts on catfish*

# Director of *Fish & Wildlife*



**Gary Doxtater**  
*DFW Director*

As you may have heard, Mark Cottingham, the editor of this newsletter and an information specialist with our division, died September 25 in a car accident in Indianapolis.

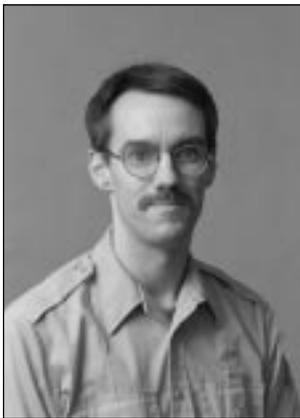
This Focus newsletter was Mark's "baby" and, as you have probably noticed, a newsletter that was continually improving as he strove to improve our DNR division's communication with Indiana's citizens. He was a good listener and a good teacher.

The most recent improvement came two issues ago when Mark expanded Focus from four pages to twelve pages. He improved the paper and the printing and stuffed these extra pages with better photographs and in-depth magazine style articles. More than one hundred of our readers took the time to contact us and praise the improvements.

With Mark's death, the citizens of Indiana have lost a great friend and advocate. I spent many pleasant hours with Mark discussing natural resources management, and Mark always had a very well developed sense of right and wrong. His convictions were strong and rooted in a good up-bringing.

The accident reminded me that our time in Indiana is not endless. And that it's not what we do for ourselves that will last, but what we do for others that will go on — like this newsletter, or the informative news releases Mark developed and wrote, or the State Fair Wild Game Cookout, an event that Mark organized every year. Mark's work impacted hundreds of thousands of people and raised awareness about fish and wildlife resources throughout the state. And it also reminded me of how Indiana is better because of the many DNR employees like Mark—people dedicated to improving our state even when other pastures were often greener.

We could always count on Mark. He was our go-to guy when things got rough. He was intelligent and usually cheery in all types of weather. And I believe that somewhere he's still pulling for us. It's always good to have a friend and advocate in high places.



Mark Cottingham  
1961-1998

**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.

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**Visit the DNR  
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[www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/index.html](http://www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/index.html)

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# A deer in the headlights

Hoosier motorists are most likely to be involved in deer-vehicle accidents during the fall months, but it is important to remain alert year round.

In 1997 alone, 10,268 deer-vehicle accidents were reported in Indiana. Even though this number sounds high, when compared to other states, Indiana's deer-vehicle collisions are quite low.

The number of reported deer-vehicle accidents is one of the more important indices that biologists use to evaluate deer population trends. Studies in a number of states, including Indiana, have shown positive correlations between the number of deer-vehicle accidents and deer harvest figures.

In 1997, Indiana's deer harvest dropped 15 percent from the previous year's harvest. In the same year, the state saw a 12 percent decline in deer-vehicle collisions – a drop of more than 1,200 deer-vehicle collisions in a year.

Motorists tend to drive more miles as urban areas and human populations grow. Biologists improve the use of deer-vehicle accidents as an indicator of deer population trends when they take into account the number of miles

driven in each county. This standardization gives a more meaningful picture of the deer herd over time.

In 1997, there were 146 deer-vehicle collisions per billion miles driven – a 19 percent decrease over the previous year. Seventy-eight percent of Indiana counties showed a decrease in accidents per billion miles traveled over 1996 levels. Despite the drop in accidents, it is still important to stay alert and follow a few precautions to avoid collisions with deer. (See below.)

The recent decline in the deer harvest has caused some people concern about Indiana's deer herd. The Division of Fish and Wildlife sets hunt seasons and bag limits to maintain the herd at a healthy, stable level, and, according to DNR biologists, deer continue to thrive throughout the state. This management goal promotes ecological balance, provides recreational opportunities for



wildlife watchers and hunters, decreases deer-vehicle collisions, and reduces crop and habitat damage by deer. ✧

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prepared by Mark Weaver, Deer Survey Biologist.

## Avoiding the Collision

- Adjust driving speed to lighting situations. Slower driving during low light situations gives you more time to react.
- Scan the roadside for deer (often eyes will reflect headlights). Feeding deer could easily dart into traffic. Slow down.
- Deer often travel in groups, seeing one deer may mean that others are nearby. Reduce your speed. Stay alert.
- Be aware of deer crossing signs. The Indiana Department of Transportation posts the warning signs to alert drivers of frequent deer crossing areas. The signs indicate a general area rather than an exact crossing point.
- Deer are creatures of habit. They will cross a road in the same general area time after time.
- To increase visibility, use high-beam headlights at night in rural areas whenever other vehicles are not present.
- Do not swerve to avoid hitting a deer. State police reports indicate that accidents resulting from loss of control of the vehicle generally are more severe than accidents resulting from an impact with an animal.





Tim and Matt Christie

urban areas today, the Christie's business is one that is in great demand. Wildlife control professionals are required by the state of Indiana to have permits that allow them to control, outside the regular hunting and trapping seasons, a nuisance wild animal. These individuals must also submit year end reports that track the types and numbers of animals that the individuals handle, the name and address of the landowner assisted, the date of assistance and the method of disposition. The law also states that animals taken under this permit shall not be possessed for more than twelve hours and shall not be sold, traded, bartered, or gifted. The Christie's have always carried the appropriate permits through the Division of Fish and Wildlife, they also carry insurance so they are protected in case of accidents.

Seven years ago, when Tim began the wildlife management business, business was slow.

Tim's wife, Mona, helped him by answering phone calls for the business and by going out on some of the calls for him. The whole Christie family helps at times with the business.

Matt began helping his father in 1994. It was at this point when the business started to grow. They placed an ad in the yellow pages that year. Since then, their business has increased by 120 percent. They now spend about 30 hours a week working with property owners and the animals. On top of all those hours, Tim and Matt both work full time jobs. All this work takes a lot of patience, tons of dedication and very understanding spouses.

Today, Matt's wife, Bridget, has become an integral part of the business. Bridget handles phone calls and is the first person to talk to customers who are often frantic. She is skilled at

## People in *Fish & Wildlife*

*The Christie's*

### Managing urban wildlife

While many wildlife species have adapted well to living among people, not all people have adapted well to living with wildlife. Because of this, Tim and Matt Christie have successfully built a wildlife management business in Terre Haute. Tim started the business, Wildlife Management Services, in 1991 and his son Matt has been involved in the business for the last four years. Tim wanted a business in which he had a heart-felt interest.

"I have spent a lifetime studying animal behavior," said Tim. It is this knowledge that allows both Tim and Matt to help people around Terre Haute manage their urban wildlife.

Before Tim decided to start the business, he approached his local conservation officer to see if the area had a need for a professional wildlife management service. The officer thought it was a great idea and got Tim the appropriate paper work to fill out. With wildlife thriving even in



Setting a mole trap.



calming customers down and giving them advice on how to handle a situation until Tim or Matt can get there.

Sometimes Bridget is able to handle the situation over the phone. This not only saves Tim and Matt time, it also saves the property owners money. A lot of phone calls that the Christies receive do not need a service call, the property owner just needs to be given some information about the species they are having trouble with. For instance, a lot of landowners get upset if they see an opossum on their property, and they want Wildlife Management Services to come and trap the animal. It would be very expensive for Tim and Matt to do a job like that because opossums do not typically take up residency in any one area. They tend to be roamers. It might take Tim and Matt two weeks to catch that opossum, if ever. So, they try to reassure the customer that is best to leave the animal alone. This is the most practical solution for all three parties (customer, animal and Wildlife Management Services).

In the beginning, the Christies didn't think they would have return customers, but now they have some customers that they work with every year. Terre Haute has some old neighborhoods with large trees and plenty of food that are squirrel and raccoon havens. In these areas, the Christies will often work with landowners year round to keep their wild animal populations in check. They have also realized over time that a big part of their job is education. More and more, people are becoming detached from the natural world and do not understand wildlife. Tim and Matt try to explain to their customers a little about why the animals might be there and what they can do to eliminate the problem. A little education goes along way in making their job easier.

Wildlife Management Services is more than just trapping animals from customers attics. Tim believes that many trappers want to get into the business to extend their trapping season.

"There is a lot more to the business than just trapping the animals, it is more public relations than animal relations," said Tim.

Tim and Matt do a lot of preventative and repair work to keep the animals from entering or returning to properties and structures. Some of the preventative work they do consists of installing chimney caps and roof vent covers. The repair work is usually to fix an existing problem, like a hole in the roof or soffit where an animal has entered the property.



Matt places a chimney cover to keep the animals out.

They have also had to deal with some odd animals. They once rescued a Savanna monitor from a neighborhood and they retrieved a boa constrictor from a customer's shrub. The Christies have removed and excluded many types of animal for customers. On a regular basis they work with: skunk, squirrel, raccoon, mole, beaver, muskrat, pigeon, geese and bats. They are trying to teach their young herding dog to scare geese from local apartments and have begun working on goose behavior modification.

Tim and Matt are members of the Indiana Animal Damage Control Association (IADCA). They work closely with this group and other animal damage control professionals to better themselves and their profession. They are working with IADCA and the national association to get a cost effective insurance for professionals in the animal control business. IADCA is an important group for control professionals because it allows individuals like Tim and Matt to meet others in their field and share new ideas and frustrations. This association works hard to keep their members up to date on the newest disease information, on changing laws and regulations and on new methods of removal or exclusion. Tim is also involved with Bat Conservation International. Bat Conservation International works to promote the importance of bats in our ecosystems. Tim helps them with a study on how bats use man-made bat houses. Tim has used his connection with Cinergy to hang the bat houses high on electric poles in suitable habitat. ❖



prepared by Amanda Wuestefeld, Information Specialist.

# Programs of *Fish & Wildlife*

## Indiana's Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program



Relatively new in the field of wildlife management are programs focusing on wildlife species not regulated by hunting, fishing and trapping laws. These animals, often referred to as “nongame” species, include almost every aspect of the animal kingdom. In Indiana, 85 percent of our wildlife species fall into this nongame category. This new focus on nongame wildlife programs began at the same time as a growing concern for endangered species swept the nation. Since information and management strategies were needed for both nongame and endangered species, many states combined them into one conservation program.

In 1981, the Indiana legislature created the state's Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program (NEWP). It became a unit of the Department of Natural Resources' Division of Fish and Wildlife. Funding for the new program followed the next year when a checkoff was approved for the state income tax form. Through donations to the Nongame and Endangered

Wildlife Fund checkoff, Hoosiers continue to play an important role in the protection of Indiana's nongame wildlife.

Each year, over 40,000 citizens donate all or a portion of their refund to the Endangered Wildlife Fund checkoff. Other Hoosiers, those not receiving tax refunds or who hear about our endangered species through educational programs or media coverage, often send a separate donation. Over the sixteen years of the fund's existence, the number and amount of donations have stayed fairly consistent.

Donations to the Endangered Wildlife Fund are the main source of funding for Indiana's Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program. From this financial base, NEWP develops projects aimed at protecting and managing more than 550 wildlife species in the state. This conservation goal is accomplished by using a variety of strategies. The most widely recognized technique is the restoration of endangered species



River otters at Salamonie River.

# Support the Nongame & Endangered Wildlife Program

You can help by contributing all or a portion of your tax refund on line 27 of your Indiana state income tax form. If you are not eligible for a refund but would like to donate, simply send a check or money order to:

**Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Fund**  
**Division of Fish and Wildlife**  
**402 W. Washington Street, Room W273**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46204**

For information concerning otter sponsorships or other special projects contact Kathy Quimbach, Nongame Information Specialist, at the above address.

to the state. Three endangered species have been restored to Indiana since 1985: the bald eagle, peregrine falcon and river otter. Each of these projects was funded almost exclusively by donations to the tax checkoff. Those donations are now paying dividends. This year, Indiana hosted 19 pairs of nesting bald eagles, eight pairs of nesting peregrine falcons and 75 more river otters were released in Indiana waterways. Biologists report seeing otter pups at seven of the ten current release sites. But, restoration efforts are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to preserving our unique wildlife heritage.

The majority of NEWP projects are aimed at determining what species are located in different areas of the state and their population sizes.

Research is also conducted to determine the threats facing our endangered species. This information, combined with information about the needs of each species, is important for creating management plans that benefit these animals.

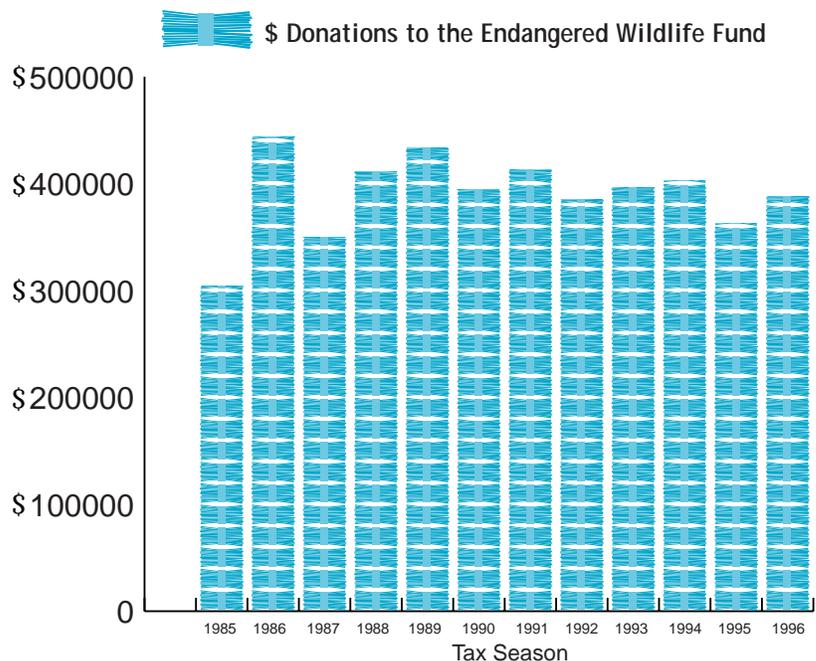
Wildlife also benefits when habitats are protected or improved. Bat gates protect the endangered Indiana bat and the habitat it needs for a safe winter hibernation. Nest boxes provide additional space for barn owls and peregrine falcons to raise their young.

Along with making donations to the Endangered Wildlife fund, you can assist NEWP by reporting any endangered species you see. Useful information includes a general description of the animal(s), where

and when you saw it, how many animals there were and what they were doing. A list of Indiana's endangered species is available on the Web at [www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/index.htm](http://www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/index.htm) or by writing to the Division of Fish and Wildlife address above. Reports of endangered wildlife help biologists track movements and population trends of endangered species.

When preparing your taxes, remember to "Check out the eagle" and donate to the Endangered Wildlife Fund. Your support of the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program will ensure that your children and grandchildren have a diversity of wildlife species to enjoy. ♡

prepared by Kathy Quimbach, Nongame Information Specialist



# Catfishing

Channels, flatheads, yellow bellies, Mr. Whiskers – all names for a favorite of Hoosier anglers: the catfish.

Many people learn to fish by angling for catfish, which are common in most Indiana waters, but are especially sought after in rivers, streams and southern impoundments.



These fish are good to eat, abundant and can be readily caught with inexpensive fishing equipment. Whether the persistent tug-tug-tug of a bullhead, the lightning quick hit of a channel catfish, or the thrill of watching a big flathead make a four inch cottonwood tree dance on the bank of a large river, each experience adds to the joy of fishing and the outdoor experience.

Channel catfish, flathead catfish, blue catfish, white catfish and three species of bullheads are found in Indiana.

Blue catfish are not generally regarded as native to Hoosier lakes and streams north of the Ohio river drainage. However, they commonly move into many southern Hoosier rivers. Catfish have very small scales, which give their skin a smooth slick texture. This group of fish is characterized by a fleshy adipose fin

on the dorsal or top side of the fish. Catfish have three sharp, bony spines located at the front of the dorsal and two pectoral fins. They also have barbels or whiskers attached to the lower jaw. The sharp spines of the catfish are defensive tools. They can deliver a painful puncture to

predators and careless anglers alike. Barbels, often called whiskers, are sensory tools that help the catfish seek out food in the dark environments these fish call home. Very little is known about the function or purpose of the distinctive adipose fin.

Channel catfish have gray bodies with white underbellies. Small channels have spots. Their strongly forked tail separates them from bullheads.

Flathead catfish are distinguished from channels by their

distinctive head and body coloration. Blue catfish differ from channels only slightly. Blue catfish have a longer anal fin supported by 30 or more rays. Channels have 24-29 rays. White catfish can be distinguished from channel catfish by a distinct coloration difference and an anal fin possessing 19-23 rays. White catfish do not have spots. Black, yellow and brown bullheads are common in Indiana. The three species of bullheads are quite similar to each other. However, all the bullheads are separated from the other species described here by a square, rather than a forked tail.

According to the 1994 angler survey, the most commonly sought catfish in Indiana is the channel catfish. Channels can be found in about every body of water in the state. These fish reproduce successfully in rivers, streams and

large impoundments. Reproductive success is usually poor in smaller impoundments and ponds, which are routinely stocked with fish to provide good fishing. One possible reason for limited reproduction is that catfish eggs and fry are highly susceptible to predation in small bodies of water. In fact, channel catfish fingerlings make such fine prey that the Division of Fish and Wildlife rears channel catfish to a size of about eight inches before stocking to maximize the odds of survival of stocked fingerlings.

In a natural setting, catfish spawn in a hollow along the shoreline of a river, stream or large lake. The eggs are protected by the male catfish. The male gently fans the eggs with his tail to circulate fresh water through the egg mass. After the hatch, the small fry form a school that resembles a small dark cloud hovering around the adult male. The male then does his best to guard this school from predators until the fry can fend for themselves.

Channel catfish are fairly easy to raise, but there are some tricks to the process of collecting and hatching the eggs. Spawning activity at Cikana State Fish Hatchery usually begins early in July. Catfish are allowed to spawn in milk cans placed in shallow water around the edge of ponds containing brood fish. Adult males claim the cans and eventually entice females to enter. The females deposit eggs, which are fertilized by the male.

Catfish eggs are deposited in a Jello-like mass. The egg mass can weigh up to several pounds depending on the size of the fish producing the eggs. Hatchery personnel collect one- to two-day-old egg masses by hand and transfer them to incubation facilities. The eggs are incubated in specially-made hatchery jars.

Catfish eggs have a deep golden or straw color at the beginning of the incubation period, but quickly turn red as incubation progresses. The eggs hatch in about eight days if the water temperature is around 78

degrees. The newly hatched fry are held in hatchery tanks and trained to accept artificial feed for about a week, then moved to outside ponds for the duration of the growing period. Catfish are usually stocked as yearlings at a size of eight or ten inches.

In Indiana, channel catfish are stocked to provide fishing opportunities. The channel catfish is second only to the walleye as the most preferred fish stocked by the DNR. Over 100,000 catfish are stocked at more than 100 different sites each year. Research shows these fish provide good fishing, but have very little impact on existing

sport fish communities in small lakes and ponds where they are stocked. Channel catfish are not stocked in areas where natural reproduction sustains good populations of these fish. The state record channel catfish weighed 37 pounds 8 ounces and was caught in Vanderburgh County in 1980.

Flathead catfish are high order predators. The Indiana state record flathead catfish weighed 79 pounds 8 ounces and was caught in Lawrence County in 1966. These fish are not routinely stocked by the DNR. From time to time, adults are collected and used in reintroduction efforts for some very specific fish management programs. Flatheads typically inhabit big rivers and large reservoirs. They often become the topic of legends when anglers, and even scuba divers, encounter huge specimens in rivers and large reservoirs. Anglers generally use specialized equipment and techniques to pursue this remarkable animal.

Bullheads represent a third group



of catfish commonly sought by anglers. These fish are abundant in some natural lakes where they reach a large size and have earned a devoted angler following. The state record bullhead weighed 4.9 pounds and was caught in St. Joseph County in 1994. In small lakes and ponds, bullheads frequently become stunted at a small size, then contribute to water quality problems by muddying the water during their search for food. Many young anglers have learned to fish by catching bullheads. These fish are large enough to bend the fishing pole and cause excitement, yet common enough to provide fast action. They bite persistently, making it easy for young anglers to set the hook and learn the sport.

The white catfish is the least abundant species of catfish normally considered a sport fish in Indiana. This distinct species is not rare, but is uncommon in Indiana. The state record white catfish weighed 9.72 pounds and was caught in Wabash County in 1985.

Indiana fishing regulations require anglers catching fish in streams to release catfish less than ten inches in length. A daily bag limit of ten fish has been established for lakes and reservoirs. There is no catfish bag limit for streams. There is no bag or size limit on bullheads.

Catfish baits range from live fish and worms to pungent stink bait formulas. Virtually every legal hook and line combination has been used to catch catfish. Most boat and shoreline anglers opt for a rig consisting of a slip sinker on the main line, separated from a medium size, snelled, bait holder hook by a swivel. More specialized anglers use

limb and trot lines, floating jugs, even specially rigged fly rods with good success.

Catfish are found in virtually every body of water in Indiana. Their abundance makes it difficult to target "best" fishing spots. The where to fish section of the Fishing Regulations booklet provides some good suggestions. Biologists normally recommend rivers and large reservoirs for the biggest fish. Smaller ponds usually provide the fastest action. Numerous public access facilities, suitable for anglers of all skill and ability levels, are available statewide.

Catfish are active throughout the year. This means the best time to go catfishing is whenever the opportunity presents itself. Mr. Whiskers is an Indiana tradition. Give him a try. ♡

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prepared by Gary Armstrong, Hatcheries Supervisor.



### What food attracts which birds

*These foods are a quick source of energy and protein, which helps birds keep their body temperature up for warmth during cold winter months.*

Food	Birds
Suet	Woodpeckers, chickadees, mockingbirds, warblers, titmice, nuthatches, jays, starlings, wrens
Niger/thistle seed	Goldfinches, house finches, purple finches, pine siskin, dark-eyed junco, white-throated sparrow
Black oil sunflower <small>(Black oil sunflower seeds are high in fat and protein with a softer, easier to break shell than gray and white striped sunflower seeds.)</small>	Cardinals, chickadees, nuthatches, titmice, finches, blue jays, woodpeckers and nuthatches.
Safflower seed	Goldfinches, chickadees, blue jay, woodpeckers, grosbeaks, mourning doves, cardinals, finches, nuthatches

stay warm throughout the night.

Providing food for birds, either through feeders or native winter plantings, has become one way to attract birds for winter birdwatching. Many of Indiana's winter birds are common backyard visitors. To attract different types of birds, you need to use different types of food. One of the most common winter bird foods is suet. This combination of lard and other ingredients such as cornmeal, seeds, nuts and berries, provides food for many birds, especially insect eaters like the woodpeckers. Black oil

sunflower seeds are also an important winter food and are preferred by birds over the gray and white striped sunflower seeds. Like suet, black oil sunflower seeds are high in fat. They also have soft shells that are easy to crack open.

Songbirds are not the only birds that come to call. Small birds at feeders occasionally attract predatory raptors. Cooper's hawks and screech owls can be seen in suburban and rural residential areas throughout the year.

Your backyard is only the

beginning of winter birdwatching adventures. Birds can be found in any Indiana habitat during the winter months. The most majestic winter bird is the bald eagle. Each year, southern Indiana hosts a wintering population of bald eagles. Eagles that nest in northern states, such as Michigan and Wisconsin, fly south in the winter to find open water. In Indiana, they congregate around large bodies of water like Monroe and Patoka reservoirs, and along large river systems, such as the Wabash and White rivers. They can be seen throughout the state in late February and March when they migrate back to nesting territories.

Roadsides and fence rows throughout the state provide hunting grounds for red-tailed hawks and American kestrels. These birds of prey are more easily seen in the winter, perching on leafless trees or sitting gracefully on fence posts or powerlines. Open water areas hold wintering waterfowl such as ducks and swans. Chickadees, woodpeckers, golden-crowned kinglets and titmice may brighten a winter walk in the woods. Sparrows and horned larks search grasslands and harvested cropland for food.

Wherever you are, there are general rules of etiquette to follow when watching birds and other wildlife. Move slowly and quietly so the birds are not disturbed. Your goal is to see the natural behavior of birds in the wild and to enjoy their presence as long as possible. Never chase or harass animals. The fight or flight response this triggers in the animal uses valuable energy that is needed to stay warm and survive. Don't pick up orphaned or injured animals. Respect the rights of others. If there are other people watching the same bird, be careful not to scare it away.

Birdwatching adds color to your winter. Take advantage of the many opportunities to watch and learn about Indiana's diversity of bird species. And the next time the snow flies, enjoy the feathered view from your window. ✧

prepared by Kathy Quimbach, Nongame Information Specialist

## Big Fish, Big Stories, Big Contest

If the "big one" didn't get away, enter it in this year's record fish program. Each year the Division of Fish and Wildlife honors anglers for the biggest catch of the season, Indiana's Fish of the Year.



Forty-five species categories are open for awards. Entries do not have to be state record size. Even a small fish can win if it is the biggest entered in its category.

Anyone can enter, and enter more than once. Only a few rules apply. The fish must be taken legally by hook and line from Indiana waters. The fish must be caught in public or private fishing waters where there is no fee. To enter complete the entry form and send it in with a copy of your fishing license and a good picture of your catch to the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

With recent changes to the program, even catch and release participants can enter.

Winners receive a certificate and a colorful jacket patch. Entry information is located in the Fishing Guide. Pick up a copy at your local sporting goods store or call (317) 232-4080 and request a copy.

## WILDLIFE ARTISTS WANTED

### Increased prize money

Submit designs for the 2000 and 2001 state migratory waterfowl, trout/salmon and game bird habitat stamps and the 1999-2000 and 2000-01 Hoosier Outdoor Calendars.

The contest is open to all artists, regardless of residency. Artwork is accepted until April 15, 1999. All artwork must have an official entry form attached.

A total of two first place winners and two honorable mentions are selected for each stamp category, and two first place winners and ten honorable mentions are chosen in the calendar category. First place artists receive \$1500 and honorable mention artists receive \$750. All winning entries will be featured in the Hoosier Outdoor Calendar.

Call the Division of Fish and Wildlife for contest rules and an entry form, (317) 232-4080.

## Indiana Nuisance Wildlife Hotline

# 1-800-893-4116

from Lafayette area, call 496-3968

## DNR webpage location

The Department of Natural Resources has moved its website. Surf on over to [www.state.in.us/dnr](http://www.state.in.us/dnr) for department wide information.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife site is located at [www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/index.htm](http://www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/index.htm). This site contains the latest news releases, regulation guides and other information from the division.

## Federal Funds Proposed for Wildlife and Land Conservation

Progress on the federal legislation that includes Teaming With Wildlife continues. Two bills, collectively known as the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (H.R. 4717 and S. 2566), were introduced in Congress on October 7, 1998. Title III of both bills contains the goals of Teaming With Wildlife. In Title III, the legislation proposes long-term, consistent annual funding for wildlife conservation, and for the support of wildlife education and recreation programs.

The money for this legislation would come from Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas royalties that formerly went into the federal treasury. The annual return to Indiana from the legislation would be between \$15 - \$18 million a year.



**TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE**  
*a natural investment*

Title I is the Coastal Impact Assistance for Lake Michigan area conservation. Title II is the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which contains permanent funds for urban and state parks. Title III, Wildlife Conservation and Restoration (TWW), extends existing programs to aid game and non-game wildlife in supporting the health and diversity of habitat as well as providing funds for conservation education.

More than 60 member groups joined the Indiana Teaming With Wildlife Coalition. Included are conservation organizations, sportsmen's groups, businesses and tourism and convention organizations. Because the legislation will be reintroduced early in 1999 in the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress, Members of Congress need to be contacted to show support for the Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1998.

# Wild Turkey Season

April 21, 1999 to May 9, 1999

## Bag Limit

The bag limit and possession limit for wild turkey is one bearded or male turkey per season.

## Hunting Hours

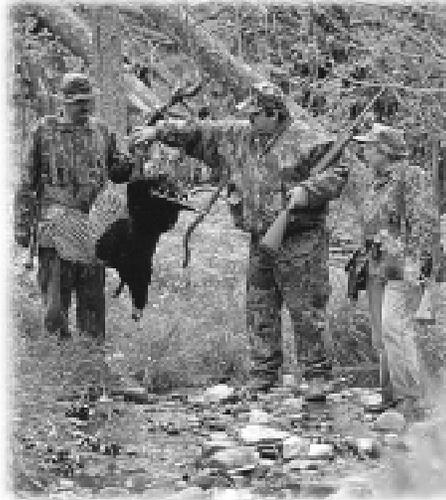
1/2 hour before sunrise to 12 noon EST (11 a.m. CST). Turkey hunters must leave the field by 1 p.m. EST (12 noon CST).

## Legal Equipment

- Bow and arrow
- 10-, 12-, 16- or 20-gauge shotguns loaded with pellets of size No. 4, 5, 6, 7 or 7 1/2.
- A muzzleloading shotgun loaded with pellets of size No. 4, 5, 6, 7 or 7 1/2. Combination loads using shot sizes other than these are illegal.

## Check-In

Turkeys must be checked in at an official turkey check station within 24 hours of harvest or before leaving the state.



**14** Fourteen properties are participating in this year's reserved wild turkey hunts. Applications are available in the 1998-99 Hunting Guide. Pick one up where you buy turkey licenses or call 232-4080 to request a copy. **The application deadline is March 15, 1999.**

- Atterbury Military Training Site
- Crosley FWA
- Glendale FWA
- Jasper-Pulaski FWA
- Jefferson Proving Grounds
- Kingsbury FWA
- LaSalle FWA
- Minnehaha FWA
- Mississinewa Reservoir
- Pigeon River FWA
- Salamonie Reservoir
- Splinter Ridge FWA
- Willow Slough FWA
- Winamac FWA

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