

American Fisheries Society (AFS)

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Ohio Sea Grant College Program

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Wetlands and fisheries



What is the Ohio chapter of American Fisheries Society? The American Fisheries Society (AFS) is a professional organization composed of educators, scientists, biologists, and managers trained in fisheries-related disciplines.

Mission Statement

AFS increases public awareness of the importance of wetlands in supporting diverse fish communities. This fact sheet provides additional sources of information with a wide range of perspectives regarding the value of wetlands.

Importance of Wetlands to Fish

Many species of fish are dependent upon wetlands during all or part of their lives. Wetlands provide many valuable functions important to fish:

Ecosystem Diversity and Stability

Wetlands play a significant role in maintaining a high level of biological diversity. The variety of habitats provided by wetlands increases species diversity, richness, and numbers. Community diversity leads to community stability.

Spawning Habitat

Shallow, dense stands of aquatic vegetation are ecologically important as spawning substrate for fish.

Nursery Habitat

Aquatic plants protect young fish from predators.

Food Production

Nutrients, shallow water, and plants provide the necessary mix for the production of algae, zooplankton, and invertebrates, which are utilized by young fish.

Water Quality

Wetlands serve as a natural buffer zone between upland drainage areas and open water. They improve water quality by removing heavy metals and pesticides from the water column; these pollutants are bound to particles that settle out and become part of the sediment. Wetlands remove nutrients, such as phosphorous and nitrogen compounds, by incorporating them into plant tissue.

Types of Wetlands Used by Fish

Bogs

Bogs are isolated wetlands that receive little runoff water, and are acidic and generally unproductive. They provide habitat for several of Ohio's endangered and nongame species.

Diked Wetlands

Dikes are constructed to allow for the mechanical control of water levels, which maximizes production of emergent vegetation.

Fens

Fens are isolated wetlands that receive somewhat greater inputs than bogs, and are less acidic and more productive. They support several of Ohio's endangered species.

Floodplains

Floodplains are temporary habitats created by excessive rainfall or meltwater. They provide refuge from strong river currents during high water periods.

Freshwater Estuaries

Estuaries are drowned river mouths characterized by a zone of mixing lake and stream water. Fish have free access to the system at all times. They provide nursery areas and are important to resident and transient species of fish.

Littoral Areas

Littoral areas are at the margins of lakes extending to a depth of 2 meters (6.6 ft). Emergent, submerged, and floating vegetation are common.

Marshes

Marshes are dominated by emergent vegetation, such as reeds, sedges, and grasses, and are located along lake and river margins. Marshes can also be isolated. Fish communities here can become diverse with numbers becoming abundant.

Swamps

Swamps are dominated by flooded timbers, are rich in nutrients, and provide exceptional wildlife habitat.

Ohio Sea Grant Extension Program

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Buffalo District
1776 Niagara St.
Buffalo, NY 14207
716-879-4209
www.lrb.usace.army.mil/

Ducks Unlimited
One Waterfowl Way
Memphis, TN 38120
901-758-3825
www.ducks.org/

Fish and Wildlife Service
National Wetland Inventory
Center
9720 Executive Center Dr.
Monroe Building, Suite 101
St. Petersburg, FL 33702-2400
727-570-5400
<http://wetlands.fws.gov/>

Fish and Wildlife Service
Central Ohio Office
6950 Americana Pkwy.
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068
614-469-6923
<http://midwest.fws.gov/Reynoldsburg/>

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**Natural Resources
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P.O. Box 2890
Washington, DC 20013
202-720-3210
www.nrcs.usda.gov/

**Natural Resources
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Central Ohio Office
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Room 522
Columbus, OH 43215
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The Nature Conservancy
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6375 Riverside Dr., Suite 50
Dublin, Ohio 43017
614-717-2770
<http://nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/ohio/>

**Ohio Department of Natural
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1840 Belcher Dr.
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WILDLIFE
www.dnr.state.oh.us/wildlife/

**Ohio Department of Natural
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4383 Fountain Square Dr.
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Columbus, OH 43224
614-265-6610
www.dnr.state.oh.us/soilandwater/

**Ohio Environmental
Protection Agency**
Public Information Center
122 South Front St.
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614-644-3020
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www.pheasantsforever.org/

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