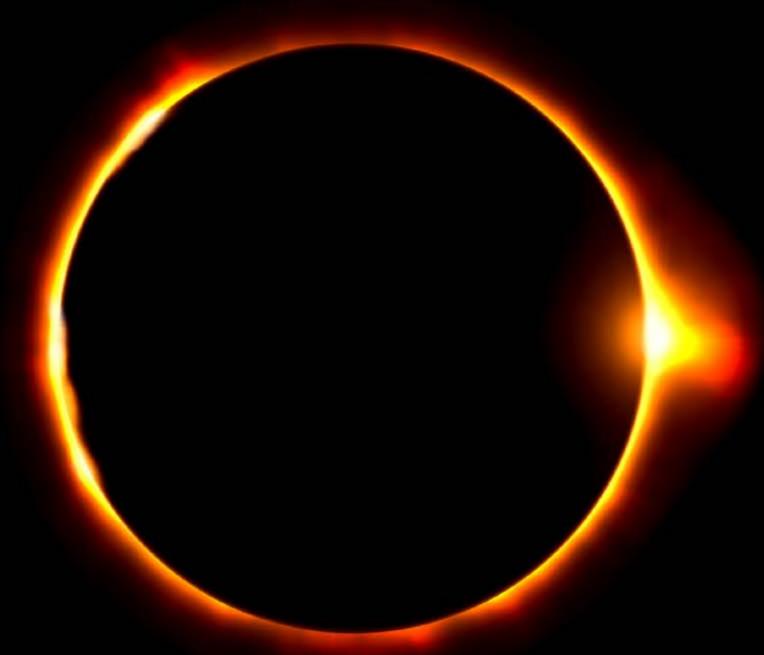




NOCTURNAL WILDLIFE OF OHIO AND THE 2024 TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE field guide

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



INTRODUCTION

On April 8, 2024, Ohio will experience a total solar eclipse that will move from northwest of Cincinnati and Dayton along a line northeast to Lake Erie, just west of Cleveland, in a matter of minutes. This once-in-a-lifetime event will not occur in Ohio again until 2099.

The Ohio Division of Wildlife is interested in how wildlife react during a total eclipse. We reviewed information from past eclipses in Ohio and compiled this special Solar Eclipse Wildlife Guide to help wildlife watchers observe their local wildlife during the total solar eclipse. This field guide is a collection of species most likely to be seen within the path of totality.

We encourage residents and visitors to connect with us at our 28 focus locations within the path of totality and join our iNaturalist project to tell us what behaviors you see from the wildlife around you. Go to [iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org) and sign up for an account. Once you have an account, join the project titled Ohio Wildlife Observations: Solar Eclipse 2024. We ask that you make observations 30 minutes before totality, during totality, and again 30 minutes after totality. You can make more observations if you'd like, but these three observations would be most helpful.

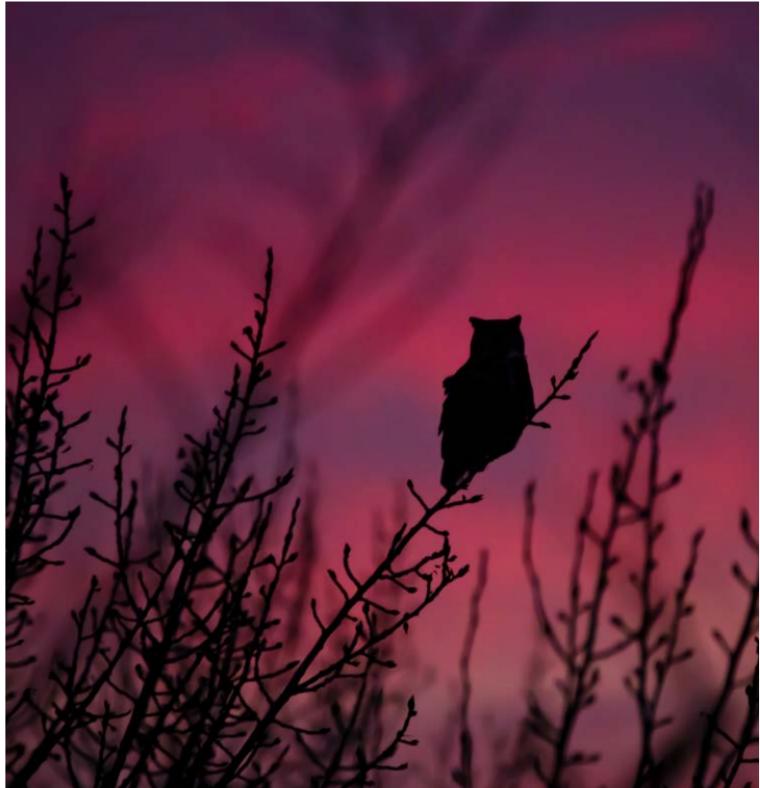


The species presented in this field guide are those you'll most likely encounter within the path of totality. Many of these species could exhibit behavior changes before, during, and after totality. Bats, owls, moths, small mammals, and other nocturnal animals may emerge to feed. Diurnal or daytime birds, squirrels, and insects may quiet down and take shelter in the darkness. You may see all of this in reverse as light returns after the eclipse.

We don't know what behaviors to expect from animals during the eclipse. Your participation in this citizen science project will help us learn about what happens during this rare phenomenon.

There are 23 state parks and five wildlife areas featured during the eclipse. You can join us at any of these locations to view the eclipse and make observations. Please expect traffic to be heavy in the zone of totality as many people from around the country will make the trip to see this event. Pack plenty of snacks and water, make sure your car has fuel and your cell phone is charged, and don't forget your eclipse glasses!

Go to ohiodnr.gov/eclipse to find more information about eclipse resources and programs around the state.



Great Horned Owl

NOCTURNAL WILDLIFE OF OHIO AND THE 2024 TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

Avoid looking directly at the sun without specialized eye protection for solar viewing. Safe viewing eclipse glasses are thousands of times darker and should comply with the ISO 12312-2 international standard. Eclipse glasses are NOT regular sunglasses; regular sunglasses, no matter how dark, are not safe for viewing the sun.

Viewing any part of the bright sun through a camera lens, binoculars, or a telescope without a special-purpose solar filter secured over the front of the optics will instantly cause severe eye injury.

For more information visit
[https://science.nasa.gov/eclipses/
future-eclipses/eclipse-2024/safety/](https://science.nasa.gov/eclipses/future-eclipses/eclipse-2024/safety/)

ECLIPSE GLASSES



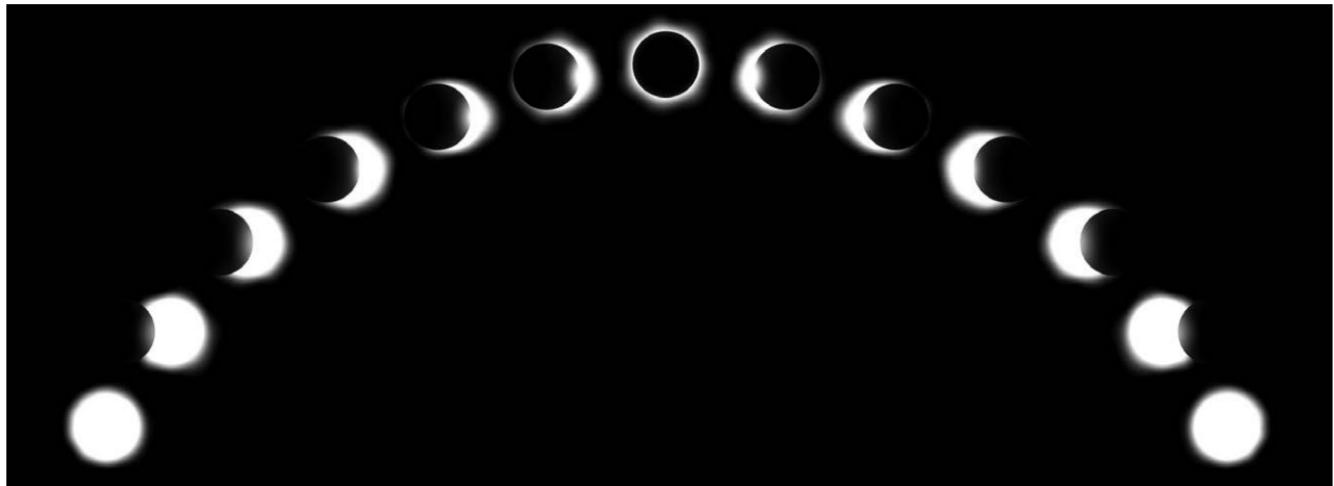
RANGE

The map represents where a species is found in Ohio. Darker colored areas of the map are more likely to contain that species.



SPECIES ACCOUNTS

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BIG BROWN BAT

Eptesicus fuscus

DESCRIPTION: Uniformly light to dark brown on the upperparts, with slightly paler underparts. The fur is relatively long and silky, and the muzzle is not furred. The ears and wing membranes are black. Big brown bats have large heads with short, rounded ears.

SIZE: Big brown bats weigh between 0.5 and 0.9 ounces and range from 4.3 to 5.1 inches long.

HABITAT: In the summer, big brown bats are found in a variety of habitats, including fields, forest openings, urban and/or suburban areas, and around water. In the winter, big brown bats hibernate in caves, mines, and even attics.

DID YOU KNOW?: The big brown bat is the second largest bat species in Ohio. It is commonly seen because it comes out earlier in the evening than other bat species.



STRIPED SKUNK

Mephitis mephitis

DESCRIPTION: A skunk's hair is mostly long and black, with a broad patch of white on its head and shoulders. Two white lines of hair forming a V extend from the shoulder part or all of the way to the base of the bushy tail.

SIZE: Striped skunks weigh between 4.9 to 9 pounds and range from 20 to 30 inches long.

HABITAT: Skunks are found in somewhat open areas with a mixture of habitats such as woods, grasslands, and agricultural clearings.

DID YOU KNOW?: Skunks do not usually discharge the foul smelling contents of their scent glands unless threatened. They are highly nocturnal and not often seen, but the shallow divots in lawns and flowerbeds created by their digging are a sign of their presence.



RACCOON

Procyon lotor

DESCRIPTION: Mostly gray or black in color with a pale gray underside. A black face mask is rimmed on top and bottom with white. Raccoons have a long bushy tail with four to six black or dark brown stripes.

SIZE: Raccoons weigh between 9 and 22 pounds and range from 16 to 36 inches long.

HABITAT: Raccoons live in urban, suburban, and rural wooded areas near big trees and water. Although primarily nocturnal, raccoons are sometimes seen foraging in daylight.

DID YOU KNOW?: Male raccoons are called boars and females are called sows. While raccoons do not hibernate, they become less active in winter and spend much of their time in dens.



BARRED OWL

Strix varia

DESCRIPTION: Barred owls are one of Ohio's largest owls. They are one of the state's two owl species with dark-colored eyes; all of Ohio's other owl species have yellow eyes. Barred owls lack ear tufts but have prominent facial discs. Their upperparts are mostly brown in color with white mottling, and their underparts are prominently marked with vertical brown streaking.

SIZE: Barred owls range from 18 to 25 inches tall, with their wingspan ranging from 50 to 60 inches.

HABITAT: Barred owls prefer mature forests, particularly swampy woods and ravines with American beech trees, which provide hollow cavities for nesting.

DID YOU KNOW?: The barred owl's call sounds like "Who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?" Barred owls often respond to imitations of their call, even barking dogs.



FAMILY: STRIGIDAE

STATUS: Common

GREAT HORNED OWL

Bubo virginianus

DESCRIPTION: Great horned owls are powerful and thick-bodied with prominent ear tufts. Females are larger, averaging about a pound heavier than males. These predators are near the top of the food chain and are the largest resident owl in Ohio. Great horned owls usually prey on small birds and mammals, but can take ducks and even skunks.

SIZE: Great horned owls range from 18 to 25 inches tall, with their wingspan ranging from 36 to 60 inches.

HABITAT: Great horned owls occupy open areas such as scattered woodlots, meadows, marshes, and other semi-open habitats. They are also found in agricultural areas and suburban sites.

DID YOU KNOW?: This magnificent species became quite rare in Ohio by the early 1900s but today is once again abundant statewide.



NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD

Mimus polyglottos

DESCRIPTION: Mockingbirds are capable of learning and mimicking up to 200 different sounds, and the subjects they mimic can be quite diverse. In addition to accurately reproducing bird sounds, mockingbirds have been known to imitate truck beeps, sirens, and whistles. Unmated male mockingbirds often sing at night.

SIZE: Northern mockingbirds are 10 inches long, with a wingspan ranging from 13 to 15 inches.

HABITAT: Often found in suburbia, prefers open areas interspersed with shrubs and thickets.

DID YOU KNOW?: A flash of white on the wings is a common field mark to look for when birding. Mockingbirds repeat their imitations at least three times, while other mimic species stop at one or two recitations.



NORTHERN RING-NECKED SNAKE

Diadophis punctatus edwardsii

DESCRIPTION: These little snakes are black or dark gray above with a bright to pale yellow underside. As their name implies they have a ring around their neck that is yellow to yellowish orange. Normally mild tempered when first caught, ring-necked snakes discharge a pungent substance from their musk glands and wiggle wildly to escape.

SIZE: Northern ring-necked snakes range from 10 to 16 inches long.

HABITAT: Ring-necked snakes occur throughout Ohio except for the west-central and extreme northwest counties. They prefer rocky, wooded hillsides and cutover wooded areas. Ring-necked snakes are basically nocturnal and spend most of the day concealed beneath logs, stones, boards, and similar objects.

DID YOU KNOW?: Unlike most snakes, ring-necked snakes tend to deposit their eggs in a community nest, frequently in rotted logs exposed to the sun.



COMMON SNAPPING TURTLE

Chelydra serpentina

DESCRIPTION: The snapping turtle is the largest turtle in Ohio. Snappers have a longer tail and larger head than other turtle species relative to body size. Their powerful jaws can do damage to a misplaced finger, and caution should be exercised when handling these bold turtles.

SIZE: Snapping turtles have a carapace (upper shell) that ranges from 8 to 14 inches long.

HABITAT: Found statewide in permanent bodies of water as well as ephemeral wetlands and ditches.

DID YOU KNOW?: Snapping turtles are seen less frequently than other turtles because they seldom bask in the sun except in early spring. From May through June, female snappers may be seen crossing roads in search of sites to lay their eggs.



SPRING PEEPER

Pseudacris crucifer

DESCRIPTION: At the first hint of spring, the spring peeper makes its appearance, often while traces of ice still remain on the shallow breeding ponds. Although small enough to sit comfortably on a dime, this tiny tree frog has a shrill, birdlike peep or whistle which can be heard for a surprisingly great distance. The peeper can be identified by the prominent dark X marking on its back, as well as by its characteristically rounded tree-frog toe pads.

SIZE: Spring peepers range from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches long.

HABITAT: After the breeding season, peepers move upland to moist woodlands where they spend the summer hiding among shrubs and feeding on insects and other small organisms.

DID YOU KNOW?: A female spring peeper lays between 750 and 1,300 eggs, which are attached in small clusters to submerged vegetation. After tadpoles hatch, they go through metamorphosis into adults over 45 to 90 days.



AMERICAN TOAD

Anaxyrus americanus

DESCRIPTION: American toads have short legs, stout bodies, and skin that is noticeably warty. They tend to have one, two, or three warts in each of the dark spots on their backs and a belly peppered with black spots. Their overall coloration can range from yellow to brown to black and can change depending on the temperature.

SIZE: American toads range from 2 to 3½ inches long.

HABITAT: American toads are common in Ohio and can be found nearly everywhere, from urban backyards to remote woodlots. They prefer shallow bodies of water such as ditches and temporary pools for breeding. On land they seek hiding places under boardwalks, flat stones, logs, and wood piles.

DID YOU KNOW?: American toads have been reported to live to 30 years of age.



STINGING ROSE CATERPILLAR MOTH

Parasa indetermina

DESCRIPTION: This species is one of two types of slug moths in Ohio, named because of their slug-like caterpillars. These caterpillars are around an inch long and often vividly colored with poisonous spines that can cause a stinging rash. Adults have green forewings edged in brown and yellow to pale green hindwings. This species readily comes to outdoor lights.

SIZE: Stinging rose caterpillar moths range from 1 to 1.2 inches long.

HABITAT: Forests and woodlands, occasional in suburbs and towns. Caterpillars feed on the foliage of rose, dogwood, apple, cherry, hickory, maple, poplar, and oak species.

DID YOU KNOW?: Females lay eggs in July, which hatch in about nine days. The larvae hide on the underside of leaves before pupating in mid- to late September. They will spend the winter inside the cocoon until they emerge as adults in spring.



ROSY MAPLE MOTH

Dryocampa rubicunda

DESCRIPTION: The rosy maple moth is classified as a giant silkworm but is relatively small compared to most members of the family. These moths can vary greatly in color. The upperside of the wings can range from yellow to cream to white with pink spots on the margins. The amount of pink is also greatly variable. The bright coloration suggests that these moths may be distasteful for predators.

SIZE: Rosy maple moths range from 1.3 to 2 inches long.

HABITAT: Rosy maple moths likely occur in all of Ohio's counties and frequently visit lights after nightfall.

DID YOU KNOW?: An unrelated and uncommon moth, the pink prominent (*Hyparpax aurora*) closely resembles the rosy maple but has a different pattern of pink markings.



THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT WILDLIFE

In nature, it is virtually impossible to apply hard and fast categories such as diurnal and nocturnal. There can be a large amount of overlap among species, and for individuals within species, in terms of daily and/or seasonal behavior habits. It is possible for the activity patterns of wildlife to change due to variations in weather, food availability, or human disturbances. The designation of diurnal or nocturnal represents the most common activity patterns of each species.

ACTIVITY

Diurnal – Most active during the day

Nocturnal – Most active at night

Crepuscular – Most active at dawn and dusk

DIET

Carnivore – Feeds primarily on meat

Insectivore – Feeds primarily on insects

STATUS

Endangered – species is in imminent danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range

Threatened – species that are likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future

Special Interest – species occurs periodically and is under minimal management efforts; Ohio is often at the edge of its range

Concern – species that might become threatened, under continued or increased stress

Uncommon – localized; infrequent

Common – widespread and frequent



Stinging Rose Caterpillar

Herbivore – Feeds primarily on plants

Omnivore – Feeds on both plants and meat



For more information about Ohio's native wildlife, please contact the ODNR Division of Wildlife:

1-800-WILDLIFE

1-800-945-3543

(1-800-750-0750 Ohio Relay TTY only)

WILDOHIO.GOV

To mail a donation, send to:

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY FUND

2045 Morse Road, Bldg G

Columbus, OH 43229-6693



OTHER ODNR DIVISION OF WILDLIFE BOOKLETS

Pub 5127 - Stream Fishes of Ohio

Pub 5140 - Common Spiders of Ohio

Pub 5204 - Butterflies & Skippers of Ohio

Pub 5320 - Dragonflies & Damselflies of Ohio

Pub 5334 - Sportfish of Ohio

Pub 5344 - Mammals of Ohio

Pub 5348 - Amphibians of Ohio

Pub 5349 - Warblers of Ohio

Pub 5354 - Reptiles of Ohio

Pub 5386 - Raptors of Ohio

Pub 5414 - Common Birds of Ohio

Pub 5418 - Waterbirds of Ohio

Pub 5423 - Owls of Ohio

Pub 5467 - Moths of Ohio

Pub 5473 - Common Lichens of Ohio

Pub 5488 - Common Bees & Wasps of Ohio

Pub 5494 - Spring Wildflowers of Ohio

Pub 5509 - Trees of Ohio

Pub 5512 - Freshwater Snails of Ohio

Pub 5517 - Freshwater Mussels of Ohio

Pub 5519 - Common Wetland Plants of Ohio

Pub 5526 - Millipedes of Ohio

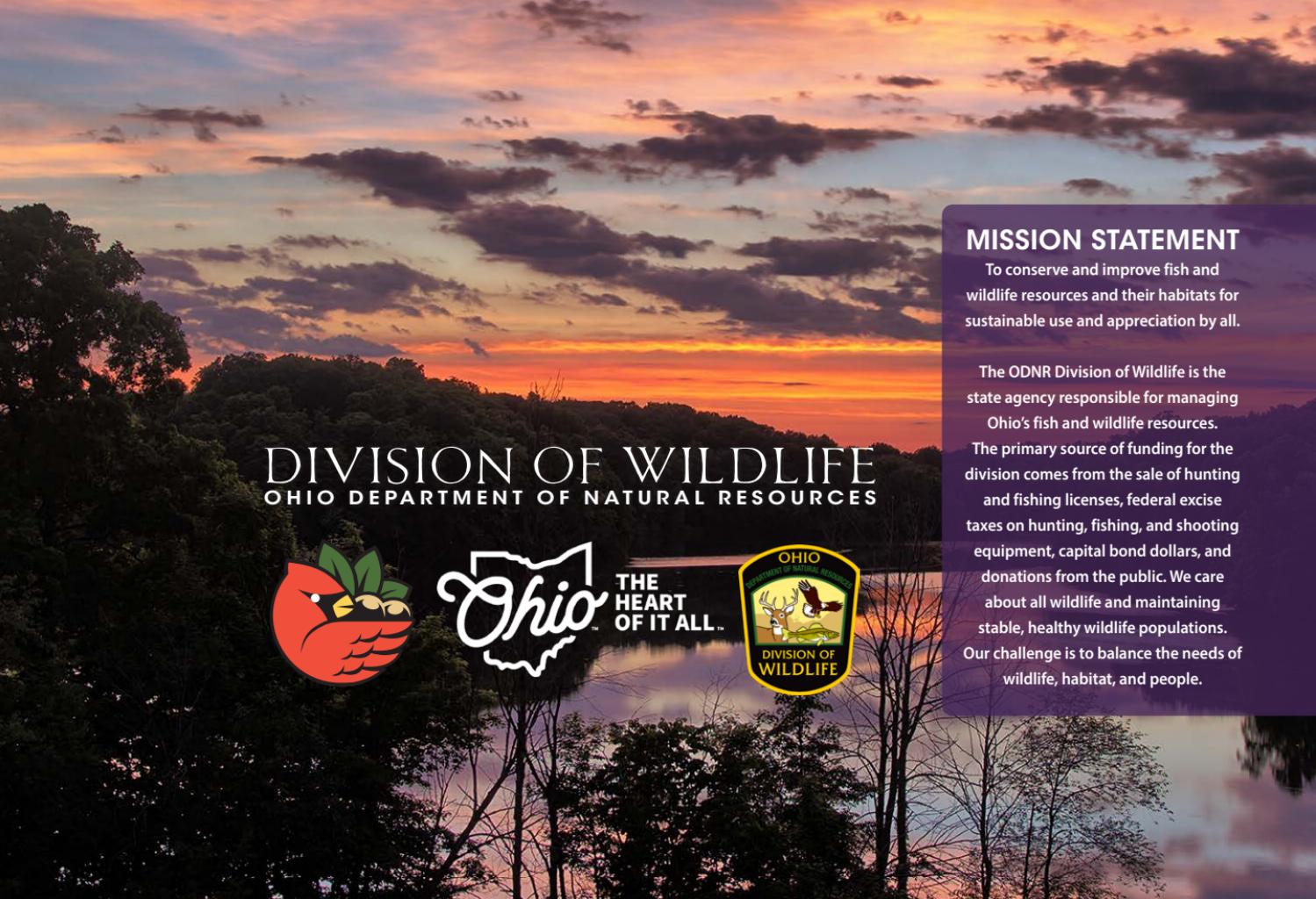
PUBLICATION FUNDING

To purchase a Legacy Stamp, call the ODNR Division of Wildlife at 1-800-WILDLIFE (1-800-945-3543) or visit wildohio.gov.

To make a donation, go to the second page of the 1040 income tax form for the tax checkoff program.

To purchase a license plate, visit your local registrar's office or call the BMV at 1-844-644-6268.





DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve and improve fish and wildlife resources and their habitats for sustainable use and appreciation by all.

The ODNR Division of Wildlife is the state agency responsible for managing Ohio's fish and wildlife resources.

The primary source of funding for the division comes from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, federal excise taxes on hunting, fishing, and shooting equipment, capital bond dollars, and donations from the public. We care about all wildlife and maintaining stable, healthy wildlife populations. Our challenge is to balance the needs of wildlife, habitat, and people.