

Public Hunting & Fishing  
3,200 Acres



Division of Wildlife  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

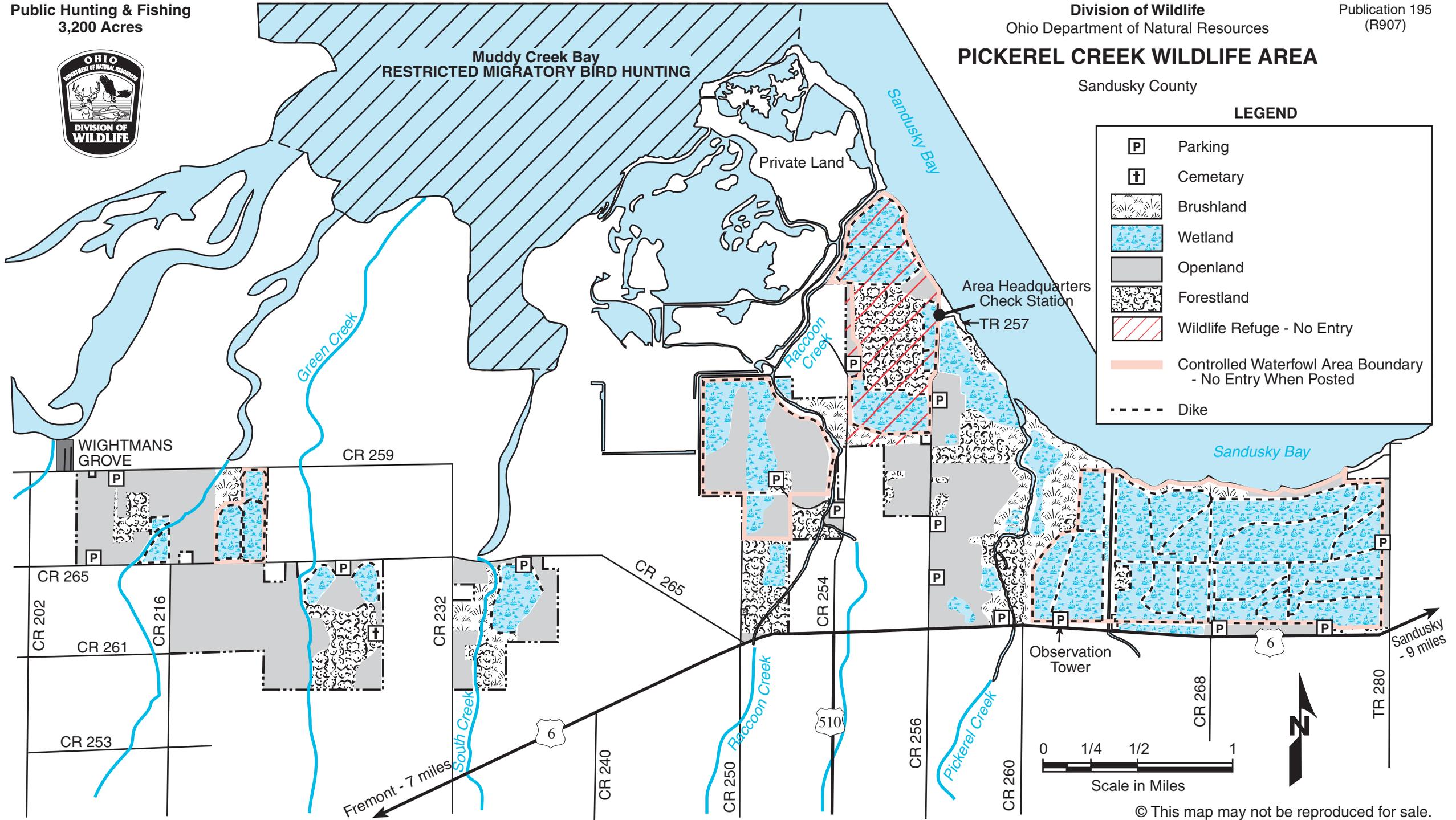
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# PICKEREL CREEK WILDLIFE AREA

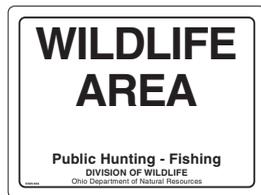
Sandusky County

## LEGEND

	Parking
	Cemetery
	Brushland
	Wetland
	Openland
	Forestland
	Wildlife Refuge - No Entry
	Controlled Waterfowl Area Boundary - No Entry When Posted
	Dike



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# PICKEREL CREEK WILDLIFE AREA

Sandusky County

DISTANCE FROM MAJOR  
POPULATION CENTERS

6 miles from Fremont

15 miles from Sandusky

40 miles from Toledo

## LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area lies between the south shore of Sandusky Bay and State Route 6 in Townsend and Riley townships, Sandusky County. The area totals 3,200 acres. The majority of the area has been restored to wetland with the remainder in woods, brush, and native grassland. Pickerel Creek flows through the western half of the area, forming a high quality freshwater estuarine habitat.

## HISTORY AND PURPOSE

The northern portion of Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area lies in the center of some of the finest wetland habitat still in existence along Sandusky Bay. Early records reveal an extensive wet prairie in this vicinity. Wild rice and other waterfowl foods grew in abundance in the clear waters of Sandusky Bay. As the surrounding land was cleared and drained for agricultural use, wetland habitat was seriously damaged. The turbid water no longer supported the huge beds of wild rice and other high quality aquatic vegetation, and waterfowl numbers decreased.

The Division of Wildlife acquired Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area in 1987. Since this region continues to support a good waterfowl population, Pickerel Creek is presently managed as a public hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife observation area with emphasis on waterfowl and other wetland wildlife.

## FISH AND WILDLIFE

Many species of fish of interest to anglers are found in Sandusky Bay and in the backwater portion of the bay in Pickerel Creek, including bullheads, crappies, channel catfish, freshwater drum, yellow perch, largemouth bass, bluegill, sunfish, northern pike, and carp. Less abundant species taken seasonally in the bay include walleye and white bass. Additional species that are hooked occasionally by anglers include bowfin (freshwater dogfish) and longnose gar.

During the spring and fall migrations, large numbers of waterfowl are attracted to the area. Mallard, wood duck, black duck, blue-winged teal, and green-winged teal are the more abundant species, with wigeon, pintail, gadwall, and shoveler appearing in smaller numbers. Canada geese also use the area. Other bird species include the trumpeter and tundra swans, common tern, great blue heron, common egret, black-crowned night heron, woodcock, common snipe, sora, Virginia rail, and mourning dove. Bald eagles nest on the area and both adults and immatures are frequently seen year-round.

The geographic location of Pickerel Creek, along the southern shore of Lake Erie, also accounts for high numbers of song birds, shorebirds, and hawks during the spring and fall migrations. Upland game animals and furbearers are also plentiful including cottontail rabbit, white-tailed deer, woodchuck, muskrat, raccoon, and mink.

## HUNTING, TRAPPING, & FISHING

In an effort to provide and perpetuate quality waterfowl hunting opportunities at Pickerel Creek, a permit only system has been established within the area marked "Controlled Waterfowl Hunting Area." Special regulations are in effect regarding public access to the controlled waterfowl area. The public is advised to refer to signs posted on the area as well as consult the area headquarters or Wildlife District Two Office for current regulations. The remainder of the area is open to waterfowl hunting at all times without an area permit.

Trapping rights to the refuge and controlled waterfowl hunting area are awarded annually through a special drawing. Public trapping along Pickerel Creek and its adjacent marshes remains open and can be very productive for muskrat, raccoon, and mink.

Good populations of rabbits and white-tailed deer inhabit the grassland and reverting farmland. Fox squirrels are also found in good numbers in the various small woodlots and creek bottoms. Red fox, gray fox, and coyote frequent the area as well.

Access to Sandusky Bay for fishing or hunting waterfowl is limited to boating down Pickerel Creek from U.S. Route 6. Fishermen may also cross the controlled waterfowl area on foot when regulations allow. Bullhead fishing peaks in late March and April but continues throughout the year. Crappie and perch fishing is best during April, May, and October. Channel Catfish and freshwater drum are taken throughout the year, but the best fishing occurs from June through September. White bass and walleye are taken in early spring from late March through early May. Good winter ice fishing occurs in this area of Sandusky Bay, primarily for yellow perch, crappies, and bullheads.

Pickerel Creek near U.S. Route 6 offers good fishing for bullheads and crappies from late March through May and in October. Northern pike are caught in late fall and early spring in this backwater area of Sandusky Bay. While some largemouth bass and bluegills are taken in both Sandusky Bay and Pickerel Creek these species do not provide a significant fishery.

## WATCHABLE WILDLIFE

An observation tower is open year-round for viewing the abundant wetland wildlife. It is located along U.S. Route 6 just east of Pickerel Creek. Many opportunities for viewing and photographing wildlife can be found here. White-tailed deer are frequently seen in the early morning and late afternoon hours. The best birding in Ohio occurs in the western Lake Erie marsh region with over 300 species recorded. Among the species regularly seen at Pickerel Creek are bald eagles, great black-backed gull, short-eared owl, willow flycatcher, marsh wren, dickcissel and swamp sparrow. The rare sightings of yellow-headed blackbird, white pelican, sandhill crane, king rail and others make birding the area very productive and exciting.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information may be obtained from Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area Manager, 3451 Co. Rd. 256, Vickery, Ohio 43464; telephone (419) 547-6007 or Wildlife District Two Office, 952 Lima Avenue, Findlay, Ohio 45840; telephone (419) 424-5000.

## TURN IN A POACHER

Ohio's TIP, "Turn In a Poacher," program is helping to curtail poaching throughout the state. TIP is designed to involve the public in reporting wildlife violations. Citizens who observe wildlife violations should call the TIP toll-free hotline, 1-800-POACHER.