



Fact Sheet

Ohio Water Facts

From Lake Erie to the Ohio River

Ohio's Water

- » Total miles of perennial, intermittent, primary headwater, and large rivers in Ohio is more than 199,000 miles.
- » Ohio is an Iroquoian word meaning “good river.” The name refers to the Ohio River that forms its southern border.
- » Ohio has three basins in which the water flows - Lake Erie, Ohio River, and Grand St. Mary.
- » Border miles of the Ohio River: 451
- » Border miles of Lake Erie shoreline: 312

Lake Erie Facts



- » Lake Erie, meaning “long tail,” was named after the Native American group called Erie, also referred to as Cat or Raccoon people because of the numerous mountain lions that lived in the area.
- » The 11,649 square miles that make up Ohio's Lake Erie Basin is comprised of beech-maple, oak, hemlock, and hardwood forests, button bush swamps, glacial kettle lakes, wet woods, small ponds, fens, wet prairies, small marshes, vernal pools and bogs, rare oak savannas, wet prairies, lakeshore grasslands, and sand dunes, sustaining more than 1,500 species of plants and animals.
- » While it was the first Great Lake to be uncovered by the retreating Wisconsinan glacier, it was the last to be discovered by Europeans.
- » Lake Erie, along with the many tributaries that feed the Lake, supply drinking water to 13 million residents regionally and roughly 3 million Ohioans.
- » Each year nearly seven million people flock to Ohio's portion of the Lake Erie basin, including Kelleys, South Bass (or better known as Put-in-Bay) and Middle Bass Islands, to recreate, reconnect with nature and families.
- » As a result, a quarter of a million jobs are sustained, netting \$5.8 billion in wages annually. Tourism and travel alone contribute \$9.45 billion a year in revenue to Ohio's economy.
- » Each year the nearly 1.4 million people participating in sport fishing activities in Ohio spend close to \$1 billion. Fishing is the number 1 tourist activity in Ohio. Sport fishing generates over \$300,000 billion annually and supports 23,000 Ohio jobs.
- » Furthermore, more than 3 million individuals participate in wildlife watching activities each year, spending close to \$900 million.
- » Lake Erie is the most biologically productive of the Great Lakes. More fish are produced each year for human consumption from Lake Erie than from the other four Great Lakes combined - Lakes Huron, Michigan Ontario and Superior.
- » The Lake Erie walleye fishery is widely considered the best in the world.
- » 41 percent of Ohio's citizens live within the Lake Erie basin.

Lake Erie Facts (con't)

- » Furthermore, more than 3 million individuals participate in wildlife watching activities each year, spending close to \$900 million.
- » There are 312 miles of mainland and inland shores, as well as 3,277 square miles of its waters.
- » The deepest point in Lake Erie is 210 ft. in the eastern basin.
- » Approximately 33,000 acres of valuable coastal wetlands in Ohio support at least 250 species of nesting birds, including the nation's symbol, the bald eagle.
- » Globally significant, the Oak Openings region has more than 1,000 different plants and a large number of endangered species. The oak savanna habitat within Oak Openings is perhaps the rarest, with oak trees dominating the landscape carved with the yellow quartz sand of these ancient forerunners to Lake Erie.
- » Lake Erie is the 12th largest freshwater lake in the world.
- » Lake Erie is the shallowest because the last glacial advance ice was relatively thin when it reached so far south, therefore lacking significant erosive power. (Department of Natural Resources)
- » The western basin is underlain by carbonates (limestone and dolomite) and the eastern basin by shale. Carbonates are more resistant to erosion than shale, therefore the western basin is comparatively shallow. (Department of Natural Resources)

Ohio River Facts

- » More than 25 million people, almost 10 percent of the U.S. population, live in the Ohio River Basin.
- » The widest point along the Ohio River is approximately 1 mile at the Smithland Dam.
- » Approximately 150 species of fish have been collected from the Ohio River.

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