

Ohio Wildlife History Timeline



Ohio has a rich and varied history when it comes to its wildlife. Our state has seen wildlife species and habitat come and go for more than 200 years.

Changes in the landscape, increasing human population and advances in wildlife management knowledge and technology have created a timeline that is both sad and successful. Please join us in exploring Ohio's Wildlife History.

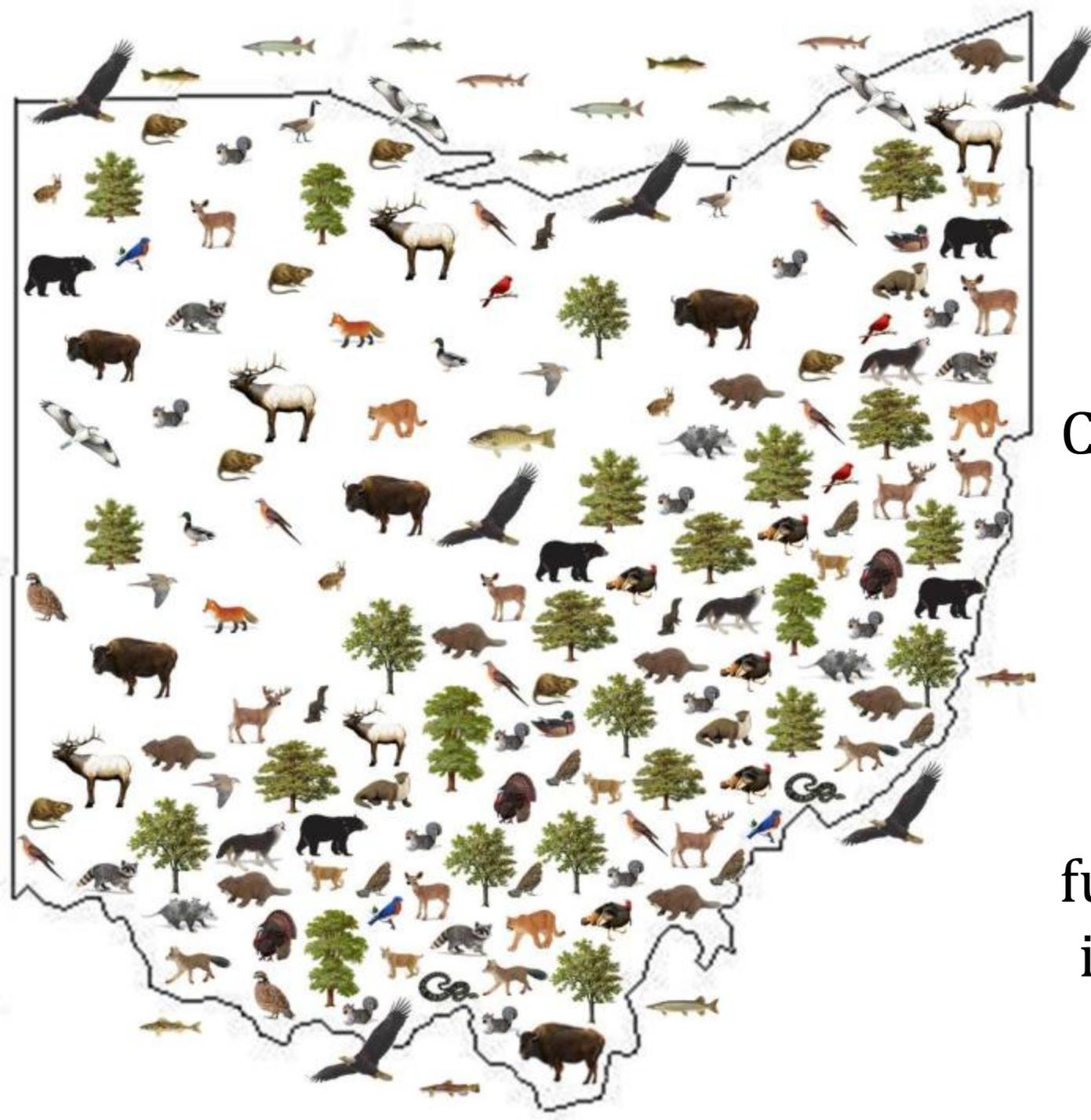


Each tree represents
1 million acres of
forest land



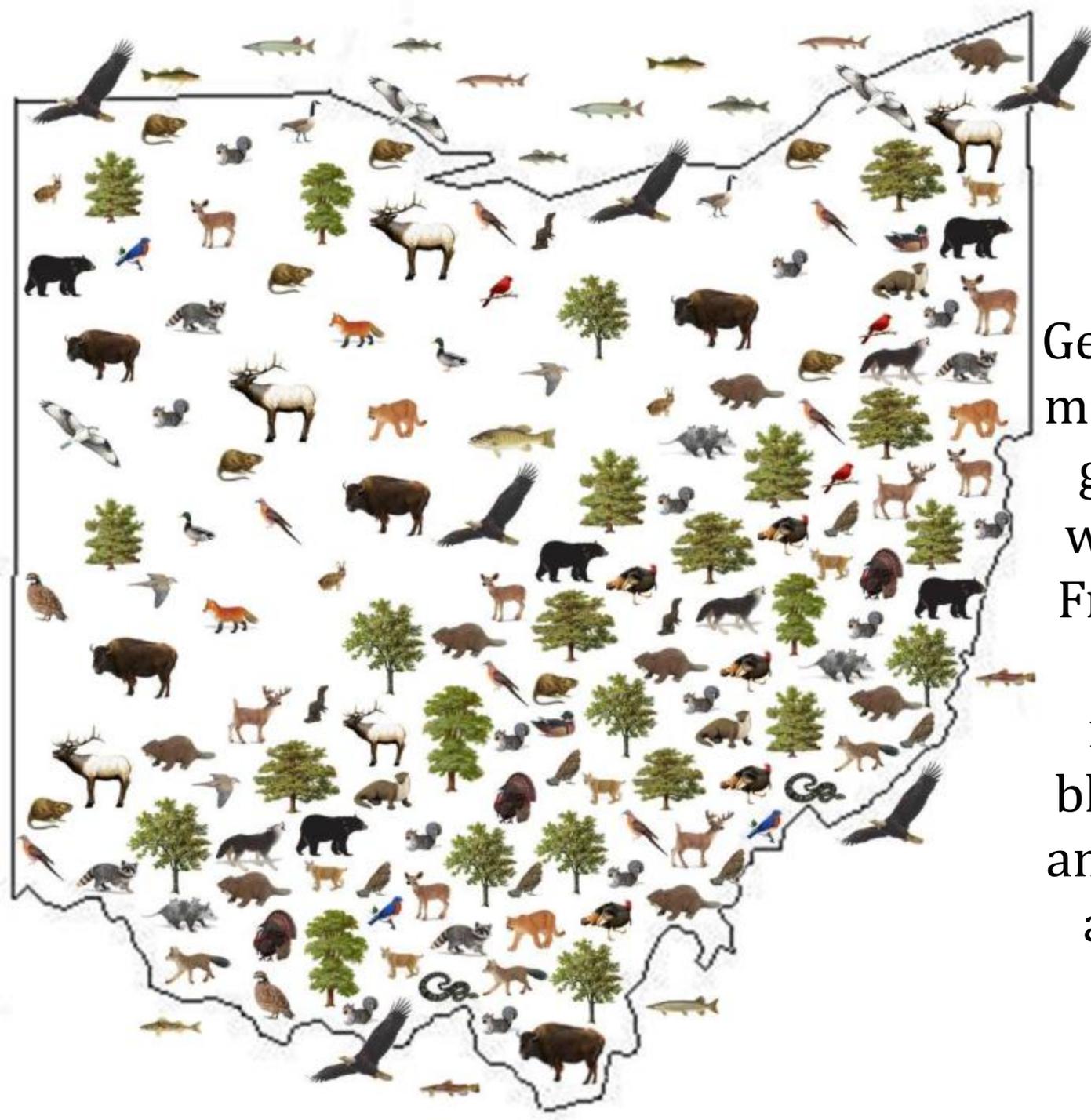
1748

The Ohio Company builds a trading post near Piqua to trade items made in England for furs. Beaver are in big demand.



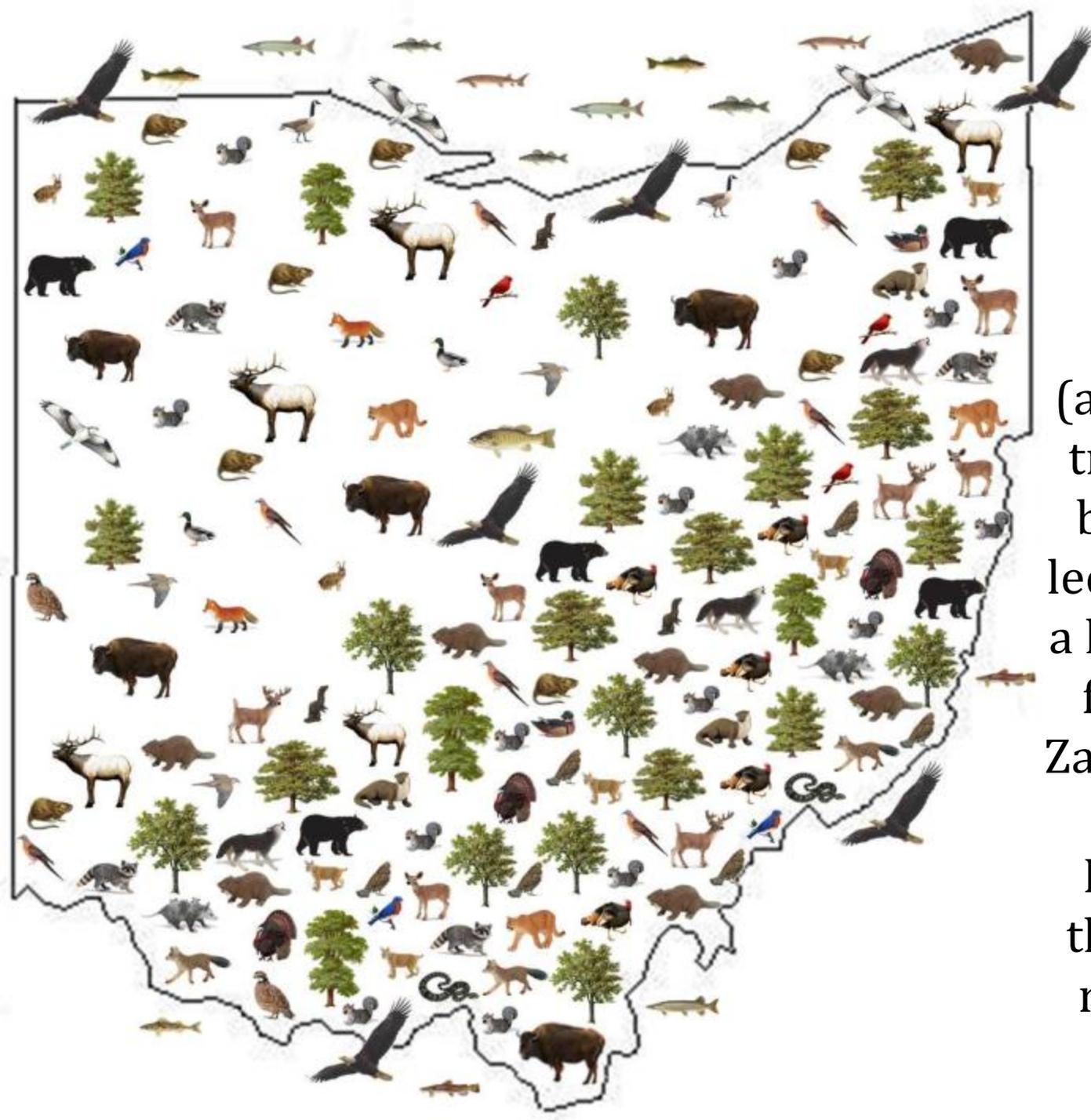
1770

George Washington mapped Ohio lands given to soldiers who fought in the French and Indian War. Wolves, mountain lions, black bears, bison, and elk were found across the state.



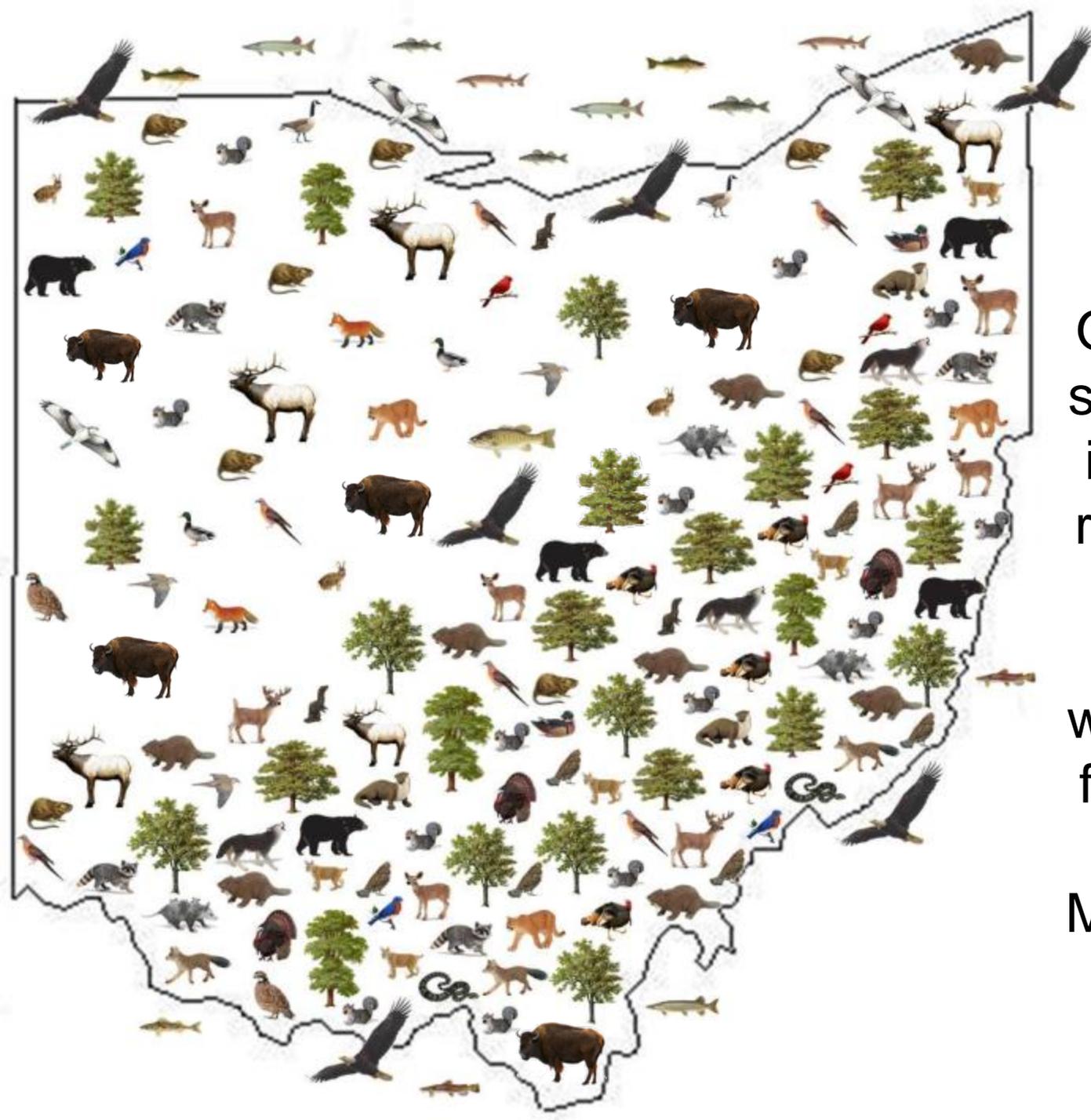
1796

Zane's Trace
(another name for a
trail) is authorized
by Congress. This
led to the building of
a horse trail that ran
from Wheeling to
Zanesville, Lancaster
and Maysville,
Kentucky. Before
this, travelers used
rivers or followed
footpaths.



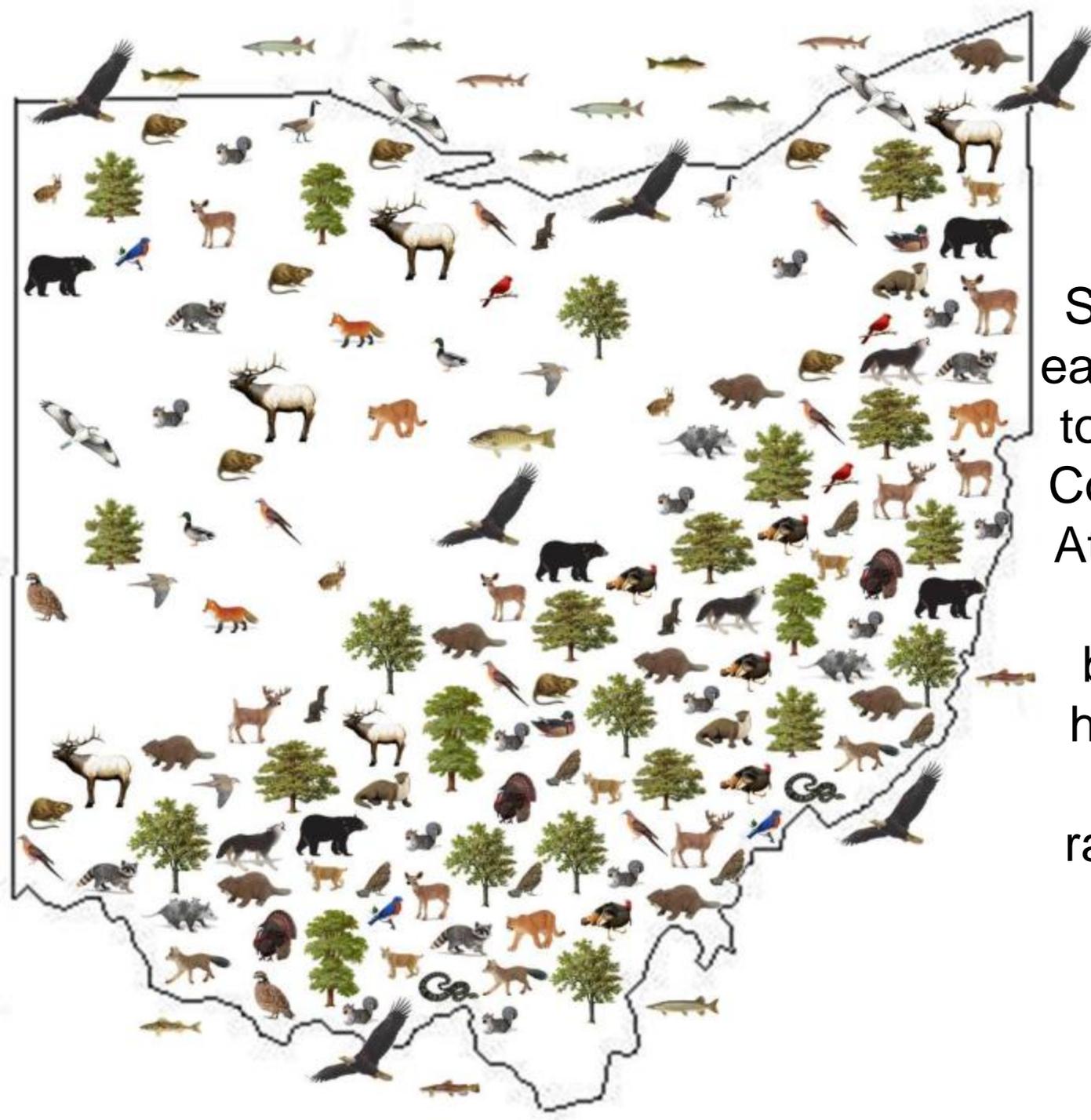
1803

Ohio becomes a state. Last bison in the state was reported killed in Lawrence County. Bison will be eliminated from every state east of the Mississippi River.



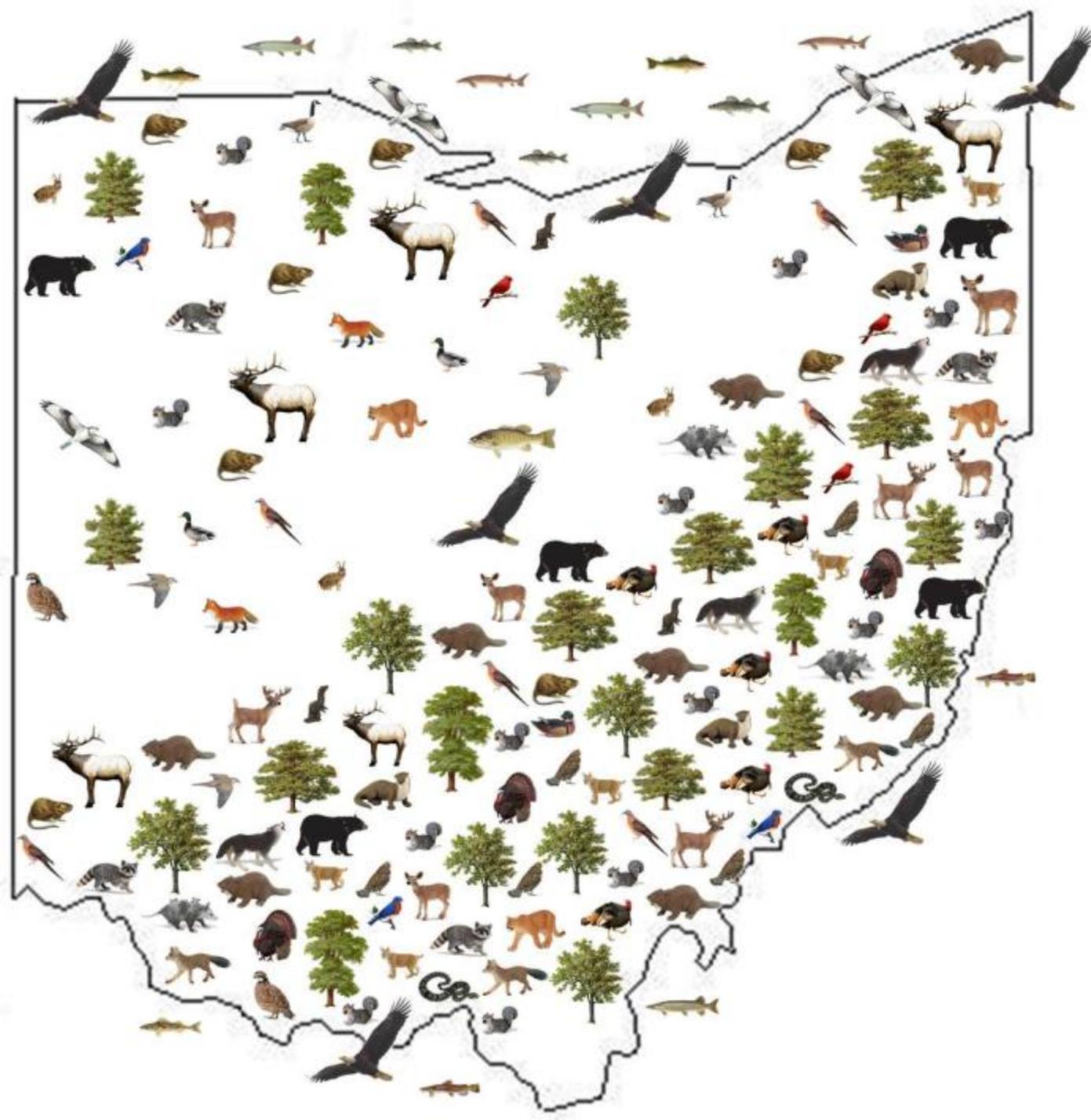
1804

Settlers who were eager for something to read started the Coonskin Library in Athens County. To raise money for books, they sold hides from bears, wolves and raccoons. \$73.50 worth of furs purchased 51 books.



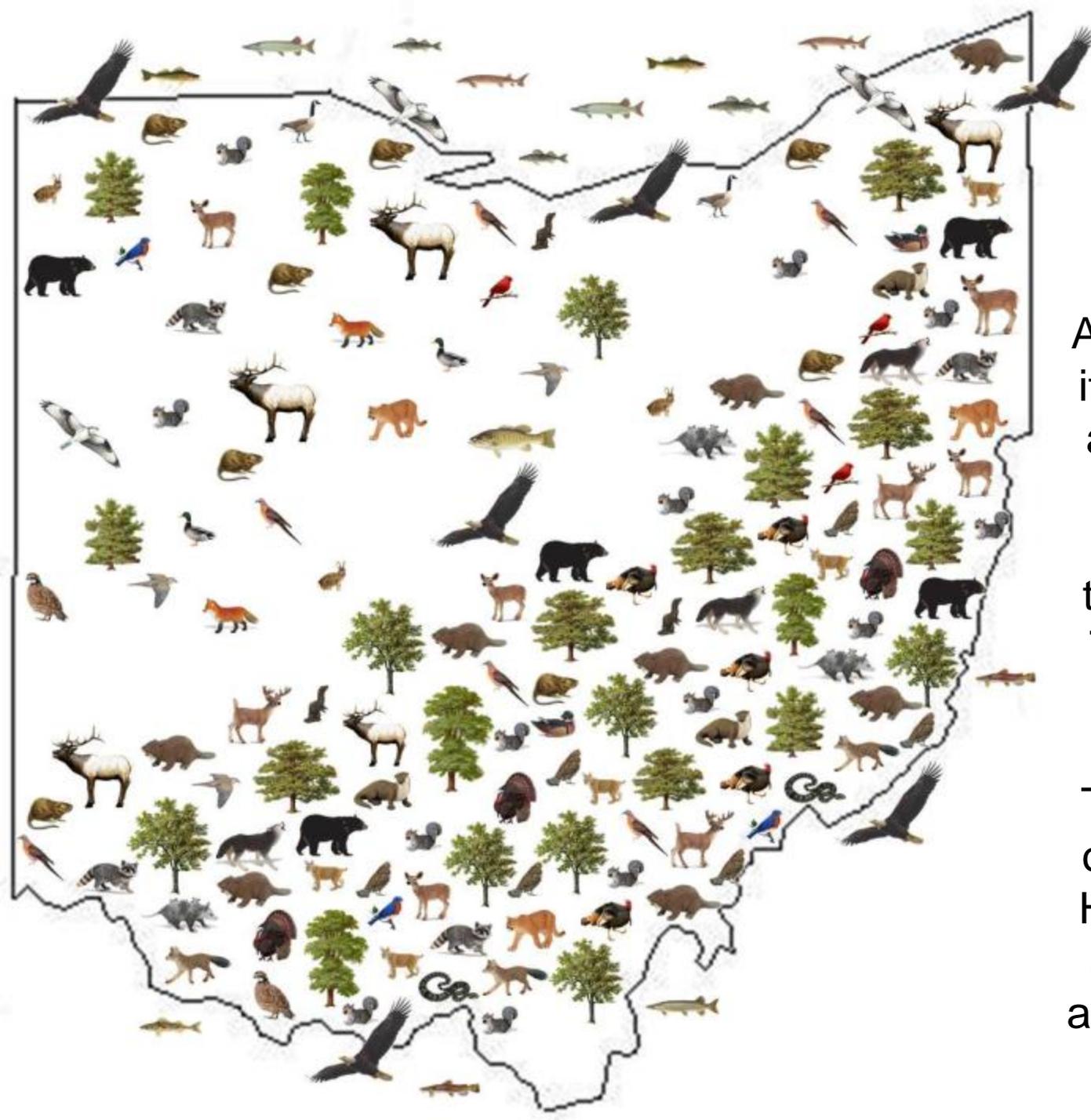
1807

Squirrels were so numerous that a law was passed requiring taxpayers to kill them and turn their scalps in to the county clerk.



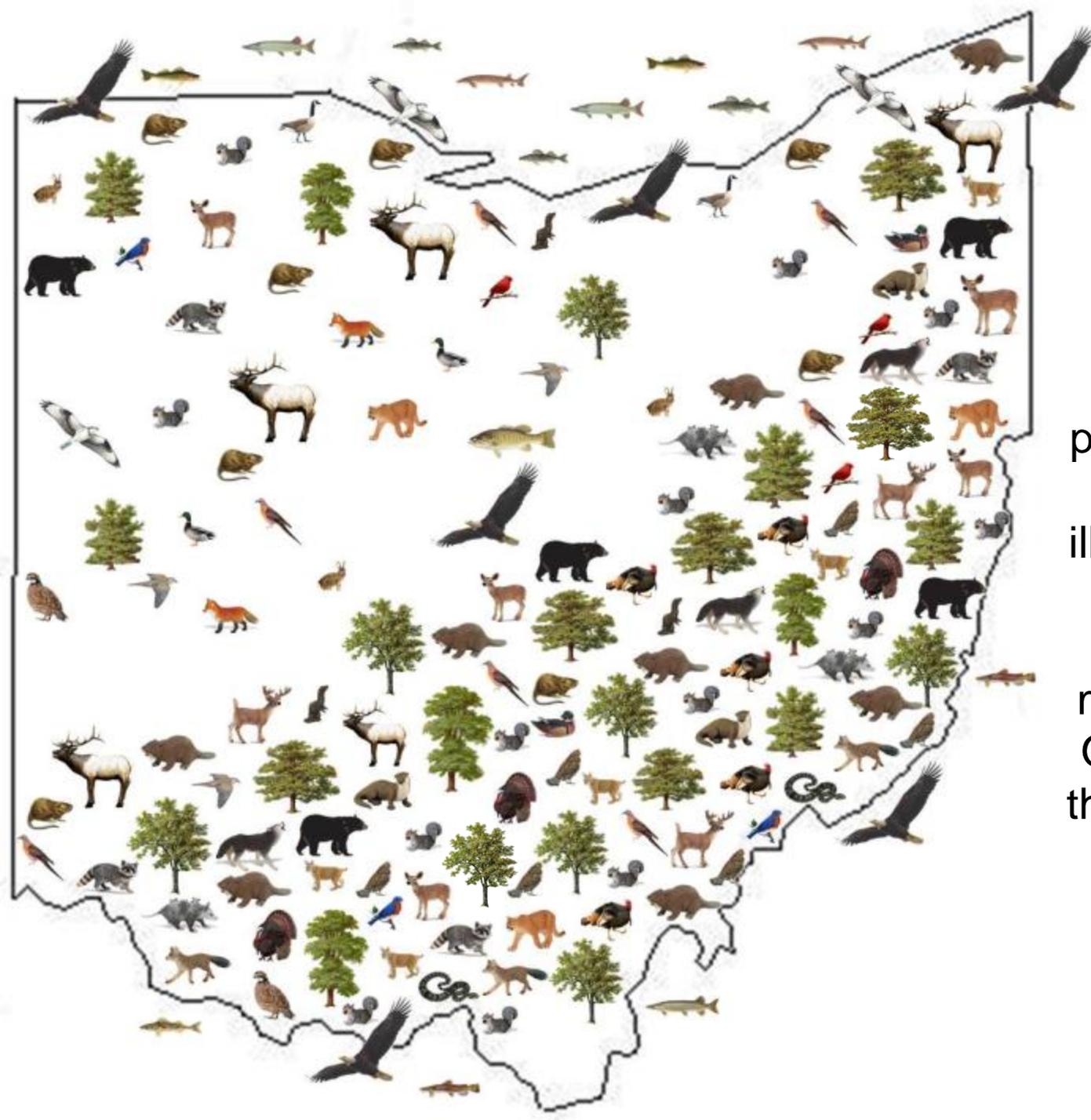
1818

Athens County drops its bounty on wolves and mountain lions. Until then, their scalps could be turned in for money. The county paid \$3 for young animals and \$4 for adults. This is also the year of the Great Hinkley Hunt. Thousands of animals were killed around Hinkley, Ohio.



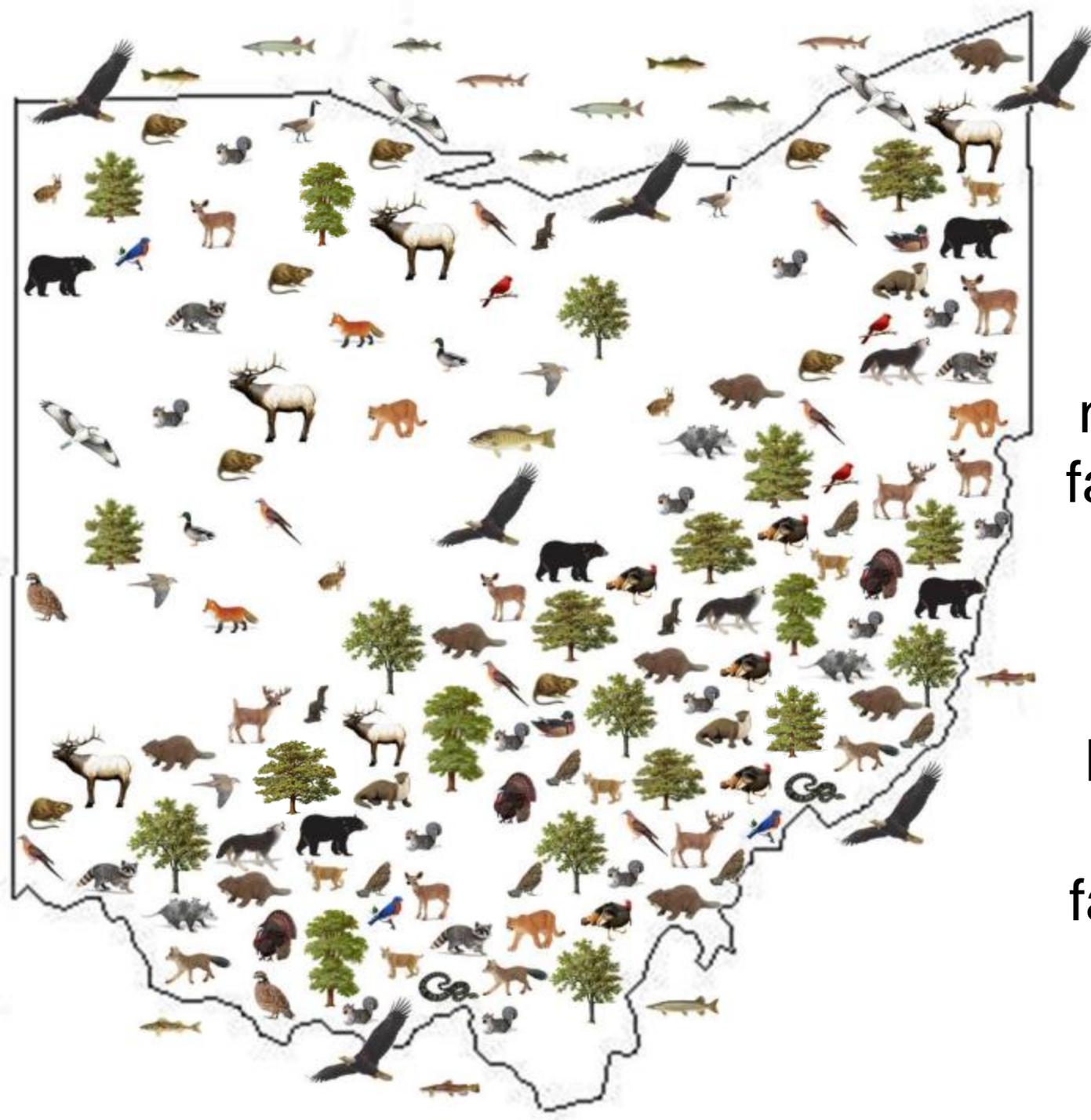
1829

The first Ohio law was passed to protect a wild animal. The law made it illegal to kill muskrats from May 1 to October 15. This marked the first time Ohioans recognized that wildlife should be conserved as a valuable resource.



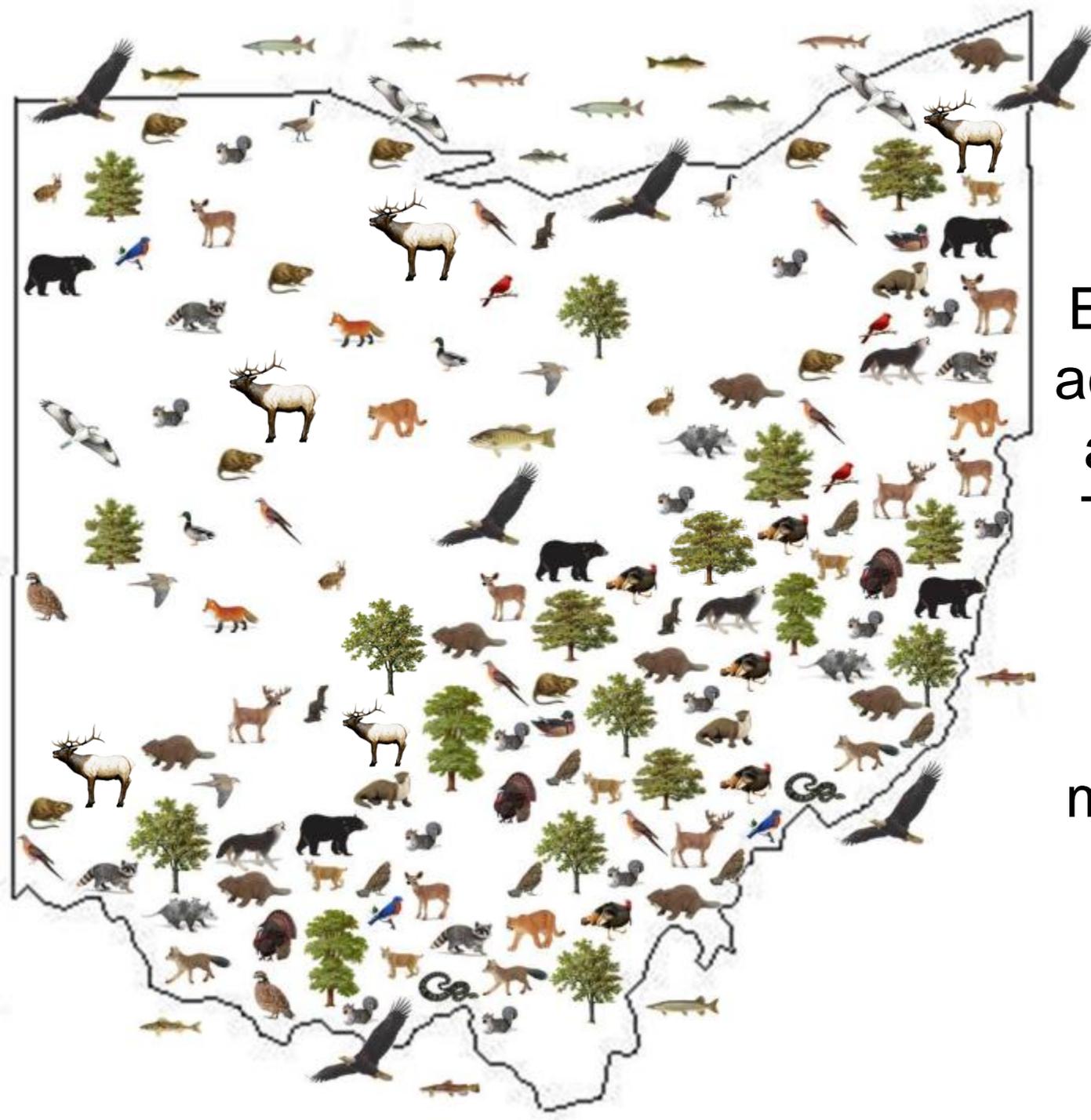
1839

Ohio led the nation in wheat farming. Almost all the original forests have been replaced by the growing number of farms and small towns.



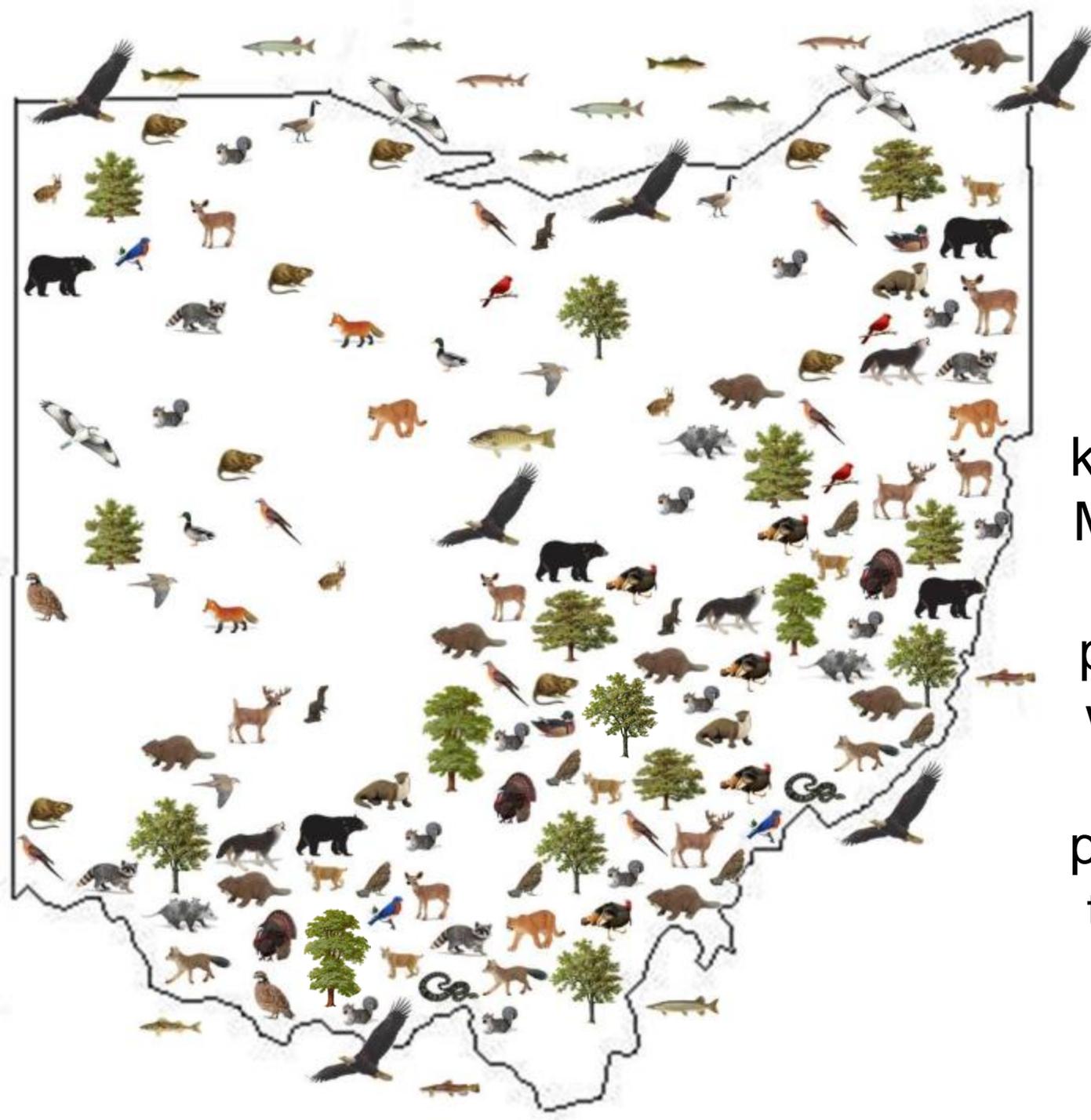
1840

Elk, once found across the state, are now gone. The last report of these large (up to 800 pounds) members of the deer family came from Ashtabula County.



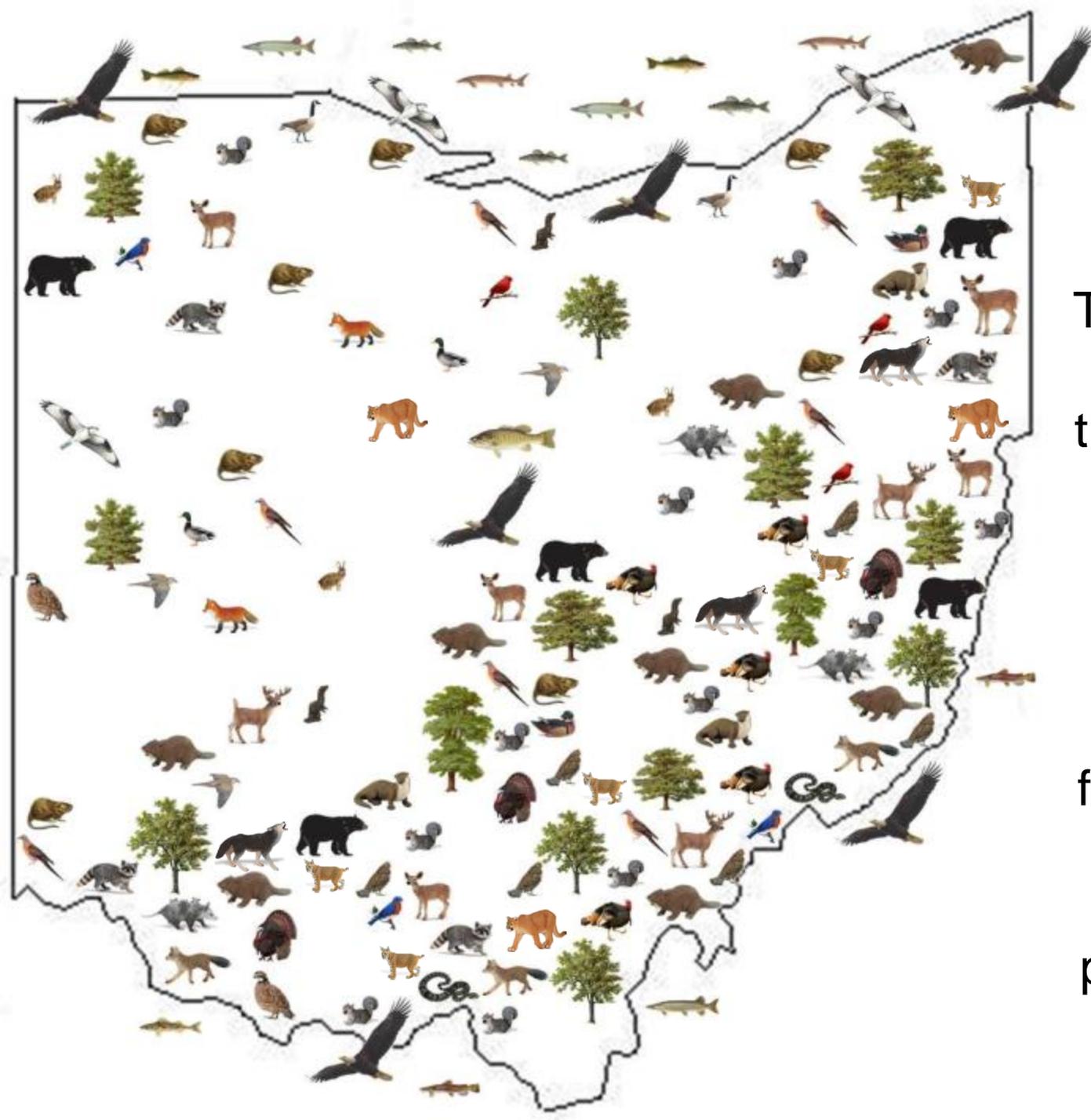
1850

Ohio leads the nation in all kinds of farming. Most were small family farms producing wool, wheat, hay and corn. Ohio's population soars to 2 million, the third highest in the country.



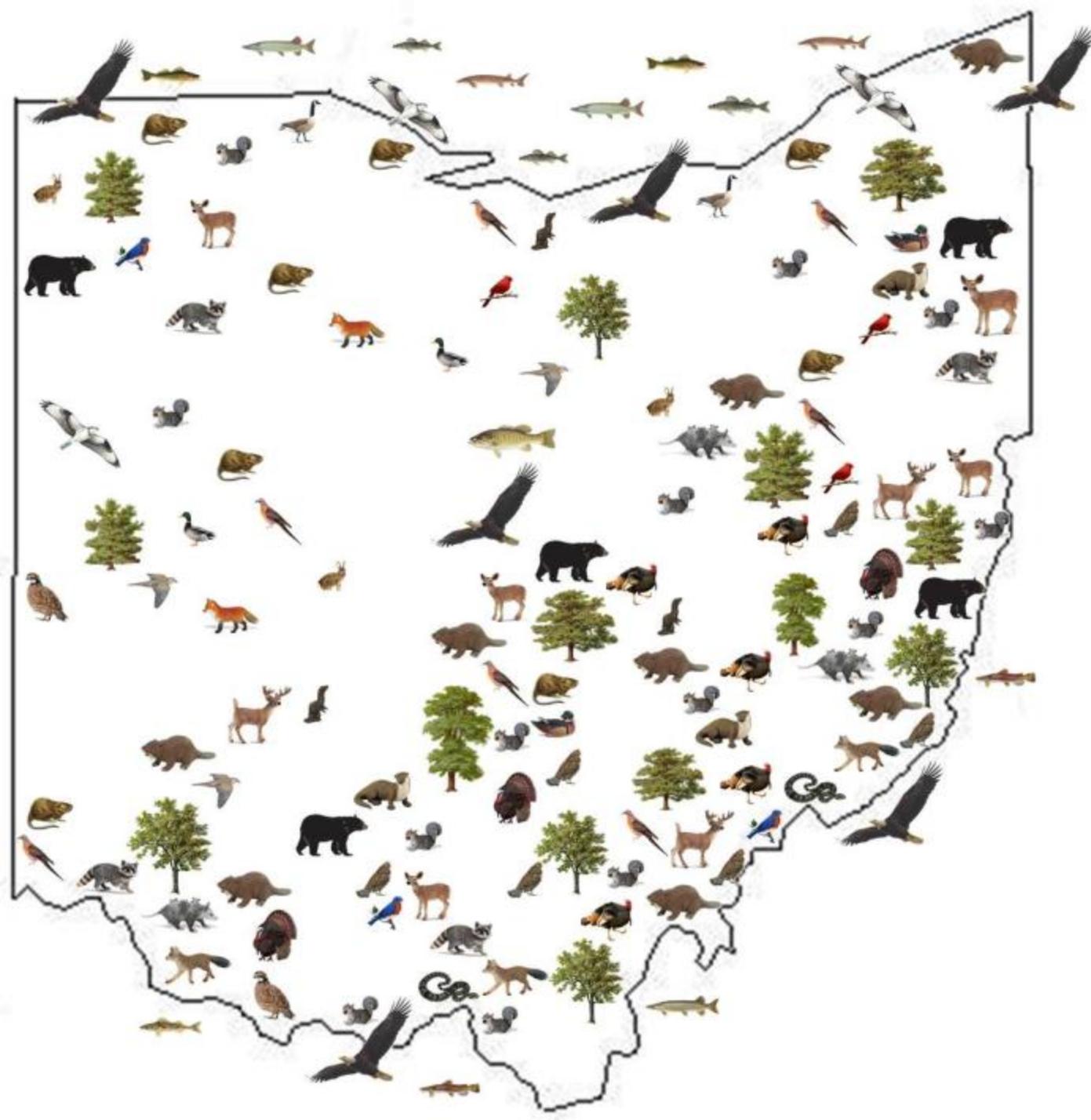
1855

There are no final records, but by this time bobcats, wolves, and mountain lions have been eliminated from the state. Most farmers despised these animals because these predators preyed on sheep, pigs, and calves.



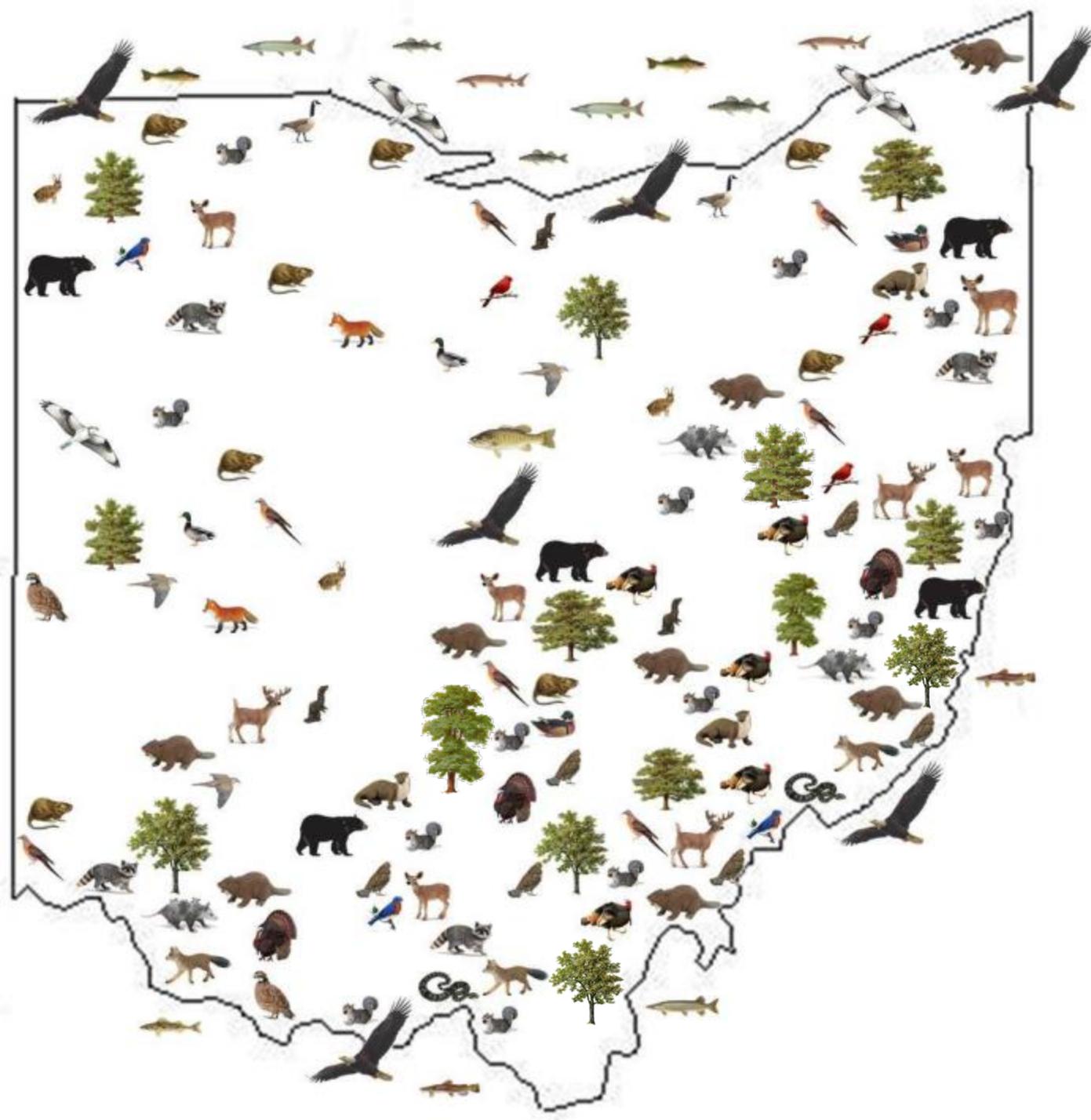
1857

First law enacted for protection of fish. First nongame protection law passed, protecting songbirds.



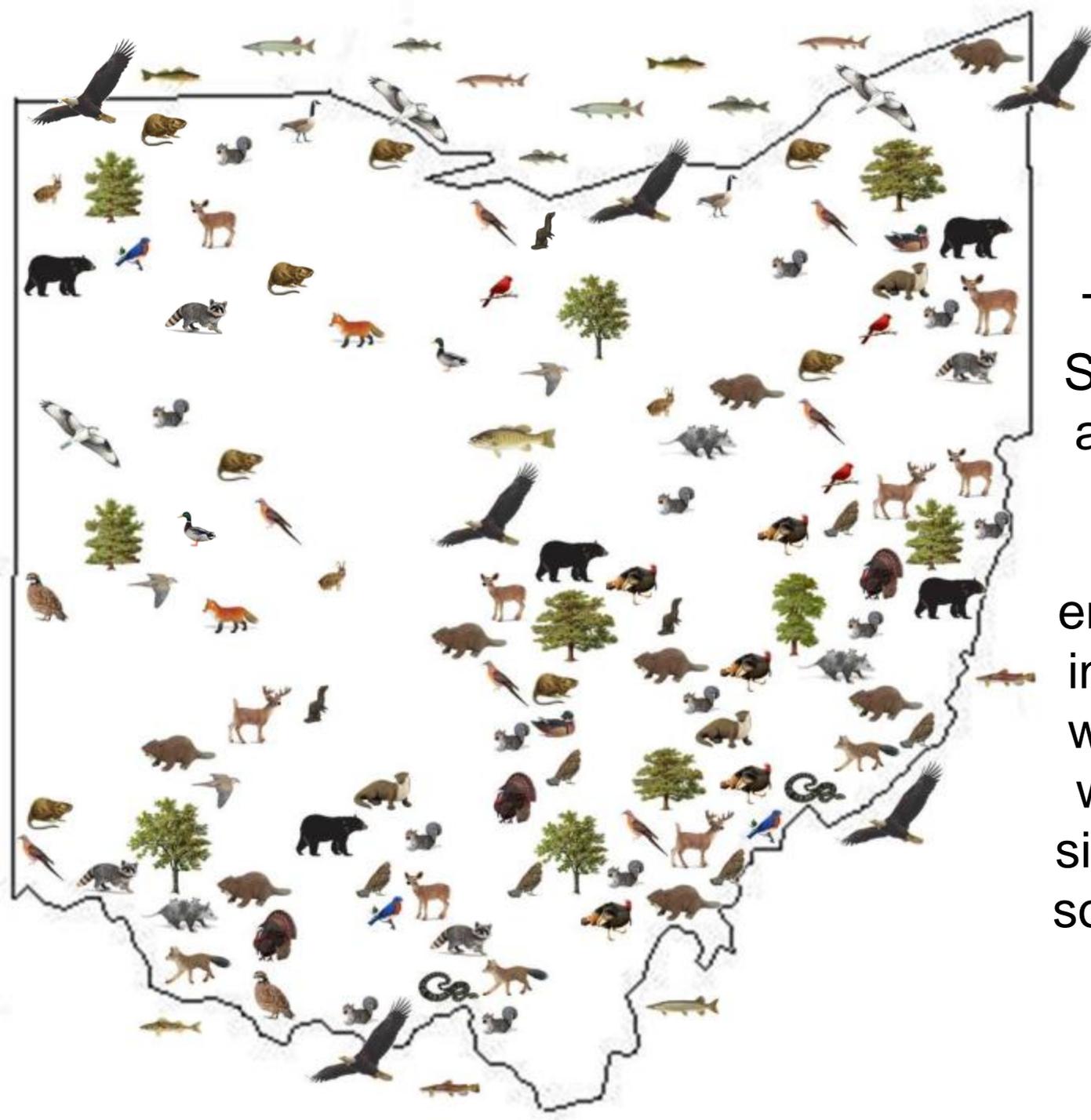
1873

Ohio Fish
Commission
established.



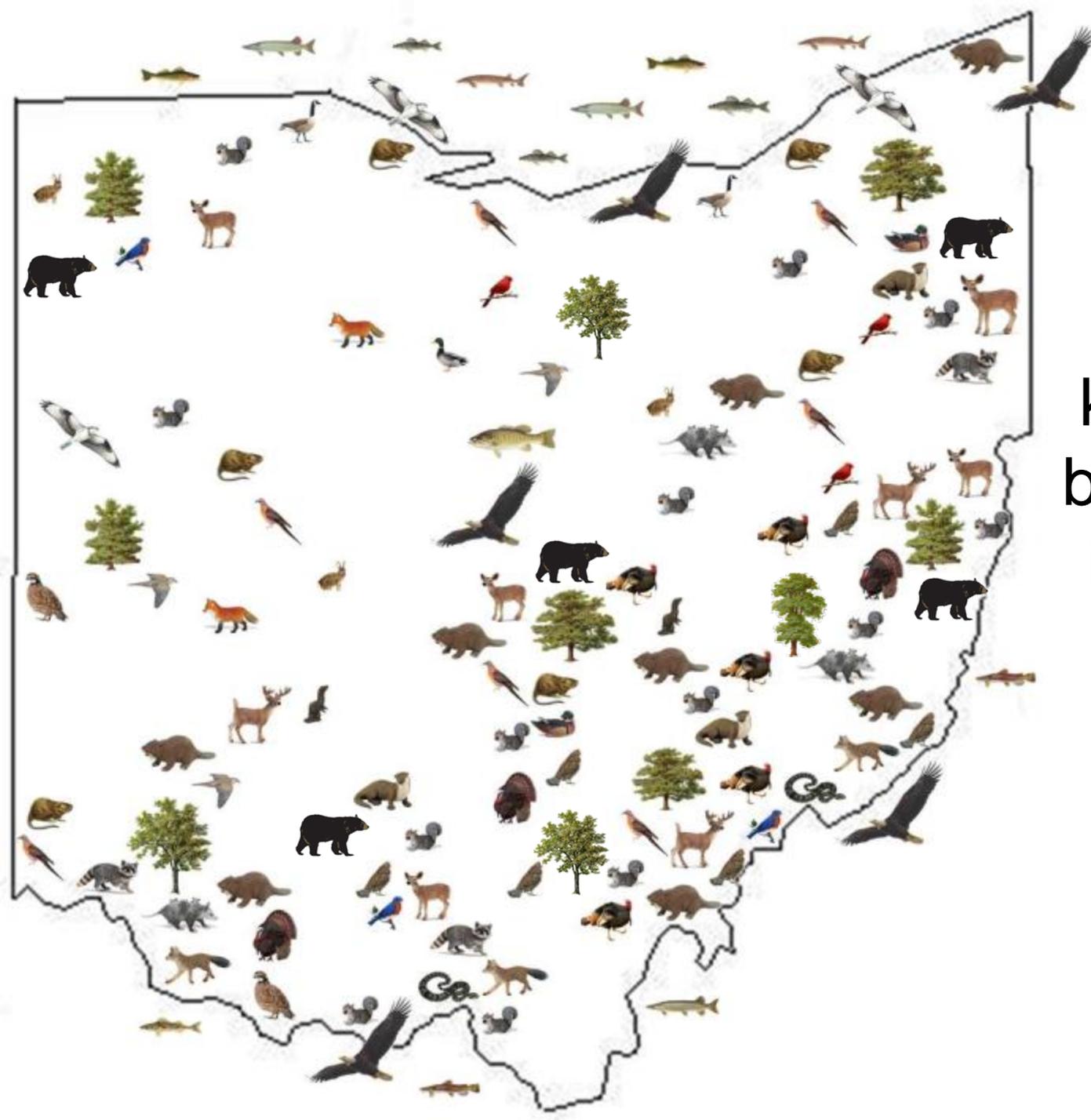
1875

The Great Black Swamp is drained after a decade of ditch work and draining. This enormous wetland in northwest Ohio was likely the last wilderness in the site. It now boasts some of the state's largest farms.



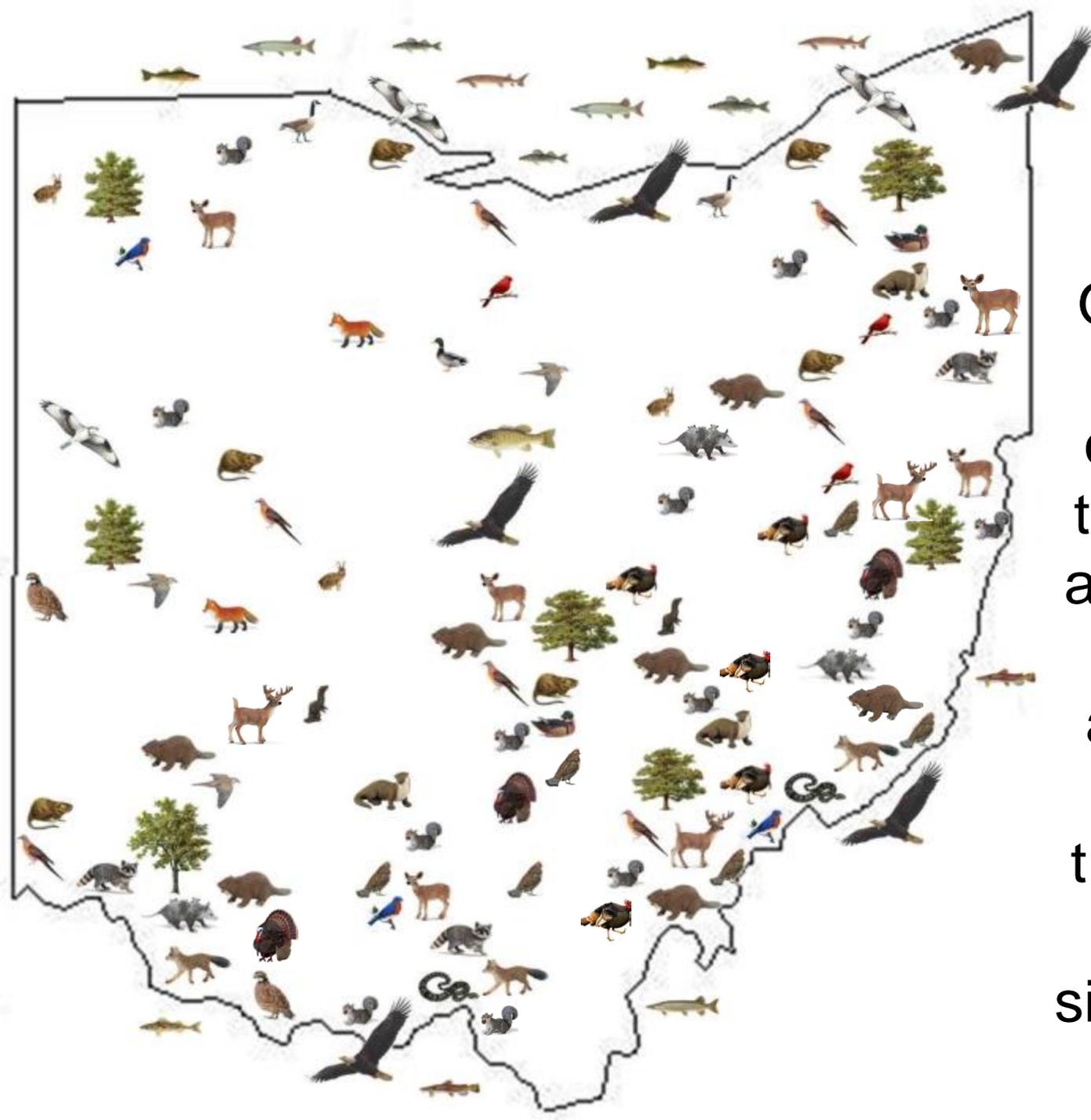
1881

The last known black bear reported in Ohio was killed in Paulding County.



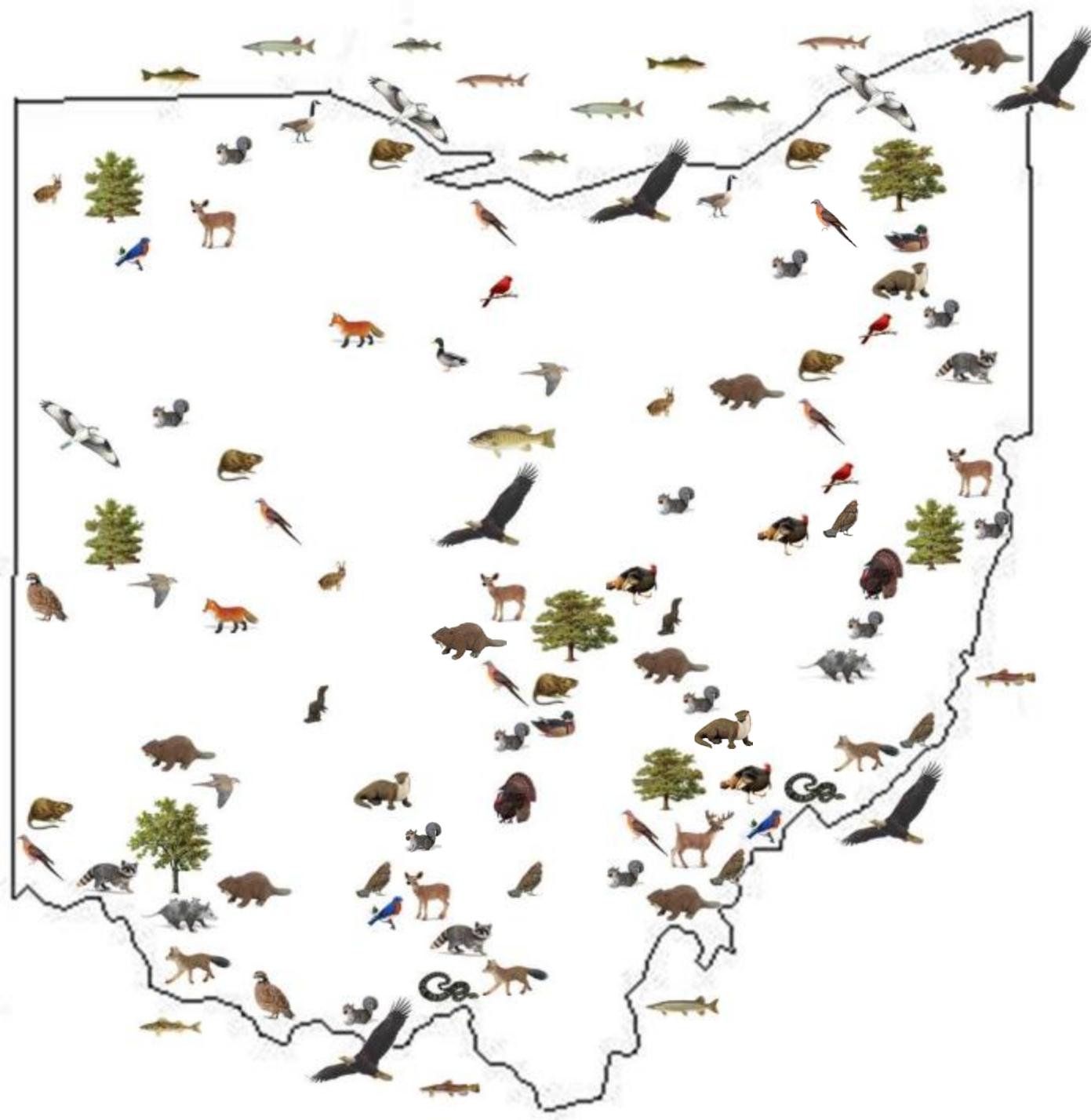
1883

Ohio's original forest land covered more than 24 million acres. By now, only 4 million acres remain. Most of the trees up to this time were simply cut down and burned.



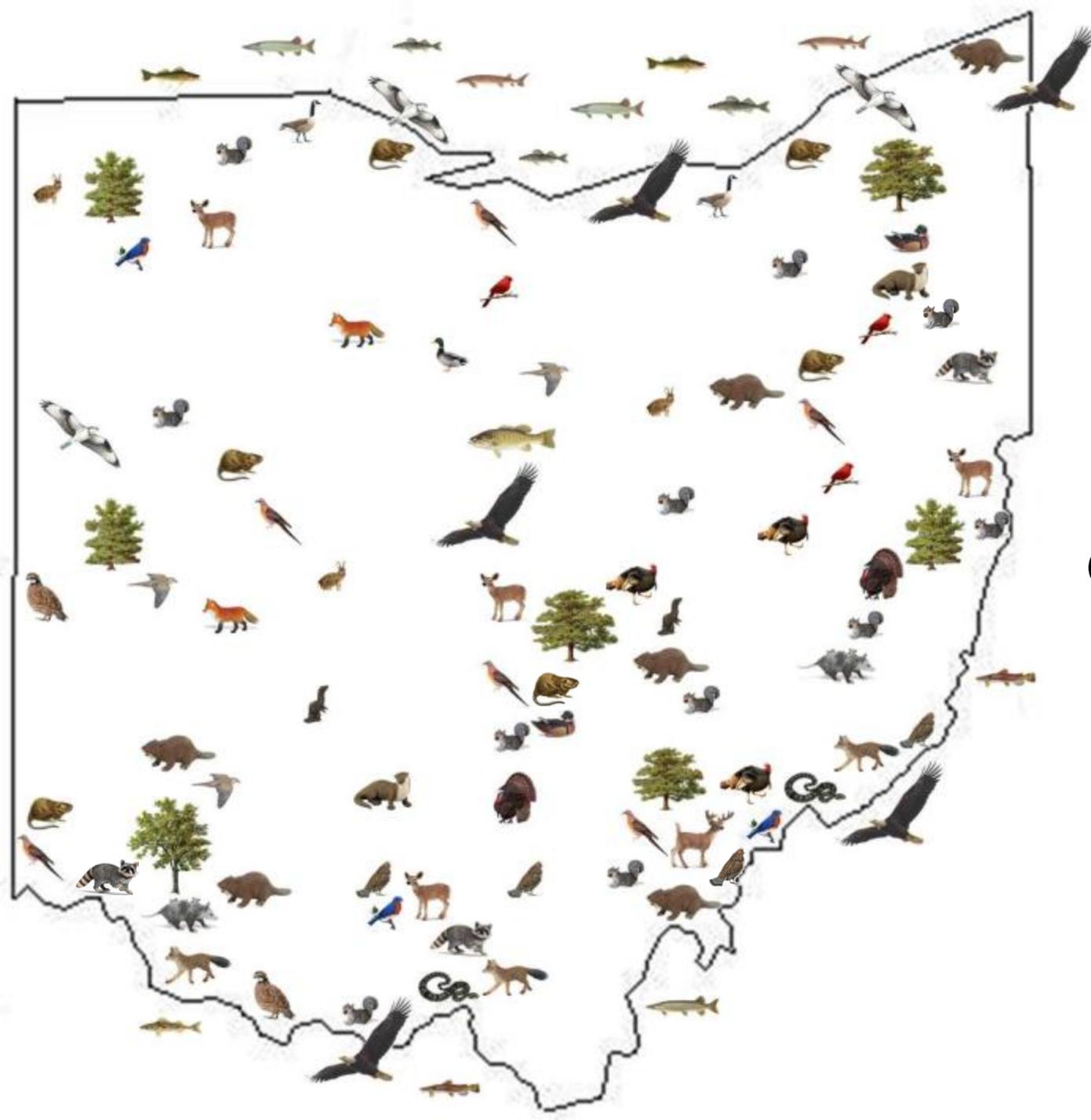
1886

Ohio Fish
Commission
becomes
Commission
of Fish and
Game. First
game
wardens
appointed.



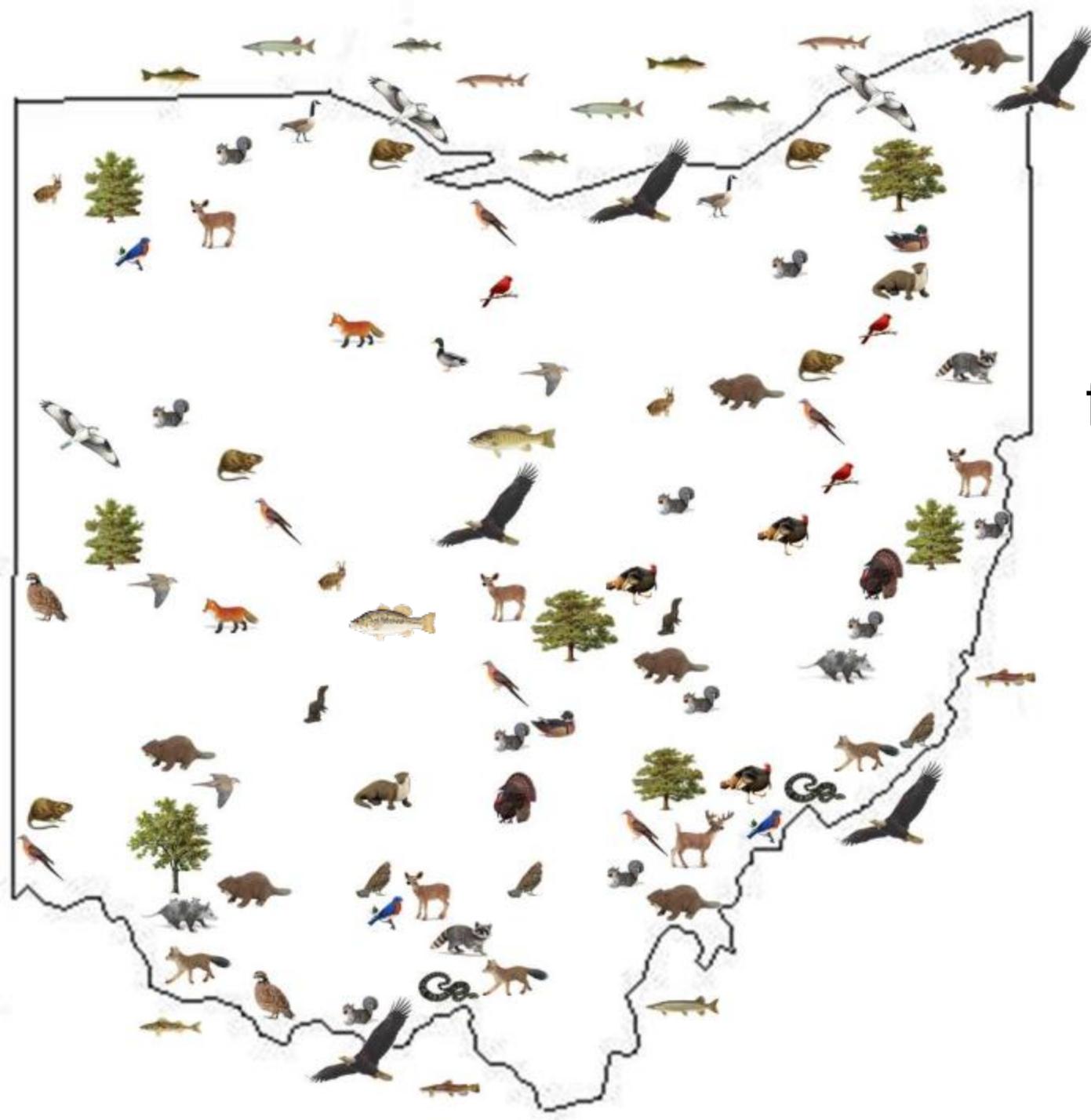
1888

A statute provided for a warden in every county and a chief warden.



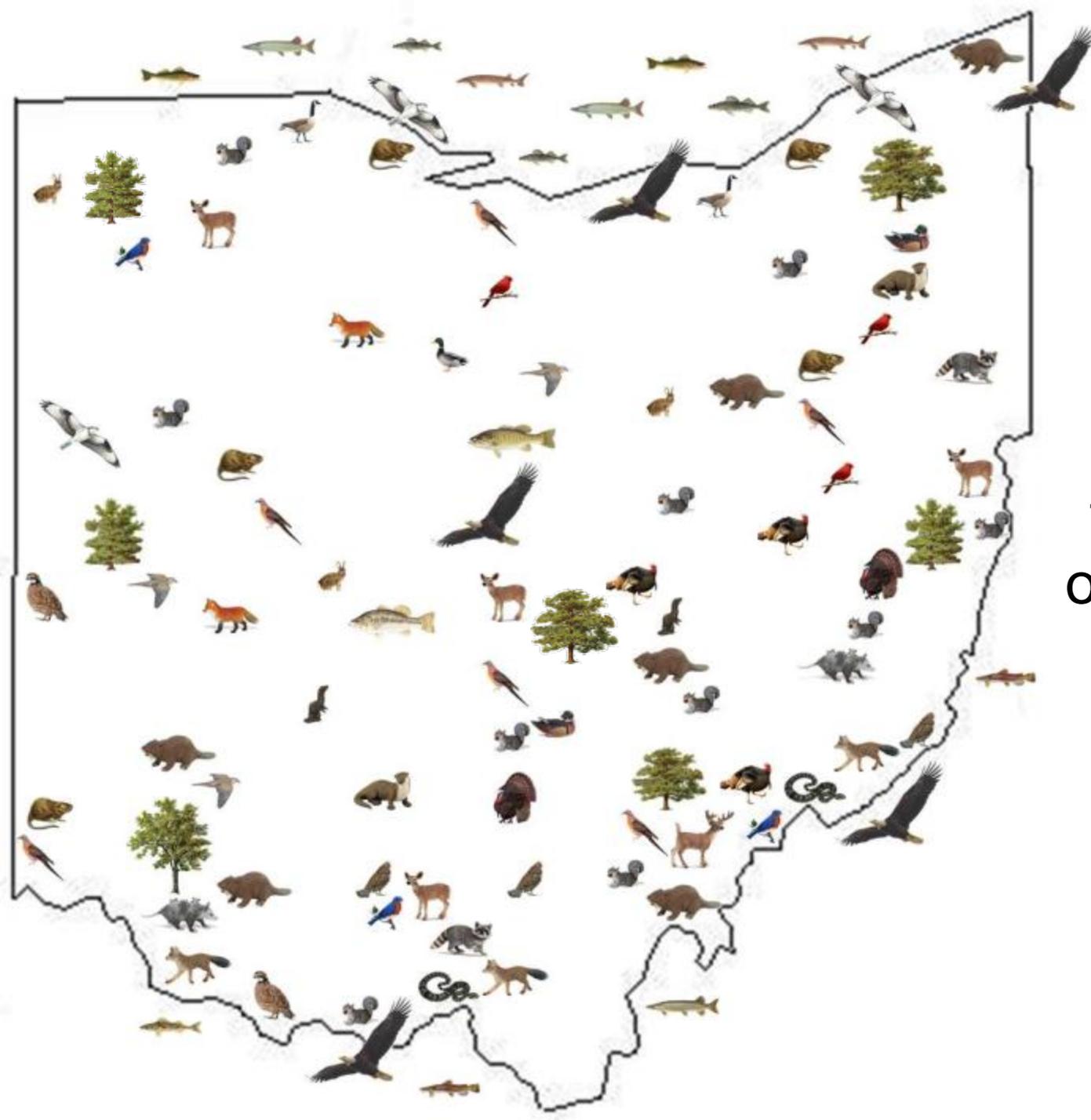
1896

First state
fish hatchery
opens in
London,
Ohio.



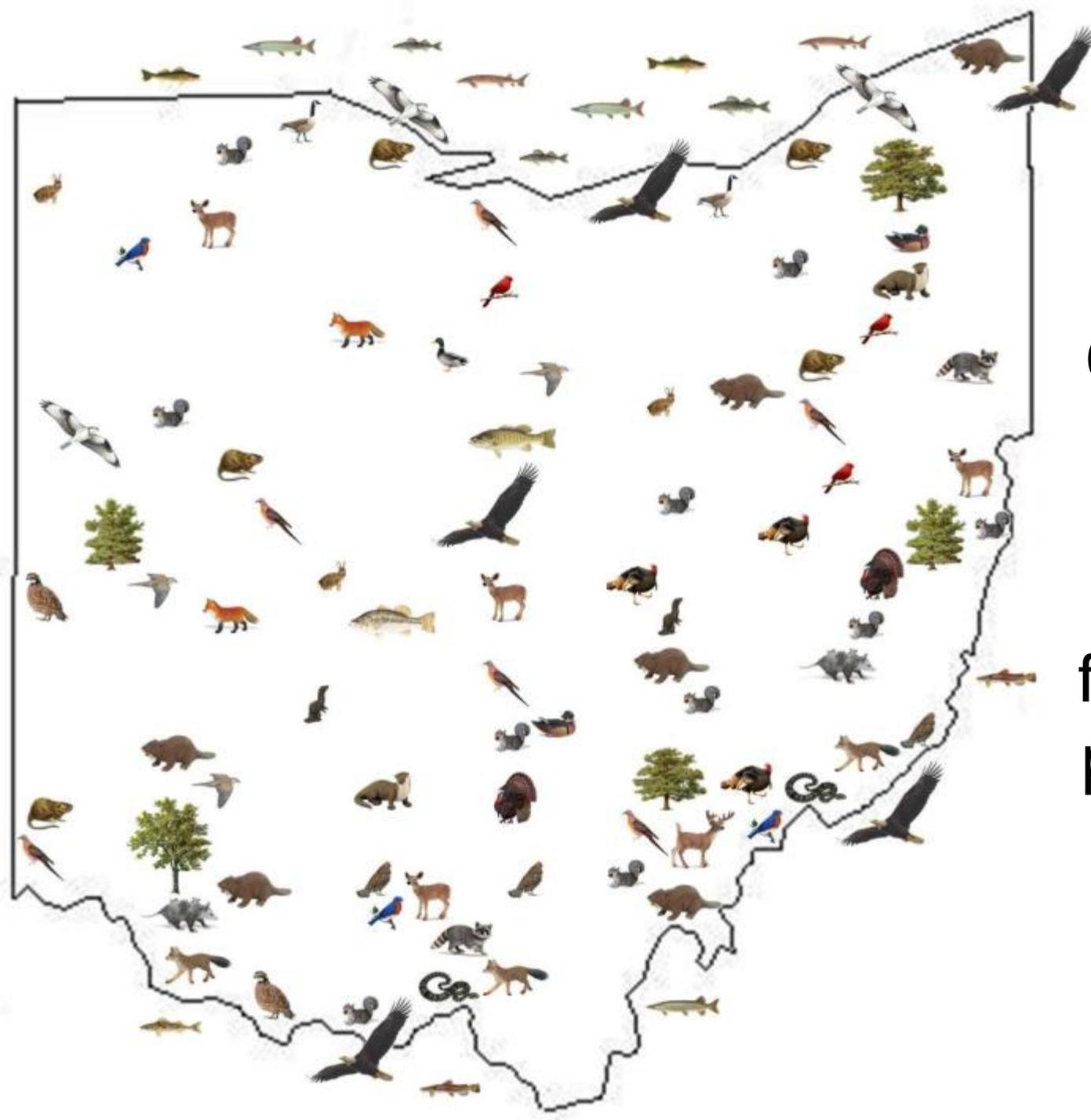
1900

Lacey Act is passed, prohibits the transportation of illegally killed game across state lines. This curbed trafficking in plumage and other wildlife products.



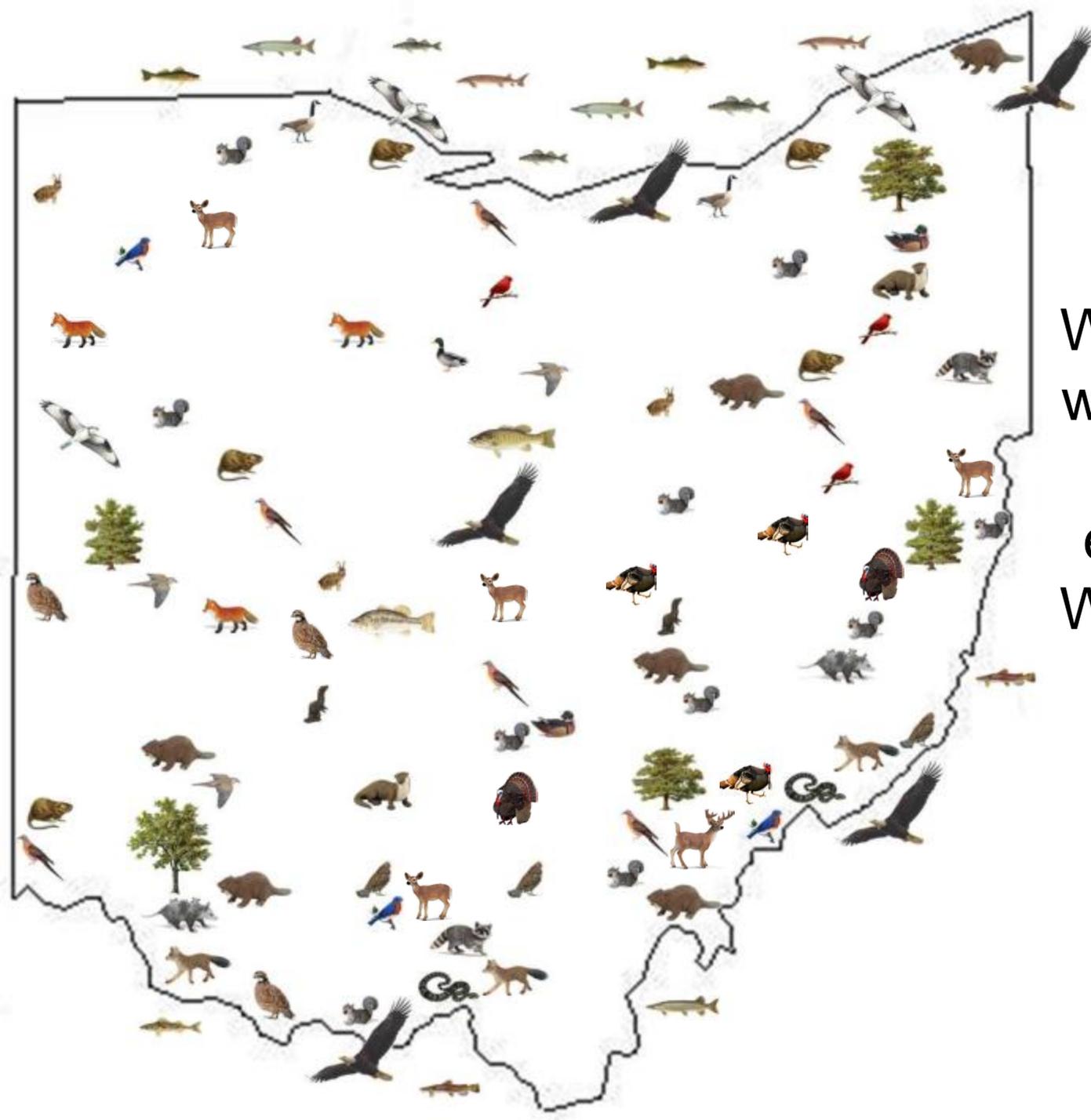
1902

Commission
of Fish and
Game
responsible
for lakes and
public parks.



1909

Wild turkeys and white-tailed deer are declared extinct in Ohio. Widespread loss of forests and uncontrolled hunting is blamed.



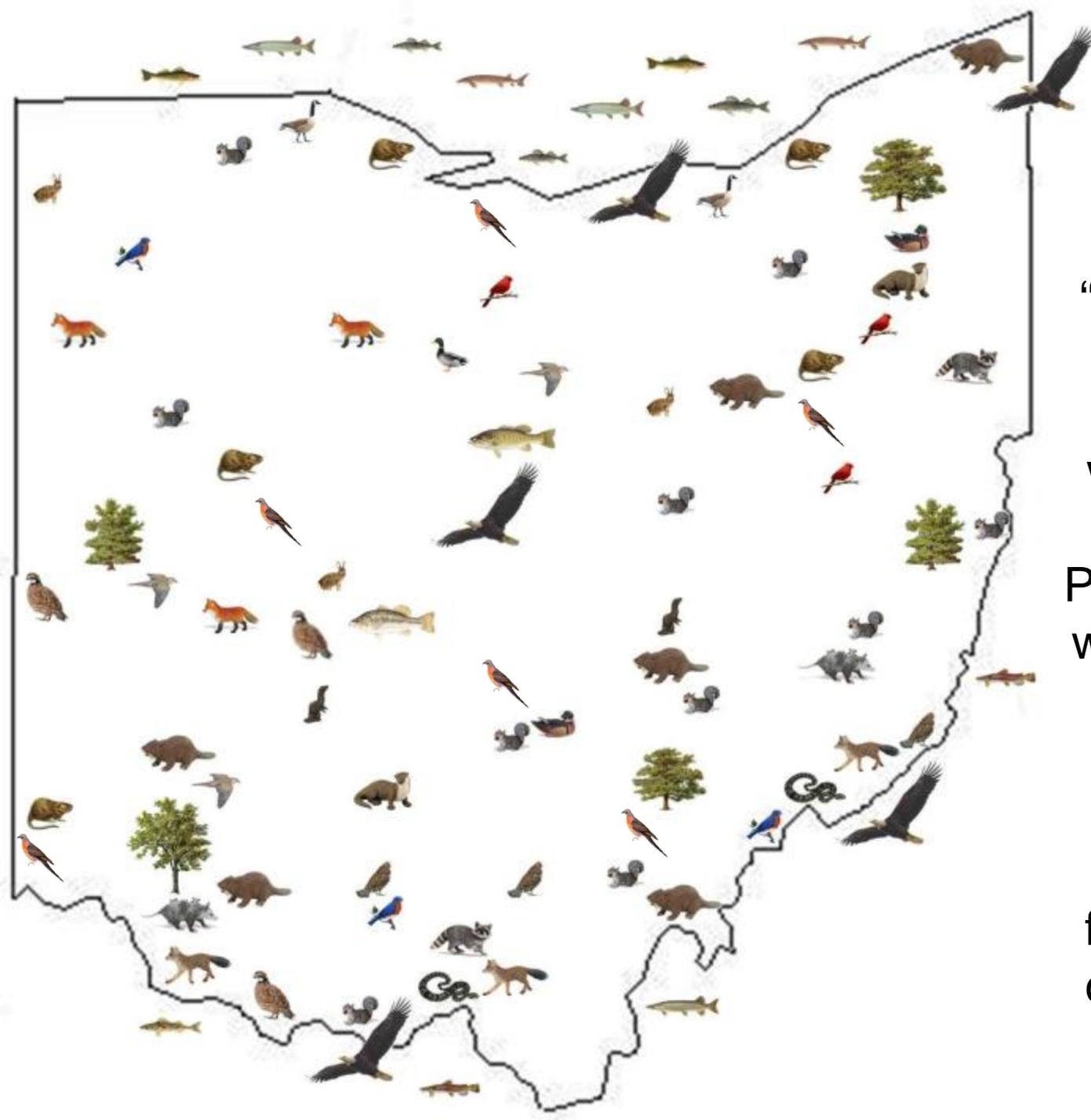
1913

The last year that ospreys were reported nesting successfully in the state. The last nest to produce young was at Grand Lake St. Marys. First resident hunting license required.



1914

“Martha,” the very last passenger pigeon in the world, died at the Cincinnati Zoo. Passenger pigeons were once thought to be the most numerous bird species in the world. Single flocks sometimes contained billions of birds.



1917

Migratory
Bird Treaty
Act. First
resident
trapping
license
required.



1919

First coyote is seen in Ohio. These animals have been spreading from the western states into new areas as forests were cleared and wolves were eliminated.



1920

First Ohio
wildlife area,
the Roosevelt
Game
Preserve, is
purchased
with license
dollars.



1925

First resident
fishing
license is
required.



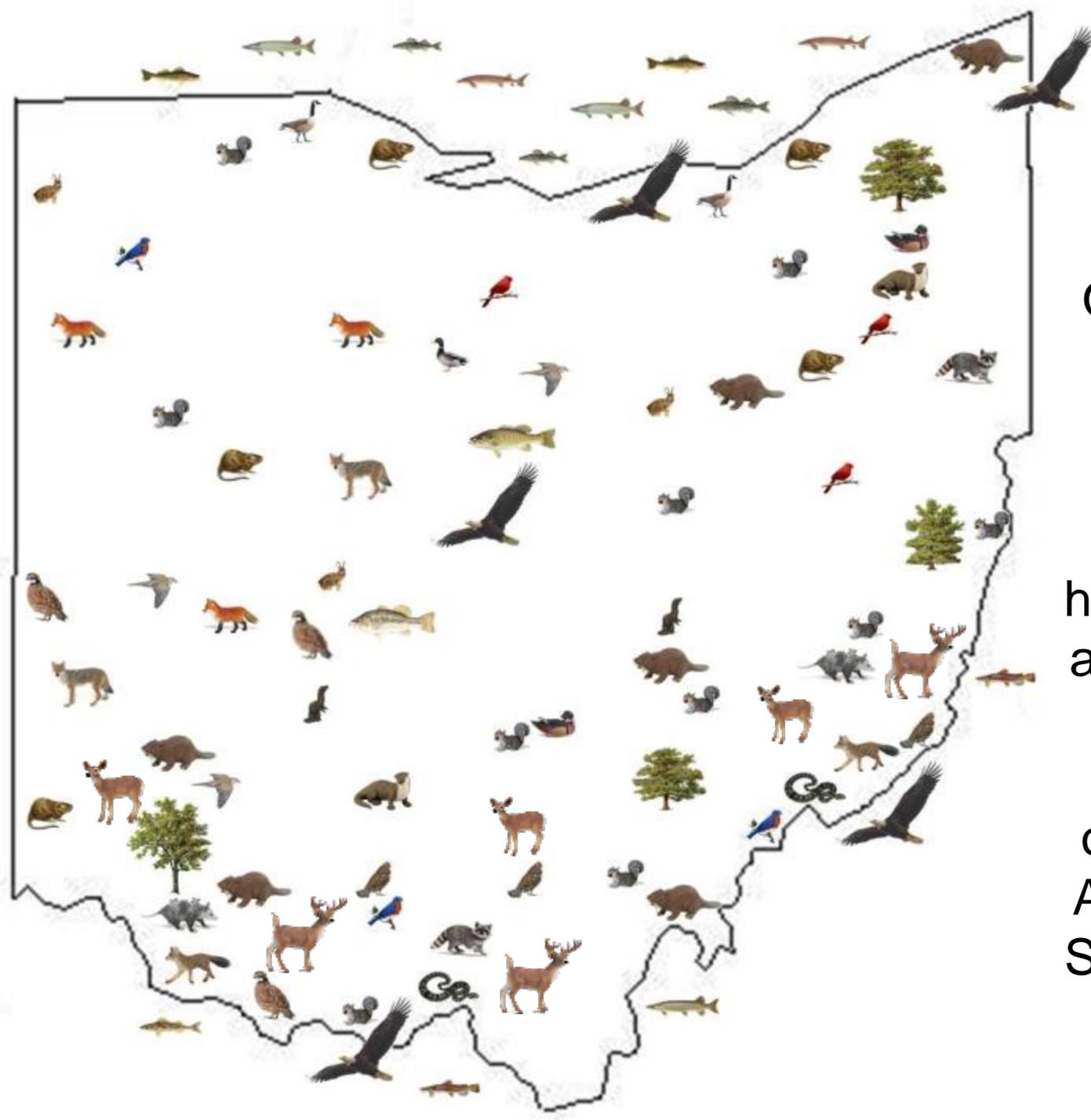
1937

Pittman-
Robertson Act
created.
Federal excise
tax on sporting
arms and
ammunition
provides funding
to states for
management
and restoration
of wildlife.



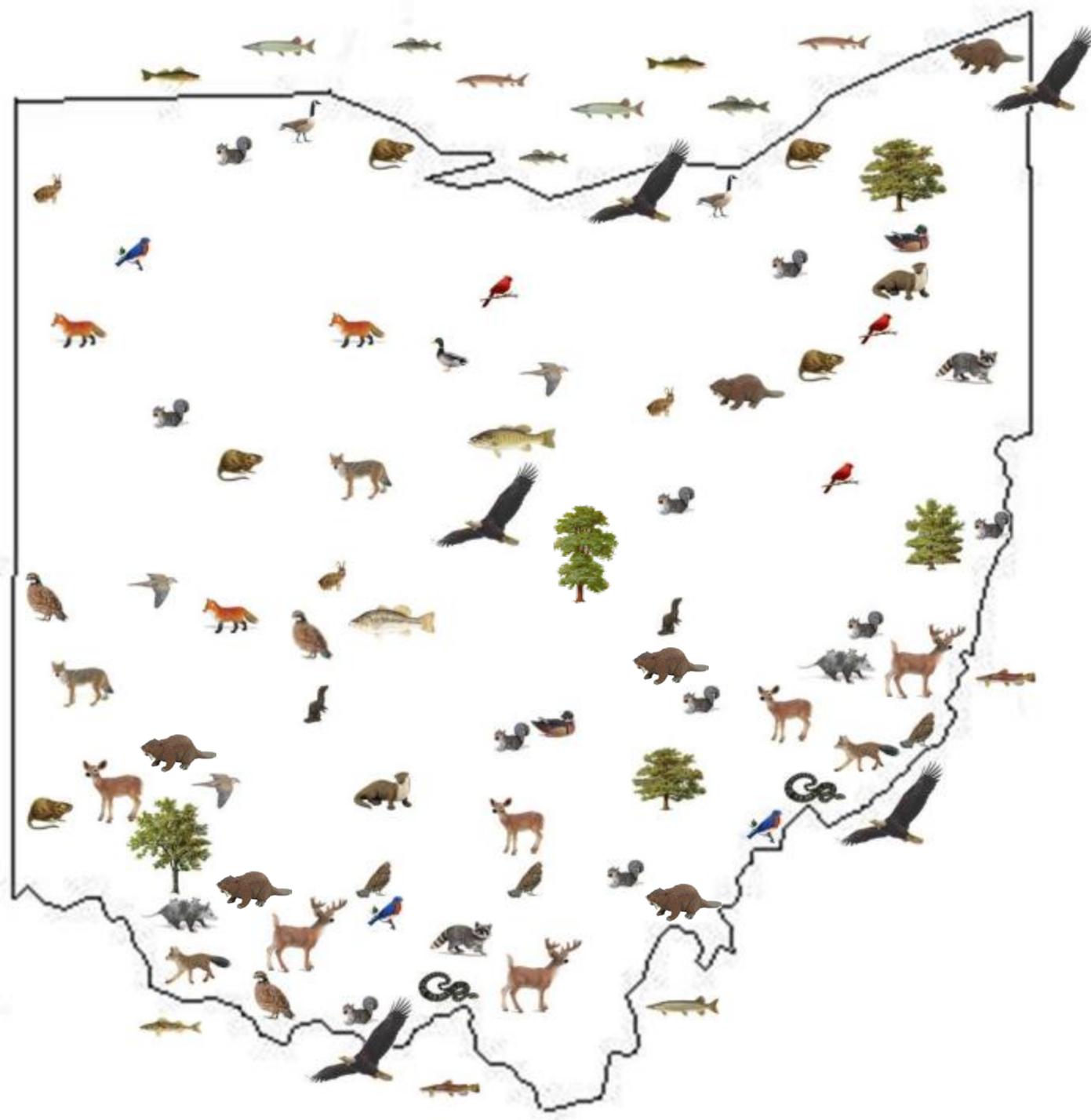
1943

Ohio allows deer hunting again. Deer, which had become scarce prior to 1900, have been making a slow comeback. Only three counties were open for hunting; Adams, Pike, and Scioto. 164 bucks were taken.



1947

A survey of
beaver
populations
turned up
only 100
animals
scattered
across 11
counties.



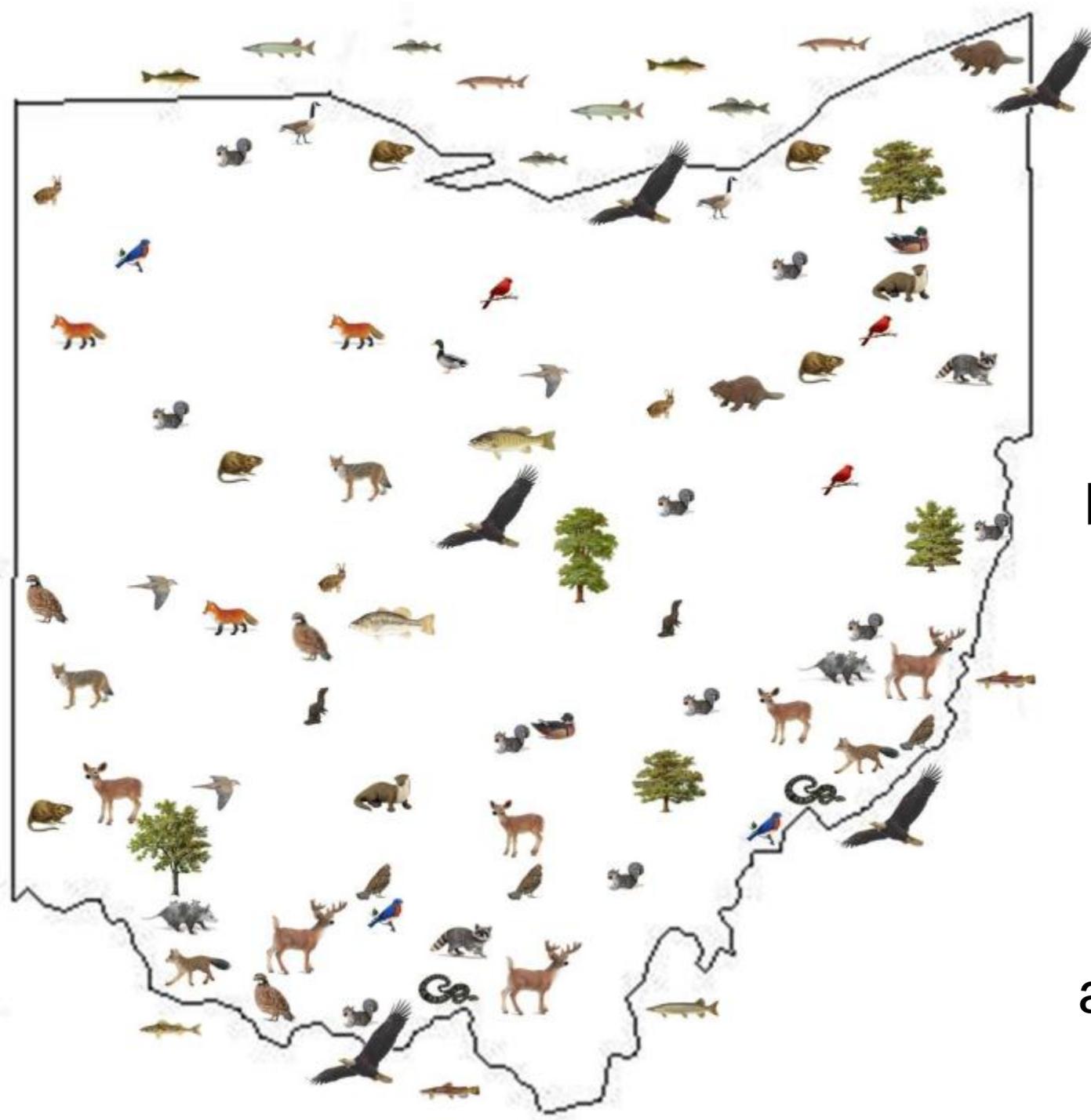
1949

Division of
Conservation
becomes
Division of
Wildlife under
the newly
created Ohio
Department
of Natural
Resources.



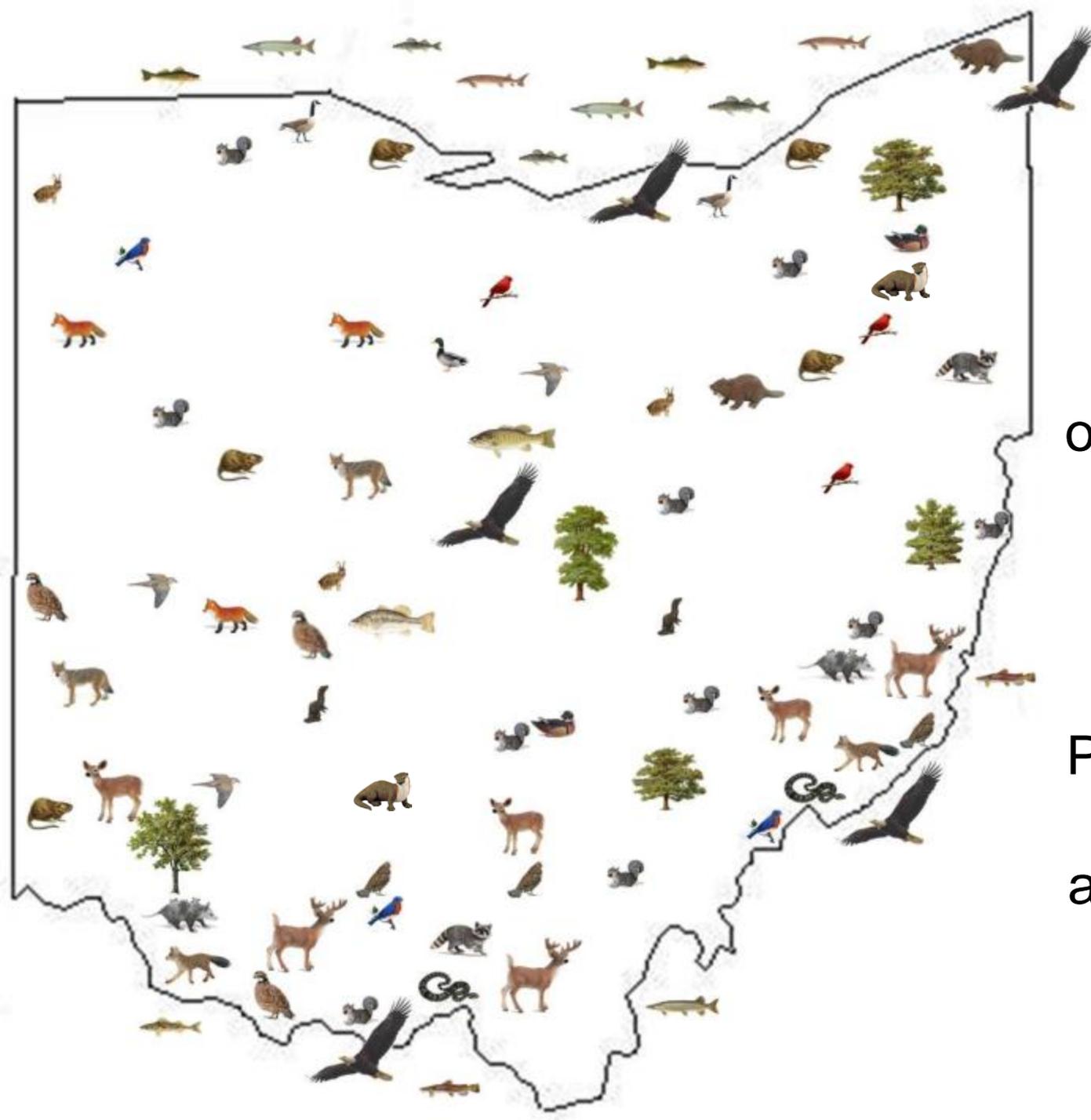
1952

Dingell-Johnson Act passed. Federal excise tax on sport fishing tackle provides funding to states for management and restoration of fish.



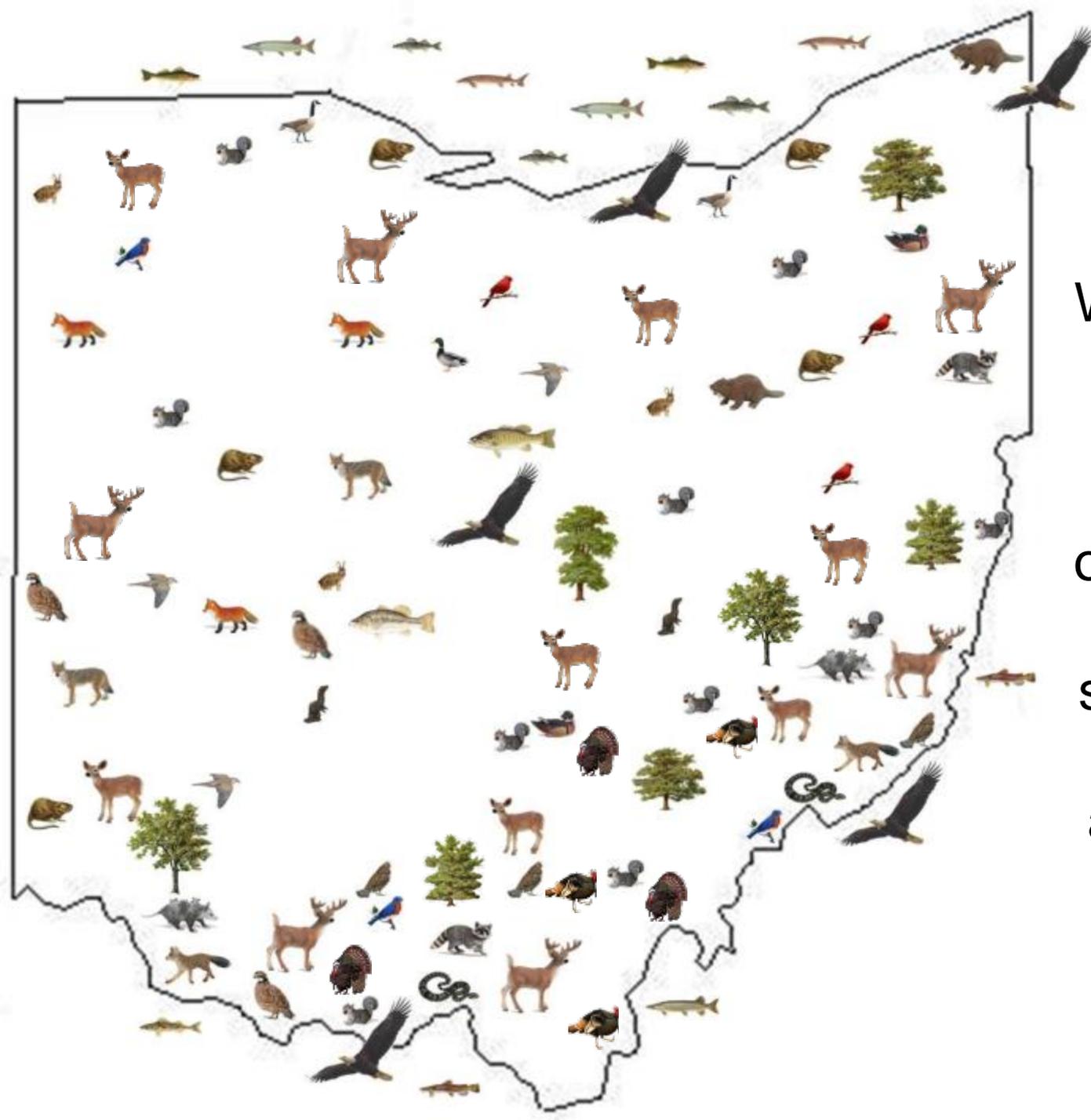
1954

Last reports of native river otters come from Ashtabula, Monroe, and Coshocton counties. Polluted streams and riparian areas were a big problem for otters.



1956

Wild turkeys are reintroduced. Wild birds are brought from other states and released into southeast Ohio, where forests are recovering. First statewide deer season.



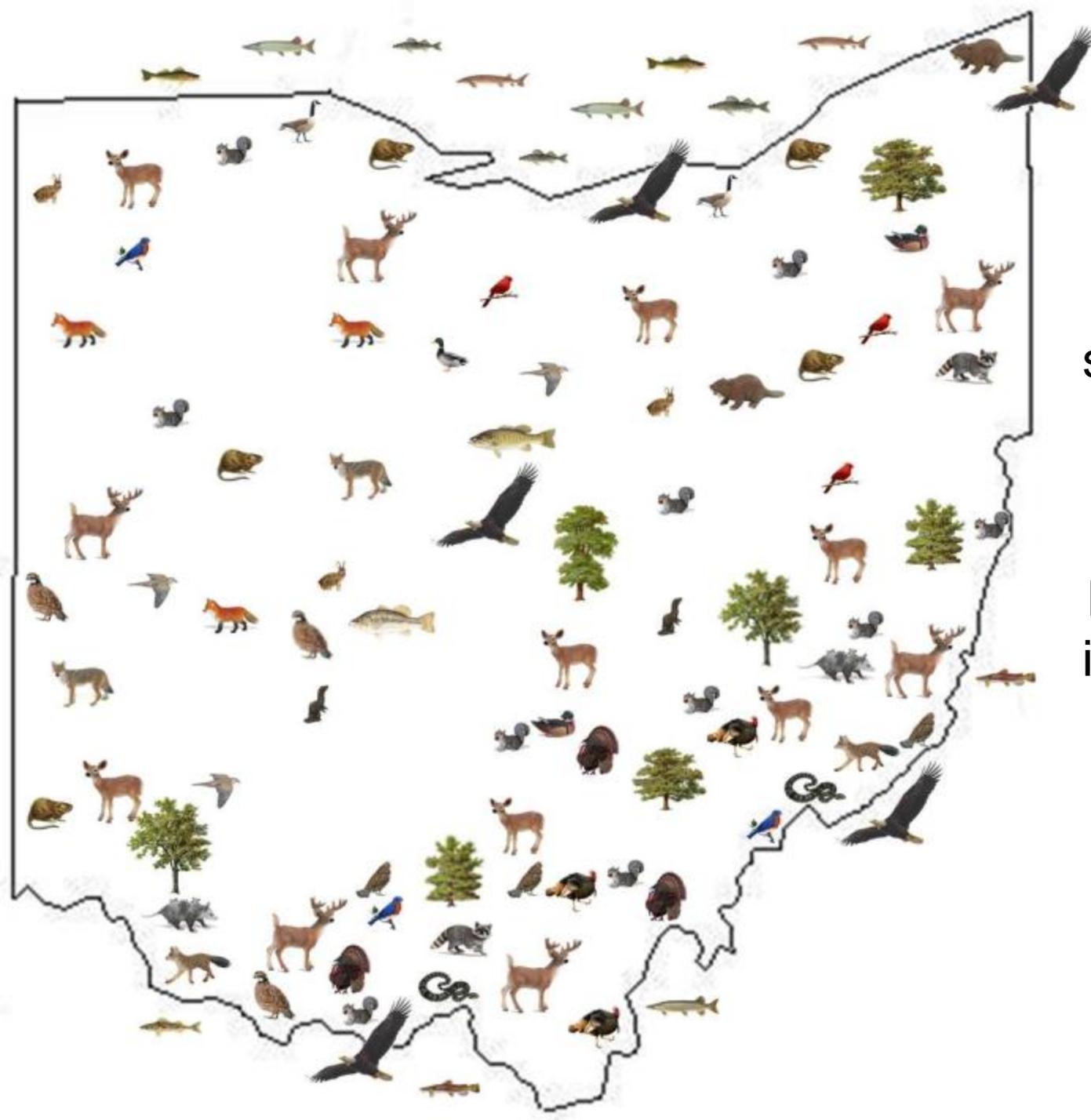
1966

First wild turkey season in limited counties.

Endangered Species Preservation Act

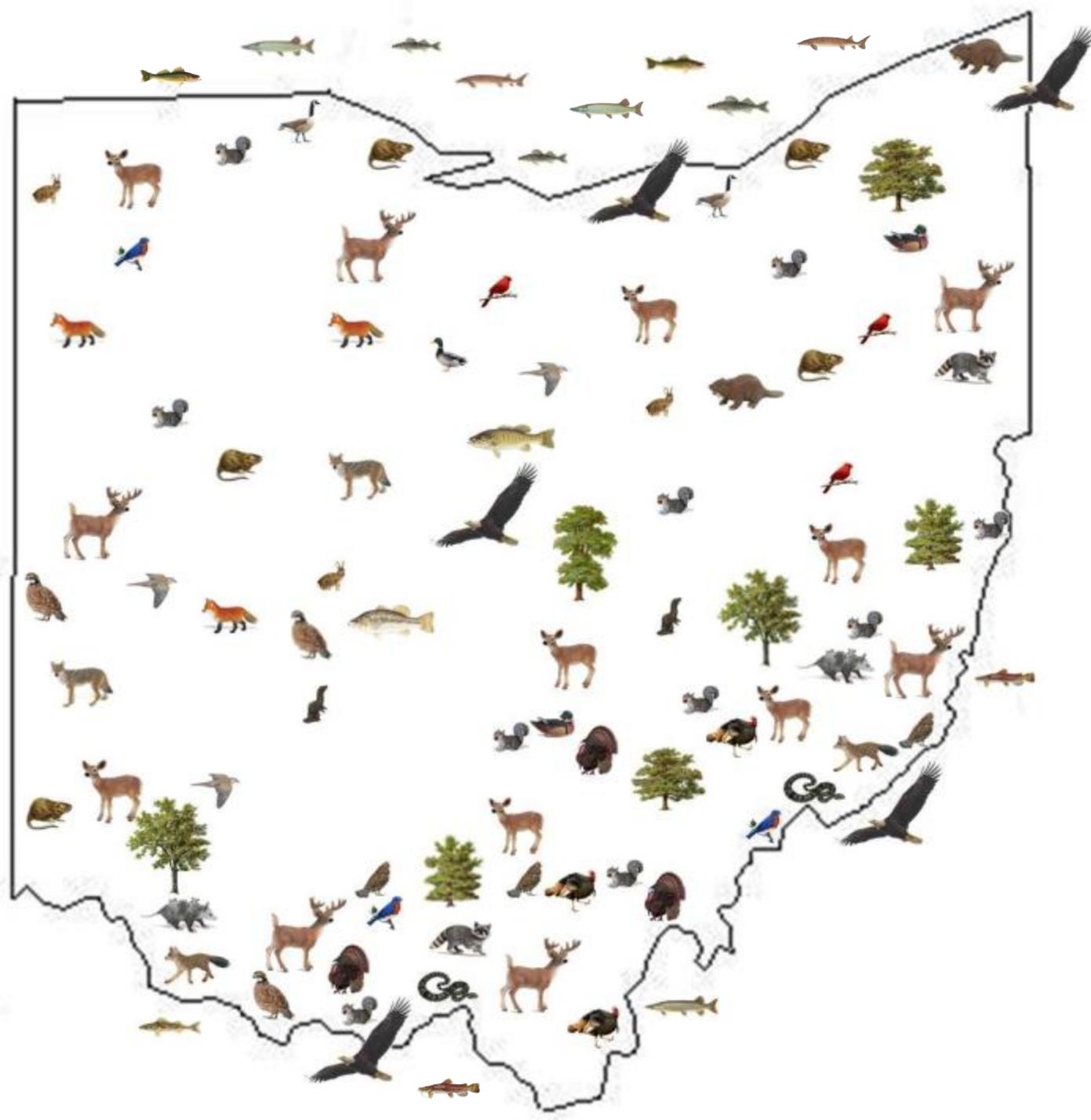
is established. It is modified for 6 years until the current

Endangered Species Act is established in 1973.



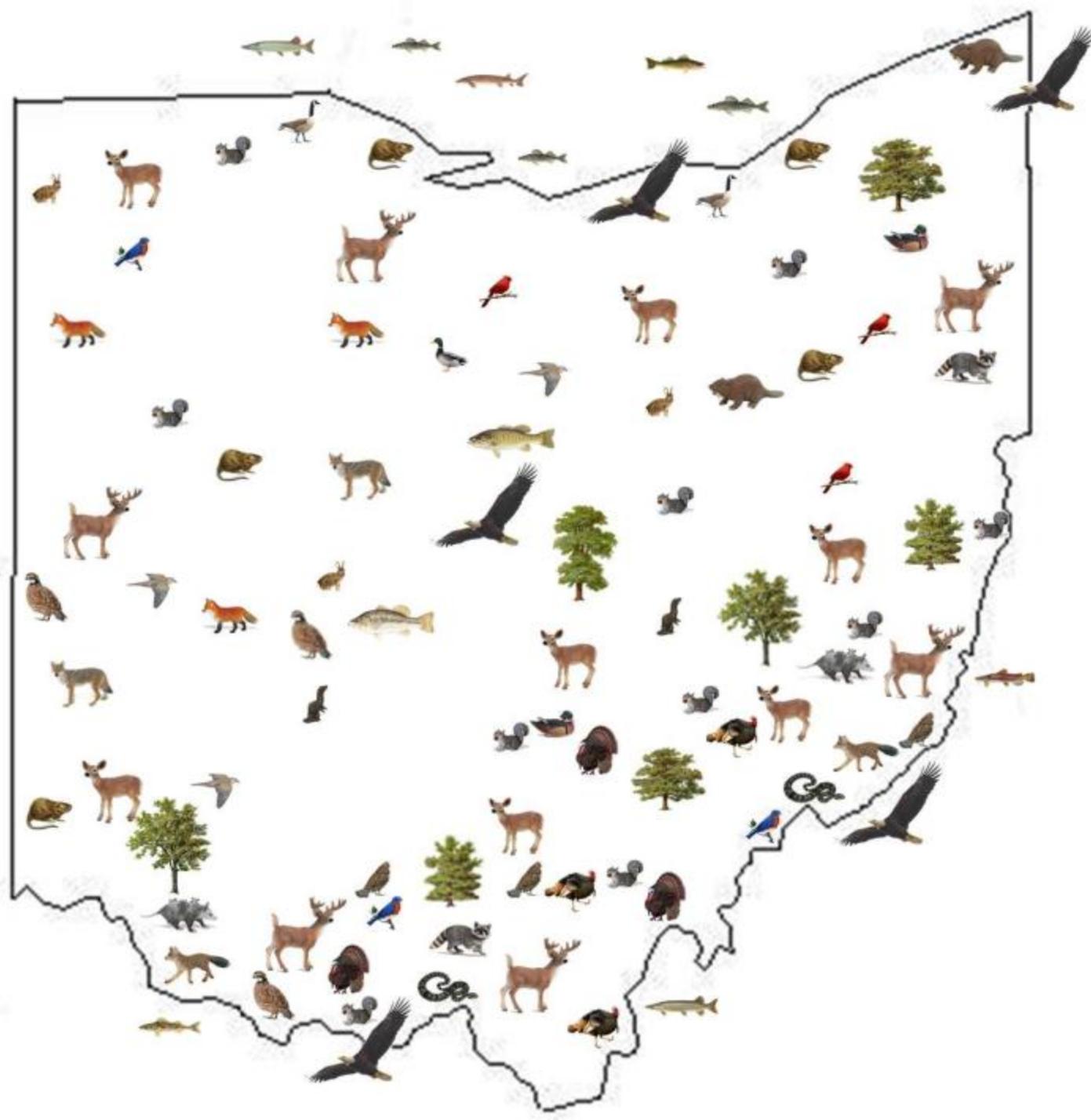
1968

Fire on the
Cuyahoga
River spurs
cleanup of
Ohio's
waterways.



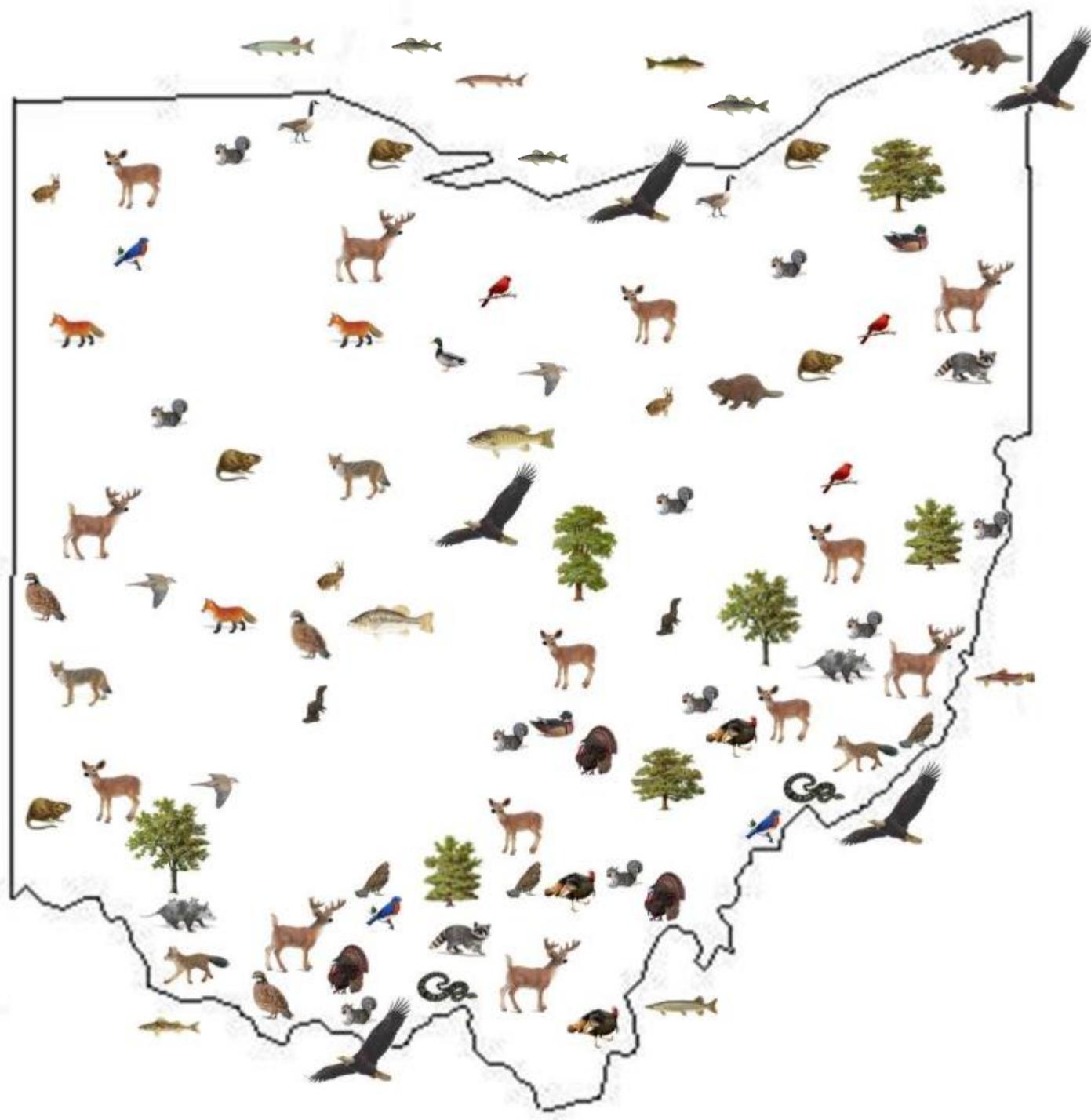
1969

The National Environmental Policy Act established. Requires federal agencies to consider the environmental impact of their action.



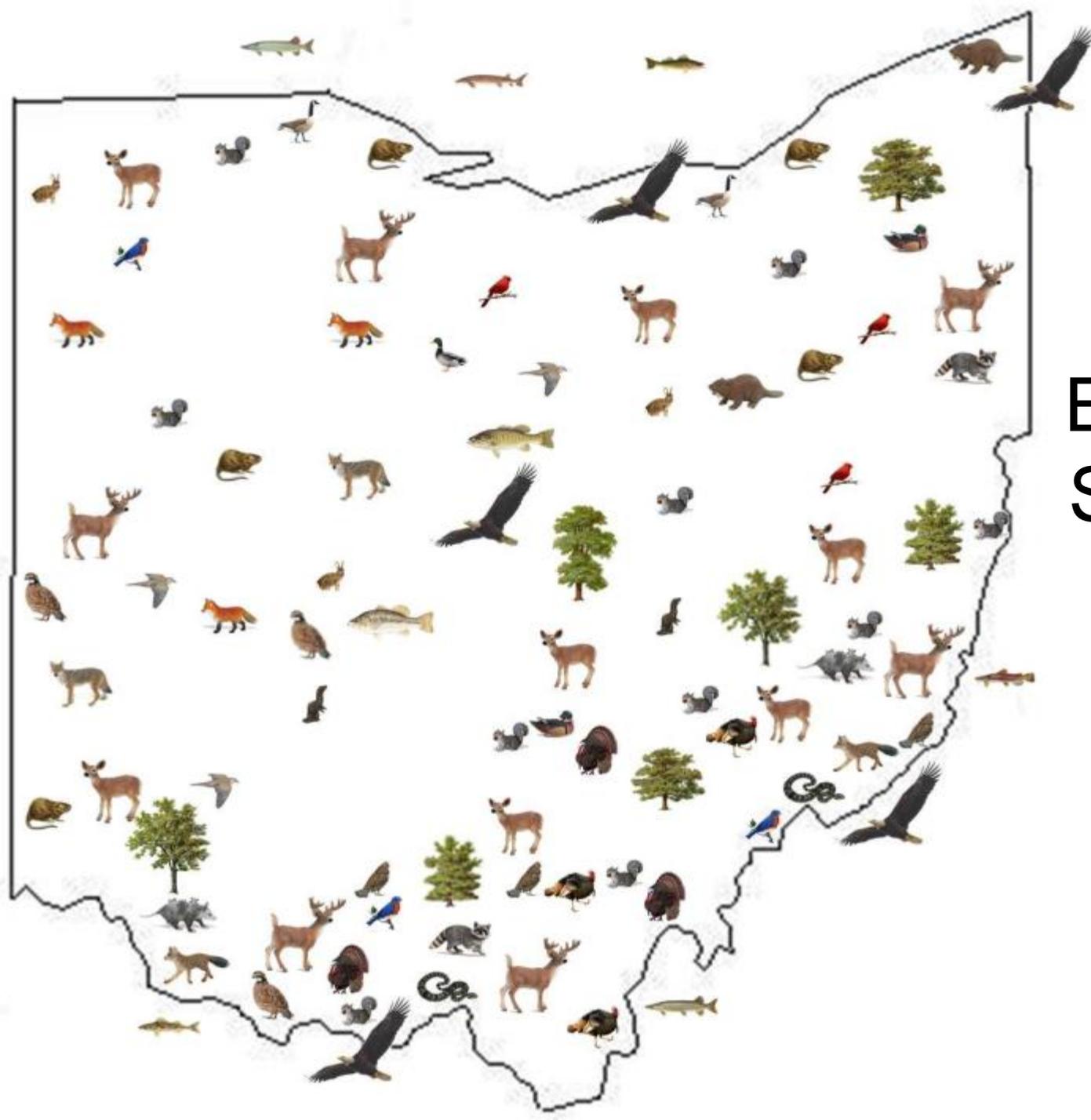
1970

Blue Pike
extinct in
Great
Lakes.



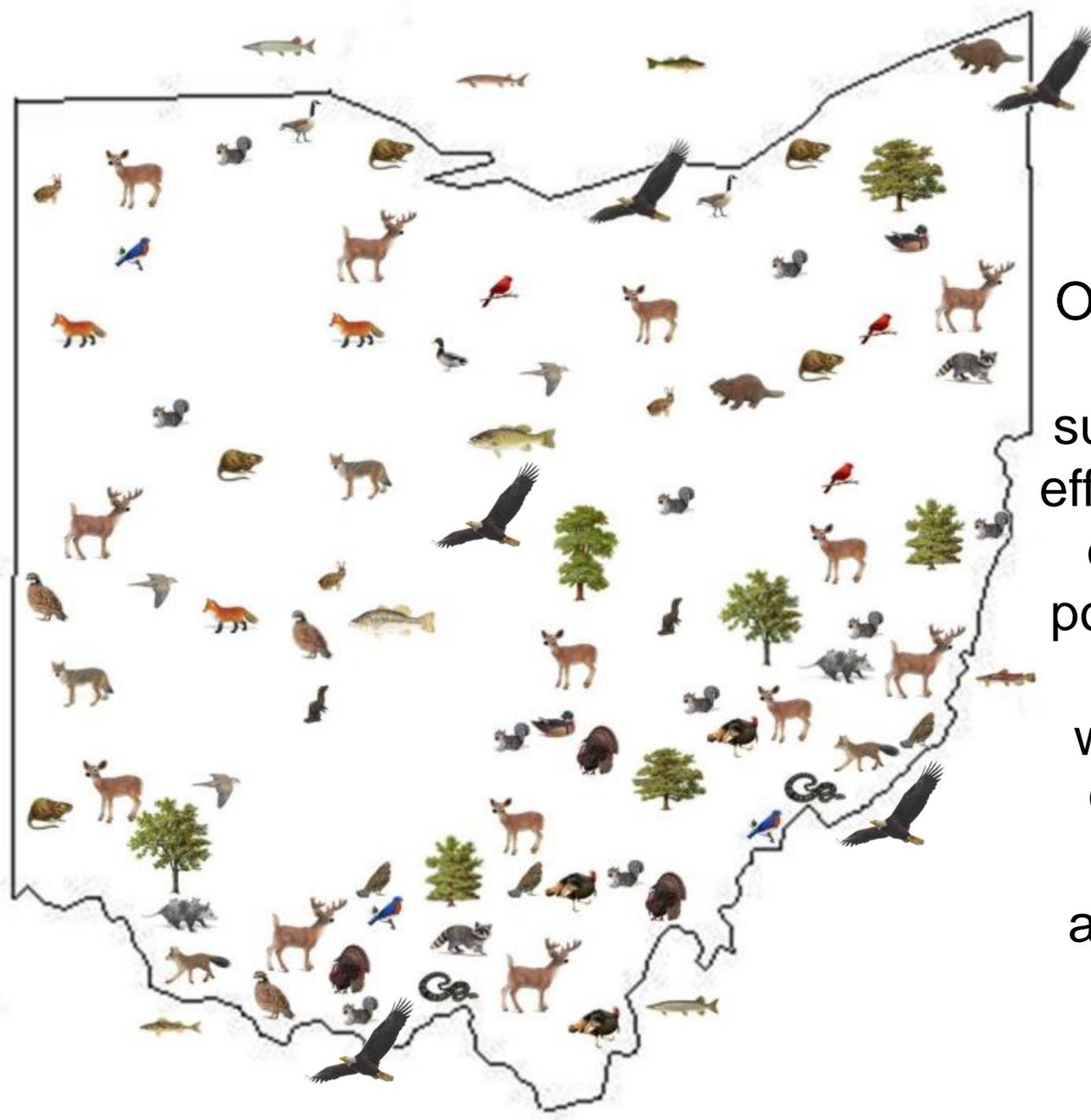
1973

Ohio's
Endangered
Species law
passed.



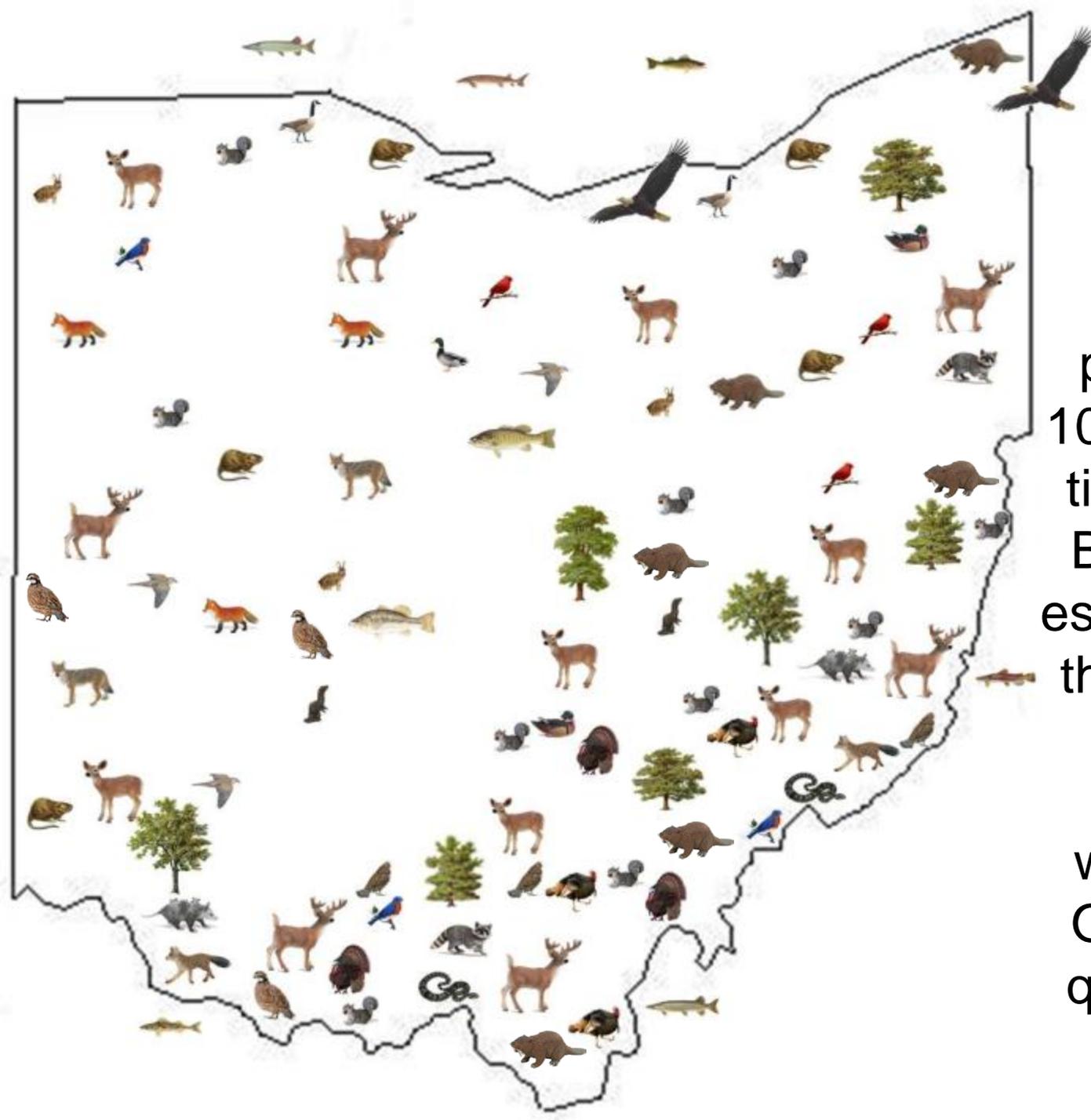
1973

Ohio's bald eagle population is suffering from the effects of DDT and other pesticide poisoning, as well as the loss of wetland habitat. Only 4 pairs of eagles remain along Lake Erie.



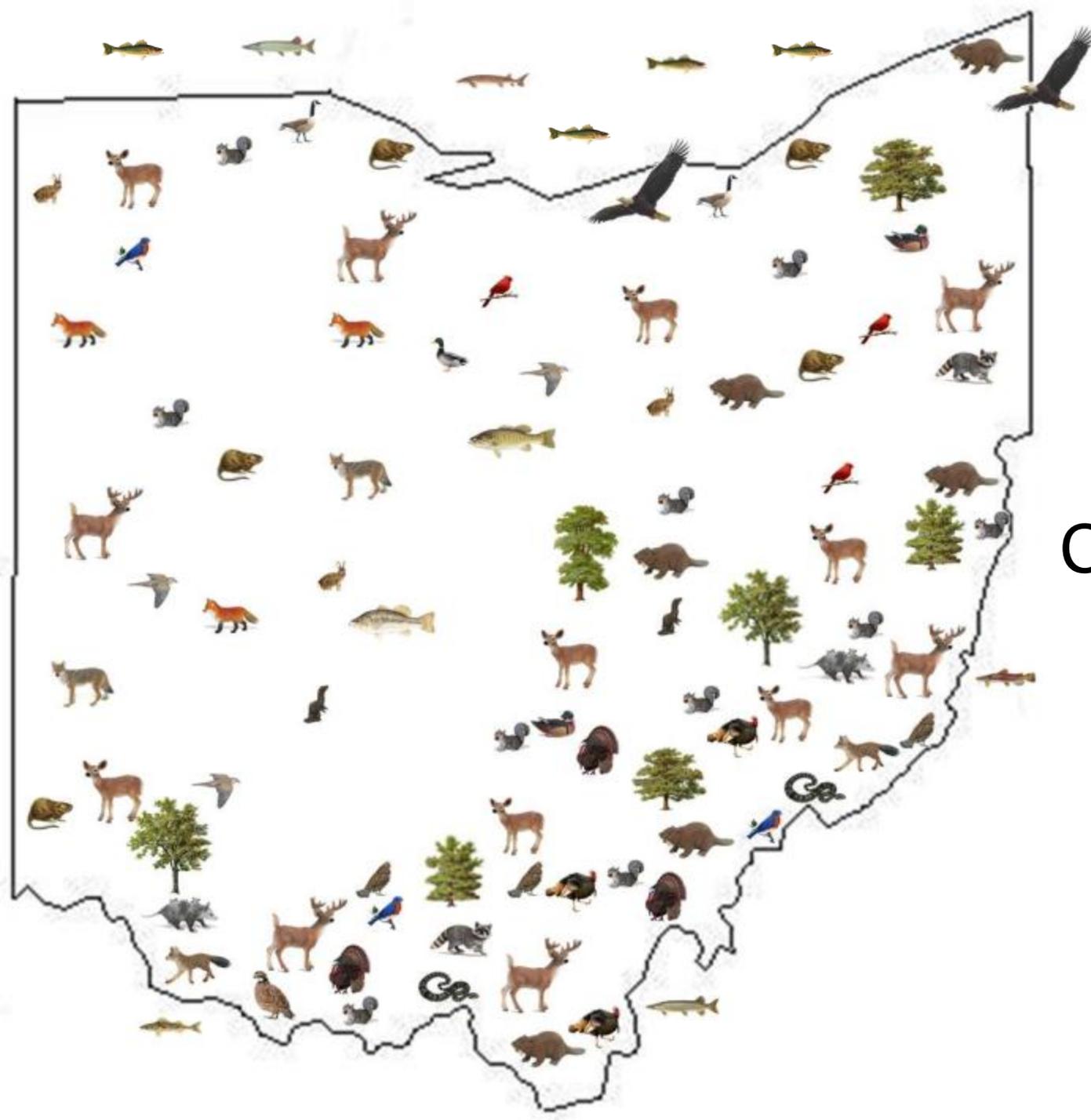
1978

The beaver population tops 10,000 for the first time in decades. Beaver have re-established across the eastern parts of the state. Blizzards this winter decimate Ohio's bobwhite quail population.



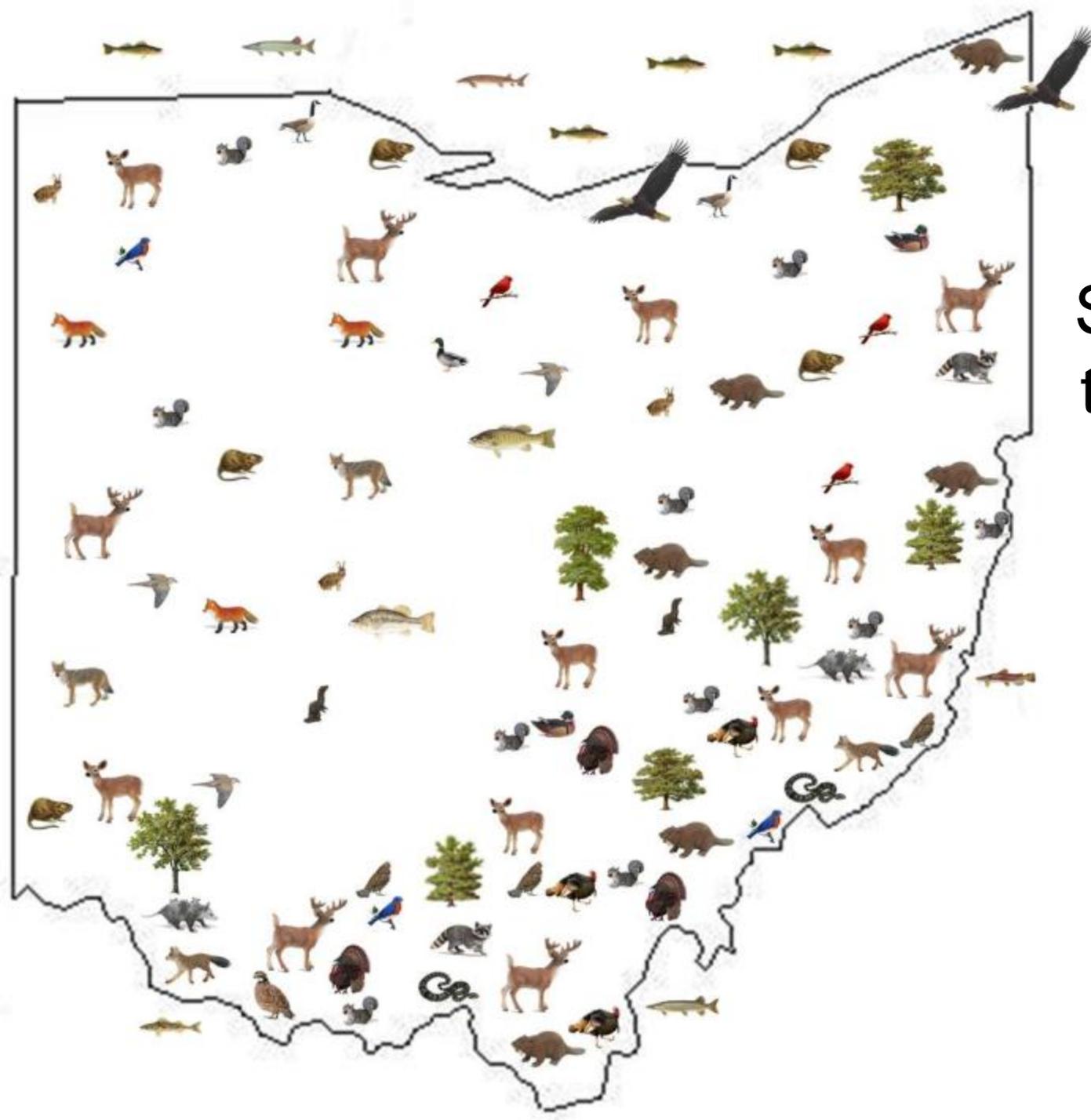
1980

Lake Erie
declared
“Walleye
Capital of the
World” by
Governor
Rhodes.



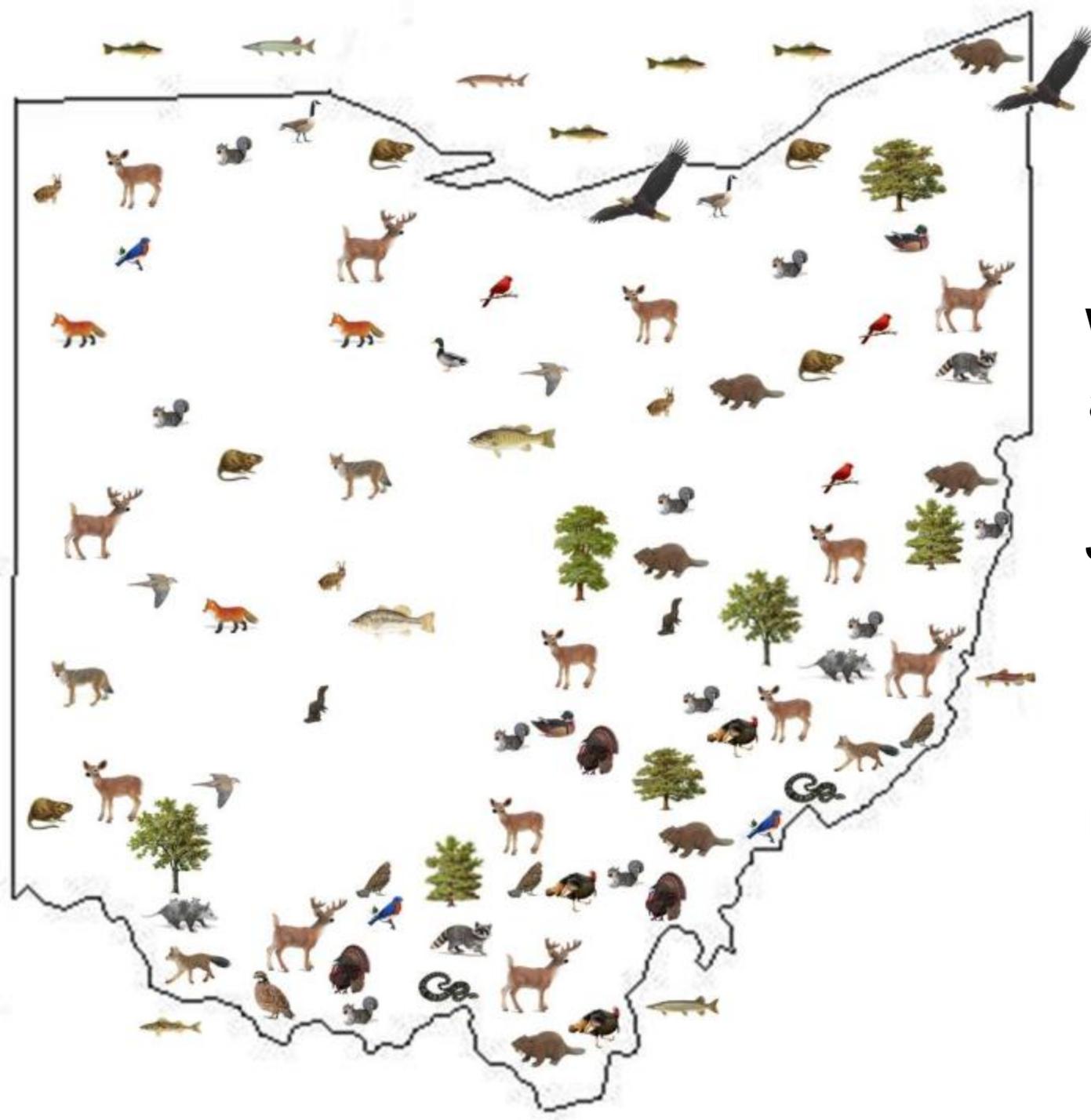
1983

State income
tax check-off
for wildlife
diversity
established.



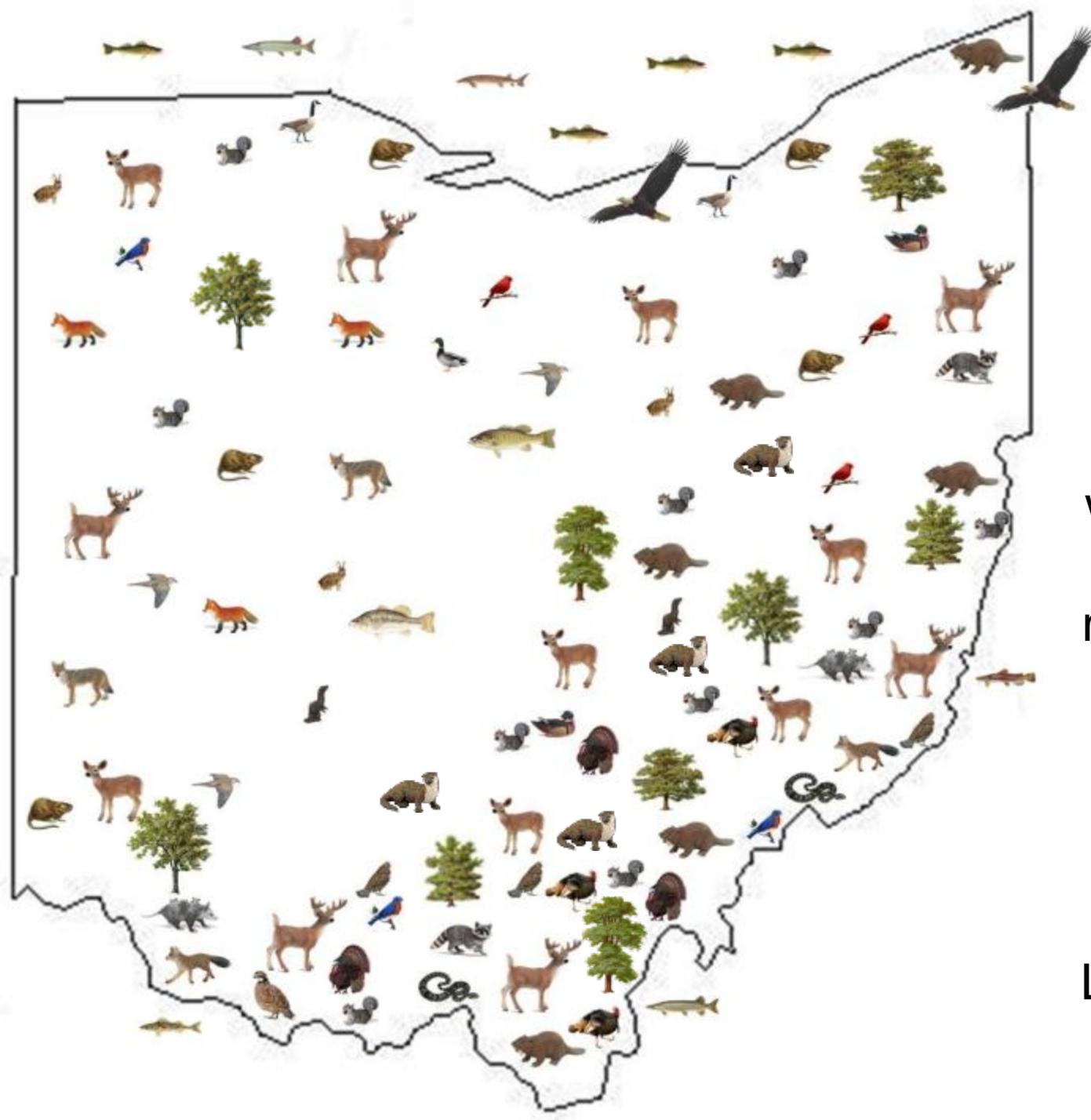
1984

Wallup-Breaux amendment to the Dingell-Johnson act to include import duties on yachts and a motorboat fuel tax on gasoline.



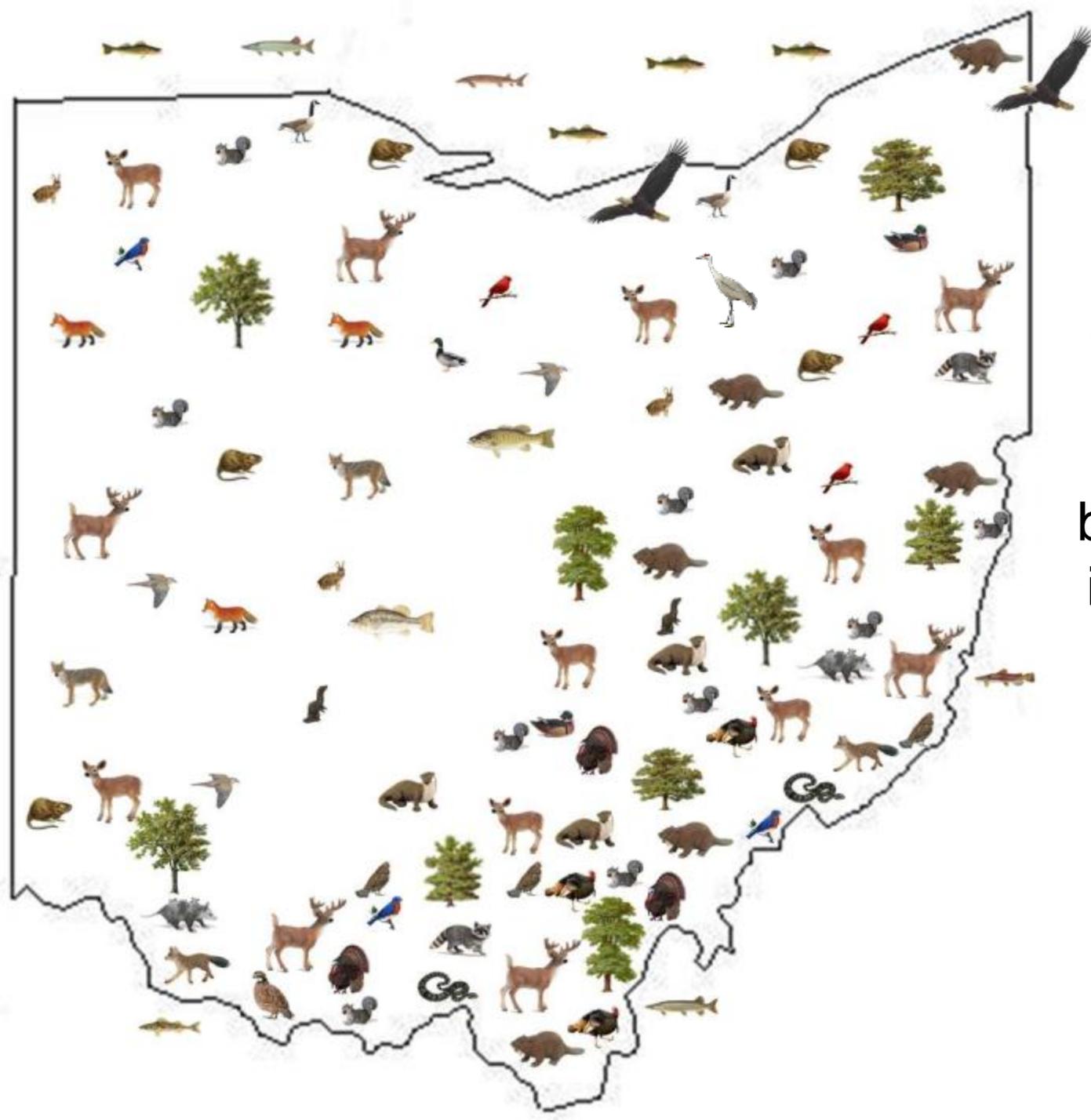
1986

River otters are reintroduced into 4 Ohio watersheds. 123 animals were released over the next five years into the Grand River, Killbuck Creek, Stillwater Creek, and the Little Muskingum.



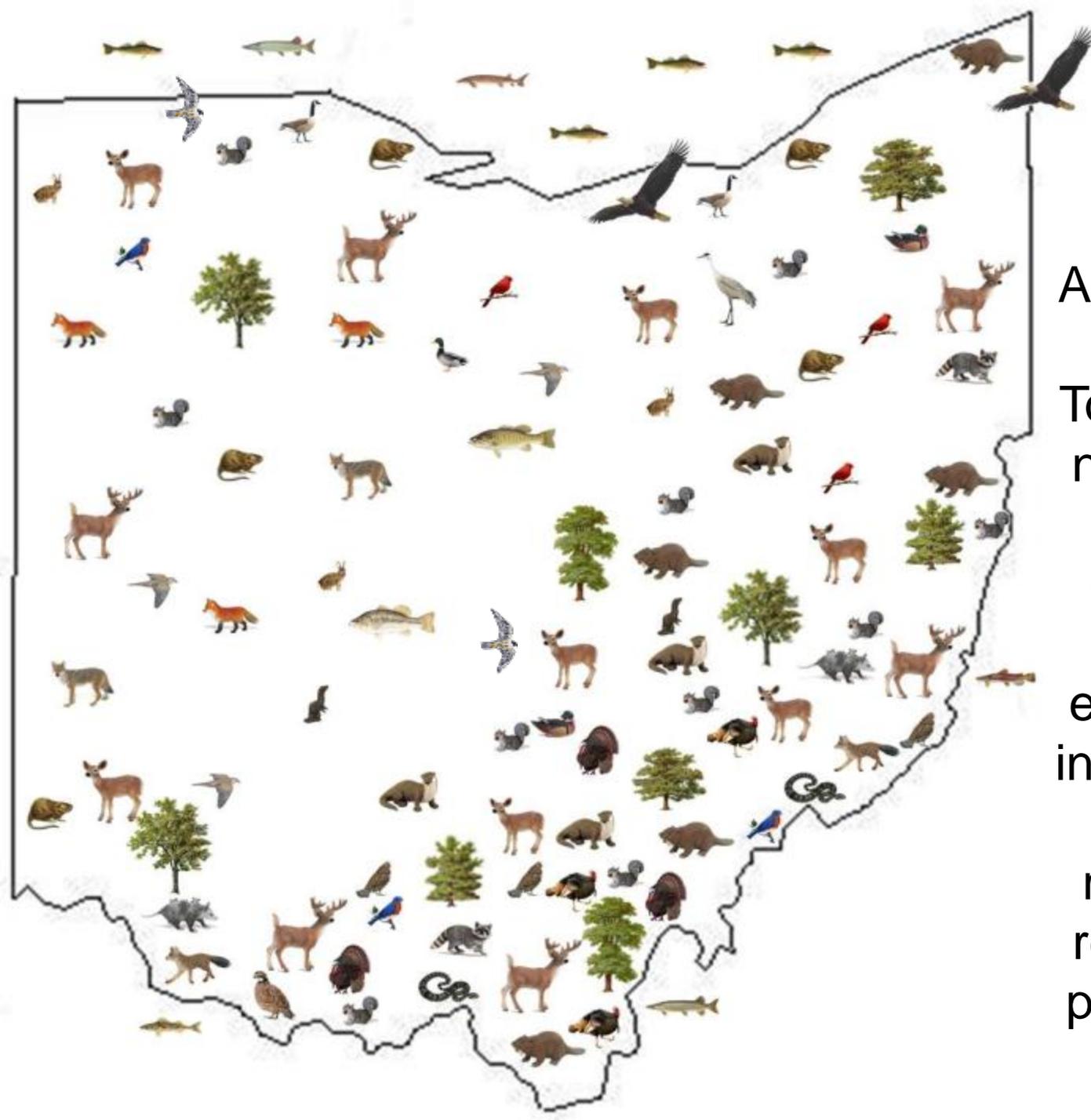
1987

Sandhill cranes return to Ohio. These large birds built a nest in a marsh near Wooster. This is the first nesting pair since 1926. They are still rare today.



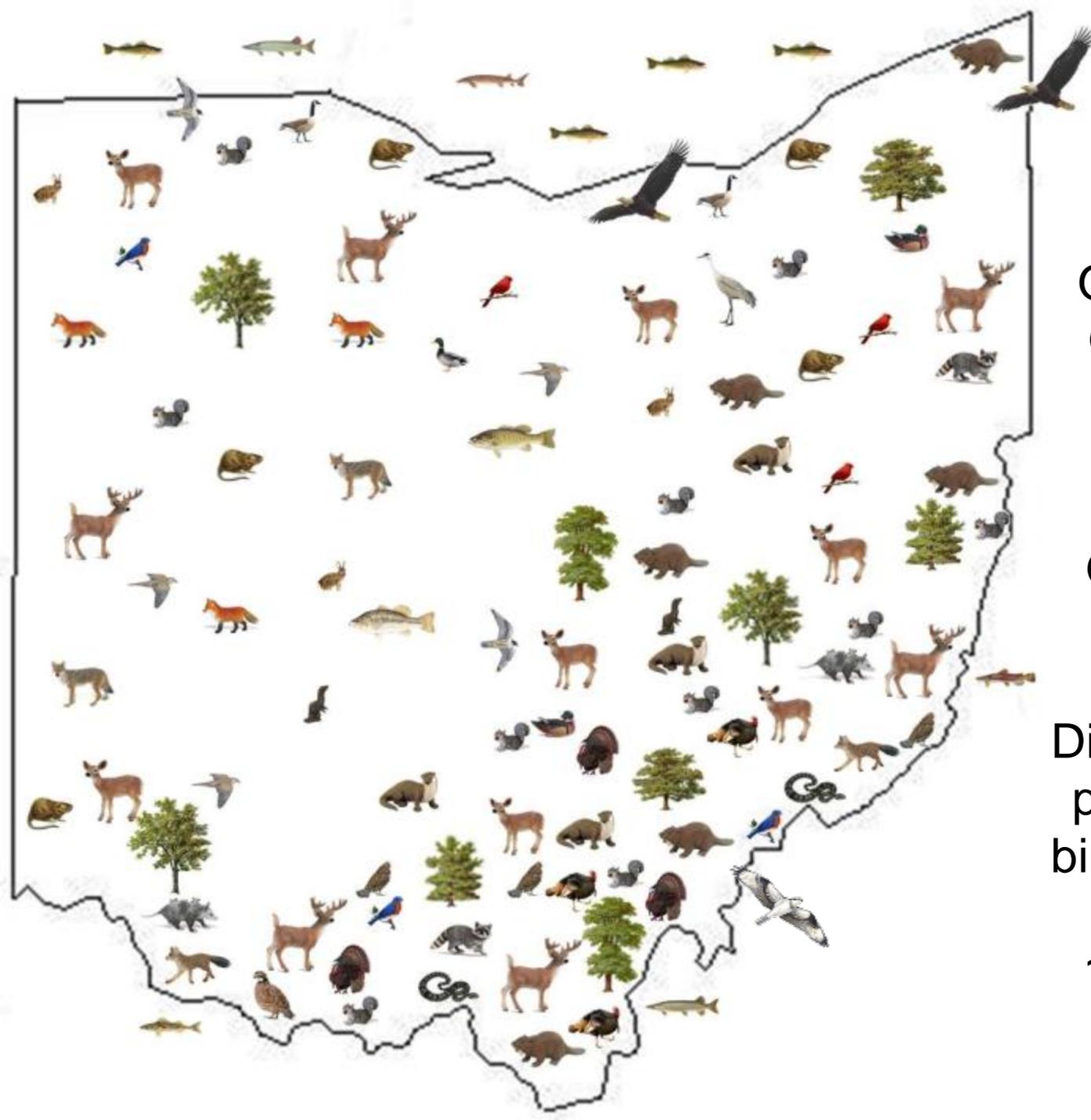
1988

A pair of peregrine falcons adopts Toledo and begins nesting on an old hotel building. Ohio soon joins other states in establishing pairs in other Ohio cities as part of a regional effort to restore peregrine populations in the eastern U.S.



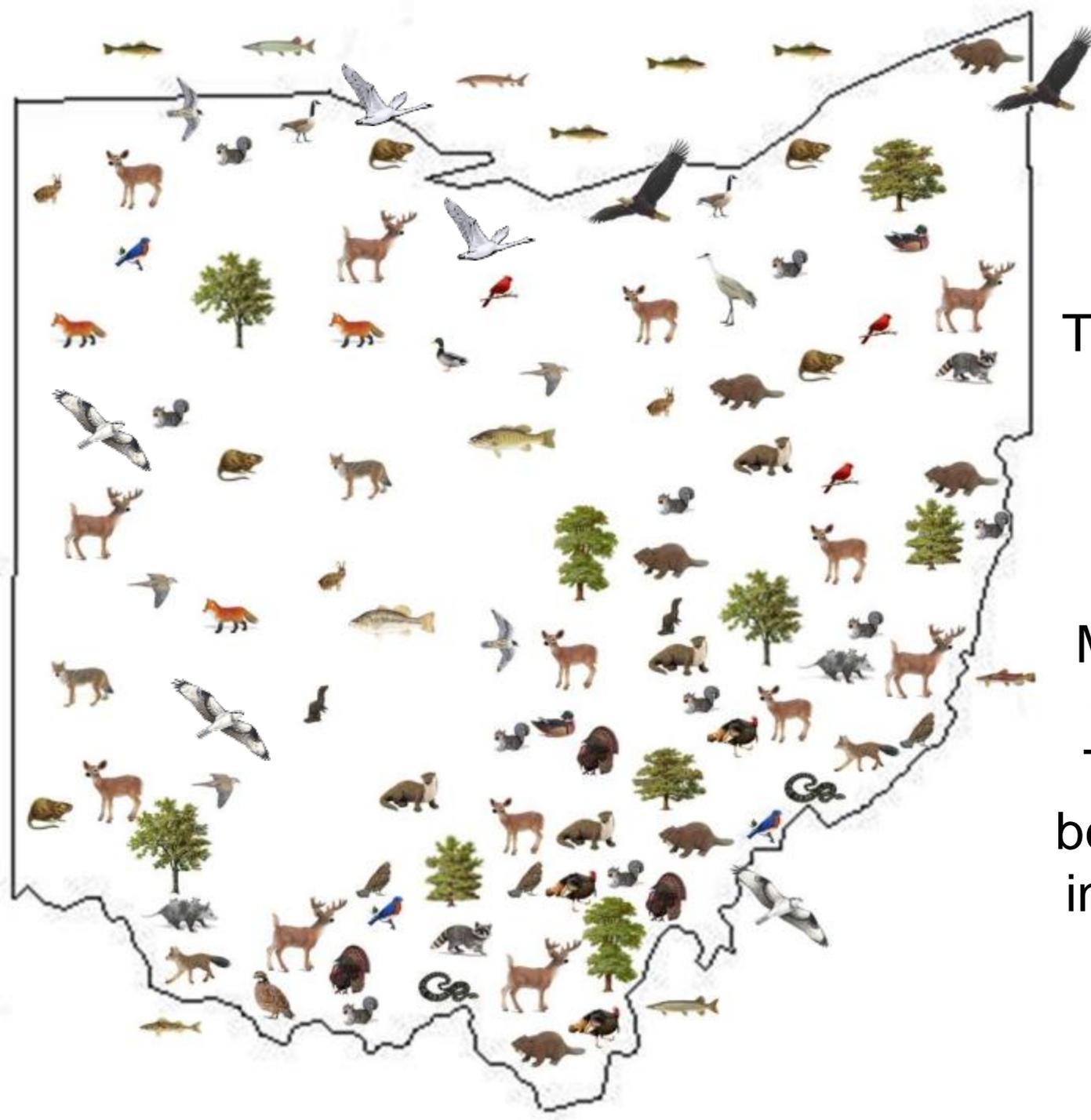
1995

Ospreys return to Ohio and build a nest on an electrical tower located over the Ohio River. This was one year ahead of the Division of Wildlife's plan to release 36 birds from Maryland into the wild in 1996. Deer herd estimated at 550,000.



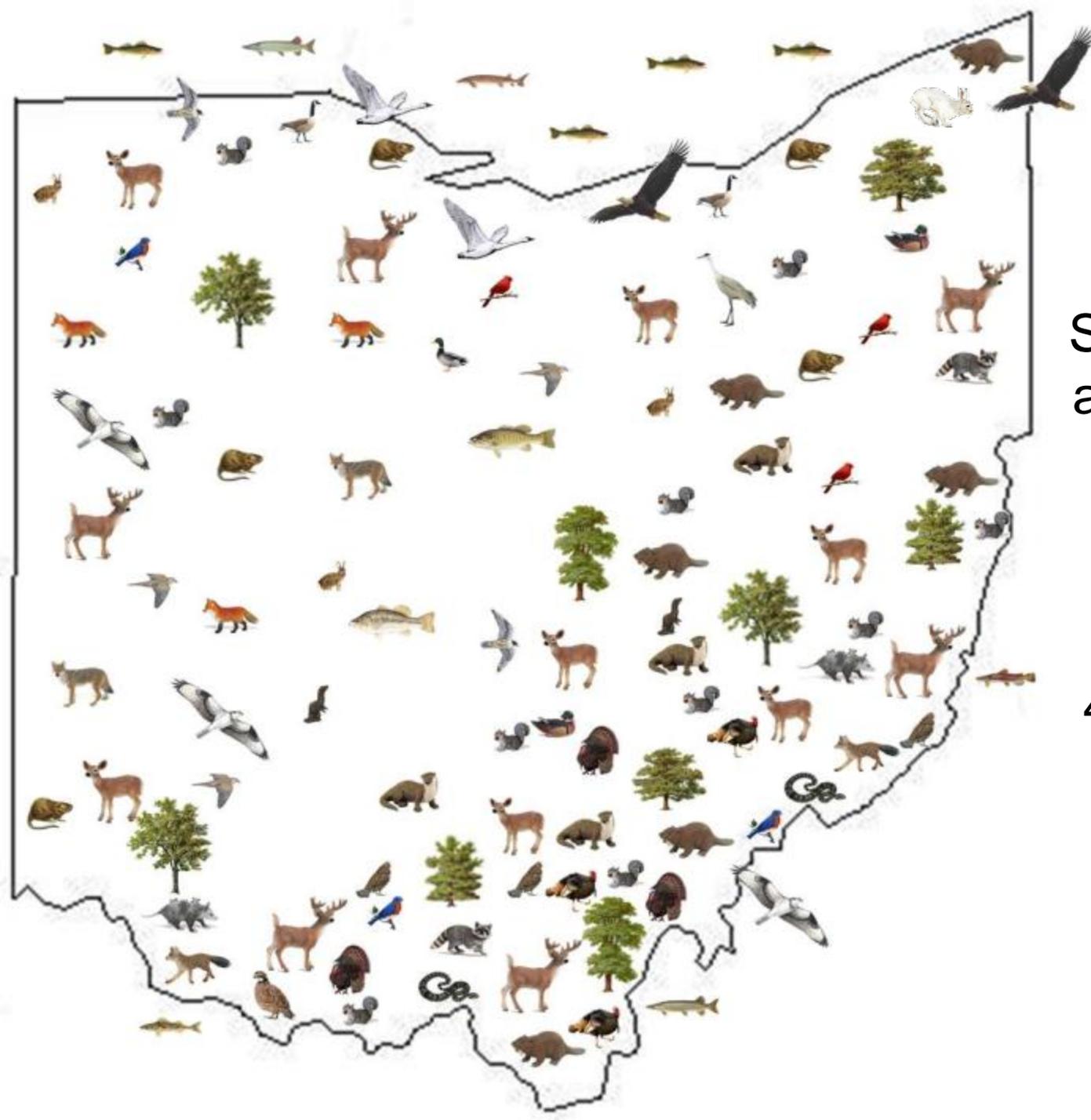
1996

Trumpeter swans are restored to Ohio when 15 birds are released at Magee Marsh in Ottawa county. These birds will be joined by more introductions in a project that will last 10 years.



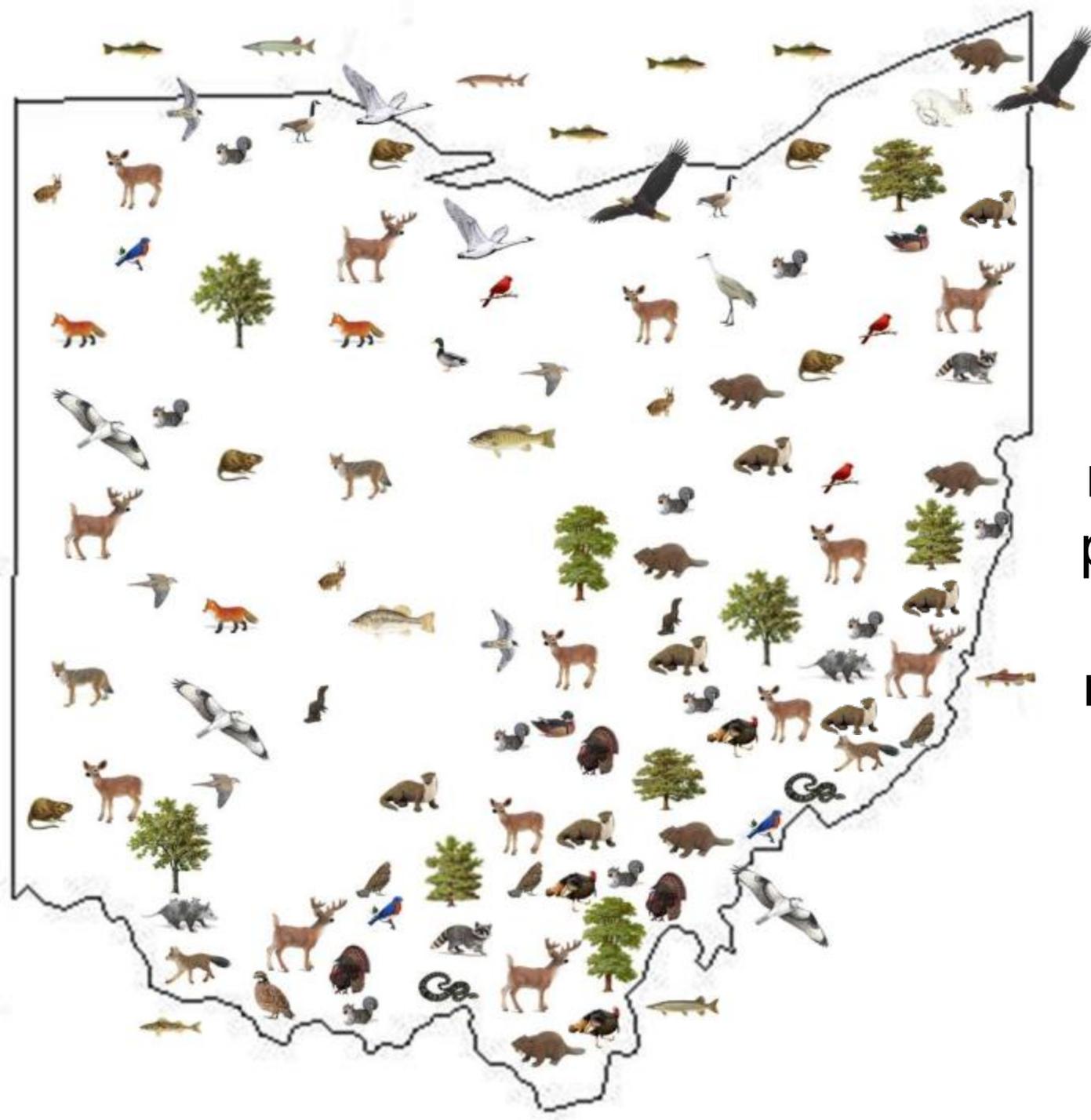
1999

Snowshoe hares are reintroduced into Ashtabula and Geauga counties. Approximately 400 hares were brought from Michigan and released on wildlife areas.



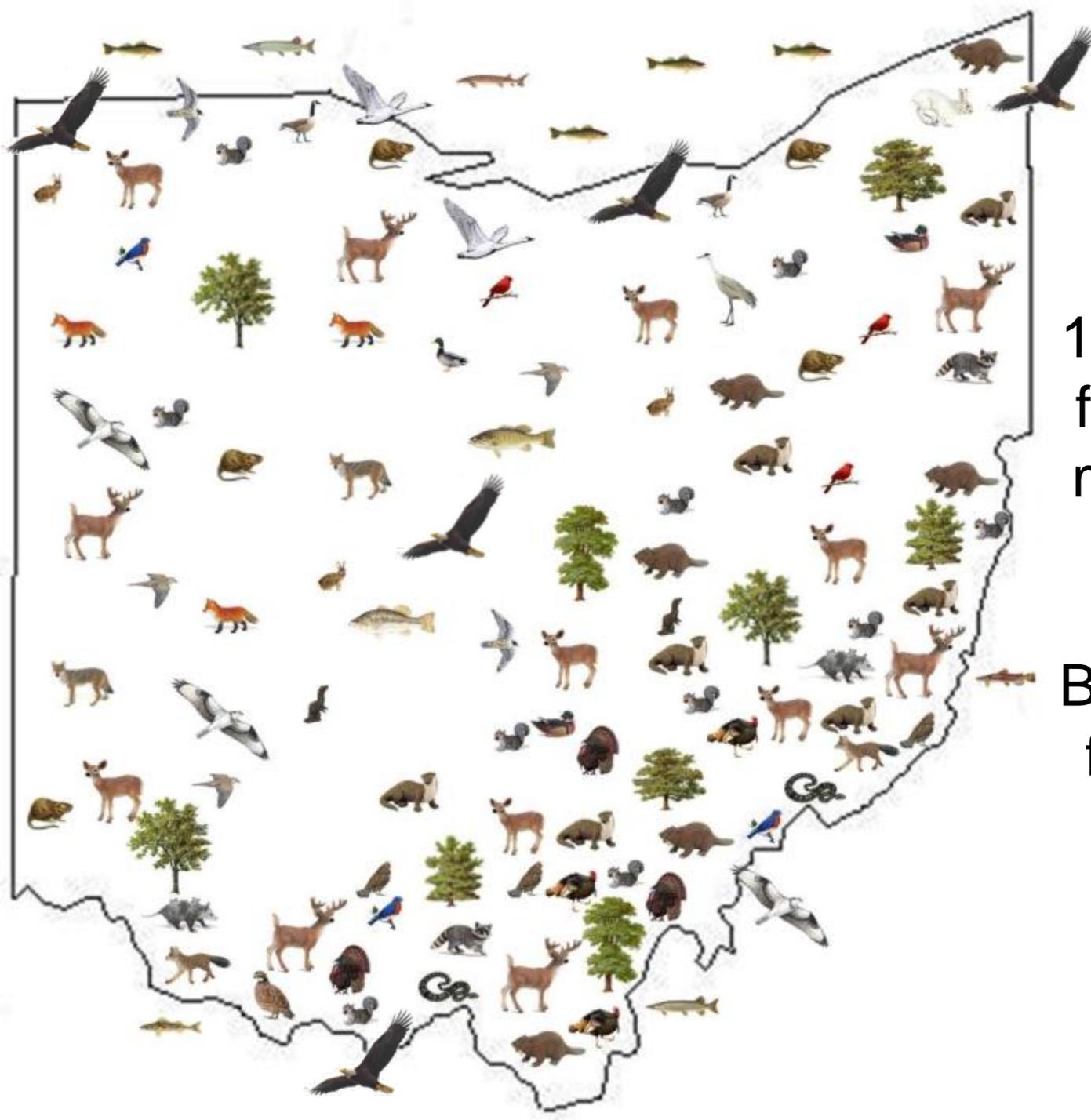
2002

After a successful reintroduction program, river otters are removed from Ohio's Endangered Species list.



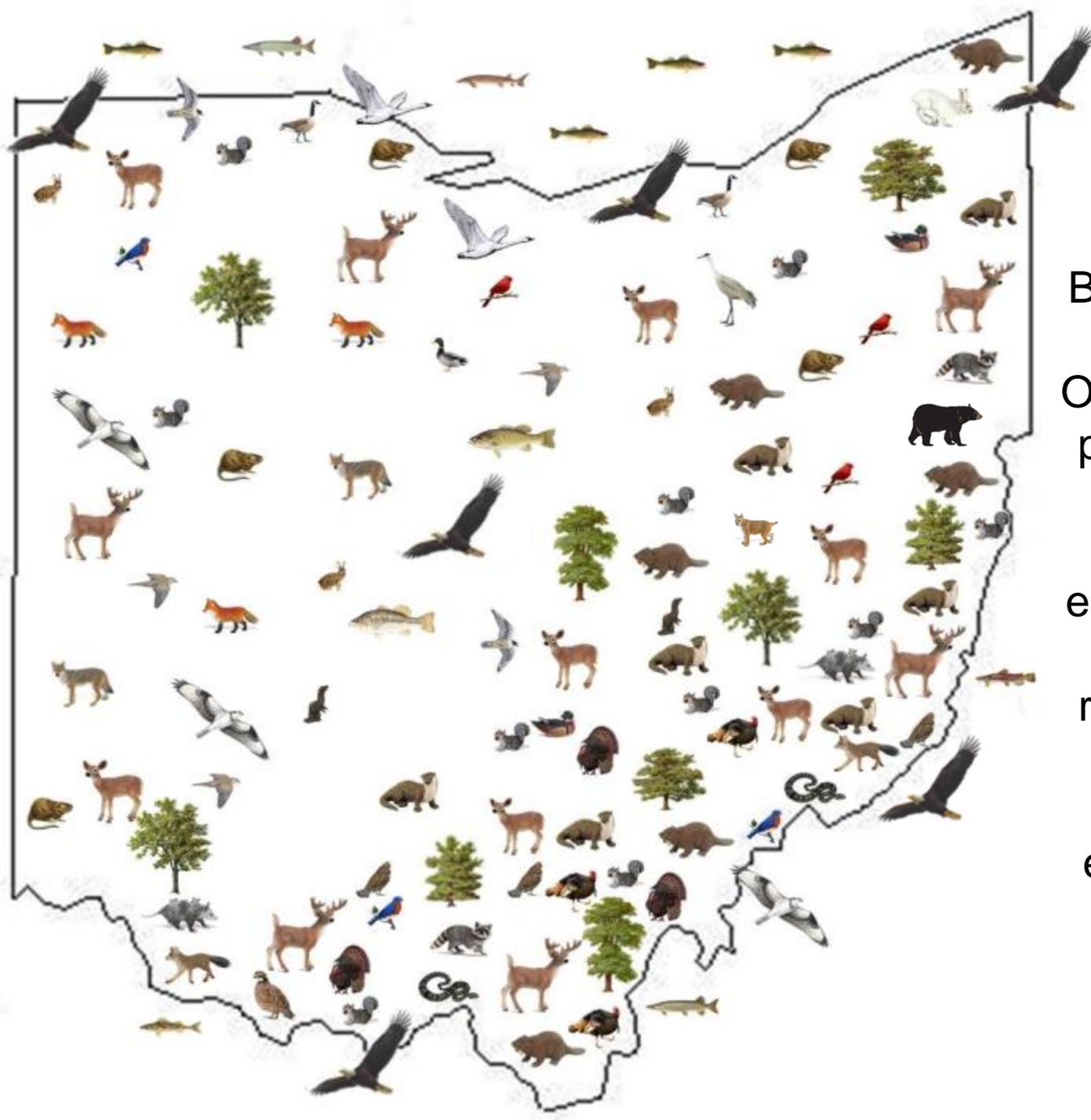
2005

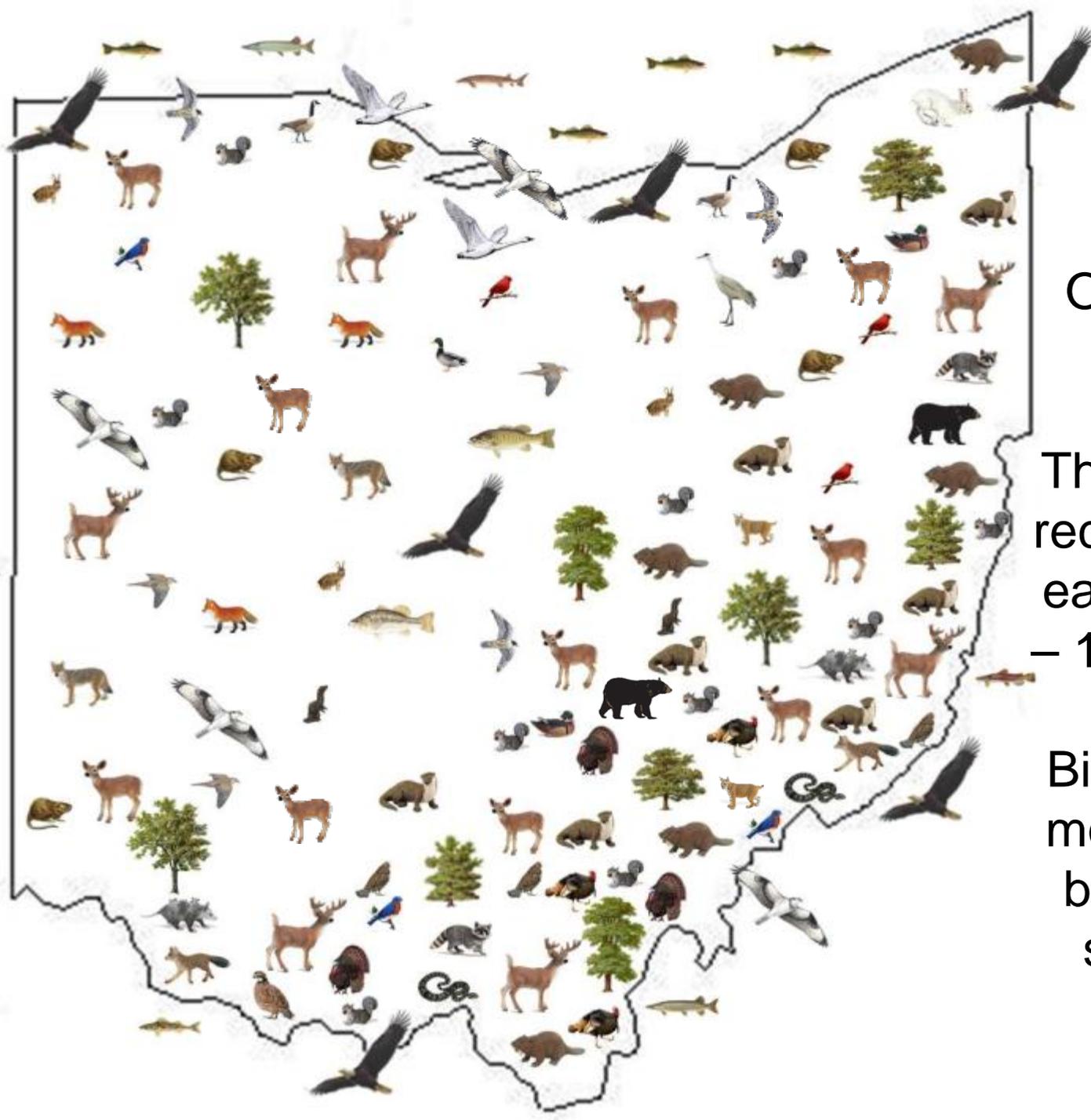
127 eaglets are fledged from a modern record of 108 bald eagle nests. Bald eagles are found in 55 of Ohio's 88 counties.



2006

Bald eagle numbers continue to rise. Over 150 nests were produced this year. Black bears are currently an endangered species in Ohio, however resident black bear populations are growing with an estimated 20 to 50 bears living in the state. Bobcat sightings also continue to rise.



A map of the state of Ohio is shown, filled with numerous small icons of various wildlife species. The icons include deer, birds (such as bald eagles, ospreys, sandhill cranes, and ducks), fish, and trees. The year '2007' is displayed in a large white font on a dark wood-grain background in the top right corner.

2007

Ohio's deer herd
has reached
675,000 deer.

There was another
record year for bald
eagle reproduction
– 164 nests fledged
186 eaglets.

Biologists are now
monitoring osprey,
black ducks, and
sandhill cranes
using radio
transmitters.

2010

Black bears are currently an endangered species in Ohio, however resident black bear numbers are growing with an estimated 30 to 60 bears living in the state.

