



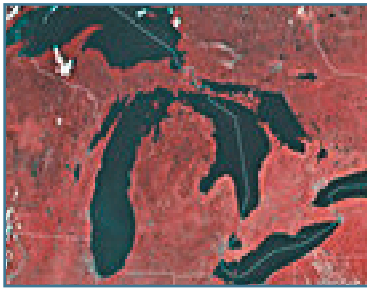
# Audubon

## GREAT LAKES RESTORATION

### Public Policy Fact Sheet



The Great Lakes watershed is one of the world's most significant ecological systems, on which the region's fisheries, birds, other wildlife, and people depend.



Lake Erie's coastal wetlands support the largest diversity of plants and animals on the Great Lakes. Nearly 140 bird species nest within the lake's wetlands, and more than 350 species can be spotted. No matter where you live in Ohio, Lake Erie impacts your quality of life. The lake supplies drinking water to 11 million people and its shoreline contributes another \$2.5 billion a year in travel revenue to the Ohio economy – a third of all travel revenue in the state.



Unfortunately, Lake Erie is facing many challenges including the build up of toxic pollutants that make waters unsafe for swimming, fish unsafe for eating, and habitats unfit for wildlife. And over 90% of its wetlands have been lost. The good news is that there has never been a better time to get involved in protecting this valuable resource.

#### **Great Lakes Basin Resources Compact**

All Great Lakes Governors are working together to create the Great Lakes Basin Water Resources Compact. This compact will limit withdrawal and diversion of water from the Great Lakes. The Compact specifies how each Great Lakes state will act to protect Great Lakes water quality and limits withdrawal and diversion of water from the Great Lakes. It would protect against export and overuse of Great Lakes water.

The Great Lakes Basin Resources Compact:

- Specifies how each Great Lakes state will act to protect Great Lakes water quality,
- Limits withdrawal and diversion of water from the Great Lakes,
- Protects against export and overuse of Great Lakes water, and
- Provides authority to develop a water resources inventory.

## **GREAT FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW**

### **The Great Lakes:**

- encompass 95% of Americas fresh surface water.
- provide drinking water to 40 million people.
- are the largest fresh-water sports fishery in the world.
- currently contain at least 162 aquatic invasive species.

### **Lake Erie:**

- is the largest sport fishery in the Great Lakes.
- provides habitat and migration routes to 350 species of birds.
- had 413 beach closings in 2003 due to raw sewage overflows.

### **Ohio:**

- has lost more than 90% of its wetlands.
- shares 312 miles of coastline along Lake Erie.
- Environmental Protection Agency has issued a statewide limit on the intake on all fish found in all lakes, rivers and streams.

## **Great Lakes Restoration Plan**

Additionally, an executive order from President Bush formed the Great Lakes Regional Collaborative (GLRC), which has released the Great Lakes Restoration Plan—a blueprint for cleanup and restoration of the Great Lakes similar in scope and scale to the federal programs for cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay and the Everglades. Audubon is working to see that the plan is fully implemented. The Great Lakes Restoration Plan:

- Removes toxic hot spots in lakes and rivers,
- Stops sewage dumping into lakes,
- Restores 550,000 acres of wetlands and 330,000 acres of buffer strips, and
- Stops and controls invasive species.

### **What is Next**

Strong national commitment for the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes Basin is needed for the ecological, economic, and social well-being of the residents of and visitors to the Great Lakes region.