

# 1996 Ohio Water Resource Inventory Fact Sheet: Streams & Rivers Status



fully attain the applicable aquatic life standards (called "uses") by the year 2000. The most recent Ohio Water Resource Inventory (Ohio EPA 1996) reported that **49.3%** of streams and rivers were fully supporting the applicable aquatic life "uses". This means that nearly one-half of Ohio's streams, other than a small proportion of waters maintained as ditches or other physically limited waters, and rivers harbor

Ohio is a water-rich state with more than 25,000 miles of named and designated streams and rivers and a 451-mile border on the Ohio River. The suitability of these waters to support human uses (e.g., recreation and drinking water) and to maintain healthy ecological conditions or "biological integrity" is critical to the sustainable future of Ohio's economy and standard of living.

inhabit the water all of the time and because of the direct contact of their gills with the water. A healthy stream community is also associated with high quality recreational opportunities

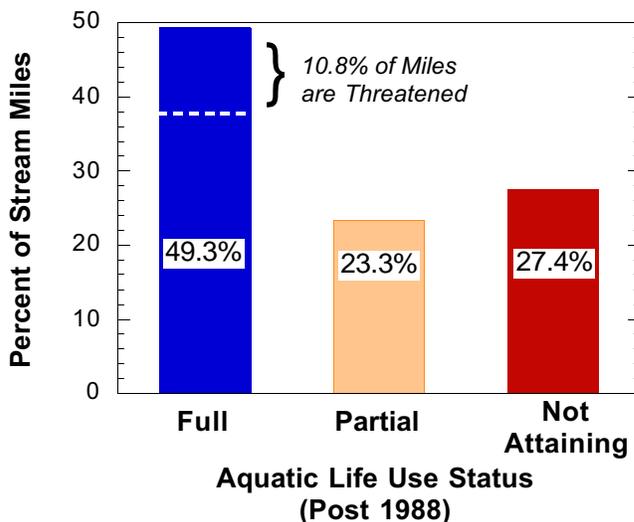


(e.g., fishing and other outdoor-related activities).

Ohio uses the fish and invertebrate communities found in streams to assess the health and well-being of Ohio's flowing waters. Aquatic animals are generally the most sensitive indicators of pollution because they

The short-term goal is for 75% of the stream and river miles to

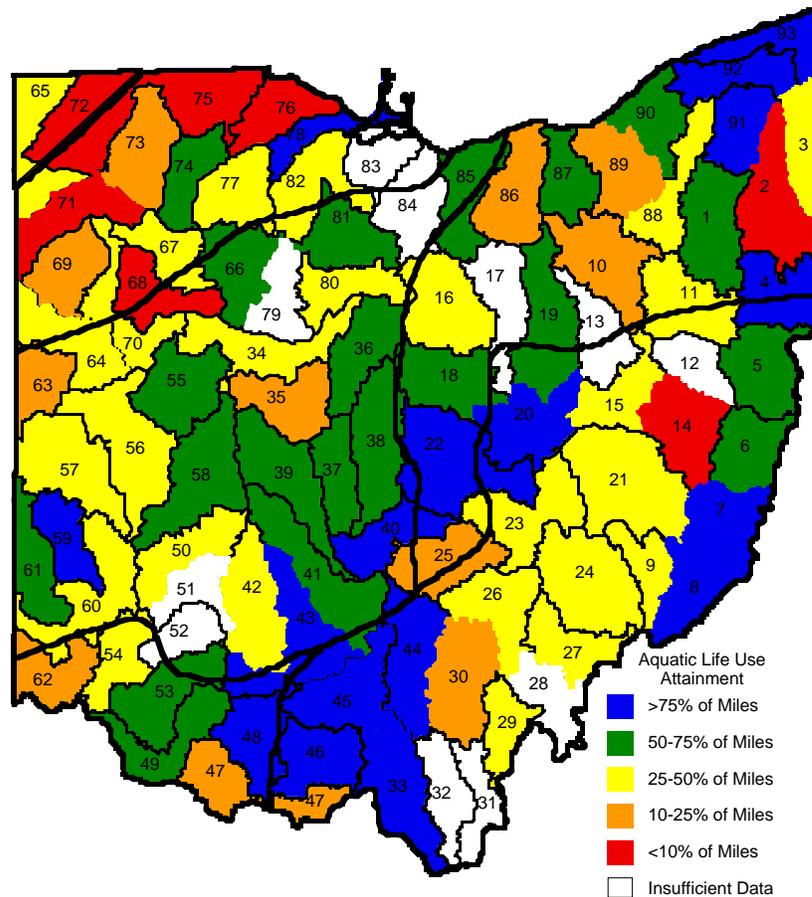
**good or exceptional** quality fish and/or aquatic invertebrate assemblages. Streams that are considered as "partially" supporting aquatic life means that while either the fish or aquatic insects are good or excellent, the other group is only in **fair** condition. In such cases certain sensitive species may be absent or there are too many pollution tolerant species (e.g., carp) than in a comparable stream where there is less pollution. "Non-attaining" streams and rivers are waterbodies in which the fish and aquatic invertebrates are both fair or one group is in **poor or very poor** condition. Examples of such streams and rivers include a warmwater stream where we should expect to find **good** fish and aquatic invertebrate communities, but both groups are rated as **fair**; or an exceptional stream, where we expect to find **exceptional** fish and invertebrates, but where both groups are **good**. As summarized in the pie chart below, the non-attainment designation does not mean that the stream is "dead," but rather rep-



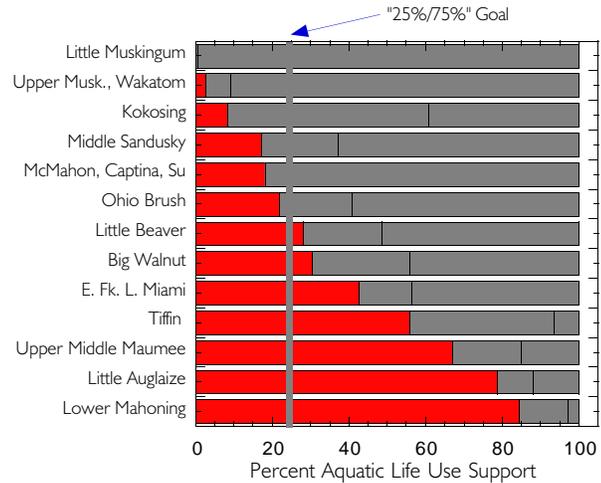
Aquatic Life Condition in Ohio's Rivers and Streams

resents varying degrees of unacceptable impairment.

It is also helpful to look at stream and river quality from a regional perspective. The map on this page (upper right) summarizes the condition for each of 93 watersheds ("subbasins") in Ohio. Some areas of the state generally have a higher proportion of high quality streams and rivers (central and southern Ohio) than other areas (northwest Ohio). By using this perspective, we can see which watersheds are currently meeting or exceeding the Ohio 2000 goal. These will be priorities for protection. For watersheds that are far below the Ohio 2000 goal, there will be a need to evaluate the "restorability" potential and future restoration efforts prioritized. It is clear that a watershed approach, that includes efforts to restore habitat and decrease sedimentation (two of the leading causes of impairment), needs to be central to any strategy to reach the Ohio 2000 goal.



**Map of Aquatic Life Use Attainment By Subbasin**



**Column Chart of Aquatic Life Use Attainment For Selected Subbasins**

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