



Flyway

Jan/Feb 2005

The Ball is in Our Court

By Fred Charbonneau

Shortly after Governor Granholm signed the bill legalizing the shooting of Mourning Doves in Michigan after ninety-nine years of protection, I was watching a Sunday morning discussion on public television. One of the participants predicted that the effort to reinstate protection for these birds will fail because birders don't have the staying power to succeed in putting the issue on the ballot. As of this writing we are over 100,000 signatures short of proving him wrong, with three months left to get the job done. To succeed, we all need to join in this effort.

The powerful lobby that pushed the bill through the legislature and persuaded the governor to sign it is a formidable and well financed coalition, but we have stopped them before, and if we are willing to make the effort, we will do it again. We have a large majority of the voting public on our side, but before they can vote on the issue, we need to get the signatures that will place the initiative on the ballot, then motivate them to vote. For this to happen, we need your help.

Every petition has room for signatures of 15 registered voters. If each of our 5,000 members gets 10 to 15 people to sign a petition, we will have 50-75,000 signatures. With similar efforts from Michigan Audubon and the other organizations that support the cause, we can easily meet our goal. When the requisite number of signatures is certified, the killing will stop until the issue is voted on in 2006.

You don't need to go door to door or stop strangers on the street. All you need to do is talk to your friends, family members, and casual acquaintances at church, work or social gatherings. Those of us who have attended community events or stood outside post offices or voting places have found that just standing there with a sign around our neck was all we needed to do.

Make sure that signers are registered voters and haven't already signed the petition. Have a form for their county, or a few blanks on hand so you can start one for them. You don't need to fill up a sheet in order to send it in, and if someone makes a mistake, it won't affect the rest of the petition, just cross out that line and have them fill in the next one. Read and follow the instructions carefully. You'll be surprised how quickly and easily you can get signatures.

We need **your** help! For petitions, please call (248) 545 2929, drop by the DAS office (8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., Tues-Thurs), or send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to our office (1320 North Campbell Road, Royal Oak, MI 48067). For more information on how you can help, visit <http://www.StopShootingDoves.org> or call (517) 321 DOVE.

One final thought: Rep. Tabor, sponsor of the bill, was recently reported as stating that she had fired 150 shots and only bagged one dove as proof that they are not endangered in our state. I wonder how much wildlife will be lost to the lead pellets that lie scattered over the area from those 149 "wasted" shots. Please put your best effort into reinstating the protection of these beautiful and peaceful creatures. Remember, the ball is in our court.

Flyway

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FEATHERED TALES

By Bev Stevenson



Douglas Burns spotted a Short
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good 15 minutes, giving Doug all the
time he needed to identify it.

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Detroit Audubon Society's 2005 Conservation Conference

Citizen Action, Citizen Research:

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Adults coming to the aid of
the earth.

Saturday April 2
7 a.m. – 4 p.m.



Grosse Ile Middle School, On East River Road just N. of Grosse Ile Parkway. Right on the river!

- 7-9:00 a.m. Humbug Marsh Field Trip**—Parking lot on Jefferson N. of Vreeland Rd. From I-75, take Exit 29-A (Gibraltar Road) heading East, N. on Jefferson. Lot on left. Leaders: Dr. Bruce Jones, President, Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy, and Karl Overman, Detroit Audubon Society Field Trip Chair
- 9:00 Registration**, Grosse Ile Middle School (Doughnuts and Songbird-friendly coffee too!)
- 9:20 Welcome**
- 9:30-10:15 Lobbying 101: How to influence legislators.** Julie Baker, campaign manager, Committee to Restore the Dove Shooting Ban.
- 10:30-11:45 Forum on Youth In Action**
Stream Team, Southgate Anderson High School.
Rouge River Education Program (invited)—students from the water monitoring prog.
- 11:45-1:15 Awards Luncheon**
Keynote: One Good Tern Deserves Another and Another—**Bruce Szczechowski**
- 1:25-2:25 Forum on Citizen Research and Monitoring**
Christmas Bird Count (Rockwood)—Tom Carpenter, DTE for Fermi count portion
SE Michigan Raptor Research—Paul Cypher
Rouge River Frog Survey—Friends of the Rouge (invited)
- 2:40-3:15 Bald Eagle status along Detroit River and Lake Erie—Dawn Laing, Bird Studies Canada**
- 3:15-3:45 Aerial canvasback survey Lake St. Clair to L. Erie—Joseph Robison, MDNR**
- 3:45-4:15 Live hawk and owl presentation –Beth Duman 4:15 Closing Remarks**



Lunch included: Pasta, Tomato Sauce, Meatballs, Tossed Salad, roll & dessert

	In Advance	At the door
Adults	\$16	\$18
Children	\$7	\$ 8 (12 and under)

Send check to: Detroit Audubon Society, 1320 N. Campbell Rd., Royal Oak, MI 48067 with a note indicating how many adults and children you are registering. The list of pre-paid registrants will be at the door.

For more information call 248-545-2929 or 313-928-2950

DAS FIELD TRIPS

South Texas

February 10-15, 2005 (Thursday to Tuesday)

Leader: Jim Fowler

South Texas is simply the best place to go birding in the US in winter. This trip combines a boat trip out of Rockport for Whooping Cranes plus numerous birding hotspots in the lower Rio Grande Valley, such as Santa Ana, Bentsen State Park, Falcon Dam and Sabal Palm Sanctuary. For trip reports for the last two years of this trip, look under "Trip Reports" on the Detroit Audubon web-page.

All lodging and transportation, including the Whooping Crane boat trip, will be provided. Transportation to and from Corpus Christi is the responsibility of each participant. Food costs not included. Charge per participant \$850 from Corpus Christi. \$170 extra for single room supplement. \$100 deposit required to make reservations. Payment in full due by February 1, 2005.

Belle Isle

February 19, 2005 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m.

Leaders: Fred Charbonneau and Jim Bull

A great time to see waterfowl up close without having to venture too far from the heat of your car.

Meet at the Nature Center parking lot on Belle Isle.

Stony Creek Metropark

March 12, 2005 (Saturday) 7:00 p.m.

Leaders: Roger Bajorek, Stony Creek's Supervisory Naturalist, and Jim Bull

Great Horned Owls have been nesting since early February and Barred Owls are just beginning to nest. Since they are defending their territories, playing an owl tape or imitating their call will not only get them to hoot in response but often get them to fly in to give close-up looks. The Screech Owl nests later but it also responds to calls.

From the I-75 exit on M-59 west, go north on M-53. Exit at 26 Mile Road. Go west on 26 Mile Road to the park entrance. We will meet at either the nature center or the golf course parking lot. Watch the Flyway and our website for more details closer to this date or call the Detroit Audubon office at 248-545-2929.

Lower Detroit River, Lake Erie Shoreline

March 13, 2005 (Sunday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Steve Santner

This trip should coincide with the first push of spring migrants and if recent history repeats itself, there is a chance for owls as well.

Take I-75 to Gibraltar Road. Go east toward Gibraltar, turn right on Jefferson and drive south to the Lake Erie Metro Park entrance on your left. Entrance fee required. Meet at the Visitor Center parking lot.

Oakwoods Metro park - Woodcock Watch

April 1, 2005 (Friday) 6:45 p.m.

Leaders: Bob Wittersheim, Oakwoods' Supervisory Naturalist, and Jim Bull

This program is good for families with children.

From I-75 exit at West Road, go west, from there go south on Telegraph (M-24), west on Van Horn, then east (Left) on Huron River Drive to the entrance to Oakwoods Metropark. You will need an annual Metroparks sticker or a daily pass. Meet at the nature center.

Crane Creek, Ohio

April 9, 2005 (Saturday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Mike Mencotti

Think spring thoughts and venture to this famous birding locale.

Take I-75 to Toledo; turn off on I-280 to Highway 2. Follow Hwy 2 east about 18 miles and turn north at the Crane Creek entrance. Drive to west end of beach parking lot at beginning of Bird Trail.

A FIELD TRIP TO REMEMBER

By Fred Charbonneau

On Saturday, Nov. 20, twenty-some members of Detroit and Macomb Audubon joined Steve Santner at the Belle Isle Nature Center for the annual November field trip. Steve had been scouting the island since early morning and was well prepared for the trip. None of us was prepared, however, for what we were about to see.

We started out at the parking lot with an American Kestrel and the ever-present starlings, and drove past Mallard and Ring-billed Gulls to the north side of the island. Beyond the Yacht Club we stopped to scope the area where we saw small groups of Tundra and Mute Swans, along with Bufflehead and Hooded Merganser. We trailed around on foot behind a flock of Canada Geese to see if we could get a smallish member of the group to cackle for us, as Steve had seen Cackling Geese earlier. The birds flew away in silence, leaving the mystery unsolved. We did, however, pick up a tree full of Rock Pigeons for our effort.

By car, we proceeded toward the fishing bridge when one member of the group spotted a Peregrine Falcon sitting on the rail of the bridge. We set up scopes and got the closest view of a Peregrine that most, if not all of us have ever had outside of captivity. We could read some of the numbers on the leg bands. After that we moved to the other side of the bridge to see what was on the river. When we reached the viewpoint, someone said, "There's another one on the ground." Sure enough, another Peregrine was sitting on the beach enjoying a breakfast of Rock Pigeon. It was larger than the rail sitter, so we guessed it was a female and the rail sitter was most likely the mate. After a while a Ring-billed Gull flew in and settled down beside the falcon sharing whatever morsels the raptor discarded.

Returning our attention to the river, we spotted American Coot, Ruddy Duck, Common Goldeneye, Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Duck, and Canvasback. Redhead and Greater Scaup were also seen by others in the group. We were also treated to the smells of fermenting mash from the Hiram Walker Distillery across the river.

As we rounded to the south side of the island Steve pointed out a Surf Scoter. Moving along, we found six Black-crowned Night-Herons along the canal, four adult and two immature birds, sitting around in a small cluster. I was reminded of Ernie Carhart who almost always found night-herons here at this time. Finishing up at Blue Heron Lagoon, we walked around to the back of the lagoon and were rewarded with a pretty good variety of ducks including American Wigeon and Gadwall. We also spotted a Bald Eagle on Peche Island and Bonaparte's Gull and Double-crested Cormorant before we called it a day.

Thanks, Steve, for a great field trip.

SUNRISE, THE DRAMA QUEEN OF THE MIDWEST

By Julie A. Craves

Rouge River Bird Observatory
University of Michigan-Dearborn



This took awhile to piece together, but here is the story on the two Peregrines we saw yesterday. (See adjacent article 'A Field Trip to Remember') The female is apparently the drama queen of the Midwest restoration project, as you can see from her history.

While we were on Belle Isle on the field trip, we saw the two Peregrines diving and swooping with/at each other, pair bonding and courtship behavior, quite interesting. Male, on pier, is Allegro, born in 1999 in Cleveland, OH. His parents were Bullet (male), a hacked bird born in Akron, OH in 1993, and Zenith, a wild born bird born in Omaha, NE, in 1992 (Zenith's parents were both hacked birds, and their two broods that summer were the first wild Peregrines

hatched in Nebraska in a century, or perhaps ever, according to the 1992 report.) The female eating the pigeon is Sunrise, a hacked bird born and released in Cincinnati in 1991.

January 1993, Sunrise first was found in Detroit paired with a Canadian male, R-51, at the Fisher Bldg. By May, however, she had mated with a male named Pop. Their nest failed, as Pop was also raising young with another female a few miles away.

March 1994, she showed up in Cleveland, trying to make time with the mate of Zenith, her future mother-in-law! When Zenith returned, there was a fight. Sunrise lost, and she returned to Detroit, where she paired with Solo, Jr 92R, from Toledo, at the Edison Conner Creek Power Plant. Their nest failed.

1995, she was paired with a young unbanded male, HiRise, at the Whittier Apts. They fledged one female chick.

1996, she was again with an unbanded male, nicknamed Seven (Sunrise's seventh mate), at Whittier. Their nest failed.

1997, she was again with Seven at Whittier. Of three eggs, one young fledged, a male, named Cinder.

1998, she paired with her son Cinder at Whittier. Of three eggs, two young fledged (male and female).

1999, she and Cinder fledged two young together (male and female) at Whittier.

2000, she entertained five males, but failed to nest. One male was apparently Allegro.

2001, she and Allegro tried nesting twice at Whittier, but failed both times. They failed again at Whittier in 2002 and 2003. Still together in 2004, they did not attempt to nest.

Julie Craves is supervisor of avian research at the River Rouge Bird Observatory and writes the "Since You Asked" feature in Birder's World Magazine.

Peregrine Artist - Steven D'Amato

Bully Pulpit

By Jim Bull



This is my last "Bully Pulpit" column in the Flyway. After the December board meeting, there will be a new president for Detroit Audubon and I will be stepping down. Our bylaws specify a one-year term for

president with a renewal for a second term possible. Although several board members including me have served as president more than once, one cannot serve more than two terms consecutively.

The Detroit Audubon Board is stepping into the future by taking some bold moves:

1. Hiring a fund-raising consultant. By the time you read this we will have already had our first planning/training session with her.
2. Agreeing to be a major partner in the Belle Isle Nature Zoo, offering environmental education programs, staff and an ongoing presence on the island in the city from which we take our name.
3. Agreeing to be a major partner with the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge's environmental education and wildlife monitoring program. We hope to have an office and bookstore outlet in the new refuge education center. This year we began our

partnership with a \$5,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to do outreach for the refuge.

4. Agreeing, in principle, to a partnership with the Sister, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Monroe to establish a nature center on their beautiful campus on the Raisin River in Monroe. Natural areas include Sisters Island right in the middle of the Raisin River, a remnant oak savannah and wetlands. Additional prairie, restored wetlands and organic gardens will be added to the mix.

Belle Isle, the Refuge Education Center and the Monroe Nature Center will all be meeting places for Detroit Audubon programs, establishing an ongoing presence for Detroit Audubon all along the Detroit River corridor and providing lots of opportunities for volunteers to lead environmental education programs or support the programs in other ways.

Detroit Audubon is turning a corner. We know that, despite all the good things we have done, our best and brightest days lie ahead. We will be bigger and have a greater impact on this area than we have ever had. There are examples for us to follow. Seattle Audubon has about the same number of members we have, but over the course of a number of years have built themselves into an organization with a \$1 million budget, 14 full-time staff members, a full-time coordinator of elementary, middle school


and high school education programs among them, 12 part-time staff and 600 volunteers. Currently Detroit Audubon has about a \$60,000 budget, one part-time secretary and counting generously, 60 volunteers. Now I say that not for you to focus on what we don't have but rather for you to realize the tremendous possibilities we have if we choose to use them. To grow in a direction that will eventually position us to have an impact comparable to Seattle Audubon will require a lot of volunteer effort. I think it is not only worthwhile but an exciting adventure we are about to pursue. Don't you want to be on board and help make it happen?

I am not going anywhere. I'll still be on the board and I'll still be working to take Detroit Audubon to new heights. I look forward to working with you in my new capacity.

NOTE: You should be aware of two initiatives in the state of Michigan that Detroit Audubon is part of and that you might want to be part of as well: **1) the Michigan Wildlife Conservation Strategy** (www.michigan.gov/wildlifeconservationstrategy) which will set the priorities for spending federal dollars on wildlife in the state and **2) The Michigan Bird Conservation Initiative** (www.nabci-us.org/michigan) which will help put local conservation efforts in a global context. Check out their web sites for more information. You will be hearing more about these initiatives in the months ahead.

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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Get Your Feet Wet as a Detroit Audubon Volunteer

HOME AND GARDEN SHOWS

Help promote the Detroit Audubon Society and have some fun. You will hand out literature, talk to people about Detroit Audubon, sell bookstore merchandise and apply temporary bird tattoos - the children love it!

Volunteer opportunities occur at Ford Field February 24-27 and the Pontiac Silverdome March 10-13. Volunteers get into the show free so come work a shift and then enjoy the exhibits. Please call the Detroit Audubon Office to sign up for a shift. If you are a new volunteer, we will arrange an orientation for you (248) 545-2929.

MAILING COMMITTEE

We have openings on the mailing committee. This group meets 6 times a year to do the Flyway newsletter mailing and then several other times during the year as needed.

THINK SPRING! THINK SPRING CAMPOUT!

Although it's January and we are enjoying the snow and winter birds, it is not too early to be thinking about the Detroit Audubon / Michigan Audubon Spring Campout. So get out that new 2005 calendar and reserve the dates of May 27-30 for this exciting event (Memorial Day Weekend). Details in next issue.

BOOK REVIEW

By Rosemarie Attilio

William Souder's book, ***Under a Wild Sky: John James Audubon and the Making of the Birds of America***, is an engaging historical look at the colorful life of a legend. Taking the reader through Audubon's illegitimate birth, years in France, and his vital move to America, we see early on the passionate naturalist and artist he was to become. Souder's research is vast, giving many detailed accounts of Audubon, his family and life in general on the frontier. We follow Audubon as he and other fellow naturalists visit soon-to-be major cities such as New Orleans, Philadelphia and St. Augustine. In these travels, the reader finds an astounding array of trials, tribulations and mishaps befalling the people of that time. Many were affected by disease, poverty, dangers on the trail, poor road conditions and many shaky business ventures in newly settled ports. Audubon was no exception. Through all of his misadventures, he emerged a resilient and resourceful naturalist and artist. He struggled to balance family life with constant business failures and poverty, while nursing a consuming passion to paint, life-size, all the birds of North America.

The book bogs down at times with dates and travel locations, and Souder jumps about in chronology. This seems a minor irritant in comparison to the picture Souder portrays of the vast, heavily forested frontier, full of now extinct Passenger Pigeons, Carolina Parakeets and lively characters such as Daniel Boone. It also is quite interesting to read comparisons of the lives of Audubon's peers and rivals, famous fellow naturalists such as Alexander Wilson and Napoleon's nephew Charles-Lucien Bonaparte, William Bartram and others. This helps to give a wonderful view of the fledgling studies of American flora and fauna.

What emerges is a message of determination and hope through adversity, of a great man who was a showman, teller of tall tales, innovative artist and naturalist. He has given the world an astounding legacy of beauty and art that is unrivaled still today.

DAS MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

- Downriver -

Detroit Audubon's Downriver monthly meetings are held from 7:00-9:00 p.m. September through May at St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church, 1123 Second St., Wyandotte. Go east on Goddard Rd., turn right on First Street. Turn right on Goodell. The church will be on your left. The church is on Goodell between First and Second Street (there may not be a street sign at Goddard and Second). Enter from alley door and go down the stairs to the basement community room (stairs or elevator).

What's New at Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

Thursday January 20

Speaker: Dr. John Hartig, Refuge Manager

The first International wildlife refuge in the world is now official. John Hartig was hired as the first refuge manager and the deed for Humbug Marsh, Humbug Island and the Humbug Ecological Complex was transferred to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, so the area is now part of the refuge. What are future plans for this area and the rest of the refuge? What problems and environmental issues does a manager of an urban refuge with a long history of industrial pollution face and how can they be addressed? How can citizens get involved? Come find out from the refuge manager himself.

Protecting a Shoreline the Natural Way and Getting Rid of Foreign Intruders

Thursday February 17

Speaker: Dr. Bruce Jones, President, Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy.

The Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy has had great success in using biological or "soft" engineering to protect the shore of their nature preserve and in restoring natural wetlands at the same time. They are also beginning a project to eradicate non-native invasive species like *Phragmites* (Common Reed) and Purple Loosestrife. Find out about the challenges of managing a natural area in the middle of the Detroit River and find out how you can help. Bruce's presentations are always fascinating. He knows the natural history of this area like the back of his hand and is very willing to share.

Coming in March

Next Program, Wednesday March 16, 2005, with Julie Craves, Supervisor of Avian Research at U of M Dearborn's Rouge River Bird Observatory. This program will be held at the Environmental Interpretive Center at U of M Dearborn (a place change for this month due to Lent and St. Patrick's Day.) We'll be back at the regular place in April.

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AUTHOR'S CORNER

ICE STORM PALACE

By Clay Mitchell

I am sitting in this cold and forsaken house looking out a wide picture window at an ice palace, a retreat for polar bears and fat seals.

I am wearing two layers of clothing, a winter coat, a stocking cap I bought in Iceland and woolen lined gloves. I am cold, the house is cold, the whole world is cold. It is twenty degrees and wind chills the marrow at five below zero. My bones feel even colder.

An ice storm has so burdened tree limbs they are breaking off and falling across electric lines like huge sabers. There is no heat, water or light. Many will shiver in the dark this night, just as I, even now.

Trees and bushes are sheathed in thick ice uniforms, so thick the bowed, outstretched branches look like praying arms that have wearied from their pleas for warmth and relief from ice armor.

The ground is littered with a thick layer of fallen twigs and branches. Thick cylindrical shards of ice clatter to the ground with every gust of wind.

The sun peers through diffuse clouds and the muted rays are bright and bitterly cold, all heat scattered to the heavens.

An opening appears and the sun thrusts shining darts directly onto the ice palace with fierce intensity. Ice sheathing has melted drops on branch tips, forming small spheres. They grasp the darting rays and refract them, making tiny bulbs of blue. A thousand light enshrouded branches flare into brilliant tubes with tiny blue elfin lanterns to crown their brilliance.

The house is still and alien but I am briefly warmed by the gift of a magical tree in March. Clouds race to mask the sun from such foolish antics during winter. Its light becomes a pale and frigid halo, impersonal and uninviting. I am colder now, warmth only a memory. Spring is so far away.

I watch the little gray juncos, the frisky titmice and the regal cardinals at the feeder. Were they so busy pecking at sunflower seeds to seek a drop of oil that they didn't see the ice palace blaze for a brief moment? Does the cold make them more practical than I who marveled while shivering?

I must think warm thoughts to live with strength and grace until this time is past. My soul and heart must sing even though my body is not joining in the chorus!



*Detroit Audubon Society
1320 N. Campbell Road
Royal Oak, MI 48067*