



Flyway

Nov/Dec 2004

THIS TIME IT'S FOR REAL HUMBUG MARSH SAVED!

At about 10:45 a.m. on Thursday, September 16, under a tent at the property that will become the headquarters of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, the Trust for Public Land signed over the deed for Humbug Marsh and Island to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Robin Thorson, Regional Director of the USFWS, signed on behalf of the new owners – the citizens of the United States. Rep. John Dingell thanked several groups including Detroit Audubon for their active part in the struggle to save Humbug. Detroit Audubon President, Jim Bull, and board member, Jack Smiley, were among the assembled guests for this historic occasion. Rep. Dingell, Refuge Manager, John Hartig and Thorson then unveiled the sign which will be installed on Jefferson Avenue to identify the “Humbug Marsh Unit” of the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge. A celebration is planned for Oct. 16 which will include the first public tours of Humbug. Made-in-Detroit’s appeal, which is still active, is not considered a threat. Rep. Dingell, quoting Churchill, concluded the ceremony saying, “This is the end of the beginning. We have accomplished much but together we have much yet to do for this wildlife refuge.”

DETROIT AUDUBON RECEIVES \$5,000 GRANT

U.S. Rep. John Dingell (D-15th District) announced that Detroit Audubon Society has been awarded \$5,000 in federal funds by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for activities it will undertake to educate its members and the general public about the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (DRIWR). This grant is part of the Friends of National Wildlife Refuges Initiative, which is a collaboration of NFWF, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Audubon Society.

Detroit Audubon President, Jim Bull, said “We have an agreement to be a partner with the refuge to present environmental programs at the refuge and off-site. This grant will be seed money to get things started - to leverage other funding to begin the Avian Migration Sister Schools Program and other programs that will benefit the refuge.” The Avian Migration Sister Schools Program will connect those students who are studying birds all along their migratory paths and where they winter or breed. “The idea is that if we are going to care for these birds, we have to protect the habitat in all three places.”

Have you donated to the Detroit Audubon annual fund-raising appeal yet? If not please take the time to do so right now! What a wonderful gift to wildlife that will be during this holiday season! (Use the coupon inside, page 6)

Flyway

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Submission of original articles and artwork is welcomed.
Deadline for the Jan/Feb '05 issue is December 1, 2004.

Advertising rates are available by contacting the
DAS office.

Flyway Editor: Sue Beattie

Flyway Layout/Design: Don Tinson II

WISH LIST RESPONSE

One member sent in a check for \$200 towards the purchase of the multi-media projector in response to our wish list appeal in the July-August Flyway. We're on our way. Four more contributions of that size and we will have that projector (or several smaller contributions). Anybody ready to step up to the plate with a contribution to help us reach our goal of \$1,000?

DETROIT
AUDUBON
SOCIETY



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RARE BIRD ALERT

The DAS's Rare Bird Alert is a recorded
phone message listing unusual species
seen in our area. The alert gives precise
instructions on where to find listed species.

Phone (248) 477-1360 anytime.

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FEATHERED TALES

By Bev Stevenson



Cheryl Himes went to the Arts
and Apples event in Rochester Hills
Municipal Park where she spotted
a duck, out of 100's, that had a very
swollen leg and trouble walking. Upon a
closer look, she discovered a band on its
leg that looked like it had been put on months
before and had infected the entire area. She
called the Rochester Hills Humane Society and Maureen and
her husband, Jeff, went to the park after work and caught it.
They treated the duck and released it, where it is now happy
and content with the others. Hats off to Cheryl, Maureen and
Jeff.

Susan Waun was excited to see from her window in the Ren
Cen building, two hawks circling slowly overhead. Soon other
hawks started to join in until there were 10. Then, as if on signal,
they all started their journey south following the river as far as
she could see.

COMMON TERN-AROUND

By Jim Bull

Some people bemoan the loss of habitat for threatened and endangered species, but Detroit Audubon board member Bruce Szczechowski did something about it. In the spring of 2003, Bruce spent close to \$3,000 of his own money to help create more habitat for the state-threatened Common Tern. The Streamteam (an organization of Downriver High School environmental activists), Friends of the Detroit River, DTE Green Team and the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy also helped. Last year there were seventeen Common Tern nests on this new habitat but they all failed - young and eggs totally disappeared. This year was a different story. At least 120 terns (60 pair) nested on the new habitat. I was able to visit the colony with Bruce once every two or three days this summer from mid-June through August. I had banded terns from the time I was seven years old until I was a junior in college but always for only one day each year. I saw terns in different stages of development, but this was first time I had the thrill of watching individuals grow up. Bruce has been studying the Common Terns as part of his master's degree work at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan. He has a permit to collect tern eggs to analyze for toxic chemicals that could give us a good indication of the water quality of the Detroit River. There is another tern colony on the cribs of Grosse Ile toll bridge at the north end of the island. This is the site where repair work in late July 2003 destroyed the tern colony (see Sept.-Oct. 2003 Flyway). Fortunately, the terns did come back. At least 250 nested there (about 125 nests). That was gratifying to see, but unfortunately that was not the end of the story. For some reason only three chicks were seen here. Most of the eggs never hatched.

Bruce collected eggs from that colony early in the season, attempting to avoid collecting eggs that were near pipping. When he got home with the eggs, he found one that was pipping. He didn't have a boat to get back to the toll bridge colony so he did the next best thing — he went to the colony on the free bridge and put the pipping egg in the first nest he could find, which already had three eggs. All four hatched and were banded. On the right leg we put a US Fish and Wildlife Service band, and on the left a black and white color band to indicate they were banded this year at this colony. The adopted bird looked quite different, more blonde and with much smaller spots. Bruce put two color bands on this one so we could identify it with certainty. We watched them grow to fledgling size and watched them take their first flights. Almost felt like a proud parent.

Over the course of the summer, we banded close to 100 tern chicks in this colony. When we finished banding for the day, we often sat on the bridge and observed the tern colony for 2 to 3 hours keeping notes on their behavior. We saw some interesting things. Although adult terns usually peck and sometimes kill

strange chicks that stray near them, we watched four young go back and forth between two nests, one with three eggs in it. They were brooded by adults at both nests as if they were their own. Several times we watched one of these adults sit on four young and three eggs. We wondered whether the females might be sisters or in some way related. We watched parents come back with fish and look all around for their young hiding in the vegetation, as they do when they are several days old. We also watched terns fly up, mob and peck at a Great Blue Heron, a Cooper's Hawk and several Ring-billed Gulls that flew near the colony, effectively keeping the predators away. As of the date of writing this article (July 30) we have watched about 40 chicks fledge and more are fledging each day. There have even been a few fresh eggs laid in the last few days. It is extremely late in the season so if they hatch, it will likely put these young at a disadvantage. It will be interesting to see what happens next year. We would especially like to know what caused the failure of the large tern colony on the toll bridge protection crib. Detroit Audubon is seeking funding to help re-establish terns to their historic nesting site on Belle Isle and Hennepin Point on Grosse Ile. The two colonies on the Grosse Ile bridges and Hennepin Point are within the boundaries of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (although one is privately owned and the other is owned by Wayne County). If you would like to help, once we secure funding and permission, contact the DAS office and we will be in touch when we need assistance. In the 1960s there were between 4,000 and 5,000 pairs of terns nesting on the Detroit River. With a little help, we may be able to at least reach 1,000 to 2,000 pairs once again. That would be a good "tern," I mean, "turn" indeed.

EPILOGUE:

On August 1 when Bruce Szczechowski visited the colony everything was fine. About half a dozen adults were still sitting on eggs, 15-20 downy young were being fed, about a dozen or so fledglings were hanging around, and about 30 pairs of adults were still at the site. On Monday afternoon, August second, when he went back to band young that should have hatched (they were pipping the day before) the area was relatively deserted - no eggs and no chicks. About 10 pairs of adults, several with fish in their bills, hovered over the site seemingly befuddled by the disappearance of their broods from the day before. Just two fledged birds remained on the surface of the nesting grounds, though we know that about 40-50 young fledged and probably flew away safely prior to the Aug. 1 event. We banded close to 100 young, so there are quite a number whose fate we are unsure about. We will know more about fledge survival in a couple of years when some of the banded birds hopefully return to the Detroit River to raise their own young. In the meantime, we are hoping to secure funding to install a video camera to do 24-hour surveillance of the colony next year. Clearly more research and more help is needed if the Common Tern is ever to be common again.

FIELD TRIPS

Belle Isle, Detroit

November 20, 2004 (Saturday) at 9:00 a.m.

Leaders: Steve Santner and Fred Charbonneau

This gem of Detroit's park system is a fine birding location for viewing migrant and wintering waterfowl.

Take Jefferson to the bridge. Cross over and drive to the east end of the island. Park in the parking lot of the Nature Center.

Niagara River Trip

December 3-5, 2004 (Friday thru Sunday)

Leader: Alan Wormington

The Niagara region is the place to be in early winter in the Great Lakes region with masses of waterfowl and gulls - exciting birding amid renowned scenery. Trips Al has lead with DAS members in the last three years have turned up such notable birds as Great Cormorant, Gannet, Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Purple Sandpiper, California Gull, Kittiwake, Little Gull, Thayer's Gull, Iceland Gull, Mew Gull and Snowy Owl.

Meet at the Detroit Audubon Office at 1320 N. Campbell, Royal Oak at 3 p.m. on Friday, December 3. Returning Sunday December 5 at approximately 9:00 p.m. Transportation and 2 nights' lodging will be provided. You are on your own for food. Cost: \$300; \$75 deposit; single room supplement extra.

Detroit Christmas Bird Count

December 19, 2004 (Sunday)

Be a part of this nation-wide birding phenomenon once and you are likely to be hooked for a lifetime. Call Tim Nowicki at (734) 525 8630 or the DAS office (248) 545 2929 for details.

Rockwood Christmas Bird Count

December 28, 2004 (Tuesday) 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Leaders: Jim Bull and Dawn Swartz

If you want to join a public bird hike that will be part of the count, meet at the Nature Area on Grosse Ile. The walk will last no more than 2 hours.

From Jefferson take the Grosse Ile Parkway over the bridge. Right on Meridian Road, left on Groh Road, right on East River Road. The Nature Area is on the right about 3/4 of mile down just past the airport and across from the Elba Mar Boat Club.

It would be helpful if you contacted Jim Bull to let him know you plan to come on the 2-hour public hike, so he can plan coffee and doughnuts. jbull51264@aol.com Phone 313-928-2950

Sarnia to Pinery Provincial Park, Ontario, Canada

January 9, 2005 (Sunday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Mike Mencotti

A journey through snow country with the potential for northern species rarely seen closer to metropolitan Detroit--Bohemian Waxwings, Pine Grosbeaks, Redpolls, and Snowy Owl are all possible.

Cross into Canada over the Blue Water Bridge. After passing customs at Sarnia, take the first exit (Front Street), bear to the right, and meet at the Ontario Tourist Information Centre. Entrance fee required at Pinery.

BOOKSTORE BJTS

By Bev Stevenson

We have great detailed Hawk charts that sell for \$4.25 including tax. They are portable and convenient for identifying hawks overhead.

Here is an idea for any 8-12 year old for Christmas, owl puke! The kit includes an illustrated book filled with fun facts, things to do and one owl pellet. The pellet will contain at least one owl meal - a mouse, shrew or small bird. It has a tray to hold the bones and a chart to identify the contents. Price \$14.80

DAS SPEAKS UP FOR PROTECTION OF SIBLEY PRAIRIE

The Last Best Remnant of
Lake Plain Prairie in Michigan

One of the last two American Bison that roamed Michigan was shot and killed at Sibley Prairie, which is located at the corner of Telegraph and King Roads in Brownstown Township. At one time Michigan's Lakeplain prairie ecosystem supported a large herd of American Bison. In 1701 Cadillac on his first visit to Southeast Michigan, during which time he established a settlement at what is now Detroit, wrote of "the luxuriant grass upon which fatten woolly buffaloes of magnificent size and proportion," while other writings tell of bison so numerous that settlers considered making garments from their wool. Part of Sibley Prairie has already been destroyed and the rest of it is in imminent danger of being destroyed. Sounds like the Humbug Marsh struggle all over again. Groups have discussed purchase with the owner but so far he has been unwilling to sell.

According to the Michigan Natural Features Inventory "this site is the largest and most diverse lakeplain prairie remnant in Michigan and represents our greatest hope for preserving a functional lakeplain prairie ecosystem." The prairie has remained remarkably intact. It has less hydrologic alteration due to draining, has no record of agricultural use outside of small pockets along the site's margins and represents the largest land area not dissected by roadways in Wayne County, although it is dissected by a railway.

What remains is now threatened with an intense development of 1,133 residential units with only terse and inadequate protections for only a 23-acre parcel of prairie that cannot be maintained as a functioning ecosystem under those circumstances. The whole lakeplain prairie area is a wetland complex, yet there is a permit application pending asking for permission to fill in what the developer deems isolated wetlands that he decided is not lakeplain prairie. The Natural Features Inventory would seem to be the more reliable source for

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this kind of determination. Detroit Audubon President, Jim Bull, and board members Jack Smiley (also President of Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy) and Rochelle Breitenbach testified at a hearing held by MDEQ on the application by the developer for a permit to fill-in wetlands on the site.

Detroit Audubon Society has also requested an environmental review of the property because of the presence of three endangered insects, including two dragonflies (Inornate Ringlet and the Citrine Forktail) and the butterfly-like Duke's Skipper (*Euphyes dukesi*). The request also cited the presence of seven species of state threatened plant species, four of which have their highest quality occurrences in Michigan at Sibley Prairie. There are also seven plant species of special concern (special concern status ranks just below threatened), three state threatened animal species and two animal species of special concern, including two reptiles, one mammal and two bird species (Cooper's Hawk and Marsh Wren). On Sept. 14, the Michigan DNR Endangered Species Office sent us a letter telling us that they are requiring that the development get endangered species clearance before proceeding, which "will likely require a complete survey of the project area." That couldn't happen until next summer. So we have probably delayed the project until next season at the very least.

Detroit Audubon has also asked Congressman John Dingell and both of our senators to introduce legislation to extend the boundaries of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge to include Sibley Prairie. It would still have to be purchased but the refuge would provide an entity to manage and protect the area.

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).

One Good Tern Deserves Another and Another and...

Tales of Common Terns and other Colonial Nesting Water Birds

Thursday Nov. 18, 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Bruce Szczechowski

Bruce will give a power-point presentation about Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Caspian Tern, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Forster's Tern, and other birds encountered during field research in the summers of 2002, 2003 and 2004. Emphasis will be on the state of Michigan's threatened population of the Common Tern and especially the two nesting colonies on Grosse Ile and within the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. Bruce is studying toxins (PCBs, pesticides, mercury, etc.) in Common Tern eggs from 4 colonies in the Great Lakes to determine if there is a difference in contaminant concentrations between historically polluted sites and relatively unpolluted areas. (See article in this issue). His slides are stunning; his knowledge and his stories compelling.

Workshop on making Holiday Ornaments from Natural Materials

Thursday Dec. 16, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Leader: Jim Bull, DAS President

Come with the whole family to make holiday ornaments out of cattails, pinecones, milkweed pods and other natural materials. Materials will be provided but you are welcome to bring some of your own too. Holiday refreshments will be served, 'Nature Holiday' follows.

Nature Holiday: Snow, Evergreens, Holly and Animal Folly

Thursday Dec. 16, 8:00-8:45 p.m.

Speaker: Jim Bull, DAS President

What could be more fitting for this time of year than a slide show depicting the different types of snow crystals, the ecology of different types of snow, how to identify evergreens and a little about their ecological importance. Also an introduction to Michigan's native Holly and a look at what birds and animals are doing this time of year.

Next Program Thursday Jan. 20, 2005 with John Hartig,
Manager of the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge.

DETROIT AUDUBON HELPS ADJUSTMENTS TO KIRTLAND'S WARBLER RECOVERY PLAN

At the July meeting of the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team, Detroit Audubon's letters to the Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were credited with finally spurring action on the Recovery Team's request for modifications to the Recovery Plan for the Kirtland's based on the last 2 years of research. For instance, the research indicates that about 40,000 additional acres of land need to be dedicated to Kirtland's habitat management to sustain the population goal of over 1,000 breeding pairs. Some habitat on richer sites does not last as many years as was previously thought. Upper Peninsula lands were not addressed in the original Recovery Plan at all. We are pleased that Detroit Audubon could help move this process along. President Jim Bull is Detroit Audubon's official representative to the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team.

The Recovery Team also supported fastening tiny radios to a few Kirtland's Warblers in the Bahamas so that researchers could better track their wintering behavior and ascertain habitat requirements. Last year over 130 Kirtland's were observed by researchers in the Bahamas, 60 of which were banded. It is almost impossible to follow birds through the thick brush in the scrublands so radio telemetry will help. A few crown feather clippings were also taken from a few Kirtland's mist netted this summer in the breeding area. Since those feathers are grown in the Bahamas, isotope analysis of them will also shed light on the feeding habits of wintering Kirtland's. The feather isotope signatures are compared to isotope signatures of insects, berries and other food sources on islands where they are observed. An ornithologist from Central Michigan University told of her ongoing research to ascertain the effect of radio towers on migratory birds. The first data will be analyzed in time to be presented to the Winter Recovery Team Meeting in February. Her research will help us better understand the threat of radio towers and wind turbines on migratory birds like the Kirtland's.

DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Detroit Audubon Board Election

The following candidates are running for three-year terms ending Dec. 1, 2007

Fred Charbonneau. Fred has been a Detroit Audubon Board member since 1984. Member of numerous environmental organizations. He served as Vice President 1997-1998 and as President 1995, 1996, 1999 and 2000. He has conducted 16 birdathons between 1981 and 1996 that raised over twenty thousand dollars for DAS and Whitefish Point Bird Observatory. He said, "There is no more important legacy we can leave our grandchildren than a reverence for the earth and all its inhabitants."

Beth Johnson. Upon graduation from Saginaw Valley State University in 1988 with a B.S. in biology, I discovered I had an interest in bird watching. In 1995, I received my M.S. in Biology from Wayne State University. As time passed, my interest grew stronger as I became more involved in various facets of birds. Over the past 15 years I have participated in Christmas bird counts, the reintroduction of the Peregrine Falcon in downtown Detroit, assisting in bird banding and volunteering at several DAS events. I am currently employed by the Detroit Zoological Institute as a Principal Zookeeper in the Mammal section. In addition, the past two summers I have had the fortunate opportunity to assist with the Piping Plover project. I have been a member of the Detroit Audubon Society since 1998. I have enjoyed volunteering my time and effort to the society for the conservation of birds. I feel that by becoming a board member I could become more focused on the current issues and concerns of the DAS.

Gisela Lendle-King. Current member of the Detroit Audubon Board of Directors and Board member of Michigan Toxic Dumpsite Coalition/ Organization for a Better Environment, working in conjunction with Michigan Environmental Council. Member of EPA and DNR Citizen Information Committee for Demode Road Toxic Superfund Site and has been a sponsored speaker at Michigan Townships Association meetings. Medical technologist at Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital. Concerned with environmental interests in Oakland County. A wildlife, wetland, and outdoor enthusiast.

Karl Overman. Currently a member of the Detroit Audubon Board of Directors, he runs the Rare Bird Alert, chairs the field trip committee and is a member of the American Birding Association. A lawyer with the United States Attorney's Office, he is a life-long student of natural history with an emphasis on birds. He not only chairs the field trip committee but leads several field trips for Detroit Audubon each year. He strives to make Detroit Audubon a responsible voice for environmental concerns while not forgetting the roots of the organization.

Georgia Reid. Georgia is a current Detroit Audubon board member and a member of the field trip committee. She is interested in encouraging increased participation in the activities of the society. She believes that a quality environment benefits everyone. She also believes that active participation by more members would enable Detroit Audubon to become more effective in pursuit of such an environment.

Joan Seymour. Current member of the Detroit Audubon Board of Directors and member of DAS for 16 years. Member of Southfield City Council, co-founder and current president of Southfield Wetlands/ Woodlands Preservation Council. Led fight to gain passage of strong local wetland/woodland ordinances in Southfield. Led fight to protect wetlands in path of I-696. Board member and executive committee member of Environmental Protection Council of Oakland County. Member of Michigan Wetlands Action Coalition, NWF, WWF. Will concentrate on wetlands and natural areas issues.

Richard Quick. He was a member of the Detroit Audubon board from 1970 to 1984 and from 1988 to present. He served as president of Detroit Audubon for three years (1974-75 and 1994). He initiated the annual birdseed sale, ran the Audubon Wildlife film series for years and has served as finance committee chair for four years. He has been teaching biology and computer science in the Detroit Public Schools for the last 31 years. Current interests are solid waste disposal and recycling of waste materials.

Nov. 2004 Board Election Ballot

Individual members get one vote - use only the first box. Maximum 7 votes.

Family members get two votes - use both boxes. Maximum 14 votes.

Family members must write their names across the outside flap of the envelope for verification purposes only.

Your ballot will remain secret.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fred Charbonneau

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Beth Johnson

Georgia Reid

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Gisela Lendle-King

Joan Seymour

Richard Quick

Send ballots to: Election Committee, 1320 N. Campbell Rd., Royal Oak, MI 48067


Ballot must be received by Nov. 30, 2004 to be counted.

SAVE THE MOURNING DOVE FUND

As you know Detroit Audubon Society is a member of the coalition to Restore the Dove Shooting Ban in Michigan. We have a long battle ahead of us as we work to gather signatures on the petitions to put the law, making the dove a game bird, to a vote of the people. There will be more work to do once the signatures are gathered. We need to educate the public and campaign to overturn that law and restore the dove to protected status. In the past, Detroit Audubon officers have gone to Lansing to testify at hearings, to meet with legislators and to kick-off the referendum campaign. Some of the costs of our involvement were travel expenses for several trips to Lansing, photocopying scientific journal articles and other materials to distribute to decision-makers and the press. We need your support. Please send contributions by check to Detroit Audubon's "Save the Dove Fund" with "SAVE THE DOVES" indicated on the comment line. As our way of saying thanks, if you send \$30 or more, we'll send you a Mourning Dove plush toy. It will remind you of the gentle bird you are helping us protect.

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AUTHOR'S CORNER

Submit a story on the theme of nature. Give us 300 to 1000 words. Submissions are reviewed by a panel of independent judges and the one they choose to be the best will be printed in a future Flyway. Please identify your story as fiction or non-fiction and include your name and phone or e-mail address.

Submissions should be sent by e-mail to swbeattie2@juno.com or a typed copy mailed to Sue Beattie, 4977 Briarwood Circle, West Bloomfield, MI 48323. All stories will become the property of DAS and will be edited for spelling, punctuation and grammar.



*Detroit Audubon Society
1320 N. Campbell Road
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