



# Flyway

**Winter 2005**

## DAS YOUTH WINS NATIONAL AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION TITLE 'YOUNG BIRDER OF THE YEAR'

### NEIL GILBERT

*By Rosemarie Attilio*

A row of cars are lined up at the bottom of a hill. I sit in one, with a few new Detroit Audubon members waiting for the trip leader to arrive. We are going on a birding field trip to Tawas State Park. I whisper to my group, "There he is!" My eyes roll in the direction of a 12 year old boy. Sudha, a new birder to the group, looks at me incredulously, laughs and then says, "Rose, you are teasing us. You mean the man standing next to him?" "No," I say seriously, "the man next to him is his driver." I didn't mention that this was also his father, John Gilbert. "This trip leader," I continue, "is Detroit Audubon Society's very own Neil Gilbert of Beverly Hills, MI. He is the National Grand Prize Winner of the Young Birder of the Year Award from the American Birding Association."

So how did Neil win this title? Neil explained to me that he has been birding half his life, (that would be six years). When he was a toddler, he was vacationing in Florida with his family and saw some Sanderlings running around. They caught his attention. His parents bought him a little bird book. He thinks it was a Golden Guide. That sparked the birding bug. In 1999 he joined the Detroit Audubon Society. Since that time, Neil has been on many field trips and feels a few of the leaders, such as Karl Overman and Mike Mencotti, have become important mentors for him.

His bird watching skills are quite phenomenal. His ability to identify a bird by its song is also astounding. On our trip to Tawas, he peered into some brush and said, "I hear a Mourning Warbler." I looked wistfully at him thinking to myself "All I hear is my stomach growling."

It is with these skills that Neil decided to try to win a scholarship to one of the American Birding Association's bird watching camps. A component of the scholarship is that the participant has to raise half of the money themselves. Neil began to draw birds and made note cards which he sold at various venues (including the Detroit Audubon's bookstore). Also, while trying to win the scholarship, he discovered the contest for the National Young Birder of the Year. There are two winners for this contest divided by age group. The contestants have different tasks (the ABA calls these modules) that they must do to qualify. One module required Neil to sketch birds out in the wild. He placed second nationally in this category. Another module was to keep a field notebook of bird information, such as the habitat where the bird is found, and/or its behavior, markings, weather etc. He had to collect field notes once or twice a week for many months. Neil placed 2nd nationally in this category. The 3rd module Neil performed was photography. Neil had to photograph birds in their natural setting or show specific bird behavior. Neil placed first nationally in this category. His work on the contest took six

months and this spring he was announced the winner in the 10-13 year old category. Some of his prizes consisted of a pair of Leica 8 x 42 binoculars, a subscription to Wild Bird magazine and a scholarship to the birding camp in S.E. Arizona.

Since winning his title, Neil continues to bird watch at every available opportunity. He often bird watches with his father, John Gilbert. His mother, Carol, likes to watch birds in her backyard and two older brothers are not birders. He also enjoys "birding" with a few people in his age range which have formed their own group called "The Michigan Young Birders" and often their sightings appear in the newspaper, the rare bird alerts or on the internet.

While he bird watches at many locations, he thinks Crane Creek in Ohio is probably his favorite and of course Pt. Pelee in Canada. Recently his family traveled to Germany where his binoculars went with him everywhere and he said he saw many neat birds.

When asked what his future career plans are, he's not sure if he will do something that makes lots of money and just bird watch on the weekends or be something like a forest ranger and bird watch all the time.

We hope Neil will continue to attend and lead many field trips in the future. Congratulations Neil, you have made the Detroit Audubon very proud.

# Flyway

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## DAS Board of Directors

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## The Detroit Audubon Society Mission Statement

The mission of Detroit Audubon is to promote  
awareness of the environment through education  
and participation. We feel that the environment  
is best served by a knowledgeable citizenry and  
that bird watching is the vehicle for developing an  
inclusive understanding of natural history.

The Society supports activities to foster the  
preservation of habitat, clean air and water, and  
conservation of land and other natural resources.

While our organization endorses the goals of the  
National Audubon Society, the efforts of Detroit  
Audubon Society, in furthering the above goals,  
will be conducted locally.

Adopted October 13, 1999

## Please E-mail Us!

If you would like to receive notices about  
membership meetings, field trips, and other  
time sensitive material, please send your e-mail  
address to [detas@bignet.net](mailto:detas@bignet.net). Simply type the  
word "subscribe" in the subject line. Please  
include at least your name in the message area  
of your e-mail. We will only send out a few  
e-mails a month and you can ask to be removed  
at any time. E-mail will help save postage and  
paper costs -- and will allow us to give you  
speedy notification of events.

## WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Anyone interested in doing any kind of volunteering:

habitat preservation, school presentations, bookkeeping, phone calling, letter writing,  
taking the DAS exhibit to events put on by us and other organizations, educational forums and other  
situations that arise from time to time, send your e-mail addresses to:

[detaudubon@aol.com](mailto:detaudubon@aol.com)

Many of these volunteer opportunities can be used by students looking for ways  
to get their community service hours for the MEEP scholarship.

# DETROIT AUDUBON

## Nov/Dec 2005 Board of Directors Election

The DAS Board of Directors consists of 27 directors. Each year directors are elected for a term of three years by membership ballot. Directors may also be appointed to fill vacancies that may occur. Nominees must be current members of the DAS.

To vote for your favorite candidates, please fill out the ballot below and mail it to be received no later than Nov. 30 to:

DAS Election Committee  
1320 N. Campbell Rd.  
Royal Oak, MI 48067

### - THE CANDIDATES -

**ROCHELLE BREITENBACH** has been a member of the DAS Board of Directors for three years, is serving as president this year, and served as secretary the two years previous. Guided by the mission statement "... to preserve resources necessary for birds and other wildlife..." is on a state level committee which is developing legislation protecting Michigan's water; the Great Lakes Great Michigan Campaign. She is working with several land conservancies to protect critical habitat for birds and wildlife. Education: B.A. in Psychology, currently finishing a degree in hydrogeology. She is involved in the water quality monitoring programs with Huron River Watershed Council and Friends of the Rouge. Memberships: American Water Resources Association, National Ground Water Association, Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, Huron River Watershed Council.

**JIM BULL** A high school and college teacher, he is a current board member and twice has been president of Detroit Audubon. He has a Ph.D. from the U of M School of Natural Resources (Environmental Education) and is one of the co-founders of the Global Rivers Environmental Education Network and the Rouge River Education Program. He was formerly Environmental Education Specialist with the National Park Service at Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Executive Director of the Clinton River Watershed Council. He spearheaded Detroit Audubon's involvement in the Save Humbug Marsh campaign. He chairs Detroit Audubon's Annual Conference, Awards and Spring Campout committees, has spearheaded annual fund-raising appeals, coordinates Detroit Audubon's Downriver Monthly Nature Programs, coordinates Detroit Audubon's involvement in Hawkfest and is a field trip leader. He wants to help Detroit Audubon grow in membership and financial wherewithal to be even more effective in environmental education and advocacy.

**JOHN MAKRIS** Current board member and past DAS president, DAS representative to the Earthshare Board of Directors, chair of Legislative Liaison Committee. Former DAS citizen's panel and member to the International Joint Commission Study of Great Lakes Pollution. Member of Michigan Bar Association, environmental law section, and co-chair of Michigan Clean Air Campaign. Interests include environmental legislation and education, land-use planning, elimination of urban "visual pollution", habitat preservation.

**JACK SMILEY** Member of the Board of Directors for DAS. President of Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy and board member of Friends of the Rouge. Helped to lead DAS involvement in wetland and habitat protection issues, including successful efforts to protect the Cranbrook Nature Sanctuary, Woodland Hills Park in Farmington Hills, the 9 Mile-Evergreen wetlands in Southfield, and Humbug Marsh. Has also negotiated conservation easements which have been donated to DAS to protect land.

**DAWN SWARTZ** is a Michigander from Muskegon who now lives in Southgate with her son. She has a business teaching Suzuki Violin and in her spare time does Contra Dance and birding anywhere she can. She most recently led a Detroit Audubon Field Trip to Cape May New Jersey and will go again in May 2006. She would like to interest more people in birding as an introduction into environmental issues.

### 2005 DAS Board Election Ballot

- Individual members get one vote - use only the first box. Maximum 5 votes.
- Family members get two votes - use both boxes. Maximum 10 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"/>	<b>Rochelle Breitenbach</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Jim Bull</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>John Markis</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Jack Smiley</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Dawn Swartz</b>			

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

**Ballot must be received by Nov. 30, 2005 to be counted.**

# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR THE CLASSROOM

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Department of Education are pleased to announce that Michigan has joined only a handful of states in creating its own environmental education curriculum, known as the Michigan Environmental Education Curriculum Support (MEECS).

MEECS is designed to provide students with an opportunity to learn about their environment through lessons in Science and Social Studies. By better understanding basic information about the environment – how it functions, how it is affected by human activity, and how harmony between human activity and the natural environment can be achieved, Michigan's students will be able to tackle environmental challenges head on.

MEECS will assist Michigan educators in disseminating science-based environmental curriculum to middle and upper elementary school students by focusing on the following topics: Air Quality, Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Energy Resources, Land Use, and Water Quality.

Aligned with science and social studies content standards and Michigan benchmarks, MEECS is designed to provide engaging, innovative activities while providing the opportunity for students to gain an increased awareness and appreciation for the environment.

Interested teachers and educators can participate in one of the many MEECS workshops beginning this January! Workshops will be offered in a variety of teacher-friendly times and locations across Michigan. Contact your local Math & Science Center for upcoming workshop details. A statewide list of Centers can be accessed at [www.mscenters.org](http://www.mscenters.org). Each of the five MEECS curriculum units requires a four to six-hour training workshop. Workshops are no cost and materials are provided FREE upon completion. Each participant will receive a kit including:

- Binder of Lesson Plans
- Background Information for Teachers
- CD-ROM with electronic version of units, extension lessons, supplemental resources and materials, PowerPoints, videos, and more
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Educators are encouraged to attend as many workshops as they desire.

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## HOLD MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND (MAY 26-29, 2006) FOR SPRING CAMPOUT

Put these dates on your calendar so you don't forget to join us for this fun-filled weekend co-sponsored again with Michigan Audubon Society. Details to follow in coming issues of *The Flyway*.



## LIVE A LEGACY, LEAVE A LEGACY

As a member of the Detroit Audubon Society, you are one of the 81.5% of Southeast Michigan residents who annually give to charity. Surprisingly, however, only 2.8% of Southeast Michigan residents leave a bequest at death.

To counter that disparity, Leave A Legacy® was established as a community-based effort to encourage people from all walks of life to make gifts from their estates to the nonprofit organizations of their choice. The program encourages prospective donors to work with the charities they already support, or the estate planning professionals with whom they already have a relationship, to establish a charitable bequest or other planned gift.

One of the misconceptions about leaving a legacy is that only the wealthy can do it. The truth, however, is that everyone can, no matter what your current income or assets because planned gifts can be a lot more than money. In fact, some of the most common gifts are stocks, IRAs, cars, real estate and life insurance policies.

Another myth is that by leaving a legacy, you'll be neglecting your family after death. This is also untrue. Of course, families should be provided for first. However, what most people find is that providing for both their family and leaving a gift to charity is possible.

Charitable bequests can easily be made through a will (as well as through a revocable trust) so a first step is to prepare a will. Only 50% of those who pass away have one. Without a will, your estate may be divided contrary to your wishes or, in some cases, it may be greatly diminished by estate taxes.

A bequest may be for a specific dollar amount or for a percentage of the assets in your will. A specific bequest

is the simplest form of bequest. It designates a fixed dollar amount or specific property to a beneficiary. This type of bequest is appropriate when you have an item of value (stocks or bonds, real estate, works of art, etc.) or a definite dollar amount that you wish to leave to a particular charity.

Residual or proportional bequests designate either your entire estate or a percentage of your estate after other specific bequests are distributed. The advantage of designating a portion of your estate is that the bequest automatically adjusts in size as your estate increases or decreases over the years.

Suggested language for a bequest in a will or trust may be quite simple, such as:

I give to the Detroit Audubon Society, a Michigan nonprofit corporation, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_

or

I give to the Detroit Audubon Society, a Michigan nonprofit corporation, all of my interest in the following described property: \_\_\_\_\_

or

I give to the Detroit Audubon Society, a Michigan nonprofit corporation, \_\_\_\_\_ percent or all of the residue of my estate to be used as the board of directors of the Detroit Audubon Society shall determine.

You may also designate your bequest for a particular purpose. However, you should contact the Detroit Audubon Society to first determine that the intended use is in keeping with the long-term objectives of DAS.

Regardless of your age or personal finances, it is important to have a will to plan for the ultimate disposition of your assets. Proper planning is essential to provide for your family's needs and to also provide for charitable works.

Remember: You, too, can Leave A Legacy.

## BOOKSTORE BITS

By Bev Stevenson

Tired of making decisions on clothes? Come on in and see our t-shirts. They have our logo in navy blue and sell for \$6.00. Tax is included.

### Buy Artworks On-line; Donate to DAS

Christmas gift idea ! Click on the ART link on our website, [detroitaudubon.org](http://detroitaudubon.org), and view lovely art. Change frame styles and change wall colors at the click of a button. Personal Preference Art will give 20% of the sale price to Detroit Audubon.

## 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.

Highlights of recent sightings are also periodically published on the Detroit Free Press 'Outdoors' page.

To report rare birds,  
call Karl Overman, (248) 473-0484

# IT'S ALL HAPPENING AT THE ZOO!



Reserve April 1, 2006 on your calendar. Detroit Audubon's Annual Conference is going to the zoo--The Zoo!

We'll have:

- An early morning bird walk around the zoo grounds
- Special feedings in the aviary
- A behind-the-scenes tour of the new animal hospital

Tentatively scheduled programs:

- Search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker by Dr. Martja Lammertink, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology
- Presentations on the Detroit Zoo's role in conserving Michigan's Karner Blue Butterfly, Piping Plover and Massasauga Rattlesnake
- Dr. Avian Guano (aka Denny Olson), a kooky ornithologist who is so into birds that he has started to turn into one.

More details to come. You won't want to miss it.

## EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

To get the latest news on environmental issues and events, be sure to regularly logon on to the DAS website at:  
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### DAS WISH LIST

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Thank You for your support!

## **DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE**

### **Belle Isle, Detroit**

November 19, 2005 (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 2-4, 2005 (Friday thru Sunday)

Leader: Alan Wormington

The Niagara region in the Great Lakes is the place to be in early winter. There are masses of waterfowl and gulls amid renowned scenery. Alan and DAS members have turned up such notable birds as Great Cormorant, Gannet, Harlequin Duck, Purple Sandpiper, California Gull, Kittiwake, Little Gull, Mew Gull, Snowy Owl, Rufous Hummingbird and Golden-crowned Sparrow on this trip in recent years.

Meet at the Detroit Audubon Office at 1320 N. Campbell, Royal Oak at 9 a.m. on Friday, December 2. Returning Sunday December 4 at approximately 9 p.m. Transportation and 2 nights lodging will be provided. You are on your own on food. Cost: \$325 with \$75 deposit. Single room supplement \$400.

### **Detroit Christmas Bird Count**

December 18, 2005 (Sunday)

Be a part of this nationwide 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 - Grosse Ile Hike**

December 27, 2005 (Tuesday)

Detroit Audubon Society and the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy co-sponsor this annual count for the second year. The 15-mile diameter circle for the Rockwood Count includes Grosse Ile, Lake Erie Metropark, Trenton, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Newport and Oakwoods Metropark. Call Jim Bull if you live in the count area and want to participate in a bird feeder watch that day from the comfort of your home. To sign up to do more serious outside counting that day, contact count compiler, Tom Carpenter, at [tcarpen1980@yahoo.com](mailto:tcarpen1980@yahoo.com) or 734-728-8733 so he can assign you to an area and count team. There are many inland areas that desperately need coverage. A big pot of chili will be available before and after the count for any hungry counters. There is a \$5 fee if you want your name listed in the official report.

### **Rockwood Christmas Bird Count - Grosse Ile Hike**

December 28, 2005 (Wednesday) 9:00 a.m. to 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 two hours. It would be helpful if you contacted Jim Bull at [jbull51264@aol.com](mailto:jbull51264@aol.com) or 313-928-2950 to let him know you plan to come on the 2-hour public hike, so he can plan coffee and doughnuts.

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.

### **Lake Erie Metro Park, Wayne Co.**

January 14, 2006 (Saturday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Mike Mencotti

This park may well be the best single location for winter birding in Michigan. It is great for waterfowl, Bald Eagles and lingering landbirds. What really has put it on the birding map in recent winters has been the presence of roosting Long-eared Owls that have been easily seen at this location for a number of winters.

Take I-75 to Gibraltar Road. Go east toward Gibraltar, turn right on Jefferson and drive south to the park entrance on your left. Entrance fee required.

### **South Florida-Bahamas**

Dates: January 14, 2006 to January 22, 2006

Leaders: Allen Chartier and Karl Overman

A chance for winter birding at its best-in short-sleeves. First, we will base ourselves in Homestead, Florida and try for a number of the South Florida specialties as well as the wealth of wintering birds. We should get the wading birds that Florida is famous for such as Wood Stork, Roseate Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, Purple Gallinule etc. and make special efforts to see the two scarce raptors that birders are keen on seeing in Florida, Short-tailed Hawk and Snail Kite. After concluding our birding in South Florida, we will fly to Abaco in the Bahamas to bird a different avifauna. Abaco is the best island in The Bahamas for birding with a number of Bahama endemics such as Bahama Woodstar and Bahama Yellowthroat plus an excellent selection of West Indian birds such as Cuban Parrot, Cuban Emerald, Western Spindalis, Red-legged Thrush and Olive-capped Warbler. Who knows? There might even be time for snorkeling.

Price: \$1800 from Miami. \$200 deposit required at time of signing up. Eight-person limit. Includes accommodation and transportation, including airfare to and from the Bahamas but not to and from Miami. Food is not included. Single room supplement price is \$2200. Pack a passport.

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## FEATHERED TALES



As the little hummers were getting ready to migrate, I witnessed four of them vying for their territory with much gusto. One of them confronted a goldfinch that landed in the wrong place. The finch did leave rather quickly.

**Freda Adler** of West Bloomfield saw an unbelievable sight the 2nd week in August. It was a pelican! Actually, it was a Brown Pelican which is a casual visitor to Michigan. Its usual habitat is from California to N. Carolina southward. Generally, it inhabits salt water but occasionally ventures inland north to the Great Lakes.

## An Osprey HOMECOMING

As seen on PBS

This stunning documentary about the Osprey Reintroduction Program of Southern Michigan centers around the touching story of C09, the Program's first osprey to return to Kensington Metropark and nest successfully.

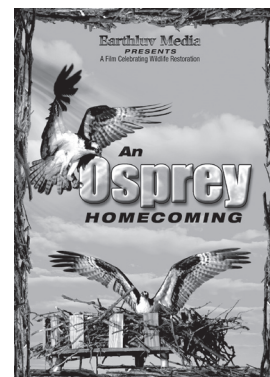
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