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Flyway

Summer & Fall 2010

Volume 2010, Issue 3

2010 Annual Program Provides Education and Fun for DAS Members

By Richard Quick

On March 27th, over 70 DAS members and friends gathered at Lawrence Institute of Technology for the 2010 Annual Program. They were presented with four presentations that informed and entertained everyone. The audience listened, questioned and sang and left with good memories of the day.



Joe Riley / photo by Chris Fielding

Over 20 stalwarts braved the morning chill to follow Jim Bull and Jack Smiley on a bird walk at Carpenter Lake Nature Preserve, the new Southfield facility where a Nature Center is being developed.

In the morning session, Harley Ellis Devereaux architects Art Smith and Mark Heber presented their work on local projects to incorporate "green" technology and practices. Using the LTU campus and the new Carpenter Lake Nature Center as examples, they discussed how they work to develop user and environment-friendly buildings.



Barred Owl / photo by Liz Clark

Gerry Wykes, the Lake Erie Metropark naturalist, gave an engaging presentation on the life of our namesake, John James Audubon. His presentation included many good pictures, artifacts and an in depth knowledge of the life and work of Audubon. Lots of questions from the audience showed their interest in his talk.

After lunch and time to bid on many silent auction items, President Jack Smiley brought everyone up to date on DAS activities.

After noon, we were entertained by the singing of Joe Reilly. He quickly engaged the audience, especially the children, with his songs of human and Earth connection. I have seldom seen anyone connect with his audience like Joe Reilly.

To finish the day, The Bat Zone at Cranbrook's Dale Smart entertained with their collection of mammals and birds. Everyone enjoyed seeing how the owls, flying squirrels and bats are adapted to their habitat and how their behavior reflects this. Everyone was sorry to see our time run out.

After gathering their silent auction winnings and sharing parting thoughts, members departed with memories of the day. I hope you will consider attending the DAS Annual Program next year.

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Flyway

A publication of the Detroit Audubon Society,
26080 Berg Rd, Southfield, MI, 48033

Telephone: (248) 990-1316

Office hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. -

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Website – detroitaudubon.org

Flyway is published four times a year and is mailed to over 6,500 local members of the National Audubon Society in Southeastern Michigan.

The opinions expressed by the authors and editors do not necessarily reflect the policy of the DAS.

Articles that appear in the *Flyway* may be reproduced freely as long as credit is given to Detroit Audubon Society.

Submission of original articles and artwork is welcomed. Deadline for the Winter 2010/2011 Issue is November 1, 2010.

Advertising rates are available by contacting the DAS office.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Jack Smiley

You should have recently received Detroit Audubon Society's Earth Day Appeal in the mail. I sincerely hope that you had a chance to read it. This appeal was special to me because it highlighted many of the local natural areas which are here today because of Detroit Audubon's involvement.

I was truly impressed by the number of significant natural areas which have been protected over the years by Detroit Audubon. From the St.Clair Woods Sanctuary near Port Huron to Humbug Marsh on the lower Detroit River, there are a some very notable habitats which have been saved. Detroit Audubon's involvement reminded me of the phrase which was popularized during earlier Earth Days, "Think Globally, Act Locally".

This phrase seems to truly epitomize many of Detroit Audubon's activities. While DAS has been involved in noteworthy efforts to save dolphins, protect endangered species and stop the illegal smuggling of exotic birds for the pet trade, the crux of Detroit Audubon's activities have revolved around issues close to home. Working to protect our local environment; saving habitat for birds and other wildlife...these are issues which are near and dear to us.

You, too, can play an important role. Whether it's leading the charge to protect the next threatened natural area or making a contribution to support those that do, your involvement is essential. If you know of natural areas which are threatened or which are in need of protection, please feel free to contact me at daspres@detroitaudubon.org. And please join me in making in a contribution so that the Detroit Audubon Society can continue to work to protect birds and the habitats they need to survive. Wildlife will benefit, and people will, too.

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The *Flyway* Online?

Are you one of our members looking to reduce the amount of mail you receive and the amount of paper you have to recycle? Are you also interested in saving DAS postage costs - over \$1.40/year currently? If so, send us an email message and we will add you to a FLYWAY notice list and stop mailing the FLYWAY to you. We will be posting it as both text and as a pdf on our DAS website, www.detroitaudubon.org for those who like reading on their computer. We will send a message the day the FLYWAY is ready to print.

Send email to: detas@bignet.net; put "FLYWAY Online" as the subject. We will confirm receiving it.



SONGBIRDING IN MID-AUGUST

By Leonard Weber
August, 2008

In my local birding spot, Eliza Howell Park, there are about two dozen wild black cherry trees scattered over several grassy acres. These are mature trees, many of them fifty feet tall or more. While I noted their white hanging blossoms in the spring, I gave them only minimal attention, not knowing that these trees would be the focus of my mid-August birding. In August the trees are full of small cherries, ripening from red to black.

American Robins and Cedar Waxwings are the most common and most dedicated cherry eaters. As individuals and in small flocks, both species move from one tree to another, pursuing preferred fruit and/or easy picking. At least half of the robins, it appears, are juveniles with their heavily spotted breasts. And a large percentage of the waxwings have blurry streaks and lack crests, indicating that they are youngsters as well. The juvenile waxwings sport yellow tail bands, though, something that makes them seem pretty mature-like to me.

As I watch the foraging, I find my attention drawn more to the waxwings than to the robins. They are more active, more entertaining to watch. While the robins tend to grab the cherries within stretching distance of their perches, the waxwings will flit out to the cherries, sometimes hovering and sometimes even hanging upside down on the fruit clusters. By comparison, the robins seem large and a little stiff and the waxwings agile and acrobatic. It may be, of course, that I am simply succumbing to the birder's temptation to ignore the common every-day birds when others are present. Evidence of some bias is clear a short time later: when some European Starlings arrive at the cherry tree I am watching. I pay them almost no attention at all.

In an area frequented by shorebirds, like Pointe Mouillee, August is an exciting birding month. In a park where most of the bird watching is focused on songbirds, it is easy to think of August as an in-between month. Breeding-related activities are largely finished and the first migrating warblers don't begin arriving until near the end of the month. In Eliza Howell Park in mid-August, I no longer routinely see the Baltimore Orioles that have been common since May. The male Ruby-throated Hummingbird is no longer perching on the same dead branches from which it had watched over its territory for months. Now that their young have grown, the Red-winged Blackbirds are gone, dispersed to I know not where, no doubt joined with others in large flocks.

But the in-between month of August has its own birding identity and its own thrills. This month's highlights revolve around fruit. In addition to cherry-tree watching, this is also the time of the year that I consider vireo season. Both Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos are summer residents of Eliza Howell, though I see them only occasionally as they forage in trees for insects. In late summer, when they expand their diets to take advantage of the ripening elderberries and other small fruits, they make themselves more visible to ground-bound humans. Seeing them can still be a challenge, but I now know to look for vireos in August in a mixed-berry patch thicket. I stand and watch. When I see leaves move, I wait for the bird to surface at the top or near end of a branch. The bird that appears may be a Gray Catbird or a robin, but often it is a vireo. There is great satisfaction in meeting a seasonal expectation.

Near the vireo berry patch, there are a couple black cherry trees at the edge of the clearing. They are close enough to good shelter so that birds – like catbirds – that avoid open areas can still have access to the hanging cherries. On one sunny morning in mid-August 2008, I made a point of watching one of these trees near the vireo berry thicket and making a list of the birds that visited the tree, however briefly. I expected to see Cedar Waxwings and robins and starlings. I did. Because of the location of the tree, I also expected to see Red-eyed Vireos and Warbling Vireos and Gray Catbirds. I did. Others not so clearly anticipated also showed up (some for the fruit, some not): a House Wren, an American Goldfinch, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, a Red-bellied Woodpecker, a Great crested Flycatcher, and two Eastern Kingbirds. There is only one term for seeing 12 species in one tree in one visit, regardless of the time of the year – good birding!

August birding is not just about fruit, of course. Several insect eaters regularly catch my attention as well. The Barn Swallows continue their seemingly erratic flights near the ground while the Chimney Swifts follow a similar pattern much higher up. I see more kingbirds at this time of the year than any other, sometimes perched in the cherry trees, interested not at all in the cherries, but looking for insects flying by. My favorite insect eater in August is the tiny Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. To my knowledge, the blue-gray does not breed at Eliza Howell, but is common after the breeding season. I love to watch it checking branches and leaves for insects in its energetic, non-stop fashion, giving glimpses of its white-edged tail as it flits from spot to spot.

When birding Eliza Howell in the dog days of summer, I am reminded again that every season has its own birding attractions. Soon I will be looking for Fall warblers, but I do not want to rush through mid-August.

DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY

FALL 2010 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

Note!! These are the trips planned for the fall and early winter of 2010! Look for the remainder of the schedule in the Winter *FLYWAY*.

Pointe Mouillee

August 14, 2010 (Saturday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Jim Fowler

This is one of the premier shore birding areas in the interior of the continent when water levels are favorable.

Directions: Take I75 to Exit 26 and drive east on south Huron Rd to U.S. Turnpike. Turn south and look for Sigler Road. Turn east and drive to the parking lot at the end. This will be a caravan into the dikes with ride sharing required.

Point Pelee, Ontario

August 28, 2010 (Saturday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Jim Bull

August may seem early for fall migration but for warblers, the end of August and the first few days of September are the peak time.

Directions: Cross the Ambassador Bridge and follow Rt. 3 to Leamington. Follow signs to Point Pelee National Park (entrance fee required: about \$12). Meet in the Visitor Center parking area. Remember to bring passport for entry into Canada and back into the U.S.

Lake Erie Metropark

September 11, 2010 (Saturday) 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Leader: Jim Bull

Meet at the trailhead across from the Marshlands Museum. We will traverse woodlands, boardwalks and observation platforms looking for warblers, other songbirds and migrating water birds. After the bird hike, we will go down to the boat launch to observe the hawk migration for awhile. Some years the number of hawks can be spectacular!

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

Metropolitan Beach Metropark

September 12, 2010 (Sunday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Joanna Pease

Hopefully fall migrants aplenty with summer temperatures still a reasonable expectation.

Directions: Take I94 east and exit on Metropolitan Parkway. Drive east into the park and park on the west side of the main parking lot near the Nature Center. Meet at the Center. Metropark entrance fee or sticker required.

Lake Erie Metropark – Hawkfest (no bird hike)

September 18, 2010 (Saturday)

All day: 10 am to 4 pm.

Bring your children and enjoy the many games, crafts, talks, demonstrations, displays and live hawks and owls at Hawkfest in and around the Marshlands Museum. Be sure to visit the Detroit Audubon display and bookstore as well as other vendors and get down to the boat launch to view the hawk migration and look at the day's tally.

Directions: See previous field trip to Lake Erie Metropark

Bird Banding Demonstration--Rouge River Bird Observatory

September 26, 2010 (Sunday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Julie Craves, Supervisor of Avian Research, Rouge River Bird Observatory and Richard Quick.

The Rouge River Bird Observatory at U of M Dearborn has been conducting research for many years on migratory bird use of this urban sanctuary, shedding light on the importance of urban green space as migratory stop-over habitat. After a banding demonstration we will take a short hike looking for birds in the U of M Dearborn Natural Area. No banding demo if it is raining.

Directions: Take I-94 to Michigan Avenue (west), turn right on Evergreen to Hubbard Drive. Make a Michigan left into the U of M Dearborn campus. Go south and park in the surface lot on the right or in the parking structure. Meet at the Environmental Interpretive Center south of the parking structure.

Humbug Marsh

October 9, 2010 (Saturday) 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Leader: Jim Bull

This is a key area for the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, which Detroit Audubon fought to save from development. This is a good time for fall migration of land birds. Migrant Raptors should still be going over as well if the winds are right.

Directions: Take I-75 to Gibraltar Road. Go east toward Gibraltar, turn left on Jefferson and drive north to Vreeland Road and look for the gate on the right. Park on Jefferson near the entrance gate.

Sandhill Crane Migration Stopover at Haehnle Sanctuary

October 24, 2010 (Sunday) 2:30 p.m. for hike or 4:30 p.m. to observe from hill only.

Leader: Jim Bull

Join us for a hike through the autumn woods at 2:30. Stay to watch 100's of Sandhill Cranes fly in to roost in the marsh for the night as they have been doing since the Ice Age. Or just join us on the hillside at 4:30 if you do not want to hike. Northern Harrier and a plethora of waterfowl are also possible. Dress warmly as it can be cold. A blanket or lawn chair to sit on would come in handy.

Directions: Take I-94 west to Race Road in eastern Jackson County. Go north two miles to Seymour road at a T-Junction. Go west (left) to the entrance of Haehnle Sanctuary on the north side of the road. Park in the lot and walk east on the trail to the overlook.

Point Edward and Lake Huron Shore, Ontario

November 6, 2010 (Saturday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Jim Bull

The focus will be on water birds and early winter arrivals. This is historically a trip that turns up great birds.

Directions: Take I-94 east to Port Huron and take the Blue Water Bridge to Sarnia. Meet at the Ontario tourist information center in Sarnia.

Owl Prowl - Oakwoods Metropark

November 12, 2010 (Friday) 7:00 p.m.

Leaders: Kevin Arnold and Jim Bull

We will call for owls and expect to hear them call back, and maybe call them in close where we can see them. This program is especially good for families with children.

Directions: 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 Metropark sticker or a daily pass. Meet at the nature center.

Belle Isle, Detroit

November 14, 2010 (Sunday) at 9:00 a.m.

Leaders: Steve Santner & Fred Charbonneau

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

Directions: Take Jefferson to the Belle Isle Bridge. Cross over and drive to the east end of the island and park in the Nature Center parking lot.

Ontario and Niagara River Trip

December 3 to 5, 2010 (Friday thru Sunday)

Leaders: Alan Wormington & Karl Overman

The Niagara region is the place to be in the late Fall in the Great Lakes region with masses of waterfowl and gulls that leads to exciting birding and renowned scenery. Alan Wormington is simply the best possible guide to that area and trips Alan has lead with DAS members in recent years have turned up such notable birds as Great Cormorant, Gannet, King Eider, Purple Sandpiper, California Gull, Slaty-backed Gull, Kittiwake, Little Gull, Mew Gull, Snowy Owl, Hawk Owl, Rufous Hummingbird, and Golden-crowned Sparrow. You won't regret going on this trip!

Directions: Departure will be at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, December 3rd. Returning Sunday December 5th at approximately 9 p.m. Location of departure will be in Farmington Hills.

Contact Karl Overman at (248) 473-0484 for directions. Cost: \$350; Single room supplement \$450. Transportation and 2 nights lodging are included. Meals are not included. \$75 deposit to reserve a spot.

Detroit Christmas Bird Count

December 19, 2010 (Sunday)

This is one of the oldest Christmas Bird Counts. Birders spend the entire day covering a 15 mile diameter circle in parts of northern Oakland Co. to count as many birds as possible. The count is part of counts all over North America used to study bird populations. Meet for pizza and count wrap-up at day's end. To participate, call Tim Nowicki at (734) 525-8630 or the DAS office at (248) 990-1316.

Rockwood Christmas Bird Count

December 26, 2010 (Sunday)

Public hike: 9:00 a.m. to 11 a.m. Call Jim Bull at (313) 928-2950. To register for the morning hike.

A chili lunch is provided.

Christmas Bird Count: All day. The Detroit Audubon Society co-sponsors this annual count of the 15 mile diameter circle which includes Grosse Ile, Lake Erie Metropark, Trenton, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Newport, and Oakwoods Metropark. A chili dinner will be provided. If you want to participate in the all day count, contact count compiler Tom Carpenter, at tcarpn1980@yahoo.com or at (734) 728-8733.

DAS THANKS YOU!

Gifts to DAS totaled almost \$8,500 over the last year. Thanks to the 157 members who donated to the General and Endowment funds from April, 2009 to March, 2010. That number fell from over 220 last year. Several members gave to both funds. \$4,800 was given to the General fund and \$4,390 was given to the Endowment fund. We hope you will consider giving to help develop and maintain our program of bird education and environmental action. Listed are the donors in several categories. Please let us know if your name is not shown.

Up to \$500

Charles Peters
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DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Detroit Audubon Society, 26080 Berg Road, Southfield, MI 48033
Thank You for your support!

ENDOWMENT FUND CHALLENGE GRANT

After 70 years of operations, the Detroit Audubon Society began an Endowment Fund in December, 2009. Our initial goal was to raise \$10,000 so that DAS could establish a fund with the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

Although Detroit Audubon is off to a good start, we fell short of our initial fund raising goal. In order to make sure that we can establish our Endowment Fund as planned, a very generous Detroit Audubon Society member has pledged to contribute \$5,000 once the first \$5,000 is raised. We only need to raise another \$1,200 to meet this condition, so please help Detroit Audubon reach this goal!

Please make your check payable to "Detroit Audubon Society" and note that it is for the Endowment Fund. Mail to: Detroit Audubon Society, 26080 Berg Road, Southfield MI 48033.

Please help Detroit Audubon Society match this very generous pledge!

All donations are tax deductible.

DETROIT AUDUBON STARTS NEW CHAPTER

The first new chapter of the Detroit Audubon Society was recently approved by the DAS Board of Directors. At the request of a number of residents living near downtown Detroit, the Detroit Riverfront Audubon Society (DRAS) was established to promote Audubon programs in the local area.

A core group of people living at Lafayette Towers initiated the request for chapter status. A number of the residents had an interest in birds and sought a way to learn more about them. Detroit Audubon intends to help this new group sponsor programs and field trips in the area. The group hopes to focus on the Detroit riverfront near the downtown area, and also plans to sponsor field trips to Belle Isle.

Programs and membership in the new group will be open to all. If you would like to receive email announcements about DRAS programs and activities, please send an email to detas@bignet.net.

SAFE PASSAGE WELCOMES GENERAL MOTORS

Over the last few years, General Motors joined the Safe Passage Great Lakes program. We would like to recognize them on the Honor Roll at this time. The lights in the GM world headquarters in the Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit are turned off at night to help reduce the significant and dramatic continent-wide death toll of night-migrating birds that crash into tall lighted buildings. GM has also asked other tenants of the Renaissance Center to turn out their lights or at least to close their blinds at night.

That's not all. Since 1991, GM personnel have been guided by a list of "General Motors Environmental Principles" directing the corporation to use sound environmental practices in their business decisions. These principles commit GM personnel to actions that "restore and preserve the environment" through reducing waste, conserving resources and recycling materials. They further pledge to "continuously assess the impact of our plants and products on the environment and communities in which we live...."

DAS representatives recently met with Susan Kelsey, Environmental Group Manager of the GM Environmental Compliance Group in Southeast Michigan. At that meeting, Ms. Kelsey stated how pleased GM was to be on the SPGL Honor Roll. She explained how GM puts forth a strong effort to make the grounds of their properties friendly to wildlife and the environment. Also, she is working to get a Safe Passage type of bird-friendly understanding spread throughout the global GM community.

What good news that is!

DAS is very pleased to know that General Motors is determined to be environmentally responsible and we welcome the corporation to our Safe Passage family.

Feathered Tales



By Bev Stevenson

Judy Shatner was surprised to see, one year to the date, a Yellowed-bellied Sapsucker in her Redford yard near 6 Mile and Beech Daly. Could it be the same one?

Our editor, **Sue Beattie**, saw a pair of Sandhill Cranes feeding in her neighbor's yard in mid-April. This is around Pontiac Trail and Haggerty Road.

THE *FLYWAY* IS CHANGING PUBLICATION DATES

This issue of the *FLYWAY* is coming out a month later than usual and is combined with the 2010 Fall issue. The editors and DAS Board of Directors decided to change publication dates to allow better spacing for ongoing activities such as the Annual Program, Memorial Day Getaway and the Field Trip schedule. The deadline for the winter issue will be November 1st and will be mailed by December 15th. The new schedule for the *FLYWAY* publication starting with the next winter issue is as follows:

Issue	Deadline	Mailed	Major item
Spring	Feb 1 st	Mar 15 th	Memorial Day Getaway registration; Birdathon
Summer	May 1 st	June 15 th	Annual Program summary; Field Trips insert
Fall	Aug 1 st	Sept 15 th	Annual Appeal; Memorial Day summary; Annual Program announcement
Winter	Nov 1 st	Dec 15 th	Annual Program registration; Memorial Day announcement

If you would prefer to read the *FLYWAY* online and not receive a mailed copy of the *FLYWAY*, please email us at detas@bignet.net with the subject *FLYWAY*. We will send a notice to you when the *FLYWAY* is published.
