



# Flyway

**Autumn 2006**

## SAFE PASSAGE GREAT LAKES

By Joe Bartell

Each year one hundred million to one billion birds die during night migrations. Many small birds such as warblers, wrens, vireos, thrushes and tanagers migrate at night on their way either to their summer breeding grounds or to their wintering grounds. They face many hazards in both directions, but tall lighted buildings have been shown to be one of the most dangerous.

It is thought that the lights on tall buildings confuse the navigation systems of birds unlucky to have such buildings in their flight path. They circle the buildings repeatedly and either die of exhaustion or by colliding with the illuminated building. According to scientists at the Field Museum in Chicago, their mortality could be reduced 80% if those building lights were off.

The Detroit Audubon Society is going to request that building organizations, government agencies and property owners help reduce the carnage by turning off lights in tall buildings from 11:00 p.m. to dawn from the second weekend in March through May and from the second weekend in August through October.

By turning off these lights, not only will birds be spared but also money and energy will be saved and pollution will be reduced. It will be a win-win situation for building owners/operators and for the birds that will be able to continue their long migratory flights with one major hazard removed.

## MEMORIAL WEEKEND NATURE GETAWAY

By Rosemarie Attilio

It was early morning and fog rose from the lake as the eerie call of a loon echoed. Seventy Detroit and Michigan Audubon members were scrambling for binoculars, cameras and breakfast. It was the beginning of another beautiful day at Loon Lake for the annual Memorial Day weekend nature adventure, May 26-29, 2006.

Loon Lake Lutheran retreat center near Hale, Michigan is a fantastic place for birders, nature enthusiasts and Audubon families. It is a prime location, near Tawas State Park which is a migratory hotspot in the spring. It is also close to the Rifle River, largo Springs, Lumberman's Monument, Kirtland's Warbler viewing areas, Tuttle Marsh and the AuSable River. The camp at beautiful Loon Lake has cabins, a lodge and many acres of woods, marshes, fields and streams.

Highlights of the birding adventures yielded Sedge Wrens, Brewers Blackbirds, Upland Sandpipers, Cliff Swallows, Trumpeter Swans, Pileated Woodpeckers and nesting Bald Eagles with young. In past years, our annual weekend has also brought such rarities as Piping Plover, Whimbrel, Merlin and Western Meadowlark. Joe Gamola, from the U.S. Forest Service, treated us once again to a clear and captivating view of a singing male Kirtland's Warbler.

Back in camp, many families and nature lovers enjoyed kayaking, canoeing, fishing, and hiking. Jeanette Henderson led fourteen adventurous people on an exciting challenge course while other Auduboners took the leisure approach. They sat on a bench overlooking the lake to read and relax or took the lighthouse tour at Tawas State Park or the Lumberman's Monument's historical tour.

Speakers were brought in and Paul Thompson, Wildlife Biologist USFS, gave an informative program on Michigan Wolves and Massasauga Rattlesnakes. Caleb Putnam also gave an update on the Michigan Important Bird Areas program for which he is the coordinator.

A campfire rounded out the weekend with a great sing-a-long, s'mores and the plaintive call of the loons.

Remember to put Memorial weekend on your calendar next year and join us for an economical and fun weekend get-away. Everyone is welcome.

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# Flyway

A publication of the Detroit Audubon Society,  
1320 North Campbell Road, Royal Oak, MI 48067

Telephone: (248) 545-2929.

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 '07 Issue is October 1, 2006.

Advertising rates are available by contacting the DAS office.

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Flyway Layout/Design: Don Tinson II

## 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

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## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION VISIONING & PLANNING SESSION

6:30 p.m. Detroit Audubon office

August 29, 2006

If you would like to be a member of Detroit Audubon's Education Committee, would like to volunteer to help lead education programs and help to plan the steps to implement them, join us this evening. You do not have to commit to being on the committee to come to this session. By coming, you could help us move in new and exciting directions. We'll provide pizza and drinks.

On the horizon are:

- Figuring out what kind of programs to offer at the Belle Isle Nature Zoo and the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge (with whom we are partners)
- Planning programming for the site of our new office in a Southfield nature preserve
- Designing an urban birding program for youth and the visually-impaired
- Developing an Avian Migration Sister School program to link schools studying migrating birds we share with other states and nations
- Planning implementation of an award-winning schoolyard investigations program

You may have more ideas. What should we do first? How many of these can we do simultaneously now and in the future? What kind of staffing and fund raising will be required?

For more information contact Jim Bull, Education Chair at [jbull51264@aol.com](mailto:jbull51264@aol.com). Put ED COMMITTEE in the subject line or call him at 313-928-2950.

## BOOKSTORE BITS

By Bev Stevenson

We have a year-round guide to help out anytime you get the urge to bird watch. It's the Michigan Bird Watching Guide by Bill Thompson, III and the staff of Bird Watcher's Digest. This book is unique because you can look up the bird you want to see. It shows you when and where to see the bird, as well as a lot of other interesting facts about that species with colored photos. It also has a frequently asked questions section, a food and feeder chart, bird friendly plants for your yard, a nest box chart and how to build easy birdhouses. All this for \$18.00 including tax.

# an inconvenient truth

By Fred Charbonneau

The Al Gore movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, is beautiful and terrifying, depressing and inspirational. The issue of global warming, also referred to as climate change, remains a subject of debate among politicians, business interests and pundits years after the scientific issues were resolved.

The fact that the planet is getting warmer at an increasingly uncomfortable pace is no longer being contested except at the extremes of society. The scientific community is now being challenged to demonstrate that the increasing consumption of fossil fuels devoted to sustaining our industrial strength and supporting our lifestyles is a major, not minor, contributor to the increase in greenhouse gases.

Al Gore has stepped up to that challenge. He put together a multimedia presentation referred to by some commentators as "Al Gore's slide show" and took it on the road. *An Inconvenient Truth* is the movie inspired by Al Gore's slide show.

If you've been following the global warming controversy for very long, you may not be learning anything you didn't already know. The evidence, the graphs and charts, the statistical data have been reported for a few decades. What makes this movie so special is the presentation of that evidence. The story is told in clear, concise and convincing language. The graphics and special effects will keep you awake, interested and focused.



One compelling discovery that is sure to get your attention is the speed with which the world is changing. Until recently, most observers tended to talk of global warming in geological time (thousands of years). The current acceleration in the melting of the polar ice cap and rapidly retreating glaciers has scientists revising their estimates and beginning to think of the changes in historical time. Events we thought would take centuries are beginning to look like they may happen in a few generations.

Gore lays out the grim predictions without pulling any punches, but he doesn't leave us there. He believes that mankind still has an opportunity to slow down and eventually even reverse the warming process.

The Kyoto treaty obliges signatory nations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in a timely manner. So many nations have signed on to Kyoto that the United States and Australia are singing "You and Me against the World" to each other. The unfortunate fact about this duet is that we are by far the world's biggest contributor of greenhouse gases.

The good news is that a number of our states and cities are stepping up and undertaking their own programs to reduce emissions to combat global warming. A growing number of our largest corporations are realizing that they cannot continue to remain a part of the problem and are beginning to see the advantages and opportunities associated with becoming a part of the solution.

There is still hope for the earth, but we must act swiftly to start taking the necessary steps. When the movie ends, stick around for the credits. You'll see suggested actions you can take in your everyday activities to improve the planet. Give them a try - every little step moves us forward. We may not live to see the effects of our personal efforts, but unless we make the right choices in our daily lives, I fear that future generations will inherit a planet which cannot sustain many of the life forms we take for granted today.

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* transformed countless lives and inspired the modern environmental movement. *An Inconvenient Truth* may well inspire us to help save this beautiful and fragile planet.

Check it out. You won't regret it.

## HELP US RECOGNIZE INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS DOING GOOD THINGS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Each year Detroit Audubon gives out several awards. We encourage nominations from our membership as you may know of deserving people and/or organizations that we would not know about. Please submit award nominations to:

Awards Coordinator, Jim Bull, at [jbull51264@aol.com](mailto:jbull51264@aol.com) or write to Jim at 4136 Abbott, Lincoln Park, MI 48146

Award categories:

- Conservationist of the Year - to an individual (our highest award)
- Conservation Organization of the Year
- Conservation Corporation of the Year
- Conservation Leadership Award - to a governmental official

### DETROIT AUDUBON AWARD NOMINATION FORM

(Submit by Oct. 1, 2006)

Name of Person/Org Nominated: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Email of the Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers of Nominee: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Award Nominated for (from above list): \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think this person or organization is worthy to receive the award?

Attach photo, biography, newspaper articles and other supporting material.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***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.



## NATURE AND DETROIT AUDUBON LOSE A FRIEND



**Homer Roberts**, who many Detroit Audubon members will remember from our Spring Campouts at Camp Mahn-Go-Tahsee, passed away at the age of 94 on April 30, 2006. He was born in Onaway, Michigan on April 19, 1912, the son of a lumberjack. He

was already teaching school at age 18 as headmaster of a one-room schoolhouse. He taught the longest in the Redford Union School District until his retirement. He married the love of his life, Dot, in 1938. He was one of the early presidents of both Detroit Audubon and Michigan Audubon Societies. He traveled to schools and public venues showing his nature movies, which he narrated much like National Audubon Wildlife films.

He and Dot made a life size nest and paper mache eagles for Detroit Audubon's exhibit at the Home Builders and Flower Show, complete with a life size tree. That exhibit minus the tree is now in the nature center at Loon Lake Lutheran Retreat Center (the new name of Camp Mahn-Go-Tahsee). He served as naturalist at Camp Mahn-Go-Tahsee for over 60 years. When he and Dot retired, they bought land next to the camp and built their retirement home there, walking to camp most days to teach about nature and crafts to children or families or whoever happened to be renting the camp that week.

He was instrumental in pushing for action to save the Kirtland's Warbler resulting in the first dedicated management area for the Kirtland's in the Huron National Forest. He also helped lead the fight to ban DDT in Michigan, which paved the way for the Bald Eagle comeback. He convinced the Michigan Department of Conservation (now DNR) to designate Camp Mahn-Go-Tahsee as a state nature preserve, the first and may still be the only official privately owned state nature preserve.

His family describes him this way: "Homer will be remembered by all of us for the way he lived his life, the things he taught us, and most importantly, the things he taught us to see. From the grandeur of the forests to the beauty of each creature that makes up the natural world and the need to protect the environment. He opened our hearts as well as our eyes. We will continue to hear his voice in the songs of the birds and the whisper of the wind in the trees. Nature has lost a champion - a teacher, ornithologist, photographer, illustrator, musician, Purple Heart veteran, husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather."

Condolences on Homer's passing can be sent to Dorothy (Dot) Roberts at: Willamette Oaks Retirement Community, 455 Alexander Loop, Apt. 113, Eugene, OR 97401

## UPDATE ON COMMON TERNS

By Jim Bull

As of June 28, there were 140 Common Tern nests on the piers of the Grosse Ile Free Bridge (Wayne County Bridge) compared with about 180 last year. The toll bridge colony had about 90 nests. However, when we went to observe the terns today, we couldn't find even one chick. Since Bruce Szczechowski did not receive his banding permit renewal until last week, we could not go into the colony to study them like we did last year so it is hard to tell for sure what happened. It could be predators again, toxic chemicals in the fish or a combination of both, or something else entirely. There still may be some re-nesting but it is not clear if those nests will be more successful than the first try or not. This State-threatened species will need much more research and resources devoted to it if it is to survive and thrive on the Detroit River.


### DAS WISH LIST

*Gently used binoculars and birding field guides*

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## HAWKFEST 2006

Lake Erie Metropark  
September 16-17, 2006  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day

Detroit Audubon Society will lead an early morning bird hike (see field trips) and will have an exhibit at Hawkfest. The Southeast Michigan Raptor Research organization will have professional and volunteer hawk counters down by the boat ramp where, if you are lucky, you might see a spectacular sight like the 555,371 Broadwinged Hawks that were counted all in one day on Sept. 17, 1999. Bring your children. At the Marshlands Museum they will enjoy the many games, crafts, talks, demonstrations and displays, as well as live hawks and owls up close and personal. Often there is a Native American talk and hawk dance. Children can even climb up into a reconstructed eagle's nest, try on a pair of eagle's wings and see the world from an eagle's point of view.

This is one of our best sales times of the whole year. We need volunteers to help us staff our exhibit and merchandise area. If you would like to help out either one or both days, shifts are:

- 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- 12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Contact is Jim Bull at jbull51264@aol.com or 313-928-2950

### 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

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## PLAYING JEOPARDY AT THE HOME & GARDEN SHOW

By Karl Overman

I volunteered to work at the Detroit Audubon display at the Detroit Home & Garden Show this year. One of the benefits from such volunteer work is getting a chance to speak to people that you would otherwise never have the opportunity to meet and to share in your common interest - environmental and wildlife matters.

On the last day of the show, an elderly black man, slightly stooped and leaning heavily on a cane, stopped by our display. He picked up a bird book and slowly leafed through it. I dutifully asked if I could help him with something. He related to me that he loves to carve and was looking for a book with good illustrations of birds. I asked if he carved commercially. He responded, "Oh, no, just for fun. Would you like to see some of my work?" Of course, I said I would love to. He then pulled up his cane to show me five intricately carved busts down the length of the cane. They were indeed skillfully done. He asked if I could identify who the people were. Well, I love trivial pursuit so I instantly took up the challenge.

If you watch JEOPARDY, you know that the questions get tougher as you proceed down the category. That proved to be true of the likenesses on his cane as well. The top figure was John Kennedy. Now I can see where this is going, I thought. This is too easy. Oh, yes, further down the cane were the likenesses of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Surely there will be a Rosa Parks, a Martin Luther King or maybe a Thomas Jefferson further down the cane in this man's personal tribute to great Americans. Well, there was a black woman so when I guessed Rosa Parks, he beamed as if to inform me that I would not be around for Double Jeopardy. "So who is she?" I asked. "The mayor's mother, Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick, he replied. That left one more great American. A male for sure but, unlike the others, he had a tortured face. I had no clue. I did not even tender a guess. "So who is this?" I asked. He looked at me with little expression and said, "Why, that's Wayne Fontes - I always liked him."

### 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.



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### PROBLEMS IN PROTECTING WATER QUALITY

*Statement of Bob Perciasepe, Chief Operating Officer,  
National Audubon Society*

New York, NY, June 19, 2006 - A divided Supreme Court has created chaos for protections of over 50 percent of the nation's waters today. The split decisions on the Clean Water Act today make it much harder for agencies to determine what bodies of water qualify for protection. Muddying the regulatory waters, as the court has done, almost always works in favor of polluters and will take years to sort out.

The ruling signals an environmentally unfriendly direction for the court under Chief Justice John Roberts, and the decision endangers 30-year old federal rules that protect half of the nation's streams and wetlands.

Audubon continues to support passage of the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act, which would clarify the scope of the Clean Water Act and provide stronger protections for our nation's environment.

The cases, *Rapanos v. United States* and *Carabell v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*, were heard earlier this year by the Supreme Court. The court's ruling may put jurisdiction in the hands of states, at least over the short term, resulting in confusion and a patchwork of rules that would endanger environmental quality in downstream states. The ruling may be viewed at <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/04-1034.ZS.html>. The Clean Water Authority Restoration Act is HR 1356 in the House, and S. 912 in the Senate.

## ARMCHAIR NATURE EXPEDITIONS

Big Saturday evening entertainment has been added to our monthly programs. We now call them *Armchair Nature Expeditions* because they will transport you vicariously to nature's most beautiful places via song, film and drama. The especially entertaining programs will have educational value, but it will sneak up on you.

Saturday programs include two concerts: **Songs for the Earth** with Julie Beutel and Judy Insley on Sept. 23 and **Songs and Stories of the Great Northwoods** with Tom Hodgson. Detroit Audubon members will remember Julie from her performance at our annual meeting at the Detroit Zoo, April 1. Two nationally acclaimed filmmakers will present their films as part of this series, too. Allen King presents a film called, "**Romance of the West: Wildlife of the Lewis and Clark Expedition**," on Nov. 11th. Filmmaker, Christi Vedejs, will present her Emmy-winning film, "**An Osprey Homecoming**," on Jan 13th. Interspersed will be Thursday programs on **Bird Collisions with Cell Towers and Wind Turbines** on Oct. 12, **Peregrine Falcon Soap Operas of SE Michigan** on Feb. 8 and **Michigan's Farming Butterflies** on May 10th.

These programs are a step up in quality but also a step up in costs. In order to pay for these higher cost programs, while keeping them free to all, we are asking folks to dig deep into their pockets and give substantial donations at the door to help defray the cost of these programs. Come out and bring your friends and relatives or your club or scout group. Why not make it a Detroit Audubon theater or concert party? See the insert for the full-year's schedule of programs and keep it on your refrigerator with the field trip schedule so you won't miss any Detroit Audubon events.

## FEATHERED TALES

By Bev Stevenson



**George Byrd** of Clarkston was amazed to see Sandhill Cranes right in his backyard.

**Suzie Robinson and Georgia Reid** were at Crane Creek on April 15 and were shocked to see three American White Pelicans fly overhead. The last time pelicans were spotted here was in 1969 when five were sighted.

**Joan Antos** swears she has seen an Anhinga (Snake Bird) on the south side of Orchard Lake near Pontiac Trail. She said she saw the long snake-like neck and the very long pointed bill which is different than the cormorant. This sighting was in the first week in June. She said she saw it there last year as well.

**Carol Garza** was one of DAS's most reliable volunteers before she moved into a nursing home. One of her favorite pastimes is to watch the sparrows on the birdfeeder outside her window. On June 15th, she was thrilled to see a female hummingbird buzz the feeder. Perhaps, Carol thought, it was the red perches that attracted her.



*Detroit Audubon Society  
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Royal Oak, MI 48067*