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*Flyway*

**Winter 2008**

# HERON PLATFORM PROJECT

By Tim Nowiki

The Heron Platform Project aims to restore Oakland Park rookery.

In early August of 2007, DTE Energy apprentice crews installed 11 utility poles and attached 37 frameworks, which will serve as nesting platforms, in a wetland at Lyon Oaks County Park near Wixom, Michigan. This project is an effort to bring back herons to the property where there had been a rookery for at least 75 years prior to the early 1990's. At one time there were about 200 nests with Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets in the rookery. It had become a local landmark. But as nesting trees fell down, birds abandoned the area and searched for new nesting trees.

The Michigan Natural Features Inventory classifies heron rookery locations as scarce in Oakland County. By introducing this man-made rookery technique to Michigan, it will serve as an example to other facilities that a rookery can be established or maintained by installing poles and platforms. This technique is not new. Rookeries have been established using this technique in the Chicago area, Vermont and Alberta. Utility poles are very durable and can be located in appropriate places where natural trees may not be growing and predator guards can be easily installed as well.

A decoy and pseudo-nest were placed on one platform to "convince" herons arriving next spring to nest on the platforms as this one is doing. Herons from near-by areas regularly hunt in the ponds

and traverse the property, so it is hoped that in the spring of 2008, the birds will begin nesting on the platforms. A trail with a viewing area has been established for people to observe the rookery, but too much activity in the immediate area in March could deter "skeptical" herons from establishing a nest. A balance of curiosity and caution will need to be met. Once the herons have established this as a regular nesting site, plans will proceed to install a video camera on a pole and transmit live action video of nesting activities to the Lyon Oaks Nature Center. Patrons could then watch their lively activities without disturbing them during the critical early nesting period.

This project would not have been possible without the help of DTE Energy. They provided the poles, equipment and labor for installation.

*In Your*

*Flyway*

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# Flyway

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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 Spring '08 Issue is January 1, 2008.

Advertising rates are available by contacting the DAS office.

Flyway Editor: Sue Beattie

Flyway Layout/Design: Don Tinson II

## 2007 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SCHEDULE

In December of each year, DAS sponsors two Christmas bird counts of birds in specified areas. Volunteers will travel by car and hike in legal areas to identify birds and count individuals. The DAS surveys will be combined with hundreds of surveys conducted throughout the United States and Canada. Scientists have used data from these counts, that started in 1900, to help monitor bird populations. This amount of data would not be possible without the help of volunteers.

### Detroit Count

On December 16th, the Detroit Audubon Society will survey birds in a 15 mile diameter area of NW Oakland County during the annual Christmas Bird Count. Volunteers should be familiar with birds of our area in winter, but they do not have to be experts. Leaders of each section of the circle are familiar and helpful in identification. Participants should dress for the weather and bring a lunch, binoculars, a sense of humor and patience. This is a count for science, not a "hot" birding day. If you want to have your name in the official count list, a fee of \$5 is charged. At the end of the day, participants gather for pizza and to hear the tally of what was seen by others. If you would like to join the group on December 16, call Tim Nowicki at 734-525-8630 or the DAS office at 248-354-4960.

### Rockwood Count

On December 22nd, the Rockwood Christmas Count in the downriver communities will survey birds in the Grosse Isle, Lake Erie Metropark, Trenton and Rockwood areas. Volunteers will count birds all day and gather later for a complimentary chili dinner to share the sightings for the day. Call Tim Carpenter at 734 728-8733 to sign up to participate. You can stay at home and do a bird feeder count by calling Jim Bull at 313 928-2950.

We hope to see you at one of these counts. Look for results in the next FLYWAY.

### For the Latest News and Views from Detroit Audubon

be sure to frequently visit our website:

[detroitaudubon.org](http://detroitaudubon.org)

### DAS Board of Directors

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DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY



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To find out about workplace giving, e-mail John Makris at [detas@bignet.net](mailto:detas@bignet.net)

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

### **New DAS Office**

We completed the move of the DAS office to Southfield in August. In an effort to contain costs and to be in an area where we can be involved with a new Southfield nature center, we settled into a small area of the Burgh Historical Park. Our office manager, Beverly Stephenson, has adjusted to the new office and the Board of Directors held the September meeting there so all members could see the new space. The mailing committee sent out the fall *Flyway* the first week we were there.

We have less space for the bookstore but we will continue to have a small selection of books for sale. Beverly will be happy to order a book for you. You can reach us at:

DAS  
26080 Berg Rd.  
Southfield, MI. 48033  
Phone: 248 354-4960

### **Board of Directors Election**

Each year, a new class of the DAS Board of directors is elected. There are eight positions for each 3 year class. At this time, there are only four members in the 2007 class. The DAS Board of Directors is a working board with several committees functioning to further the goals of the Society. We need new members to work on those committees which control financial business, environmental activities, field trips, annual meetings and special projects, public relations, membership and several others. We not only need people with expertise in these areas but we need people willing to take responsibility for these areas to help the Society progress and grow. We especially need members with knowledge in development, fund raising and grant writing.

Please consider adding your name to the Detroit Audubon Society Board of Directors and using your skills and talents for this worthy organization. We can offer you satisfaction for a job well done. Fill out the Board Election form and put your name and information in the section "I am interested in joining the Board." We will contact you.

### **Annual Appeal to the Members**

In order to accomplish our goals of promoting bird conservation and study, fighting for environmental quality and keeping our members informed, the Detroit Audubon Society is currently working on a budget of over \$60,000. As noted above, the move to Southfield has allowed us to reduce the amount of money we spend for office and meeting space. We have been receiving a "safety net" amount from National Audubon based on our large membership of over 5,000. We have had some small grants to help with special projects and have collaborated with other organizations to share costs, but we rely heavily on member contributions for most of our budget.

I hope you will consider giving an end-of-the-year gift to Detroit Audubon. Your gift is 100% tax deductible and will be used for our programs described here and on our website. Use the Annual Appeal form to contribute your year-end donation to The Detroit Audubon Society.

### **Give a Membership**

By growing our membership we can increase our influence and mobilize our efforts to reach our goals. By giving a membership to a family member or friend, you will help us do just that. With a membership of over 5,000 we are one of the largest environmental groups in the state. By

increasing our membership by 10% a year we could begin to dramatically change environmental policy and the conservation movement in Michigan. Put your gift membership information on the Membership Form and mail it in. We will send a gift notification in your name.

## **SAFE PASSAGE ENDORSEMENT**

Project Safe Passage Great Lakes has received the endorsement of both the Southeast Michigan Group and the State Chapter of the Sierra Club. They noted in their decision that Safe Passage complements their efforts on behalf of the Sierra Club's Cool Cities Program, which exemplifies the concept of Think Globally, Act Locally. The Cool Cities program is an effort to address the problem of global warming one city at a time. Local committees are working to urge their cities to:

1. Join the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement to reduce global warming pollution. At this writing, 358 mayors representing 55 million people have signed the agreement.
2. Green their city's vehicle fleets with hybrid and other cleaner cars.
3. Modernize city buildings with money-saving energy efficiency technology.
4. Invest in clean and safe renewable energy.

Detroit Audubon and Michigan Audubon welcome the support of the Sierra Club in our efforts to make cities safer for the night-migrating birds that pass over them every spring and fall.

## DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

### **NEW - Belle Isle Nature Zoo**

November 10, 2007 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m.  
Sponsored by Detroit Audubon Society  
Waterfowl I.D. Workshop

### **Belle Isle, Detroit**

November 17, 2007 (Saturday) 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. **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 7-9, 2007 (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 that lead 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, Harlequin Duck, Purple Sandpiper, California Gull, Kittiwake, Little Gull, Mew Gull, Snowy Owl, Rufous Hummingbird and Golden-crowned Sparrow. **Meet at the Detroit Audubon Office, 26080 Berg Rd., Southfield, at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, December 2nd. Returning Sunday December 4th at approximately 9 p.m. Transportation and 2 nights lodging will be provided. You are on your own for food. Cost: \$325; \$75 deposit. Single room supplement \$425.**

### **Detroit Christmas Bird Count**

December 16, 2007 (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) 354-4960 for details.

### **Rockwood Christmas Bird Count**

December 22, 2007 (Saturday) 9:00 am-11:00 am  
Detroit Audubon Society and the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy co-sponsor this annual count. 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 at (313) 928-2950 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 chili lunch and chili dinner will be provided. There is a \$5 fee if you want your name listed in the official report.

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

January 19, 2008 (Saturday) 8:00 a.m.  
Leader: Mike Mencotti  
Lake Erie Metro Park is simply the best single location to bird in winter in Michigan. There should be thousands of ducks off shore and the woods in the park typically host in winter a number of species that are difficult to find elsewhere in Michigan such as Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Fox Sparrow. There is always a chance for Long-eared or Saw-whet Owls at this location in winter. **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.**

### **Belle Isle**

February 9, 2008 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m.  
Leaders: Steve Santner and Fred Charbonneau  
The Detroit River is one of the key wintering areas for waterfowl in North America and Belle Isle is a very convenient location to take this in without having to go too far from your vehicle. **Meet at the Nature Center parking lot on Belle Isle.**

### **Humbug Marsh**

February 16, 2008 (Saturday) 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.  
Leader: Jim Bull  
See this natural gem of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge in winter. There should be good numbers of waterfowl in the area plus a good assortment of wintering land birds. **Take I-75 to Gibraltar Road. Go east toward Gibraltar, turn left on Jefferson and park in the lot off of Jefferson.**

## FEATHERED TALES



By Bev Stevenson

In late August, **Donna Derwich** saw a white/blond sparrow among a group of regular ones in her Lincoln Park back yard.

Around the same time in late August, **Janet Townley** also spotted a white sparrow with other normal ones in Ferndale.

There was a Bald Eagle soaring around 22 Mile Rd. in Macomb.

**Marge Stetten** has been watching a pair of Carolina Wrens since the beginning of August. She is hoping that they will make it through the winter.

## 2007 ANNUAL APPEAL

### A letter to the members of the Detroit Audubon Society

The budget depends on DAS receiving funding well beyond the income we receive from memberships, bookstore sales and a few other sources of income. To accomplish the goals of the Society, the budget calls for \$60,000 in income. We projected raising about \$30,000 to meet that target. In recent years we have been running a deficit and have used cash reserves to supplement expenses.

You can help raise that amount with your end-of-year gift to Detroit Audubon. We have taken steps to reduce our expenses and have improved our financial controls. At the same time we have added more programs to our list. The budget this year provides funding for our Safe Passage project and the Important Bird Area program. Both of these are collaborations with the Michigan Audubon Society to make them state-wide in scope.

You can help us meet our goal of raising \$30,000 with your gift. The Safe Passage project will require over \$5,000 per year and we are obligated to provide at least \$4,000 a year for the IBA program. The FLYWAY printing and mailing costs about \$12,000 a year and the salary and taxes for our office manager is about \$18,000. Our Annual Conference has been costing over \$5,000 a year.

The bottom line is that we are not meeting our costs with regular income and we are relying on our members to help us balance our budget this year. You can help with your gift. Please consider giving to DAS. Your gift is fully tax deductible.

Thank you for helping.

Richard R. Quick  
President

### Detroit Audubon Society Annual Appeal

*I want to help protect birds and their habitat in Michigan*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to Detroit Audubon Society**

My gift amount: \_\_\_\$500 \_\_\_\$100 \_\_\_\$50 \_\_\_\$25 Other: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Payment method: \_\_\_Check \_\_\_Visa \_\_\_Master Card

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail this form to:** Detroit Audubon Society, 26080 Berg Rd., Southfield, MI 48033

**- DAS is a non-profit tax deductible organization -**

### 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.

## UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL: MID-OCTOBER AT "EH"

by Leonard Weber, October 2007

"EH" is my shorthand for Eliza Howell Park in northwest Detroit. I go birding at Eliza Howell all year long and each month has its own characteristics and special features. Mid-October is one of my favorite times.

In a typical walk in the park in mid-October, I usually see 25 to 30 different species. But it is not the number of species that makes mid-October so fascinating; it is the unique combination of species, the number of individual birds, and the opportunity to watch their foraging. I spend much, really most, of my time just standing and watching. A route that takes me, walking and stopping, about 1 1/2 hours much of the year takes me about 3 hours in mid-October.

This is when I see the first dark-eyed juncos of the year, flashing the white outer tail feathers as they fly up from the ground. It is always exciting to see these "snowbirds" arrive from the north, promising a striking avian presence when the weather turns really cold.

This is the time of the year when bird watching means looking down more than looking up. Among the ground feeders are flocks of white-throated sparrows and flocks of white-crowned sparrows. Unlike the juncos, these birds, so abundant now, will be gone in a few weeks, continuing their migration south (though a few white-throated sparrows may linger through the winter).

Mid-October is the season of "crowns." In addition to white-crowned sparrows, I see ruby-crowned kinglets, golden-crowned kinglets, and orange-crowned warblers. Names can be misleading, however. While adult white-crowned sparrows are clearly that, immatures of the species, which make up a significant portion of any flock at this time of the year, have sort of a rusty crown. The crown of the golden-

crowned kinglet is always noticeable, but the ruby crown of the other kinglet is often not visible at all. And I have never seen a crown of any sort on the head of the orange-crowned warbler. The kinglets, tiny and frenetic, are also just migrating through, captivating and unforgettable.

Some bird names are absolutely right. A few minutes after watching a fox sparrow recently, I saw a red fox. The reddish hue was very similar. The yellow-rumped warbler is also accurately named, though the name doesn't ring poetic.

Most species of warblers that migrate through SE Michigan have moved further south by mid-October. But the yellow-rumped warbler is now present in great numbers and the individuals of this one species probably outnumber the individuals of all the 20 or so other warbler species that visit EH earlier in the Fall. At least that seems to be the case, as 10 - 12 yellow-rumps flit around in one location after another. Like many other warblers in the Fall, they do not now have the same bright breeding plumage that they do in the Spring. Because many Fall warblers are more drab and do not look like the breeding male that we usually think of first when we hear a bird's name, I used to think that Fall migration was not as exciting as spring migration. I no longer think that. Fall warblers, especially when seen up close, are also quite attractive.

The yellow-rumped and the orange-crowned are the only two warblers I normally see at Eliza Howell at this late date. The orange-crowned is quite plain all year long. At this time of the year, it tends to be pretty tame as it forages on weeds and in shrubs close to the ground. And when birds are seen "up close and personal," their behavior is more fascinating than their looks, at least to me.

Sometimes the "up close and personal" observation is of attractive and uncommon birds. This year, for example, a small flock of purple finches spent some time at Eliza Howell. I usually see purple finches only about once a year, just one or two at a time, usually from quite a distance. This

flock of 8-10 was foraging in weeds and shrubs close to the path and not at all quick to move on to a new location. I was able to observe the variation in appearance between different females as well as between different males. I understand now why it is called a "purple" finch, while previously I had thought of the male as red. A lovely bird and a lovely bird-watching opportunity.

Migration is regular; the same kinds of birds return at about the same time each year. Based on migration records, I sometimes go to EH with the hope of seeing a particular species. In mid-October, I usually think of looking for a fox sparrow, a hermit thrush, or a purple finch, species that migrate pretty late. It is satisfying to find them, just as I had hoped.

I sometimes forget other late migrants, however. I find myself surprised to see an Eastern phoebe at this time, when I should not be surprised. Somehow, I don't expect to see members of the flycatcher family around on frosty mornings, even though phoebes are around at this time every year. One of the good things about birding Eliza Howell in mid-October is that flying insects aren't in my face like they were during the summer and through September. But they are obviously still plentiful enough for some phoebes.

Not all the up close and personal birds are migrants. Permanent residents like cardinals and black-capped chickadees are also now very much in evidence. Their presence, like that of the juncos, serves to remind me that, while many of the birds I am now watching will disappear from Eliza Howell until the spring, some good birding opportunities will continue when the transients move on.

### BOOKSTORE BITS

by Bev Stevenson

Christmas is just around the corner. Give someone a birding head start with a field guide to identify and learn the habits of the birds they can see in our area.



# GIVE A DAS MEMBERSHIP

The end-of-year holiday season is a good time to give Detroit Audubon memberships to family and friends. A DAS membership tells the new member you care about birds and their habitat and that you want to preserve the environment needed to maintain bird populations.

Basic DAS only membership includes the *FLYWAY* four times a year and e-mail notifications of DAS events, activities and alerts to environmental issues. The combined membership includes the DAS basic, a membership to the National Audubon Society and a subscription to *AUDUBON* magazine which is published 6 times a year.

Detroit Audubon benefits with either membership through increased membership and funding for our programs. Please consider giving a gift membership this holiday season.

Use the **DAS Gift Membership Form** below and send it in soon!

## DAS Gift Membership Form

Give a gift membership to the Detroit Audubon Society, one of the leading environmental organizations in Michigan. Help us continue our vital role in protecting birds and their habitat.

### *I would like to give a membership:*

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Please send a membership to:*

Recipient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Chapter Member Only Dues

\$15.00  (includes *FLYWAY* 4 times a year)

### National Member Dues

\$20.00  (includes *FLYWAY* and *AUDUBON* Magazine)

Additional Gift Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

This membership is  New  Renewal

Make your check payable to: Detroit Audubon Society

Payment method  Check  Visa  MasterCard

Credit Card No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like information on volunteering:**  Yes  No

## 2007 Board of Directors Election Form

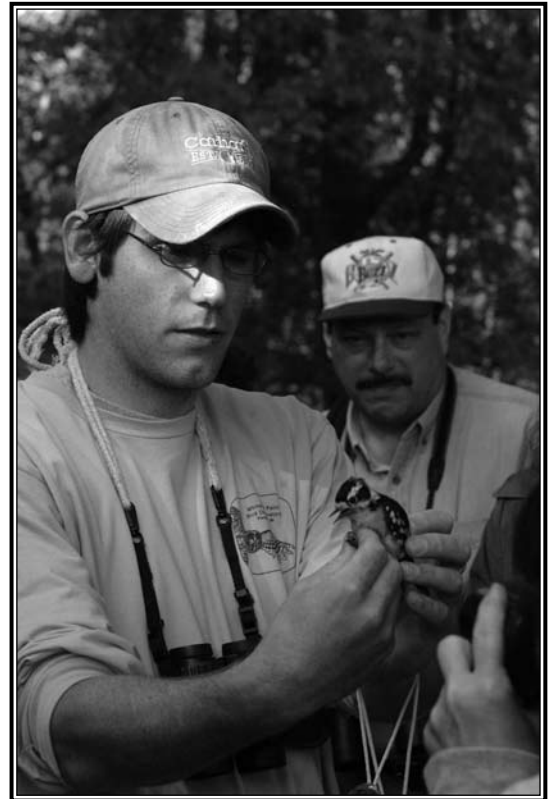
There are currently four members in the class of 2007. Each of them is running for re-election as the class of 2010. Each class has a maximum of eight members. All members of The Detroit Audubon Society are eligible to be members of the Board of Directors.

Class of 2010 Candidates:

Rosemarie Attilio       Rosemarie Fielding  
 Andy Howell             Gene Perrin

If you would like to be considered for the Board of Directors, please enter your name and address below. We will contact you to arrange a follow up.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address: \_\_\_\_\_



Greg Norwood shows a banded Downy Woodpecker at the Dearborn Nature Center trip  
- Photo by Rosemarie Attilio

# MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

## January 18-21, 2008

### Come Celebrate Our 12th Annual Festival

MORRO BAY, CALIFORNIA – Come to where the birds are and join Morro Coast Audubon Society (MCAS) for our 12th Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival. Located on California's scenic Central Coast, Morro Bay is an important stop on the Pacific Flyway and one of the country's pre-eminent birding spots. The area is recognized worldwide for its diversity of both resident and wintering birds, and at last year's festival, over 200 species of birds were identified!

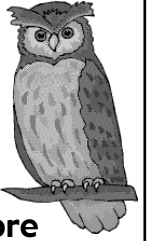
The Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival is sponsored by MCAS and gives you the chance to join local and national birding experts on a variety of field trips and workshops. Field trip group sizes are limited to maximize spotting and identification opportunities. The Festival also offers workshops aimed at sharpening your birding skills, as well as evening programs with outstanding speakers.

For more information about the Festival, check out our website at [www.morrobaybirdfestival.org](http://www.morrobaybirdfestival.org), or call (805) 772-4677. You can request that your name be added to the mailing list for our 2008 brochure, or register online. Both the brochure and online registration will be available in October 2007. The registration deadline is January 4, 2008 and early signups are encouraged as the most popular events fill up quickly.

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[www.adraycamera.com](http://www.adraycamera.com)

# ADRAY Camera

2 Michigan  
locations . . .

**Dearborn** 20219 Carlisle • 313-274-9500  
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## DAS WISH LIST

### *Gently used birding field guides*

Provide a new birder the opportunity to develop the passion for birding that sustains many of us. We encourage you to donate your gently used birding field guides. We can arrange pick up of donated items and provide you an acknowledgement of your tax deductible donation.



*Detroit Audubon Society*  
26080 Berg Rd  
Southfield, MI 48033