

Appendix A - Letter to USFWS from the Metro Detroit Nature Network

Metro Detroit Nature Network

13 March 2017

██████████ National Coordinator
Urban Bird Treaty Program
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Dear ██████████

On behalf of the Metro Detroit Nature Network, we are pleased to nominate Metropolitan Detroit as an Urban Bird Treaty City. As required, attached please find a copy of our Urban Bird Treaty Action Plan.

There are over 350 species of birds that are regularly observed and recorded in Metropolitan Detroit area. Key avian attributes of our metropolitan region include:

- It is situated at the intersection of the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways;
- Over 350 species of birds have been identified in the corridor;
- 30 species of waterfowl have been documented using the corridor;
- More than 300,000 diving ducks use the lower Detroit River as stopover habitat during migration;
- The lower Detroit River is one of the three best places to watch raptor migrations in the U.S., with 23 species of raptors migrating across the river;
- Pointe Mouillee, Erie Marsh, and St. Clair Flats, one of the largest freshwater deltas in the world, are important stopover points for feeding for migratory shore birds during fall migration;
- The corridor has four “Important Bird Areas” designated by National Audubon Society;
- In 2011, Ducks Unlimited identified Metropolitan Detroit as one of the top ten metropolitan areas for waterfowl hunting in the U.S.;
- Detroit River and western Lake Erie offer exceptional birding opportunities – a ByWays to FlyWays Bird Driving Tour features 27 unique birding sites in southwest Ontario and southeast Michigan;
- This corridor has been recognized for its biodiversity in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network, and the Biodiversity Investment Area Program of Environment Canada and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency;
- Humbug Marsh in Trenton and Gibraltar, Michigan has been identified as a “Wetlands of International Importance” under the International Ramsar Convention;
- The Detroit River and western Lake Erie are part of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, the only international wildlife refuge in North America;
- The Detroit River is the first river in North America to receive both American Heritage River and Canadian Heritage River designations; and

- There are many important upland sites for neo-tropical migratory songbirds during spring and fall migration.

As noted in our Bird Agenda, one key goal is to identify high priority actions and “next steps” that can be taken over the next five years to move forward on this important conservation issue. It is not feasible to move forward on all next steps due to resource limitations and time constraints. Therefore, the following actions are identified as high priorities over the next five years:

Habitat loss and fragmentation:

- Recruiting new partners to the Metro Detroit Nature Network that will participate in the Urban Bird Treaty as described in this document
- Expand cooperative programs for bird habitat conservation (e.g., creating more stop over habitat and wildlife corridors, expanding corporate wildlife habitat programs like Wildlife Habitat Council)
- Supporting and expanding green infrastructure programs
- Expanding school yard and backyard habitat projects

Hazard Reduction:

- Expand Safe Passage
- Promote Bird Friendly Bird Design including offering training for architects on bird friendly design
- Coordinate the timing of construction and re-vegetation projects (e.g., mowing schedules, etc.)

Citizen Science Programs:

- Compile long-term, citizen science, trend data on peregrine falcon and osprey in southeast Michigan and broadly disseminate this information to show the value and benefit of such programs
- Expand peregrine falcon and osprey monitoring through citizen science to ensure long-term sustainability of these programs
- Expand black tern and grassland bird monitoring programs under the leadership of Detroit Audubon
- Expanding participation in Christmas Bird Counts
- Expanding backyard feeder watch program
- Expanding monitoring under the Safe Passage Program

To help recruit new partners and volunteers for this important bird conservation work the Metro Detroit Nature Network will convene an Urban Bird Summit within one year. This Urban Bird Summit will review progress on key issues, recruit new partners, and to help identify and seek small grant funding to support the above projects. This important Bird Agenda work will also be helpful in addressing the Metro Detroit Nature Network and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s

Urban Wildlife Conservation Program goals of developing develop the next generation of conservationists in urban areas because that is now where 80% of all U.S. citizens live.

Thank you for your consideration. Please don't hesitate to contact us with question.

Sincerely,

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