



***NEWS RELEASE – 5 September 2017***

## **Detroit River Hawk Watch Celebrates 35 Years of Hawk Monitoring**

Grosse Ile, MI. On 2 September 2017, at the Boat Launch of Lake Erie Metropark, the Detroit River Hawk Watch (DRHW) will begin its 35<sup>th</sup> year of monitoring the annual migration of raptors as they begin their long journey to wintering grounds in the southern United States and Mexico. Upwards of 250,000 Broad-winged Hawks, Turkey Vultures, Red-tailed Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and even Golden Eagles will funnel southward from Canada and fly over the hawk watch site during their non-stop migration.

This year DRHW welcomes Kevin Georg as their primary hawk counter. Kevin comes to us with over three decades of hawk watching experience and will lead a team of die-hard volunteers who will assist him in scanning the skies over Lake Erie and Canada, looking for rising kettles of Broad-winged Hawks and Turkey Vultures, that will drift along the Lake Erie shoreline until they stream across the narrowest waters that separate the United States from Canada. Lake Erie Metropark is an ideal location for one of North America's largest hawk migrations as raptors of many species do not have to expend as much energy flapping their wings when crossing open waters. Warm air rises and forms "thermals" that buoy raptors as they cross open land, but these thermals disappear over open water.

September is a particularly exciting month for hawk migration as Broad-winged Hawks fly over the hawk watch site by the thousands. On 17 Sept 1999 over 540,000 Broad-winged Hawks were counted in a single day! This year the 28<sup>th</sup> annual HawkFest , sponsored by the Huron Clinton Metroparks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, and the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance, will be held on 16–17 September 2017 to coincide with the peak of the Broad-winged migration. Food, games, crafts and birds of prey will be on hand to celebrate one of Nature's great spectacles. The DRHW is open to the public and visitors are encouraged to come down daily between September 1st and November 31st. A Metroparks vehicle entry permit is required to enter any Metropark and is only \$35 annually for regular admission, \$21 annually for seniors or \$10 daily.

DRHW is the premier citizen science initiative of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. It is a partnership among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Refuge's Friends Organization called the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance, Huron Clinton Metroparks, and the Detroit River Hawk Watch Advisory Committee. Raptor count data are entered into a North American database managed by the Hawk Migration Association of North America. More information on DRHW is available online at: <http://www.drhawkwatch.org/>.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is proud to be the only international refuge in North America and one of only 14 priority urban refuges in the nation charged with bringing conservation to cities. It covers 48 miles of shoreline along the lower Detroit River and western basin of Lake Erie -- stretching from southwest Detroit to the Ohio-Michigan border. The Refuge focuses on conserving, protecting and restoring habitat for 300 species of birds and 117 species of fish. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service currently owns or cooperatively manages 6,202 acres of unique habitats and partners with other organizations like Michigan Department of Natural Resource and Essex Region Conservation Authority and the City of Windsor in Ontario to cooperatively manage other lands. In total, over 18,700 acres of land in southwest Ontario and southeast Michigan are now being cooperatively managed for conservation and outdoor recreation for nearly seven million people living in a 45-minute drive. More information can be found at: [www.fws.gov/refuge/detroit\\_river/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/detroit_river/).

For more information, contact Jerry Jourdan of the Detroit River Hawk Watch Advisory Committee ([jourdaj@gmail.com](mailto:jourdaj@gmail.com)) or Steve Dushane of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge ([steve\\_dushane@fws.gov](mailto:steve_dushane@fws.gov); 734.692.6704).

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