



The MI Marsh Chatter



Michigan Ducks Unlimited Newsletter

3rd Quarter - Fall 2021

Ducks Unlimited conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.

A Word From Our Chairman

Tracy Oberleiter: 2021 - 2022 State Chairman

Activities and events for Ducks Unlimited continue to increase here in our state as we continue to bring back many of our in person events and offer virtual opportunities to



support our organization. We are finding that our supporters can't wait to be able to join all their friends and family and come to our in person banquets and events. Some of our chapters that have been required to postpone their spring of 2020 events have successfully rescheduled for this fall and are finding great success with attendance and financial results.

During the covid pandemic we have also learned that we have many supporters in our state that enjoy participating in our virtual auctions and raffles offered by chapters in other communities. This support has made a significant contribution to Ducks Unlimited and has allowed us the opportunity to continue making great advances with our wetland conservation projects. Going forward we will be offering these opportunities as they become available by our chapters and state organization.

As I previously mentioned we are back to work offering a wide variety of fundraising opportunities including banquets, golf outings, shooting competitions, gun frenzies and many more fun and entertaining opportunities to support our mission of wetland conservation. I really believe we offer something for everybody and you can find what tickles your fancy by visiting our events webpage at www.ducks.org/michigan/events.

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Our encouragement and support of our volunteers is also critical to the success of our organization as we move forward. We have over 1600 volunteers operating nearly 100 chapters here in our State of Michigan. As such we also held a very successful Volunteer Leadership Day of training and using best practices for fundraising events in Mt. Pleasant this past July. You will find more information about our Leadership Day later on in our newsletter.

We are looking forward to having our volunteers and members joining us at our upcoming State Convention which will be held at the Park Place Hotel in Traverse City on January 28th -29th 2022. Keep a look-out for more information coming soon.

We are always looking for a few more volunteers that can give us what they have to offer. Some of our people work just on the day of our events and others have more time to give and provide more support. Whatever time you have would be greatly appreciated and you can get started by calling Michael Trombley our State Volunteer Recruitment Chairman at 989-860-2143.

Also, some great news to share with you, Michigan was recognized recently at the National Convention as the #1 State in the Nation on Feather Society member recruitment. Find out how you can also become a Feather Society member by calling David Steinbach our Major Donor Chairman at 734-474-3241. Congratulations to David on a job well done!

Well, enough now from your State Chairman...please enjoy all the great information and chapter activities shared in this fall's Marsh Chatter.



RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS!

WHAT DO DUCKS UNLIMITED VOLUNTEERS DO...  



WE CONSERVE **WE RESTORE**

WE EDUCATE **WE HAVE FUN**

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BEING A
DUCKS UNLIMITED VOLUNTEER VISIT WWW.DUCKS.ORG



Pointe Mouillee State Game Area Restoration and Hunter Access

By Kali Rush



DU recently completed construction at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area (PMSGGA) - Cripple Point. The objective is to provide optimal coastal emergent wetland habitat to benefit wetland-dependent wildlife and aquatic organisms. The 4,000-acre Pointe Mouillee State Game Area is located along southwest Lake Erie within one of the most productive waterfowl use and fish spawning grounds in the Midwest. The majority of the coastal wetland habitat at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area is managed in separate units using a combination of dikes, water level control structures, and pumps. Unfortunately, the wetland management infrastructure for the 28-acre Cripple Point Unit was installed many decades ago and has far exceeded its life expectancy. DU and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) developed a plan to restore the unit by rehabilitating approximately 0.5 miles of dilapidated dikes and installing two water level control structures and a pump ramp. This project improved water level management capabilities, increased the productivity of valuable coastal hemi-marsh conditions, improved waterfowl migration and nesting habitat, and offered better control of invasive plant species. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Sustain Our Great Lakes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Coastal Program Great Lakes, the Pointe Mouillee Waterfowlers Festival, Southwest Lake Erie Chapter of Waterfowl USA, Gibraltar Duck Hunters, and DU provided project funding.

The MDNR is dedicated to conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and habitats. In addition, MDNR is responsible for managing the PMSGGA. Based on their master plan, the managers' goal is to manage the Pointe Mouillee marshes' hydrology (e.g., Bad Creek, Cripple Point, and Pointe Sec wetland units). DU was awarded a grant for engineering services to perform a topographic survey, restoration design plans, and complete construction management for the last unit within the complex, the

Pointe Sec Unit. Additional support was received from Gibraltar Duck Hunters Association, Pointe Mouillee Waterfowl Festival, Waterfowl USA Southwestern Lake Erie Chapter, and local Audubon clubs. After completing this project, MDNR will have three independently managed wetlands totaling a 122-acre complex of emergent coastal/moist soil management wetlands on the Humphries Unit's west side.

DU was presented with an opportunity to contribute to constructing a new ADA blind at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, in partnership with Michigan DNR and Pointe Mouillee Waterfowl Festival. "Nelson's Nest" provides a waterfowl hunting blind and observation platform designed for accessibility. DU is one of several local supporters for this project, including Blaze Contracting, Inc., Waterfowl USA, Passing Along The Heritage "PATH", Walbridge, Gibraltar Duck Hunters Association, Industrial Fence Co., Mid-American Group, Casadei Steel Inc., Roman Stone Works, Inc., and Krzyske Bros. Co.



Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge – Ferguson Bayou

By Kali Rush

The Shiawassee Flats is a 40,000-acre floodplain basin formed at the confluence of the Bad, Cass, Flint, Shiawassee, and Tittabawassee Rivers. Historically, the Flats were a diverse complex of emergent, submergent, scrub-shrub, and bottomland forested floodplain wetlands. Today, intensive farming dominates much of the region and the upper part of the watershed. However, the remaining habitat in the Shiawassee Flats provides many ecological and socioeconomic benefits, including



Regional Biologist
Kali Rush

habitat for wetland-dependent fish and wildlife, flood storage and attenuation, water quality improvement, and opportunity for outdoor recreation and education.

Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge and Ducks Unlimited have been at the forefront of an emerging paradigm shift to reconnect restored wetlands to their floodplain by prioritizing the hydrologic connections that allow for natural water fluctuations. With the recent restoration of Maankiki Marsh as a foundation, the opportunity to restore 940 acres of habitat evolved into the opportunity to ultimately establish water management resources with long-term benefits that work in concert with the river system throughout the Shiawassee Flats. The purpose of the partnership's newest cooperative effort is to provide construction management services to install multiple water control structures and excavate the Maankiki-Ferguson connection ditch and Ferguson-Spaulling connection ditch. The overarching goal of this project is to enhance wetland habitat and construct protection infrastructure at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge.



The Ferguson Bayou Hydrologic Reconnection project will reconnect more than 800 acres of floodplain forest to the river system and other wetland units. DU's Engineering Services team has two additional reconnection projects in the queue. First, DU is currently designing restoration plans for Moist Soil Unit 9. The scope of this project is to enhance nearly 100 acres of the floodplain system. Next, DU is planning to perform a topographic survey at the Little Prairie West Unit in 2022. We expect to complete construction for both units in 2023.



Across the State by Date



Michigan Ducks Unlimited Gun Frenzy – June 12th

Michigan Ducks Unlimited hosted a very successful virtual Gun Frenzy on June 12th offering a combination of 50 guns, YETI Coolers and cash prizes.



The Gun Frenzy was held at the conclusion of a very successful in person event held by the Monroe Chapter. We discovered that combining the two events made it possible for all supporters whether in person or at home to join in on the fun.

Paw Paw Chapter event – June 24th

The Paw Paw chapter held another outstanding sold out banquet on June 24th. There was not an empty seat in the hall and everyone enjoyed a great evening of fund raising for the ducks. The second picture is of the long standing Paw Paw Chapter committee.



Leadership Conference – July 24th

By Tracy Oberleiter

On Saturday, July 24th, we held a very successful Leadership Day that included some great information for our chapters to bring home and try out at their next event and many enjoyed an afternoon of sporting clays to finish up the day. The event was well attended and we all received updates from David Bowers on Public Policy activities, Kali Rush on conservation advances here in Michigan.



Our Regional Directors, Craig Curtis, Martin Anderson and Kevin Stoltz gave great tips on blending virtual events with in person events and the great news of many chapters planning in person events. Dave Perry and Max Leyman shared some ideas on new games to try out and tips on getting your chapters ready to launch events.



We also had a great discussion on the importance of recruiting and retaining new committee members in your chapters and discovered some new techniques from those in attendance. Also big news to announce is Michael Trombley from our Saginaw Bay chapter has stepped up and is taking on the position as State Volunteer Recruitment Chairman and is looking forward to working with all our chapters. BRAVO to Mike.

Tim Bliss brought all 14 of this year's Sponsor Print Artwork contest entries and we all voted to select this year's winner. Congratulations goes out to Buck Spencer from Junction City, Oregon for his amazing entry of a pair of

Buffleheads. We also voted and selected next year's species which will be Old Squaw (Long-tailed duck) and Greater Scaup (Bluebill). Great job Tim.



Congratulations goes out to Rich Jess from the Red Cedar Chapter with winning \$1500 in DU merchandise for their next event and David Smrchek from the Rogers City chapter winning the DU Shotgun of the Year for their next event. Also winning nice items was Ed Berry from the Greater Grand Rapids chapter winning the YETI cooler, Tim Bliss winning the Smith & Wesson gmm Shield pistol and Mike Trombley

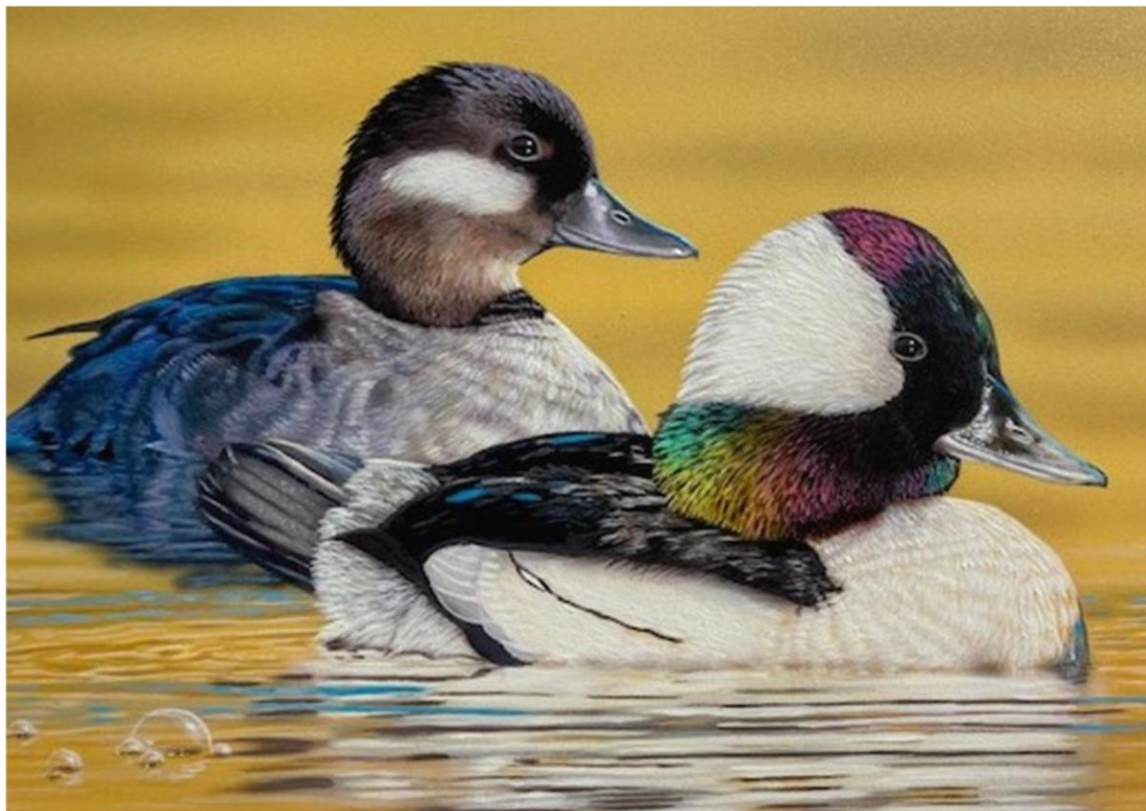
the lucky guy that he is with winning the Big L Lumber donated Weatherby Shotgun. Thanks goes out to Big L Lumber and the RD's for making these great prizes available to those chapters that attended. I sincerely appreciate all that attended this year's event and look forward to even more attending next year's.



A shout out goes to all those that made this event the success that it was....Erin Wilson for invitation poster design, Michael Trombley for registration, Tim Bliss for art contest entries and voting, David Bowers for Public Policy update, Kali Rush for conservation update, Dave Perry as our Master of Ceremonies, Max Lehman and Big L Lumber for donating the Weatherby Shotgun given away, bringing all the drinks & snacks and

pass out copies, Ken Top our caterer, Our RD's Craig, Martin and Kevin for all their assistance and presentations. Hopefully I didn't miss anyone and if I did, thanks to you as well. The message here folks is it takes a DU Team to make an event like this to turn out to be a success. I'm proud to be part of that team.

Michigan Ducks Unlimited 2022 Sponsor Print Art Winner – July 24th



The winner of the 2022 artist contest to select the Michigan Sponsor Print is **Buck Spencer** from Junction City, Oregon with this pair of Buffleheads.

His winning artwork will be the featured Buffleheads on our 2022 Michigan Sponsor Prints.

Sturgeon River Slough Project Dedication – August 7th

Michigan Ducks Unlimited hosted the Sturgeon River Sloughs Project Dedication on August 27th that included on the bronze dedication plaque the names of every major donor that lives in the Upper Peninsula as well as many across the state. This wetland project improved 950 acres of emergent marsh in the Sturgeon River Sloughs State Management Area.



Pictured below is Tracy Oberleiter, Michigan State Chairman and Paul Zombory from Northville. Paul is pointing to his inscribed name as a Major Donor on the plaque.



The Sturgeon River Slough Project was dedicated to the lifelong work of Major Donor Walter Kuntze and his wife Joanne. (shown above)

Curtis Chapter Event – August 7th



The Curtis Chapter was one of the earlier chapters to offer in person events coming out of the Covid 19 Pandemic. The Curtis Banquet held on August 7th was a sell out with most everybody from town attending.

Duck & Goose Calling – September 18th

Michigan Ducks Unlimited hosted a Duck & Goose Calling Contest at the Pte. Mouillee Waterfowl Festival on Sept. 25th. Dave Perry emceed the contest, and judges were from both DU and the Pte. Mouillee Waterfowl festival.



Monroe Chapter Banquet – September 25th

The Monroe Chapter held a very successful fall banquet on September 25th. Eight hundred people attended the banquet and enjoyed an evening of conservation fundraising. Pictured here are chapter volunteers Troy Goodnough and David Thompson assisting auctioneer Jim Alban sell a ride for six on the infamous Sherp all terrain vehicle.



Ferris State University – October 5th

Great night at Ferris State University where Craig Curtis has been hard at work establishing a new college DU Chapter. They had a great turn out for the kickoff meeting and this group of young adults are going to be having a bunch of fun this year helping conserve more wetland habitats. Bravo to you Craig....Job Well Done!



Dave Steinbach Flies Michigan to New Heights – October 26th

DU National held their awards ceremony on Oct. 26th via a Zoom meeting. Congrats to Dave Steinbach for helping make Michigan DU, #1 for Feather Society pledges. Great job Dave!



CWAC Report Fall 2021



Dale Borske
CWAC Chair,
Former State Chair &
State Treasurer

Greetings fellow waterfowlers. As you read this we are well underway with our waterfowl season. I hope you are able to get out and enjoy the wetlands that you have supported over these years. I am reaching out to you before we have our next Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee meeting in January for any input you may have going forward. This coming year we will only be setting the waterfowl dates and the zones were set last year and will not come up again this year. Changes you are seeing for 2021 include a five goose harvest for the entire season, Saginaw Bay is now in the middle zone and our managed state game areas are now doing two daily draws again but they are outside of the buildings. If you are hunting Saginaw Bay this year please send me your thoughts on the move to the middle zone so we can review them at the meeting in January. Please send your comments and suggestions regarding waterfowl hunting to cruiseplanner1@chartermi.net with the subject titled CWAC. I look forward to hearing from you. – Dale Borske

Michigan DU Calendar Raffle

The Michigan Ducks Unlimited Raffle Calendars are on sale now. This year's calendar has the equivalent of 263 raffles all for only \$60. Supplies are limited, so be sure to get yours soon.

MICHIGAN DUCKS UNLIMITED 2022 CALENDAR RAFFLE

Featuring 248 guns
• handguns, shotguns, rifles •

Three Can-Am 450 ATVs to be given away!
Drawings on April 13, July 6 and December 21

One YETI cooler every month!

Benelli BERETTA
BROWNING RUGER
Remington WEATHERBY
and more!

\$60
per calendar

Raffle info,
raffle ticket and
DU membership
included

TOTAL RETAIL VALUE OF ALL PRIZES IS APPROXIMATELY \$150,000!

Recipes

DUCK PARMESAN by Dave Steinbach

Ingredients:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 4 Duck breasts | ½ cup grated Mozzarella cheese |
| ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese | 1 small jar pasta sauce |
| ½ cup seasoned bread crumbs | 1 small onion chopped |
| 2 Tbsp Flour | 2 roma Tomatoes diced |
| 1 egg | ¼ cup red wine. |
| 1 Tbsp milk | |
| ½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese | |



Directions:

- Place duck breasts between saran wrap & gently pound with a meat mallet (or wine bottle) to about ½ inch thick.
- Beat egg and milk together.
- Mix the grated Parmesan cheese, bread crumbs and flour in a bowl.
- Dip each breast in the egg wash then dredge in the bread crumb mix.
- Heat several tablespoons of olive oil in a heavy skillet
- Brown the duck breasts until golden brown, flip and brown the second side.
- Place duck breasts in a 9x13 glass dish.
- Add onions, tomatoes to the skillet and sauté until the onions are soft.
- Add wine and pasta sauce and stir until heated then remove from heat.
- Mix shredded parmesan and mozzarella cheese and top each breast with it.
- Pour sauce over the breasts.
- Bake at 350 uncovered until bubbling and the cheese is melted.
- Serve on a bed of spaghetti topped with more grated parmesan cheese.

DECOYSLAYER'S VENISON CHILI SOUP By Joe Marra

Ingredients:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • 1 lb stew meat | • 1 heaping tbs Better Than Bouillon Base |
| • 1, 28 oz can no salt crushed tomatoes | • 1 heaping teaspoon minced garlic |
| • 1, 10 oz can Rotel diced tomatoes with chilies. (No salt) | • A few light shakes Tabasco |
| • 1, 7 oz can dice green chilies | • A dash of black pepper |
| • 1, 14.4 oz can beef broth (reduced or no sodium) | • 1/2 large onion, diced |
| • 1 Cabernet Sauvignon (small bottle, comes in 4 packs) | • 2 poblano or Anaheim peppers, diced |
| | • A light sprinkle of chili powder (don't overdo, the peppers & onion are the stars of this soup) |

Directions:

Flash fry the venison stew meat, along with the minced garlic in a large pot. Add all the ingredients to the meat and simmer till done.

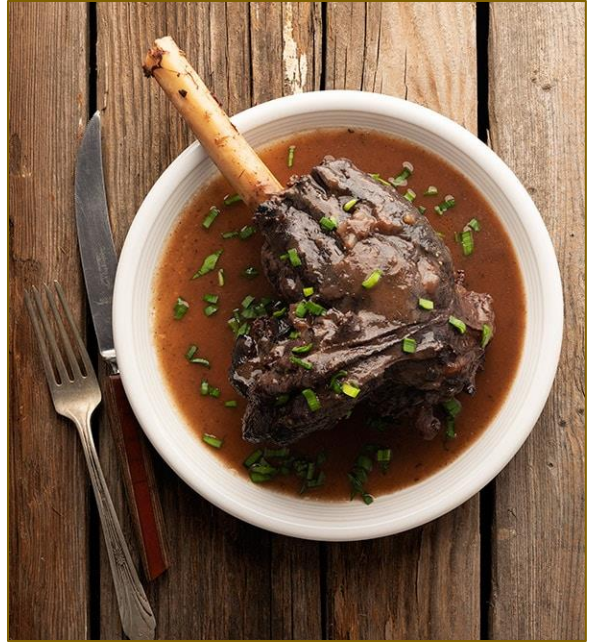
Portuguese Braised Venison Shanks by Dave Steinbach

Ingredients:

4 venison shanks or lamb shanks
1 tsp. black peppercorns 1 tsp. allspice berries
1 tsp. juniper berries 8 cloves
1 cinnamon stick 1 hot dried chile
2 bay leaves ¼ lb Thick cut bacon
1 Tbsp. olive oil 2 yellow onions diced
12 cloves of garlic chopped 1 bottle red wine
2 cups beef stock 2 Tbsp. molasses

Directions:

- Dust shanks with Salt and Pepper and set aside.
- In a shallow Dutch oven or pot, add spices/herbs to wine and molasses and heat to medium.
- Preheat the oven to 300°F.
- Pour olive oil into a frying pan set over medium heat and Brown cut up bacon.
- Add bacon to the wine pot keeping at a gentle simmer.
- Brown the shanks slowly on all sides except the one with the bone.
- Move the shanks to the wine pot, bone side sticking up.
- Add onions in the fry pan and turn the heat up to high. They will deglaze the pan.
- After about 5 minutes, add the garlic and toss to combine.
- Heat until onions and garlic begin to brown then cook another minute or two.
- Pour in the stock and mix it well with the onions. Bring to a furious boil scraping everything off the bottom of the pan.
- Add stock mix to the wine pot, and mix, make sure the shanks are still bone side up.
- Cover and cook in the oven for 3-4 hours.
- When the meat is almost falling off the bone, remove it gently and tent it with foil.
- Fish out the bay leaves, cinnamon stick and cloves, peppercorns, allspice and juniper berries.
- Puree the sauce with a stick blender. It should be thick.
- Pour over the shanks and serve at once with mashed root veggies and something green.



Partnerships Pay Off

By Joe Marra, Monroe Chapter Chairman

Ducks Unlimited is a very successful organization and has been so for a long time. One the biggest reasons we are such a success is our ability to “partner” with other similar organizations, industries, and government, to help advance the DU mission. A prime example of how partnerships work can be seen in southeastern Michigan. DU has been working with other local conservation partners here for a very long time.

One of those groups is the Pointe Mouillee Waterfowl Festival. The festival is the longest running event of its kind in Michigan. It started in 1948 and has run every year since, except for the “Covid Year” of 2020. The Monroe county chapter of Ducks Unlimited has become a permanent fixture at the Festival.



Monroe DU has been running the duck and goose calling competitions for the last three festivals. The long term goal is to make the Pointe Mouillee competitions the final for a state-wide championship. If you haven't been there yet, be sure to stop in next fall at the Pte. Mouillee Waterfowl Festival on Sept 17-18 '22!

At a Pointe Mouillee Waterfowl Festival committee meeting you will find many people who are also involved in other conservation groups. There are members of Ducks Unlimited, Gibraltar Duck Hunters, the Detroit River Refuge Alliance, and Waterfowl USA on the Festival committee. In fact, in our area, no matter what conservation organization committee meeting you go to, or event you attend, there are always members of other organizations there giving their support.



No project exemplifies the partnerships better than the new, ADA compliant blind, located in the “Nelson Unit” in the marsh at Pointe Mouillee. The unit, and the blind, known as “Nelson’s Nest,” is named for the family that once owned the farm that is now part of the project. The blind that was built by the Pte. Mouillee Waterfowl Festival and paid for mostly by sponsors, and partners, both from industry and other conservation groups, including the DNR and Ducks Unlimited. It was finished just in time for this year’s waterfowl season.

I had the opportunity to use this blind last week when I took some friends out for a hunt. I hunted with Bob Whitman, the executive director of the Pte. Mouillee Festival and his father Dick, a long time fixture at the Festival. Dick was the director for 17 years prior to his son taking over. Jeff Morse, another very good friend of mine, joined the crew. The blind made this hunt possible since neither Jeff nor Dick would have been able to get into the marsh at all due to their handicaps.



The Nelson’s Nest blind is a monument to the efforts, generosity, and hard work of many people, and a great example of how Ducks Unlimited and other conservation groups can succeed by working together.

Joe Marra, Jeff Morse, Dick Whitman & Bella



People to Know



Director Of Operations, Great Lakes Atlantic Region - JAMIE RADER



Jamie joined DU in 2010 as a regional biologist and a manager of conservation programs in 2015 where he helped grow, diversify and implement conservation programs on private and public lands throughout the region from Virginia to Florida.

In 2018, he became the Director of Conservation Programs where he oversaw all of DU's conservation efforts in the southeast area of the Southern Region.

In 2020, Jamie was promoted to his current position as Director of Operations for the Great Lakes/Atlantic Region.

Prior to joining DU, he was the State Waterfowl Coordinator and Upper Coastal Project Leader with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources where he managed three state wildlife management areas and provided technical assistance on waterfowl and wetland management issues to other managers and the general public.

Jamie has conducted research on avian species in the Chicago region as a USDA/WS biologist, endemic water birds in Hawai'i and waterfowl in the Prairie Pothole Region of North Dakota. He studied under Dr. Leigh Fredrickson and has extensive experience in wetland management issues. When not in the office, Jamie enjoys being outdoors in the garden, yard and field. He is married to Jennifer, a University of Michigan graduate, and has two great kids, Bea and Thatcher.



Be Part Of The Next Marsh Chatter

Hi Everyone,

You can be part of the next Marsh Chatter. For the newsletter I'm looking for:

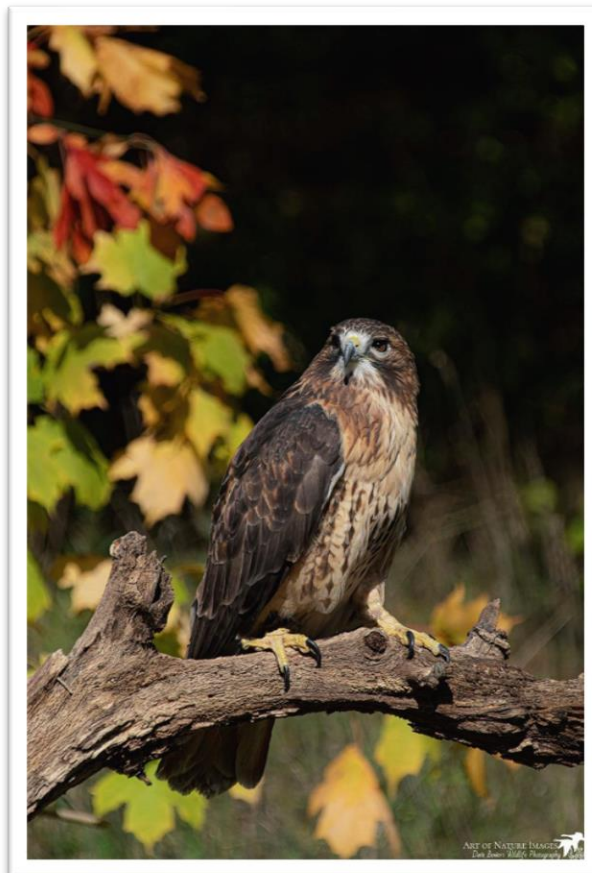
- Pictures: Events, Committee Activities & DU friends
- Pictures: Working dogs at their best, wildlife, stunning scenery and of course, ducks!
- Nominate someone for the "People to Know" spot.
- Recipes: Fish and Game
- Your stories: Hunting, fishing and DU!

Please send them to me at jan.mcdu@yahoo.com

Thank you in advance!

Jan Marra

Marsh Chatter Editor



Red-tailed Hawk – Photo Courtesy of David Bowers



Save the Date!

Michigan Ducks Unlimited State Convention

January 28th & 29th 2022



Park Place Hotel & Conference Center, Traverse City, MI

