



## NEWS RELEASE

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# DETROIT RIVER INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE CELEBRATES 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Grosse Ile, MI – Partners and friends of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge will celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of refuge establishment with an annual benefit dinner on Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 PM on Fighting Island in LaSalle, Ontario. The benefit dinner will include the release of the annual report that highlights 10 years of progress, presentation of the “John D. Dingell Friend of the Refuge Awards,” silent and live auctions, and live music. Tickets are still available and can be purchased at: [www.iwralliance.org](http://www.iwralliance.org).

Highlights of accomplishments of the international wildlife refuge in the first 10 years include:

- The growth of the refuge from 300 acres to over 5,700 acres in ten years;
- The preservation of Humbug Marsh, the last mile of natural shoreline on the U.S. mainland of the Detroit River, and its incorporation into the refuge in 2004;
- The designation of Humbug Marsh as a “Wetland of International Importance” under the international Ramsar Convention (only one in Michigan);
- The 2005 documentation of lake whitefish reproduction in the Detroit River for the first time since 1916;
- Our region singled out at the 2005 White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation for leadership in public-private partnerships for cooperative conservation;
- The establishment of our friends group called the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance in 2006;
- The creation of ByWays to FlyWays bird driving tour in 2007 that highlights 27 exceptional birding sites in southeast Michigan and southwest Ontario;
- The hosting of the FLW Outdoors Chevy Open fishing tournament in 2008 that offered \$1.5 million in prize money;
- The 2008 construction of the Fighting Island sturgeon reef that represented the first-ever Canada-U.S. funded fish habitat restoration project in the Great Lakes;
- The 2009 documentation of lake sturgeon reproduction on the Fighting Island reef, representing the first time in 30 years that lake sturgeon reproduction had been confirmed in the Canadian waters of the Detroit River;

- The 2009 documentation of osprey reproduction in Gibraltar, representing the first successful nesting in Wayne County since the 1890s;
- The 2010 designation of the Detroit River as an “Important Bird Area” by The Audubon Society;
- The 2011 designation of Detroit as one of the top ten metropolitan areas for waterfowl hunting by Ducks Unlimited;
- The restoration of common tern (threatened species in Michigan) habitat at three locations in the Detroit River;
- The daylighting of Monguagon Creek at the Refuge Gateway in Trenton and the restoration of 67 acres of coastal wetlands at the refuge’s Brancheau Unit in Monroe County; and
- The completion of 38 soft shoreline engineering projects in the watershed.

A complete copy of the annual report is available from:

[http://www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver/documents/DRIWR\\_AnnualReport2010.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver/documents/DRIWR_AnnualReport2010.pdf).

“Clearly, the Detroit-Windsor metropolitan area has much to celebrate from the first ten years of international wildlife refuge existence, but the next ten years promises to be even more exciting,” notes Dr. John Hartig, Refuge Manager of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. “The annual benefit dinner promises to be a once-in-a-decade opportunity to celebrate our significant accomplishments at a world-class venue on BASF’s Fighting Island that has received Wildlife Habitat Council certification,” notes Joann Van Aken, Office Manager of the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance.

The Detroit International Wildlife Refuge covers 48 miles of shoreline along the lower Detroit River and western basin of Lake Erie. It stretches from southwest Detroit to the Ohio-Michigan border. The Refuge focuses on conserving, protecting and restoring habitat for 300 species of birds, including 30 species of waterfowl, 23 species of raptors, and 31 species of shorebirds, and for 117 species of fish.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is, working with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The International Wildlife Refuge Alliance is the refuge’s friends group and a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The Alliance’s mission is to support the first international wildlife refuge in North America by working through partnerships to protect, conserve, and manage the refuge’s wildlife and habitats, and to create exceptional conservation, recreational, and educational experiences to develop the next generation of conservation stewards.

For more information, please contact John Hartig of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (734-692-7608; john\_hartig@fws.gov), Joann Van Aken of the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (734-692-7671; iwr\_alliance@yahoo.com) or Allison Krueger of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (734-692-7672; krueger.ali@gmail.com).

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