



News Release: For Immediate Release: November 18, 2016

OSPREY FLEDGED FROM REFUGE’S STRONG UNIT IN MONROE COUNTY REACHES SOUTH AMERICA ON HER FALL MIGRATION

Grosse Ile, Michigan – On June 28th an osprey named Monroe Julie, born on an osprey platform in the Strong Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge near Estral Beach, was banded and then a tagged with a satellite transmitter to better understand their migration patterns and ecology. Monroe Julie fledged on July 19th and started on her journey on August 23rd. Our very own Monroe Julie has now reached South America on her migration from her breeding grounds at the Refuge’s Strong Unit to its over-wintering grounds.

Osprey is one of the largest birds of prey in North America, with a nearly six foot wingspan. These unique North American raptors live on a diet of fish and are well known for their ability to dive for them. As a result, osprey is often called a “fish hawk.” Osprey is a common sight soaring over shorelines, patrolling waterways, and standing on their large stick nests with their white heads gleaming. It is considered a “species of special concern” in Michigan. Osprey numbers have rebounded since the banning of certain pesticides like DDT, starting in the late-1960s, and wildlife biologists consider them a good indicator of aquatic ecosystem health.

A team of biologists, veterinarians, utility company workers, and volunteers helped make this project possible, including volunteers and staff from Michigan Osprey (formerly Osprey Watch of SouthEast Michigan, Detroit Zoological Society, DTE Energy, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Michigan Osprey championed the project and secured the funding from DTE Energy, Oakland Audubon, Huron Valley Audubon, and private donations for the satellite transmitters, and support from Detroit Zoo veterinarians who performed health checks on the chicks, U.S. Department of Agriculture secured the tracking unit to the bird, DTE Energy installed the utility pole, an Eagle Scout built the nesting platform on the Strong Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, and Michigan Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided technical assistance.

The transmitters are about the size of a nine-volt battery with a 7-inch antenna that is secured to an osprey’s body with a harness. Osprey wear these satellite backpacks easily and the units are designed to drop off in 2–3 years. Osprey have been found to be ideal candidates for tracking with solar-powered transmitters because they stay out in the open - not under canopies - and winter in sunny climates that will continue to charge the battery. Fledgling osprey typically leaves in the fall and remain in their wintering habitat for two winters, returning north when they reach breeding age.

After fledging on July 19th Monroe Julie flew around the area near Estral Beach and the lower Detroit River for a month, and on August 23 she started her journey to South America. This is a fascinating story of fledging our very own Monroe Julie from the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and her migration journey to wintering grounds in South America. See link to follow her journey. <http://michiganosprey.org/osprey-migration-tracking/139005-monroe-julie/>

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 6,107 acres of unique habitats and partners with Michigan Department of Natural Resource on conservation of 7,897 acres of state-owned land. A Canadian registry of lands now includes 3,797 acres of Essex Region Conservation Authority lands and 981 acres of City of Windsor lands. In total, 18,782 acres of land in southeast Michigan and southwest Ontario are now being cooperatively managed for conservation and outdoor recreation for nearly seven million people living in a 45-minute drive.

More than 80 percent of Americans now live in urban or suburban communities and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service values the role that urban refuges play in bringing conservation to urban areas and in providing innovative educational programming and volunteer opportunities. More information can be found at: www.fws.gov/refuge/detroit_river/.

For more information, please contact Barb Jensen of Michigan Osprey (248-895-2681 or rushonne@aol.com) or John Hartig of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (734-692-7608 or john_hartig@fws.gov).

#



Monroe Julie fledged from the Strong Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, 2016

Photo Credit: Mike Grosso

Discover Our Wild Side