

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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# News Release



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## 17-ACRE TRACT OF LAND IN MONROE COUNTY EXPANDS WILDLIFE CORRIDOR OF THE DETROIT RIVER INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

**GROSSE ILE, MICH.** – Today, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the acquisition of the 17-acre Tishkof Tract to become part of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. This unique tract is located near the mouth of Swan Creek in Berlin Township of Monroe County and is adjacent to the Refuge's Brancheau Unit. It is important to note that this tract is located in the "Conservation Priority 1" area identified in the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan – meaning that this land is deemed highest priority for conservation and inclusion in the Refuge. This tract and the Brancheau Unit are also located adjacent to the Refuge's Fix and Lagoon Beach (cooperatively managed with DTE Energy) units, representing the expansion of a critical wildlife corridor along western Lake Erie. This tract was purchased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with funding from U.S. Department of Transportation for expansion of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

"These unique lands are an outstanding addition to the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge," notes former Congressman John Dingell. "This significant addition to the Refuge helps extend an important wildlife corridor along Lake Erie and helps protect our internationally-renowned "natural capital" that enriches our quality of life and is a gift to future generations."

The Tishkoff Tract is an important acquisition for the Refuge because it contains southern hardwood swamp habitat, mixed wet prairie and shrub habitat, and Great Lakes coastal marsh habitat. It represents high quality migratory stopover habitat for a broad range of neotropical bird species, including warblers, tanagers, vireos, orioles, and flycatchers. Rusty blackbirds likely utilize this habitat during spring and fall migration. The coastal wetland provides high quality nesting habitat for sora, Virginia rail, common moorhen, pied-billed grebe, American and least bittern, black-crowned night heron, marsh wren, and many others. Mammals likely present include white-tailed deer, coyote, southern flying squirrel, numerous bat species, red and gray fox, and numerous small mammal species. Eastern fox snakes and snapping turtles are also likely abundant.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge represents a new model for conservation – one that both restores habitats for wildlife in an urban area through public-private partnerships and provides a blueprint for bringing conservation to cities across the nation. The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge extends along 48 miles of lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie, and focuses on conserving, protecting, and restoring habitats for 30 species of waterfowl, 117 kinds of fish, and over 300 species of birds. The Refuge currently owns or cooperatively manages 5,834 acres of unique habitats that include islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, wet prairies, shoals and riverfront lands. To date, 3,797 acres of Essex Region Conservation Authority lands and 981 acres of City of Windsor lands have been added to a Canadian registry of lands, and 7,897 acres of Michigan Department of Natural Resources lands have been added to the U.S. registry of lands for conservation purposes. When totaled between Canada and U.S., 18,509 acres of land in southwest Ontario and southeast Michigan are now being collaboratively managed and protected for the benefit of wildlife and outdoor recreation in the spirit and intent of the 2001 Conservation Vision and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

More than 80 percent of Americans 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. 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. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, and dedication and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).



Wet prairie and shrub habitat of the Tishkof tract in Monroe County, Michigan (photo credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

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