

Refuge Reporter

Volume 10, Issue 3

Summer 2007

2007 Junior Duck Stamp Contest Winners

By *Becky Goche, State JDS Coordinator*



Samuel Dantuma has done it again! For the second year in a row, Dantuma was awarded Michigan's Best of Show in the Junior Duck Stamp contest held on March 30, 2007, at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center in Saginaw. His piece seen above, "Wood Duck in the Early Morning," was done in acrylic. Dantuma is the son of Daniel and

Jennifer Dantuma of Standish. He is a senior at Standish-Sterling Central High School. Dantuma has been drawing since about age 7 and won his first national art competition sponsored by the Winter Olympic Committee when he was in the seventh grade. Dantuma's artwork goes against the rest of the country's Best of Shows in the national competition in Washington, D.C. on April 20. Last year, Dantuma's piece placed in the top ten in the national contest. The first place national winner's artwork will be made into the Federal Junior Duck Stamp for 2007-2008.

Four hundred and eighty-eight students in grades K-12 entered this year's contest. Entries came from all parts of the state and included students from public schools, private schools, and home schools. Russ Terry, regional biologist for Ducks Unlimited, and one of the five judges who selected winning artwork said, "Ducks Unlimited is proud to

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Kids' Free Fishing Day on June 9 in Need of Volunteers

By *Becky Goche, Park Ranger*

Kids' Free Fishing Day is Saturday, January 9 at Ojibway Island in Saginaw. The contest for children ages 3 to 15 years runs from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m.

who can help beginning with set-up at 6:30 a.m. through the end of the awards ceremony which usually ends around 11:30 a.m. Different jobs include registering children, releasing fish, and helping distribute prizes. If you're interested please email me at Becky_Goche@fws.gov or call (989) 759-1669.

We need several kid-friendly volunteers

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Special Points:

- *Now is a perfect time to see all the new, young life on the refuge. Be sure you are prepared for mosquitoes.*
- *2007 refuge deer hunt information will be available on our website by mid-June. Application deadline is August 1. Applications can be either mailed in or done online.*

2007 Junior Duck Stamp Winners Continued

be a partner in this year's Junior Duck Stamp Contest. It is so important to foster an appreciation for habitat conservation in our youth, and the Junior Duck Stamp Program is a great way to do it. Plus, the proceeds from the sale of the stamp support conservation education."

Other judges were Dean Adkins of Ella Sharp Museum in Jackson, Faye McNew of Michigan DNR in Lansing, Lucetia Manwaring of Congressman Dale Kildee's Office in Saginaw, and Rod Lawrence of Kalkaska.

Twenty-five winners were selected in each of the four age groups; first, second, third and honorable mention (HM).
Group I (Grades K-3) winners: Cassie Young, Birch Run – 1st, Levi Madar, Flint – 1st, Claire Miller, Saginaw – 1st, Katelyn Kruse, Birch Run – 2nd, Reaann Cabello, Birch Run – 2nd, Miranda Becker, Birch Run – 2nd, Rachel Huff, Sturgis – 3rd, Delaney Storm, Frankenmuth – 3rd, Gracie Freeman, Frankenmuth – 3rd, Anthony Rice, Sturgis – HM, Cole Krueger, Vassar – HM, Breana Jerry, Birch Run – HM, Damien Hochstetler, Constantine – HM, Jared Mose, Frankenmuth – HM, Paige LaBrenz, Frankenmuth – HM, Aaron Haubens-tricker, Frankenmuth – HM, Brandon Lilac, Bridgeport – HM, Keyon Allen, Detroit – HM, Jacob Rummel, Frankenmuth – HM, Jaren Snellenberger, Vassar – HM, Abigail Stewart, Birch Run – HM, Ariel Weigandt, Burt – HM, Jakob Fox, Birch Run – HM, Shane Stockmeyer, Saginaw – HM, and Holly Bill, Birch Run – HM.

Group II (Grades 4-6) winners: Theodore Li, Ann Arbor – 1st, Christopher Naum, Ada – 1st, Rachael Laage, Ada – 1st, Rachel Wallace, Ada – 2nd, Allison Schieber, Grand Rapids – 2nd, Clara Cullen, Ada – 2nd, Shannon Bardwell, Caro – 3rd, Artemis Eyster, Chelsea – 3rd, Brooke Madar, Flint – 3rd, Brandon Yoder, Centreville – HM, Matthew Meyerhuber, Saginaw – HM, Remington Turchetti, Grand Rapids – HM, Brian Ferro, Ada – HM, Connor Sullivan, Grand Rapids – HM, Rebecca Prouty, Ada – HM, Julia Sabin, Grand Rapids – HM, Jacob Purman, Frankenmuth – HM, Erik Johnson, Manistee – HM, Geena Martin, Grand Rapids – HM, Ian Olive, Ada – HM, Johnny Stasiak, Ada – HM, Jessica Challa, Grand Rapids – HM, Natasha Van Gessel, Grand Rapids – HM, Jessica Van Dyke, Grand Rapids – HM, and Abby Van Slooten, Grand Rapids – HM.

Group III (Grades 7-9) winners: Harold Eyster, Chelsea – 1st, Kendra Classen, Bronson – 1st, Anthony Frison, Gibraltar – 1st, Sarah Rudd, Birch Run – 2nd, Amber Goulet, Rockwood – 2nd, Heidi Schwartz, Sturgis – 2nd, Lorraine Maxwell, Howe – 3rd, Heidi Cornett, Colon – 3rd, Linda Kool, Sturgis – 3rd, Raquan Henix, Saginaw – HM, Joshua Crandall, Saginaw – HM, Adam Miller, Sturgis – HM, Carleigh Brush, Bridgeport – HM, Mark Bullard, Bridgeport – HM, Kayla Brayman, Saginaw – HM, Clifford Jamerson, Bridgeport – HM, Caitlyn

Moore, Saginaw – HM, Steven Wilson, Saginaw – HM, Alejandro Carranza, Bridgeport – HM, Matthew Carstens, Bridgeport – HM, Sherese Miller, Sturgis – HM, Esther King, Sturgis – HM, and Chelsea Billmeier, Saginaw – HM.

Group IV (Grades 10-12) winners: Samuel Dantuma, Standish – 1st, Caitlin Machcinski, Woodhaven – 1st, Steven Drenth, Decatur – 1st, Heather Kilgore, Brownstown – 2nd, Joanna Brettschnieder, Rockwood – 2nd, Jacob Fuchs, Ida – 2nd, Yi Li, Ann Arbor – 3rd, Amanda Mikolowski, Imlay City – 3rd, Katherine Lou, Plymouth – 3rd, Erin Hammill, Manitou Beach – HM, Daniel Howarth, Rockwood – HM, Ellen Vines, Rockwood – HM, Rebecca Emanuelsen, Rockwood – HM, Chelsea Bilk, Gibraltar – HM, Stephanie Spinner, Branch – HM, Brandon McVicker, Fountain – HM, Brittney Hutton, Dryden – HM, Robby Hunter, Livonia – HM, Jaime Myers, Newport – HM, Thomas Gartner, Midland – HM, Sabrina Wheeler, Midland – HM, Olga Bogert, Lapeer – HM, Alex Castillo, Lapeer – HM, Julia Purosky, Haslett – HM, and David Barrett, Custer – HM.

An awards ceremony was held on May 5 at Green Point to honor all first through third place winners and the State's Best of Show winner. In addition five teachers were honored for their efforts in getting students to participate in the contest. These teachers were Steve Buchinger of St. Lorenz Lutheran School in Frankenmuth, Cathy Lesinski of Bridgeport Middle School in Bridgeport, Lisa Rodammer of North Elementary in Birch Run, Anne Keller of Goodwillie Environmental School in Ada, and Jeffrey Frank of Carlson High School in Gibraltar.

The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program is sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In Michigan, the program is coordinated by the refuge. This year's program partners were the Friends of Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Ducks Unlimited, Congressman Dale Kildee's Saginaw Office, Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division, Point Mouillee Waterfowl Festival, U.S. Postal Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Office, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Challenge Cost Share. Volunteers and staff that helped with this year's contest and all that goes with it were: Joy Clark, Donna Bull, Janet Martineau, Susan Scott, Steve Gasser, Tom Horb, Michelle Vander Haar, Steve Kahl, and Jim Dastyck.

All first through third place winning artwork will be displayed at Green Point through June. In the fall, all original, winning artwork will be displayed at the Ella Sharp Museum in Jackson. A smaller traveling display featuring copies of first through third place winners will be available for various programs and agencies to display. You can also see this artwork on the refuge's website.

Random Refuge Ramblings

by Ed De Vries, Assistant Refuge Manager

We had a good public turnout at the annual deer management meeting in March. There is always a lot of interest in the refuge deer herd, but that doesn't always translate to well-attended meetings. This year we had a few more people than usual in attendance, and it was good to see they made the effort to show up. As far as refuge deer hunting, there will be some minor changes this year. Even though 60% of the deer taken in 2006 and in the past few years have been does, the male to female ratio is still unbalanced in the refuge deer population. In other words, we're still seeing too many female deer, despite the number of does which are removed each year. Instead of the 1:1.2 buck to doe ratio we had 5 years ago, we're seeing more like a 1:2 ratio. There are a number of reasons why this is happening, including the fact that perhaps not enough does are being taken off neighboring private land. We can't control that. Consequently, we will do a few different things in 2007 based on what we can control and based on the hunter comments we received in 2006. For instance, hunters complained about encountering too many other hunters during their hunts. So we will be allocating 80 hunter permits for the early November archery either sex hunt as opposed to the 110 permits allowed in 2006. The other archery hunts will have 100 permits as in the past. To reduce the number of bucks taken, the either sex shotgun hunt has been eliminated for 2007. To help reduce hunter conflicts, there will be no more "deer driving" allowed on agricultural land or anywhere, period. Hunt partners will have to remain within sight of each other. We won't allow partners to wander all over the refuge. The last two changes were mostly based on hunter feedback and complaints of disturbance by "deer drivers" and wandering, weaponless "partners". Our goal continues to be to maintain refuge deer numbers at a level that the habitat can sustain while providing safe, quality hunts. Above all, the primary refuge mission is that of providing food, sanctuary, and nesting habitat for migratory birds. Maintaining a balanced deer herd is one of the primary means to achieve that mission. Application information for the deer hunts should be available in June.

Some days you come to work and you have no idea where the day will take you. On April 9 a refuge visitor reported an injured eagle, or at any rate what he described as "a large bird" flopping around near the Ferguson Bayou Nature Trail. After getting an exact sighting location from the visitor, I called Butch and

David down at our shop/maintenance facility and they promptly went out and captured the bird after a bit of a chase. Turns out it really was an eagle. In fact, it was a young golden eagle with a severely damaged right wing. Golden eagles are considered rare on the Shawnee NWR, but usually we see one or two a year, mostly during the winter.

While Butch and David were retrieving the eagle, I was making phone calls to the US FWS Law Enforcement offices in Ann Arbor and in Bay City to report the incident; and also to line up a rehabilitation facility. Special Agent Dan Sheill recommended that I take the bird to Howell Conference & Nature Center, which is a raptor rehabilitation center and also an environmental education facility. Within minutes of receiving the eagle from Butch and David, I was on the road to Howell. An hour and 15 minutes later I was at the Center and the bird was examined. The folks at the Center told me the eagle had been injured for at least a week, and had lost weight. Unfortunately, the eagle's wing was too badly damaged to be repaired, and an amputation would have taken the wing off too high on the body. It's FWS policy to euthanize eagles when injuries are above the "wrist" of the wing due to the unbalanced condition a total wing removal creates for the bird, so unfortunately, the golden eagle was euthanized, and its feathers will be shipped to the National Eagle Repository in Pocatello, Idaho. The Repository is a federal clearing house where eagle feathers are stored for distribution to Native Americans for ceremonial purposes. Prior to shipment, the eagle was also going to be x-rayed for the presence of gun shot, but it's very likely this bird had collided with a power line. Golden eagles are hunters as opposed to the bald eagle which primarily scavenges or takes fish. Possibly this bird was diving after prey when it collided with a power line. We'll never know for sure what happened, but there is some solace in knowing that the life of the eagle will be celebrated in some fashion.

The fire folks on the staff completed their pack tests and fire refresher on April 16. This is something we do annually to fulfill the fitness requirement for prescription burning and wildfire fighting. The pack test involves walking three miles at the Saginaw Valley State University track with a 45 pound pack on your back. In order to pass you must walk the three miles in 45 minutes or less. You can't run it, so it's a fast shuffle 12 times around the track. Anyway, we all passed and on April 29 we completed prescription burning on two

Shiawassee Refuge Contributes to Assessment of Dioxin Impacts and Distribution

by *Steve Kahl, Refuge Manager*

Dioxin contamination of the Tittabawassee and Saginaw Rivers is an issue that illustrates the interrelationship between people, wildlife, and the environment. Chlorine extraction processes at Dow Chemical Company's Midland, Michigan, plant yielded release of polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxin and dibenzofuran into the Tittabawassee during the 1910s. Approximately 20 miles downstream from this plant, the Tittabawassee traverses the northeast corner of Shiawassee Refuge. Although the river's floodplain comprises a small percentage of the refuge's acreage, two of its most important public use sites are located here, including the Green Point Environmental Learning Center and its 2.5 miles of trail and the 4.5-mile Woodland Trail. Consequently, the refuge has posted signs generated by the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) advising visitors of the risks of consuming fish and wild game and exposure to soil and sediments. Ironically, these toxins were not discovered in the local environment until 2001 when unrelated soil testing was completed adjacent to the refuge.

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and Dow Chemical have developed a Framework for an Agreement to resolve this issue. Part of this process is to assess the impacts and reach of these contaminants upon natural resources and the public via several studies, many of which are using Shiawassee Refuge as a sampling location. Michigan State University's Aquatic Toxicology Laboratory has been evaluating exposure levels and effects of dioxins and furans upon several wildlife species including wood duck, hooded merganser, great blue heron, great horned owl, tree swallow, eastern bluebird, house wren, and mink. Dow contractors, working under the purview of MDEQ, are sampling soil, sediments, and water and are measuring contamination levels across the entire river bed and floodplain. Also, the refuge plans to participate in a study coordinated by the Human Health and Risk Assessment Team (composed of Dow, MDEQ, MDCH, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources) to assess the risk to humans from consuming wild game from the floodplain. In this study, white-tailed deer, eastern fox squirrels, eastern cottontails, wild turkeys, Canada geese, wood ducks, snapping turtles, and green frogs will be collected and contaminant levels will be assessed.

Shiawassee Refuge is taking an active part in this evaluation process. Twelve separate studies are being completed on the refuge involving eight separate organizations. Further, these studies require access to the refuge by at least 50 individual researchers and technicians. The refuge is providing a wealth of guidance and technical expertise to help researchers sample at the best locations and times. Moreover, all of these studies require extensive coordination to ensure that activities are compatible with the refuge's myriad habitat management, biological, public use, law enforcement, and maintenance programs and facilities. These efforts are worthwhile because it will shed light on the impacts of dioxin and furans to refuge lands, water, and wildlife and contribute to a better understanding of the interrelationship of these elements throughout the floodplain.

Summer Refuge Hikes

By *Becky Goche, Park Ranger*

Refuge Volunteer Steve Gasser will be leading two guided hikes this summer on the refuge. It's a great opportunity to get some fresh air and exercise while enjoying the sights and sounds of the refuge. Make sure that you bring your binoculars and water, wear comfortable hiking shoes, and are prepared for mosquitoes. No registration is needed, just show up and be ready to hike about 5 miles.

Sunday, July 8—Woodland Trail Hike at 9:00 a.m.

Meet at the Woodland Trail parking lot which is located on the east side of Center Road at the Stroebel Road intersection. The trails here are more rustic than on the rest of the refuge, but a variety of songbirds can be found in the abundant trees.

Saturday, August 11—Ferguson Bayou Trail Hike at 7:00 p.m.

Meet at the Ferguson Bayou Trail parking lot which is located at the west end of Curtis Road, south of Saginaw off of Highway M-13. In the evenings, you will have a better chance of seeing deer and other wildlife. Trails surfaces are wide and covered with gravel.

Random Refuge Ramblings Cont.

separate units of the refuge. Beyond prescription burning, we're also qualified and available to help fight wildfires this year.



Zone Refuge Officer Kevin Shinn ignites a fire line along the Leach Wetland Unit on April 30. Photo by Ed DeVries.

OK, I know this is a migratory bird resting and feeding area and we're not supposed to favor "exotics", but this past winter we've really enjoyed watching the activities of several ring-necked pheasants hanging around the Headquarters area. There has been a single strutting rooster and four hens picking seeds and other things from beneath the bird feeders, and as winter progressed into spring the pheasants have become rather "tame" as they've gotten used to our comings and goings. It's been fun to watch their antics, and the male is in beautiful breeding plumage. On sunny days we've seen the pheasants lie belly-down on the green lawn and spread their wings and feathers out to take full advantage of the sun. I didn't realize they could get so flat against the ground, and it gives me a better understanding of how such a large bird can conceal itself so well in the fields. Presently the hens are most likely nesting as we only see them occasionally, usually by themselves. So if you come to the refuge headquarters, don't be surprised to see these birds walking around like peacocks at the zoo. At least until the cats chase them off.

Attention Refuge Volunteers

Be sure to keep track of your hours and submit your volunteer time logs to Volunteer Coordinator Becky Goche. If you do not have a time log, contact Becky at (989) 759-1669. Tracking volunteer hours is important to the refuge because it can mean more dollars in our budget.

Since I was out on medical leave for all of April and part of May, I was not able to get the volunteer dinner planned in time for May 17. We will try again for June at a new venue. Watch your mail for your official invitation!

REFUGE REPORTER

Published quarterly by the Friends of Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge for the refuge.

Volume 10, Issue 3

Editor: Becky Goche

Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

Established in October, 1953 and administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Shiawassee NWR provides resting, nesting and feeding habitat for waterfowl and other birds. Its mission is to preserve or manage an undeveloped expanse of floodplain forest, marshes, rivers, and associated habitat within an agricultural and urban landscape through habitat management, encouraging public stewardship, educational programs, and private lands activities.

Refuge Manager—Steve Kahl

Assistant Refuge Manager—Ed DeVries

Biologist—Jim Dastyck

Private Lands Biologist—Michelle Vander Haar

Park Ranger/Volunteer Coordinator—Becky Goche

Administrative Officer—Mary Ann Gillette

Maintenance Staff—Marion "Butch" Nowosatko and David Peters

Friends of Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

A nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization established in 1999 to promote the preservation of the natural and historical resources of the Refuge, foster its use and enjoyment by the public consistent with the protection and preservation of its environment, and engage in such educational, scientific and civic activities as will assist the management of the Refuge in carrying out its mandates.

Refuge Website: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee>

Shiawassee NWR
6975 Mower Rd.
Saginaw, MI 48601
Phone: 989-777-5930
Fax: 989-777-9200
Hours: M - F, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We're on the web!

[Http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee)



Kids' Free Fishing Day is June 9 at Ojibway Island



Summer Discovery Camps for Preschoolers

By Becky Goche, Park Ranger

We're trying a new format with our Summer Discovery for Preschoolers this year. Rather than a single one-day camp, we've broken the camp up over three days throughout the summer. If this format proves popular, we may continue it through the rest of the year. These camps are designed for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years. Youngsters and his/her parent can join us for one or more days for FREE!

Camp dates fall on the second Wednesday of each month. Each camp will highlight a different topic. Activities include stories, hikes, and crafts. The dates and themes are as follow:

June 13—Forest Friends

Youngsters will explore Green Point's forest and learn

about some of the plants and animals that are found there.

July 11—Water Wonders

Children will explore the different water types found at Green Point—pond, river and marsh.

August 8—Amazing Insects

Children will learn what makes an insect an insect by exploring Green Point's grasslands.

We ask that parents pre-register their children for these camps at least two days before so we can have enough materials available. Please call me Green Point at (989) 759-1669. We strongly encourage that children wear clothes and shoes that can get dirty and will also protect them from mosquitoes and poison ivy.

Nurturing Nature Wednesday Series

- All programs begin at 7:00 p.m. and last 60 – 90 minutes.
- Held at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple Street, Saginaw, unless otherwise noted.
- Admission: \$2 for individuals. FREE for members of the Friends of the Shiawassee NWR.

Reptiles and Amphibians of Shiawassee NWR

June 6, 2007

The refuge isn't just about birds; nine species of reptiles and 10 species of amphibians find habitat here, too. Refuge Manager Steve Kahl will show live specimens, talk about them, and then lead a short walk to identify calling frogs.

Environmentally Sound Gardening

July 11, 2007

Sally Shepardson, an advanced master gardener and a biology instructor at Saginaw Valley State University, offers tips on how to effectively meet the challenges of gardening (from lawn mowers to insects to squirrels) without harming the ecosystem..

Nature Photography on Shiawassee NWR

August 1, 2007

Award-winning nature photographer Kim LeBlanc of St. Charles has a portfolio full of images taken on the refuge. Learn a few tips from him about subjects and equipment, followed by images he has taken.

Summer Refuge Hike 1

July 8, 2007, 9:00 a.m.

Woodland Trail at Center and Stroebel Roads

Refuge volunteer Steve Gasser will lead you on a hike through the refuge's most popular trail system. The rustic trails, surrounded by trees provide many opportunities to see and hear a variety of songbirds that make their home here.

Calendar of Events

Kids' Free Fishing Day

June 9, 2007, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Ojibway Island in Saginaw

Children ages 3 to 15 years can compete in this free fishing contest for a chance to win bicycles and other prizes. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. Bring your own equipment and bait. Refreshments will be available. See flyer inside for more details.

Summer Discovery Camp for Preschoolers

June 13—Forest Friends, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

July 11—Water Wonders, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

August 8—Amazing Insects, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Green Point ELC

Join us for a free camp for children ages 3 to 5 years and their parents. Please pre-register by calling Green Point at (989) 759-1669. See newsletter for more information.

Summer Refuge Hike 2

August 11, 2007, 7:00 p.m.

Ferguson Bayou Trail at Curtis Road

Join refuge volunteer Steve Gasser for a 5 mile hike along these gravel-surfaced trails. In the evening, you will have a better chance of seeing wildlife.

For more information, contact Green Point ELC at (989) 759-1669.