

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Large Lakes Research Station
9311 Groh Road
Grosse Ile, MI 48138
Phone: (734) 365-0219
Fax: (734) 692-7603
http://www.fws.gov/refuge/detroit_river

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 21, 2013

SUGAR ISLAND'S WEST BEACH OPENED FOR PUBLIC USE THE SATURDAY BEFORE MEMORIAL DAY THROUGH LABOR DAY

GROSSE ILE, MICHIGAN – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will open Sugar Island's west beach for public use during daylight hours, the Saturday prior to Memorial Day (May 26) through Labor Day (September 2). The area opened for public use will be clearly marked with signs to inform visitors about rules and regulations pertaining to the island.

The west beach will be opened for general beach use, including wildlife observation, photography, picnicking, sunbathing, and other family-oriented beach activities, such as volleyball. Public access to the uplands will be prohibited to protect wildlife and requisite habitats. Prohibitions on the island will include: fires, alcohol, camping, glass containers, fireworks, public access to concrete piers, staging for scuba diving, and unleashed pets. It should be noted that fishing will not be allowed on the west beach because the Refuge does not have an approved fishing plan at this time. The development and approval of a fishing plan will require substantial time, including publishing it in the Federal Register. Fishing is allowed from boats following state laws. Hunting is allowed on Sugar Island during hunting season, following the rules in the Refuge's approved hunting plan. No bathroom facilities will be provided. In addition, a "tip line" telephone number has been set up for visitors to report problems and violations (734-365-0219). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will also perform an annual review and evaluation of public use on Sugar Island and make changes, as necessary.

Sugar Island is a 30-acre, uninhabited island located in Grosse Ile Township at the mouth of the Detroit River that was purchased in 2012 with federal funds for conservation of fish and wildlife habitats. Sugar Island is part of a "conservation crescent" surrounding the southern end of Grosse Ile. Other unique Refuge units within the "conservation crescent" include: Gibraltar Bay Unit, Calf Island Unit, Humbug Marsh Unit, and Lake Erie Metropark Unit. These unique habitats serve as important stopover habitat for migratory birds and important spawning and nursery habitat for fishes.

The Refuge incorporates nearly 5,800 acres along 48 miles of the lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie. The Refuge focuses on conserving, protecting, and restoring habitat for a broad range of native fish and wildlife and their habitats. It is the first international refuge in North America and one of a few urban ones in the nation. Unique habitats being managed within the Refuge includes islands, shoals, coastal wetlands, wet prairies, and forests.

For more information, contact Refuge Manager John Hartig (734.692.7608) or Assistant Refuge Manager Steve Dushane (734-692-7604).

- END -