

## **The Detroit River Hawk Watch at Lake Erie Metropark**

For over 35 years the Detroit River Hawk Watch has been conducted in one form at Lake Erie Metropark; and the boat launch in the park has been the primary site for over 20 of those years. Today, through the efforts of such organizations as the Detroit River Wildlife Refuge, the Detroit River Wildlife Refuge Alliance, the Hawk Migration Association of North America, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Huron-Clinton Metroparks the migration of raptors over the Detroit River Hawk Watch site is monitored. The information gathered is used to study the long-term trends of our raptor species; and to educate the public through programs like those presented at the annual Hawkfest celebration held at the Lake Erie Marshlands Museum.

Influenced by geography, weather, and other factors the numbers of raptors streaming over the Watch site have ranged from as low as 30,000 birds for the three month season, to over 600,000 birds. Although Broad-winged Hawks and Turkey Vultures often make-up the largest percentage of these numbers, there are a total of 16 different species that can be seen with some consistency. These include such birds as Bald Eagles, Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, Golden Eagles and others.

A paid counter, sponsored by the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge Alliance and the Hawk Migration Association of North America, along with numerous volunteers can be found at the Watch site seven days a week from September 1<sup>st</sup> through the end of November. The site is opened to everyone, and information is provided by the volunteers; as well as an interpretive kiosk provided through donations from Hawk Watch volunteers. Be sure to take some time to stop by the Detroit River Hawk Watch site between Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup> to learn more about the thousands of raptors crossing over the site, and to witness this awesome natural wonder for yourself.