



**Michigan Sea Grant College Program
International Wildlife Refuge Alliance**

NEWS RELEASE

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\$100,000 Secured for Public Education and Eco-tourism Project focused on Birds

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: GIBRALTER, MI – The International Wildlife Refuge Alliance and Michigan Sea Grant are pleased to announce that a \$100,000 grant has been awarded from the “*Wild Birds Unlimited, Inc. Pathways to Nature® Program*”, a special program of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation created in partnership with Wild Birds Unlimited, Inc. The program is designed to bring people and nature together through the creation and maintenance of trails, boardwalks, wildlife-viewing platforms, and nature center exhibits.

Funds from the grant will be used to promote eco-tourism through the construction of a wildlife observation deck and educational signage at Humbug Marsh in the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. Funds will also be used to develop a bird watching driving tour map and educational brochure for Southeast Michigan and Southwest Ontario.

“This will truly be a unique project to showcase outstanding birding opportunities in both Southeast Michigan and Southwest Ontario as part of North America’s only International Wildlife Refuge,” notes Congressman John D. Dingell. “This is significant because it not only improves our quality of life, but enhances tourism – our No. 2 economy – and helps attract and retain employees for our businesses.”

Mary Bohling, of Michigan Sea Grant and Janae Reneaud, Eastern Michigan University graduate student and recipient of a Metropolitan Affairs Coalition Fellowship, will lead the effort. Michigan Sea Grant is working in partnership with the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (IWRA) on this eco-tourism project.

The mission of the IWRA is to support the first International Wildlife Refuge in North America by working through partnerships to protect, conserve and manage the refuge’s wildlife and habitats, and to create exceptional conservation, recreational and educational experiences to develop the next generation of conservation stewards. Major IWRA funding partners in 2006 include DTE Energy Foundation, BASF Corp., DaimlerChrysler, Ford Motor Company/AutoAlliance, General Motors Corp., ITC Transmission, Hamilton Anderson Associates, Praxair, and Wade Trim.

Michigan Sea Grant, a joint program of University of Michigan and Michigan State University, promotes greater knowledge of the Great Lakes through education, research, and outreach, see www.miseagrant.umich.edu.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge covers 48 miles of shoreline along the lower Detroit River and the western basin of Lake Erie. It focuses on conserving, protecting and restoring habitat for waterfowl, fish and migratory birds, see <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver/index.html>.

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