

DNR launches mid-winter eagle survey

A deserted beach along a narrow stretch of US-2 on the northern shore of Lake Michigan is where the chance encounter occurred.

Mesmerized by the seemingly endless white-capped waters stretching out below me, I was daydreaming about battling a full-run steelhead at the mouth of one of the many creeks bisecting the beach when, out of nowhere, it appeared.

I realized immediately it was a majestic bald eagle by its tell-tale snow-white head and tail feathers. What surprised me was that it was flying low, about 40 feet off the water, but just above eye-level to me. It seemed to want to race as we both sped east for a moment.

Then he turned seaward, made a wide circle and came right back toward shore. He landed at a dead fish washed up on shore 100 yards ahead of me.

Visions of my mini-van tumbling into the sandy culvert rolled through my head as I pulled off the road as quickly and quietly as I could.

Using a couple small sand

dunes for cover, I snuck up to within 40 yards before slowly peeking over the dune.

With its dark brown body-feathers contrasting against the snowy-white head, the bright mid-day sunshine set a breathtaking backdrop as it glistened off the white-capped water. Holding the carrion in its long talons, the eagle snatched up a chunk of fish with its curved, yellow beak.

I only watched him dine for a few fleeting seconds before his keen eyes detected an intruder and his survival instincts urged him to fly back out over the lake.

I've seen a few other eagles, mostly in the past six or seven years and most of them soaring high in the sky.

That was the closest and by far the most exciting eagle



Bill Parker

encounter I've ever experienced.

Each winter DNR biologists ask for public assistance during a two-week winter eagle survey.

Survey information is valuable for biologists and researchers as they continue to monitor winter locations and movements of bald eagles throughout Michigan.

This year's survey runs through Jan. 15. Sponsored by the DNR Wildlife Division's Natural Heritage Program, the survey represents an important partnership between the DNR and the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service.

Only bald eagles sighted during this time period will be accepted as part of the national survey.

Eagle observations can be reported through the phone, fax or Internet. Participants can fill out a mid-winter bald eagle survey form on the DNR's Web site (www.michigan.gov/dnr), fax a report to (517) 373-6705,

or mail a report to: 2003 Winter Bald Eagle Survey, Natural Heritage Program, Wildlife Division, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, PO Box 30180, Lansing, MI 48909-7680. Forms are also available at DNR field offices and Operation Service Centers.

Wintering eagles can be found in all 83 Michigan counties. In the winter, bald eagles forage for food near ice-free areas on lakes, rivers, reservoirs, and cooling ponds at power plants, and can also be found feeding on road kill.

See anglers frequently see eagles.

Another tip to remember is that adult eagles have white heads and tails and hooked, heavy, yellow beaks.

Their bright yellow feet are easily noticed along with their long wingtips, up to seven feet. Immature eagles have blotchy brown-and-white feathers and black beaks.

Reports should include the following information:

■ Participant's name, address

and telephone number.

■ The date and time of the sighting.

■ The county, township, range and section, or a location near a town, lake, river, highway or other land feature.

■ The number of eagles observed and their maturity level (adult or immature).

■ The eagle's behavior and any other pertinent information.

State wildlife officials are

deeming the 2002 limited elk hunt a success with 142 hunters combining to tag 122 elk.

Hunters took 36 bull elk, nearly meeting the DNR goal of 38. Hunters also fell just short of the harvest goal of 86 cows and calves, tagging 86.

The heaviest bull was 680

pounds.

Bill Parker covers the outdoors for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Send information to: Bill Parker, c/o Outdoors, 805 E. Maple Birmingham, MI 48009.

HOOPS

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averaging 12 points per game, although Norgrove said his absence was no excuse for the loss.

"With him gone, it's very difficult for us to score," Norgrove said. "He provides some senior leadership, and he plays very hard. We were just searching for an offensive leader and couldn't find one."

Okopyn, an All-Observer & Eccentric soccer player, was in Florida to participate in a holiday sports festival that was to be attended college soccer coaches from around the nation.

Norgrove said Okopyn told him the first day of tryouts he was committed to the Florida trip and would be gone at this time. Norgrove said he told Okopyn he would evaluate him as a player and take into consideration his other commitment.

"After I saw him play, he was good enough to be on this team," Norgrove said. "I'm the type of coach who's not going to hold a kid back from a scholarship."

"It's about kids and doing what's right, then I have to evaluate that. It's best for him to go and get a scholarship and for us to have him in the program."

"Unfortunately, we didn't respond well in his absence. There's no excuse for losing, because you never know if people are going to be injured or can't play."

"The other kids have to step up and perform, and we didn't get the kind of leadership we needed over the two days and I think players will learn from that."

"If we put 12 points back in our rotation, we win Saturday because that's a game we let slip away."

Danny Preston scored eight points and Giorgio Holt five for the Falcons, who are better than their record (1-3) indicates, according to Norgrove.

Zack Donitz added 12 points for the Lakers (2-2). Farmington was 5-of-10 at the line and Lakes 10-of-14.

In the Friday game, the Falcons were down by 20 at halftime, got back to within three at the end of three but still lost by 20.

"We showed what we're capable of," Norgrove said. "It took a lot out of us, fighting back from that deficit. The problem is we're not putting that together for four quarters."

"I don't just put that on the players. I firmly believe it's my job to develop consistency and expectations. Up to this point, we haven't shown that."

Farmington's next game is Tuesday, Jan. 7, when it plays host to North Farmington.

"That's our first home game of the year and it's a pivotal game," Norgrove said, adding the Raiders have an established program under veteran coach Tom Negoshian.

"They're going to play hard; they're going to come after us. We have to play well to be successful."

RAVENS DEFEAT RAIDERS

North Farmington was only down two points at halftime Friday, but Detroit Benedictine pulled away to a 60-47 victory in the Roundball Classic at the University of Detroit-Jesuit.

Senior Marcus McComb scored 21 points and junior Gary Kennedy 13 to lead the Raiders, who trailed at halftime, 26-26.

Sophomore center Sean Macder added six points but played less than two quarters due to foul trouble. He drew his fifth foul late in the third quarter.

Benedictine made 14 of 26 free throws, North six of 13. The Ravens are 3-1 and the Raiders 0-3.

"In all we didn't play well," North assistant coach Pete Mantyla said. "We missed a lot of easy shots in the first half. We had an opportunity to be up; instead, we were down two at the half."

"The last game and a half we've struggled, so we're working on trying to pull ourselves out of that. We haven't been as aggressive defensively, and we haven't converted good scoring opportunities around the basket."

"We have a week to get some of that corrected. We have Mumford Friday and then we start the league season."

Hopefully, the tough non-league schedule did a good job of preparing us for the league season."

ACTIVITIES

FISH BUDDIES FISHING CLUB
The Fish Buddies Fishing Club meets the third Tuesday of each month in Rochester. Meetings are open to all anglers, boaters and non-boaters. Call Harold Leider at (248) 556-0556 for more information.

CITY OF FARMINGTON
2003 DOG & CAT LICENSES

2003 Dog & Cat Licenses are available at Farmington City Hall, 25600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Licenses are issued through Friday, March 31, 2003, at a fee of \$7.00 for each dog or cat six months old or older. Beginning Tuesday, April 1, 2003, delinquent licenses are \$10.00. License fees are reduced \$3.00 for neutered dogs and cats.

A current, original Certification of Vaccination for rabies signed by an accredited veterinarian must be presented when applying for a License.

Licenses may be obtained by MAIL by calling 248-474-5600.

PATSY K. CANTRELL,
City Clerk/Treasurer

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OUTDOORS CALENDAR

DOWNRIVER BASS ASSOCIATION
The Downriver Bass Association, a non-bournament bass club, meets at the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of every month at the Gander Mountain (4100 Pardee Road) in Taylor. For more information, call Ron Fodor at (734) 676-2863 or send an e-mail to riverrat22@home.com

MICHIGAN FLY FISHING
The Michigan Fly Fishing Club meets at 7:30 p.m. the first and third Wednesdays of each month at Livonia Clarenceville Middle School, located on Middlebelt Road between Seven and Eight Mile roads. Visit www.mifc.org on the Internet for more information.

FOUR SEASONS
The Four Seasons Fishing Club meets 7:30-9:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month at the Livonia Civic Park Senior Center, 15218 Farmington Road. Visitors are welcome. For more information, please call Jim Kudej at (734) 591-0043 or send him an e-mail at jkudej@aol.com.

HURON VALLEY STEELHEADERS
The Huron Valley Steelheaders meets the third Thursday of each month at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 27600 Hall Road, Flat Rock. Call Carroll White at (734) 285-0843 for more information.

CLINTON RIVER BASS 'N' RATS
The recently organized Clinton River Bass 'N' Rats meets the first Monday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Gander Mountain Lodge, Call (810) 247-9900 for direction and additional information. The club is an affiliated chapter of the B.A.S.S. National Federation.

METROPARKS
METROPARK REQUIREMENTS
Most Metropark programs are free while some require a nominal fee. Advanced registration and a motor vehicle permit are required for all programs. Call the respective park office for the following numbers: Stony Creek, (800) 477-7755; Indian Springs, (800) 477-3192; Kensington, (800) 477-3178; Hudson Mills, (800) 477-3191.

OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS
COUNTY PARK REQUIREMENTS
Advanced registration and a motor

vehicle permit are required for all nature programs at Oakland County Parks. Call (248) 625-6473 to register or for more information.

STATE PARKS
STATE PARK REQUIREMENTS
Maybury State Park, Proud Lake Recreation Area, Bald Mountain Recreation Area, Highland Recreation Area, and Island Lake Recreation Area offer nature interpretive programs throughout the year. A state park motor vehicle permit is required for entry into all state parks and state recreation areas. For registration and additional information on the programs at Maybury, call (248) 349-8330. For programs at Bald Mountain, call (248) 673-6767. For programs at Proud Lake and Highland, call (248) 655-2181. For programs at Island Lake, call (248) 229-7067.

To submit items for consideration in the Observer & Eccentric's Outdoor Calendar, send information to: Outdoors, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009, fax information to (248) 644-1314.

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