

nature

Falcon fancies Belle Isle

Belle Isle is an interesting island oasis in the Detroit River. Many people visit the island this time of year to view the Christmas flower display at the arboretum. Others will soon enjoy ice skating along the frozen canals.

Those of us interested in nature enjoy the nature center at the east end of the island. There are several displays inside that illustrate some of the local flora and fauna. One is a large flight cage that dominates the lobby with several species of live birds. They even have live animals outside in a rehabilitation center.

COYOTE, SKUNK, hawks and owls can be seen at close range. From the nature center you can begin walking



nature trails that take you through the wooded acres nearby. Every Saturday at 1 p.m. you can join a naturalist on a guided tour. Chances are you will see some of the European fallow deer that have been on the island since the 1920s. In fact, there will be a special program on the first two Sundays in December at 1 p.m. highlighting the deer population. If you are lucky you may even see a great-horned owl that has nested in the woods.

THE OPEN WATERS around the island also provide excellent feeding areas for wintering waterfowl. Ducks like canvasback, redhead, scaup, golden-eye, and others are regular visitors. Occasionally, some unusual northern migrants from the tundra appear, like scoters and eiders.

A couple of years ago another tundra bird appeared on Belle Isle and stayed for several weeks. A snowy owl perched on the telephone poles, buildings, and statues watching for mice and rats. Snowy owls are accustomed to man's presence, which allows many people a close look at the very impressive bird.

ONLY A COUPLE of weeks ago, one of the rarest birds in the eastern United States was seen on Belle Isle. A peregrine falcon was seen, probably hunting mice, rats and some of the wintering ducks. The falcon would not stay for the winter like the snowy owl; it was heading south for warmer climate.

It's always interesting to visit the island and watch the ducks and deer, but the chance of seeing some unusual or rare visitor adds to the thrill of the day. And what is nice, too, is that you don't have to go to exotic places to see these creatures — you just have to spend some time outdoors, be patient, and observant.

volunteers

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau (OCVB) has a file of more than 200 agencies. Volunteer organizations needing assistance may list with the bureau. For more information about these and other volunteer openings, call the bureau at 642-7272.

MEDICAL — Volunteers without previous training are needed in many medical areas. American Red Cross urgently needs blood program assistants. Six hour day, weekdays or Saturday. Harper Hospital needs oncology volunteers to greet visitors and/or visit patients. Hours flexible. Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital needs sales people for the gift shop.

LEGAL — If you're interested in the law and are over 25 with some college study in the behavioral sciences, the 50th District Court could use you as a probation officer three hours per month. No training is needed to be a Court Watcher for Oakland County, Weekdays.

CHILDREN — If you have patience to work with troubled children and are over 18, the Tim Ro Children's Center needs you on its volunteer staff. Two days per week. North Oakland Scamp needs office personnel for duties during fund raising, two or three hours, one day a week, or concession sales at Silverdome, age 15 and up. Summer Scamp '85 need staff aides, daytime for five weeks, 14 and up. Oak Park Youth Assistance needs people to help with organization or as a plus volunteer to work with a child.

ELDERLY — Citizens for Better Care has openings for nursing resident advocates to help improve quality of care. Three hours a week for six months. Farmington Nursing Home, Pontiac Nursing Center and Cambridge East Nursing Home needs many volunteers.

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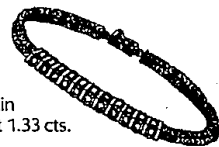
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