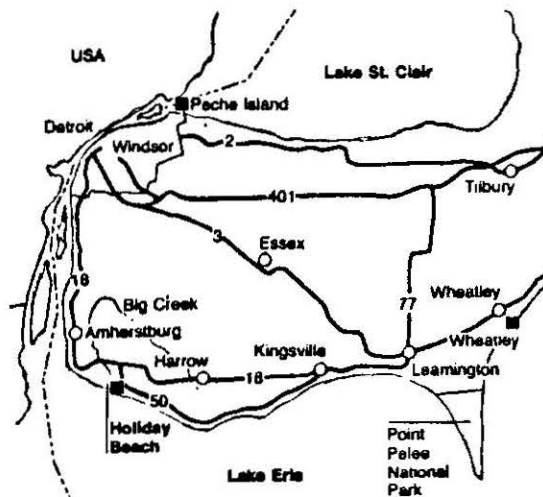


## Site Guide

### Holiday Beach Migration Observatory

"Holiday Beach Provincial Park (in Essex County, Ontario, on the north western shore of Lake Erie) is Canada's premier site for monitoring the passage of post-breeding hawks in the Fall. Birds from the northeast portion of Canada (Ontario, Quebec and presumably the maritime provinces) are funneled into southern Ontario where the majority, unwilling to cross Lake Ontario or Erie stream by to cross the Detroit River." (The Northwind.) In 1986, for example, 41 bald eagles, 36 golden eagles, 32 merlins, 22 peregrine falcons and 37 northern goshawks were counted by members of the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory as well as 43,251 broad-winged hawks, 16,135 sharp-shinned hawks and eight other raptor species.



This fall began the 13th year of formalized counting started in 1974, by the Detroit and Oakland Audubon Societies. As their influence waned over the years, a group of independent observers evolved and in 1985 formed the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory. What began in 1974 as 27 days of coverage has expanded to 90 days. You may have seen or met some of these people, principally Dick Benoit, in the parking lot of the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge the last two Springs. There they spent 92 hours, over 15 days, in 1986 monitoring our Spring hawk migration.

In the spring, the hawk flights are less concentrated than the Fall but as the hawks fly north and encounter the western basin of Lake Erie they turn west and fly around the western edge of the Lake to avoid a cross-over. The O.N.W.R. parking lot creates a break in the tree line in their east to west flight and can, on selected days, provide good views. However, in the fall this flight does not occur. The southern flying birds disperse once they've cleared the western edge of the Lake. One solution to seeing fall hawk flights is to travel to the Canadian side of Lake Erie and Holiday Beach Provincial Park. Other closer places are Lake Erie Metropolitan Park in Michigan at the south end of Detroit or Pointe Mouillee in Michigan on the southern line of Monroe County. Each is accessible from I-75.

Point Mouillee is farther south and apparently receives hawks from Holiday Beach Provincial Park as they cross the mouth of the Detroit River. Joe Komorowski reports good flights at Pointe Mouillee with 21,000 broadwings on September 16, 1986, and 500 red-tails and 200 sharp-shins a day in October. As for golden eagles in 1986, Pointe Mouillee had two whereas Lake Erie Metro Park had five.

Holiday Beach Migration Observatory has no physical structures as yet but the observers are there daily in the parking lot of the Park and welcome helpers and visitors. Their newsletter The Northwind says that the broad-winged hawks will peak during the week of September 12-18. Ospreys, sharp-shinned hawks, bald eagles and northern harriers are also present. Raw, rainy days with southwest winds the day of the time change and after (September 27-October 6) brings peregrines with merlin, sharp-shins, ospreys and bald eagles. The turkey vultures peak October 8-11, the red-shoulders around October 14, golden eagles October 27-30 (11 were seen October 30, 1986) and red-tails around November 6. The newsletter continues that wind direction becomes more important as the season progresses. The best hawk days are when winds have a northerly component and the worst days are westwinds.

Holiday Beach also has a non-hawk migration with 607,406 individual birds of 172 species tallied in 1986. The highlight of 1985 was a black-backed woodpecker that spent three days in the Park.

You can become a member of the Observatory and receive their newsletter thrice yearly by sending \$8.00 to 1120 Clair Circle, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103.