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## **The osprey has re-landed in Wayne County**

Sightings said to be the 1st since 1890s

BY JOHN GALLAGHER

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First the beaver made a comeback, now the osprey.

State and federal wildlife authorities said Monday that a pair of ospreys successfully nested in Wayne County this year, the first such documented case since the 1890s.

One of the largest birds of prey in North America with a wingspan of nearly 6 feet, ospreys are known as fish hawks and feed almost exclusively on fish.

The pair of ospreys built a nest earlier this year in a cell phone tower near the Gibraltar Wetlands Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, said John Hartig, manager of the refuge. The pair fledged two young.

Ospreys have been returning to the southeast Michigan region since about 2002, with 18 confirmed nests and 46 chicks born, said Jim Kortge of Osprey Watch of Southeast Michigan.

Historical ornithological records from southeast Michigan are limited. "However, based on available surveys and reports, there have been no reports of nesting osprey in Wayne County since the 1890s," notes ornithologist Julie Craves of the Rouge River Bird Observatory.

Like the beaver lodge confirmed in Detroit at a DTE Energy power plant earlier this year, the ospreys' return to Wayne County is considered a good indicator of the improving health of the Detroit River ecosystem.

Ospreys, like bald eagles, saw a dramatic decline throughout North America because of widespread use of DDT and other pesticides. DDT was banned in Michigan in 1969 and nationwide in 1972.

"There is no doubt that more needs to be done to clean up the Detroit River, but the environmental improvement achieved to date has laid the foundation for one of the most remarkable ecological recoveries in North America," Hartig said.

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