

GREAT BLUE HERONRY

LARGEST HERONRY in S.E.MI.

BY: **Rob Golda** HIKING MICHIGAN

2012 HERONRY NESTING REPORT

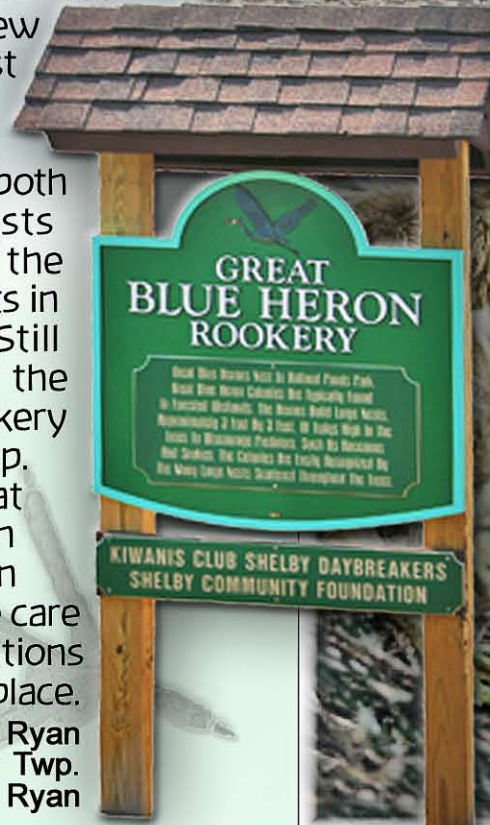
So how did the Great Blue Herons do this year, 2012, at the Heronry, located at HOLLAND PONDS? This was their best EVER, to date! A total of 44 occupied nests were recorded in both the front and rear heronries. That surpasses 2011's total of 39 nests, by 5.

Each nesting pair of Great Blue Herons were successful at hatching 2-4 chicks per nest. That unfortunately was not the number of Heron chicks to be fledged from each nest. As with any nesting season for the Herons, there would be the natural order of things ruling the outcome of the Heronry. Each nest does not fledge all hatched chicks. In many cases at least one chick per nest is lost as the weakest or sickly of the hatch. This chick will either not receive enough food, due to the competition amongst it's siblings, or a chick will succumb to illness. This is the way for the strongest of hatchlings to fledge to adulthood.

Another loss to the Heronry was weather. This year in both the front and the rear heronries, a major branch and nesting tree fell to the ground. Taking with it, 3 nests in the front heronry and another 3 nests in the rear heronry. That would have been 50 nests this year. It shows how delicate these Heron nesting sites can be.

If not for the huge success rate, at new nest building there, these 6 lost nest is would have been extremely critical to the Colonies growth. But due to the successful expansion of both heronries, even the loss of 6 nests resulted in a total net growth of the heronries as a whole, from 39 nests in 2011, to 44 active nests in 2012. Still a very successful season, and still the largest Great Blue Heron rookery Michigan. We hope that Shelby Twp. will continue to cherish the fact that more Herons reproduce there in Shelby Twp. then any other place in this corner of the state. Please take care of this rare place for future generations to learn and marvel at this unique place.

HOLLAND PONDS Park is located on Ryan rd., just north of 22 mile rd., in Shelby Twp. There is free parking on the west side of Ryan rd. The Park is open sunrise to sunset.



HOLLAND PONDS
SHELBY TWP.
 Parks & Recreation