

Francoise  
The  
Seagull  
Finds His  
Family  
Tree



Kathy  
Warnes



Francois the seagull was born on Mud Island which sits in the Detroit River at the foot of Southfield and Jefferson in Ecorse, Michigan. Ecorse means River of Bark in French, and Francois and his family had come to settle along the Detroit River with some of the old French families that settled Ecorse. His father had tried to get a job patrolling the parking lot at Great Lakes Steel Company, but he could only find work eating fish heads that fishermen at Southfield Dock threw to him. Francois' father and mother had to build a straw and stick nest on Mud

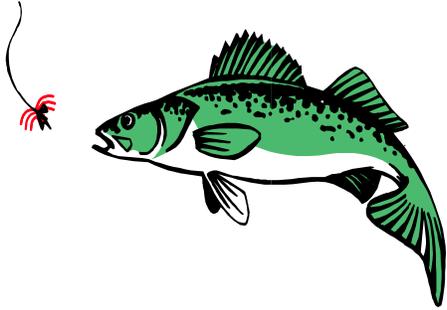


Island and Francois was born in the nest.

When Francois was younger, Mud Island didn't seem so bad.

Francois had a best friend named Emil and they went swimming every day. Tall, fresh, grass grew on Mud Island and fish swam in the Detroit River around the island.

Francois caught fish and grasshoppers in the spring, summer, and fall. In the winter he fished in Ecorse garbage cans on shore.



Then one day Francois felt the urge to fly away.

“I’m flying out see the world,” Francois the seagull screeched at his mother and father.

“I always find enough to eat, but I want something more out of life besides food,” Francois told his mother and father. “I want to see the world! I want to discover what life is all about!”

His mother and father told Francois about his French ancestors who settled in Ecorse when the Huron Indians had villages along Ecorse Creek and the Detroit River.



Every day while they were fishing they screeched family names at him.

Campau

Montie

Labadie

Salliotte,

Rousson



Campau,

Montie

Beaudrie

LaBeau!!!”

Francois didn't listen.

“Why did you name me Francois?” he shouted back. “Everybody makes fun of me and they won't call me Frank like I asked them to do. I'm leaving Ecorse and flying around the world!”

Francois said goodbye to Emil and to his mother and father. He flew away from Mud Island. He followed the Detroit River and flew over Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, down the St. Lawrence River to the Atlantic Ocean. He crossed the Atlantic Ocean to England, then flew over the rest of Europe. He flew over Asia, and then flew to Antarctica and Australia. During his trip, Francois stopped over in Paris for a month to see if he could find any of the relatives on his family tree. He found some of his cousins living around the Arc de Triumph. “Stay here with us,” his cousins urged him. “There is plenty of fish, salty air currents, and good company.”



“Thank you, but I can't stay. I have to continue my journey,” Francois said.

Francois continued his trip around the world. He stopped at the South Pole to visit some distant penguin relatives.

“Stay here with us,” his Uncle urged him. “We'll teach you how to ski. It's a good life here.”



“Thank you, but I like warm weather,” Francois said. He kept flying until once again he reached North America. He flew over Canada and stopped in Quebec to visit his Uncle Pierre and Aunt Julia.

“Stay here with us, “ Uncle Pierre and Aunt Julia said. “The city of Montreal is planning a big fair. You can enter the fastest flying contest.”



“I’ll stay for a little while,” Francois said. “I’d like to win the fastest flying contest.”

Francois stayed in Montreal for a year. He entered and won the fastest flying contest, but he remembered the contests that the Ecorse Recreation Department held on July Fourth every year. Over and over he told Uncle Pierre and Aunt Julia how he and Emil had won the fastest swimming contest two years in a row.

“Stay here with us, “Uncle Pierre and Aunt Julia said. “The city of Montreal is planning a big fair. You can enter the fastest flying contest.”

“I’ll stay for a little while,” Francois said. “I’d like to win the fastest flying contest.”

Francois stayed in Montreal for a year. He entered and won the fastest flying contest, but he remembered the contests that the Ecorse Recreation Department held on July Fourth every year. Over and over he told Uncle Pierre and Aunt Julia how he and Emil had won the fastest swimming contest two years in a row.

“And Emil won the backward crab crawl contest and he’s a duck!” Francois bragged.



One day Francois got a feather letter from his friend, Emil.



The letter said,

“Dear Francois,

Another Fourth of July is coming and you are not here. We all miss you. When are you coming home to swim and fish with us again?

Emil”

Francois showed the letter to Uncle Pierre and Aunt Julia. “Emil is my best friend,” he said. “Did you know that he-”

“Won the backward crab crawl contest and he’s a duck!” Uncle Pierre and Aunt Julia finished together.

“Francois, you are homesick,” they said. “Go home for a visit to see if you are ready to stay there.

Francois flew home to Mud Island. He kissed his mother and father.

He swam around the island three times, telling Emil about his trip.

He ate Mud Island berries and he rested.



He helped his friends and family celebrate the Fourth of July at Riverside Park in Ecorse. But this year Francois didn’t enter the backward crab crawl contest. Instead, he and Emil hand lettered words for a banner. They flew high above the crowd pulling a banner behind them.

I flew to the east and I flew to the west

Then I discovered

**HOME IS BEST!!!!**



OUI!!



OUI!!!!