



The Egret

the Newsletter of the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club

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ECFNC Monthly Meetings

Except for our outdoor meetings in July and August and our annual dinner in November, monthly members' meeting are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm at Ojibway Nature Center, 5200 Matchette Road, Windsor, 519-966-5852.

Visit our Website at essexcountynature.com

A great big *Thank You* to everyone who submitted articles and photos to the Egret this month. We always appreciate your submissions and couldn't run this newsletter without them!

Upcoming ECFNC Activities

April 10 – Walk in Devonwood

April 14 (9am-11am) – Early Spring Birding at Hillman Marsh

April 28 – Annual Bake Sale for Earth Day at Malden Park

May 8 – Walking Tour by Gerry Waldron

May 26 – Ojibway Prairie Walk

9 June (9am) – Reptile and Amphibian Hike at Rowsom Conservation Area

Releasing a Red-tailed Hawk at the Ojibway Nature Center. Photo: Larry Onysko



About the Club ...

The Essex County Field Naturalists' Club was incorporated in March 1985. We are a registered charitable organization which promotes the appreciation and conservation of our natural heritage. ECFNC provides the community opportunities to become acquainted with and understand our natural world through identification, maintenance and preservation of the natural areas within Essex County and surrounding regions. ECFNC is affiliated with Ontario Nature/Federation of Ontario Naturalists. *The Egret* is published quarterly. To receive information on the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club or to submit articles, letters, reports, etc., please write to:

Essex County Field Naturalists' Club

Devonshire Mall P.O.
P. O. Box 23011
Windsor, Ontario N8X 5B5

Information

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Point Pelee National Park
519-322-5700
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519-776-5209

ECFNC Contacts

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Chairpersons/Liaisons:

Ontario Nature Liaison: JoAnn Grondin
ERCA Liaison: Phil Roberts
Bluebird Committee Chairman: Don Bissonnette
Essex County Stewardship Network Liaison: Linda Menard-Watt
Ojibway Liaison: Karen Cedar
Citizens Environment Alliance Liaison: Phil Roberts
Windsor Essex County Environmental Committy: Phil Roberts/ Jesse Gardner Costa
Canada South Land Trust Liaison: Tom Hurst
Detroit River Canadian Cleanup Liaison: Phil Roberts/Ian Naisbitt

Committees:

Egret Editorial: Sheeva Nakhaie (chair), Betty Learmouth, Karen Cedar, Jesse Gardner Costa
Field Trip: Sarah Baldo and Sarah Renaud (co chairs)
Heritage: JoAnn Grondin (coordinator), Dave Kraus, Betty Learmouth, Jim McAllister, Bruno Sfalain, Gerry Waldron, Peg Wilkinson, Shirley Grondin, Cathy Lapain
Little River Enhancement Group: Ian Naisbitt (chair), Tom Henderson
Fish Book: Teresa Austrin (chair), Joe Parent, Dave Kraus, Phil Roberts, Jesse Gardner Costa, Sheeva Nakhaie
Website: Sarah Baldo, Sarah Renaud, Sheeva Nakhaie (co chairs)

President Report for 2012

Dear Club Members,

The Essex County Field Naturalists' Club is near that point again when we elect a Board and review the past years achievements. I have had an opportunity to speak with club reps and presidents from all over Ontario and it surprises me how many struggle with keeping their clubs afloat and recruiting new members, especially board members. Clubs are aging and recruiting younger members in this era of fast communication and digital technologies seems to prove challenging. I am always pleased that our membership remains constant and we have certainly benefitted from the younger members in attendance and on the Executive. I am also pleased that we have managed to get a few things done. The Gale Smith tree grove memorial and ceremony was very nice. Jesse Gardner Costa filled in for me as a speaker on the CEA (Citizens Environmental Alliance) Detroit River boat tour continuing to support our campaign for the protection of Ojibway Shores. The airport woodlots have finally been protected in the airport and city master plans and now there is a real opportunity to start work to link them together. The Fish book which has delighted many continues to sell to the benefit of the club and we may have to consider reprinting the Waldron tree book(s) due to popularity.

We have also remained a strong voice and partner through our committee work; working with ERCA (Essex Region Conservation Authority) for funding through the *Great Lakes Sustainability Grant* to construct a new green infrastructure to help with water quality within the west Basin of Lake Erie called a Rain Garden; producing a video on phosphorous and the blue green algae issue in lake Erie and contributing to projects like natural areas and significant wetlands protection through our role with the Windsor Essex County Environment Committee (WECEC). One of the most important strengthens though is our own programs, field trips like Dave Kraus' Pelee Trip (coming up soon so talk to him about space!!) and the monthly members meeting. I think moving the members meeting to the new Ojibway Nature Centre has been a good move both in supporting Ojibway but also to be a little closer to nature in an environmentally sustainable facility.

Nothing mentioned in this report happens without the help and dedication of club members and a great group of people on the executive board. I want to take this opportunity to thank the 2012 executive for their tireless support and trust. So it is without any trepidation that I announce my resignation from the executive and as president. It has been my pleasure to represent the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club and I have done so for a long time but the opportunity has never been better with the dynamics of the current board to move on. I have been on the executive of the club from nearly its inception and started as president when the Marshfield Woods was ramping up for the OMB. There is still a lot of work to be done and I intend on supporting the new president when elected and look forward to another great year with the Club.

If you have the opportunity to recruit someone to the club as a member or to the Executive Board please do it, it's important to our long term survival.

Thanks again to everyone.

Phil

Saying Goodbye to a Few of Our Executive

This year Phil Roberts, Ron Muir and Gerry Waldron all step down from the executive. They have done wonderful work for us and we will miss them.

ECFNC New Rain Garden Project

The west basin of Lake Erie has been seriously impacted by rain water runoff which carries contaminants and phosphorous which in turn fuels large blooms of toxic algae. A simple green infrastructure project that can mitigate this is rain gardens. Rain gardens are constructed around drains and catch basins to collect rainwater before it goes into the subsurface system. The rain gardens will have native plants chosen for their ability to filter contaminants and having high uptakes for phosphorous. The first flush of rain is often the most contaminated so even small rain events can be detrimental to water quality and with a rain garden should greatly reduce that water from ever reaching the storm drains.

Our rain garden project is supporting the work that the Essex Region Conservation Authority does and will be constructed as a pilot project in the Town of Harrow, at the arena adjacent the Harrow High School where storm water from the municipal parking lots and fields goes directly to the west basin of Lake Erie. We are calling out for anyone interested in volunteering for the site prep work and planting.

For more information on blue green algae go to our website to view the fact sheet (www.essexcountynature.com). The rain garden project will also include the production of a 'how to' manual as well as a youtube video later in 2013

Attached is a tentative time line for the project. For more details contact Jesse, Phil or Chitra Gowda at ERCA [519\) 776-5209 ext 342](tel:5197765209)

Task	Timeline
Pre-garden preparation (garden design, species selection)	March 30, 2013
Site preparation (outreach, procure materials, digging, etc.)	April 30, 2013
Planting	May 30, 2013
Follow up site visit	August 31, 2013
Evaluation and assessment	October 31, 2013
Manual, youtube video	December 31, 2013
Report to MOE	February 1, 2014

Bluebird Committee Report 2012**By: Don Bissonnette**

Full report in colour:

<http://essexcountynature.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/bluebird-newsletter-3.pdf>

2012 was a good year for Bluebirds. We collected data from 256 Bluebird houses. In total, there were 23 success-ful pairs of Bluebirds, which produced 132 fledglings. That's an increase from 2011 numbers. That year, we collected data from 256 birdhouses. We counted 21 successful pairs of Bluebirds, with only 101 fledglings.

Our success in 2012 is due in part to the weather. In most winters, there are periods of severe weather – deep freezes, ice storms, and blizzards. Prolonged periods of severe weather take their toll on local Bluebird populations. However, the 2011-2012 winter was unusually mild. There were no periods of severe weather. In fact, there was very little snow. There were many reports of winter-ing Bluebirds. These birds made it through the winter. Obviously, there were very few winter casualties because the Bluebirds were in good numbers in late March.

On warm sunny days in January and February, these wintering birds were observed catching Crab Spiders and insects! Having pro-tein in their diets helped keep the birds healthy which contributed to their winter survival. Our volunteers took advantage of the mild weather. All of the clubs' birdhouses were washed and inspected by late January. In February and early March, we were putting up new birdhouses. Pollards, Balkwills, Fords, Michinskis, and the Mother-wood Trail all received new birdhouses.

It was fortunate that we had all the trails ready to go early. Spring came early for everyone, including Bluebirds and Tree Swallows. There were many reports of male Bluebirds singing at Bluebird houses through February and early March. On Saturday, March 10, the start of a Bluebird nest was discovered by Alan Batke. This is the earliest we've ever recorded. Just a few days later, on March 13, Gil Breton reported the first Tree Swallow. Again, this is the earliest we've ever recorded. By March 15, Tree Swallows were re-ported by almost every Bluebirder in Southern Essex County. It mid-March, we saw some "daily highs" which were 15 degrees C. or better.

Firsts:

1st Bluebird singing: Friday, February 3, Bob Tanner and Don B. were working on the Pollard Trail. They observed a male Bluebird singing on top of a tall tree.

1st Red-Winged Blackbird: Reported by Alex Michinski, also on Friday, February 3. This solitary male was on Alex's farm near Harrow.

1st Wood Ducks: Cy Poisson saw a pair of "Woodies" at his backyard pond on Sunday, March 4, just south of Essex.

1st Bluebird nest: On Saturday, March 10, Alan Batke and Don B. were inspecting the bird houses at the Balkwill Farm. They discov-ered the start of a Bluebird nest – on a warm and sunny day.

1st Tree Swallow: This “early bird” was reported by Gil Breton. He saw the Tree Swallow in his back yard near Woodslee on Tuesday, March 13. This is a New Record for our Committee. By March 15, Tree Swallows were plentiful in Southern Essex County.

1st Purple Martin: Linda Lyman reported the first Martin at her home in Kingsville on Friday, March 30.

1st Hummingbird: A male Hummer was reported by Alan Batke on Monday, April 16, at his home just outside of Kingsville.

1st House Wren: Reported on Monday, April 16. This bird was discovered by Alex Michinski, at his farm near Harrow.

1st Bluebird hatching: While Monitoring at Caney Creek, Bob Tanner found a nest of recently hatched Bluebirds on April 30.

1st Tree Swallow: An single egg was discovered during the “Bluebird Tour” on Saturday, May 5, by Bob T. on the Balkwill Farm.

Lasts

Both September and October were warm and beautiful. There were many reports of Tree Swallows. In early October, many called to report Tree Swallows over the sewage lagoons, just south of McGregor. There were also reports of Tree Swallows over the sewage lagoons along Highway #3 near Essex. A single Tree Swallow was reported on Thursday, October 25. This bird was observed by Don B. in Essex. This bird was flying west over Brien Avenue East, and calling frequently.

Widowed Bluebird Finds a Helper

Last March, a local Bluebirder was happy to find a pair of Bluebirds at one of his birdhouses. He was worried for their safety, because a male English Sparrow was occasionally visiting the area. On one visit in April, the Bluebirder made a sad discovery. The male English Sparrow was chirping on the roof of the birdhouse. A female English Sparrow was close by. The Bluebirds could not be found.

He opened the Bluebird house and made another sad discovery. The male Bluebird was dead, laying on the nest. He had been pecked to death by one of the Sparrows. The Monitor removed the deceased Bluebird. He left the Bluebird nest in place. He was able to capture and re-locate the Sparrows over the next few days.

About a week after finding the dead male, the Monitor returned to this birdhouse. He spotted the female; she was alive and well! Inside the Bluebird house, he found the completed Bluebird nest which now held four Bluebird eggs. The Monitor wondered “Are these eggs fertile?” “If they’re fertile, can the widow hatch and raise this brood on her own?”

The Bluebirder wrote the “expected hatch date” in his notes. The Monitor returned to this house a few days after the “expected hatch date.” He studied the house from a distance, using binoculars. He was surprised to see a new male Bluebird sitting on the roof! Later, this new male caught an insect and passed it on to the female Bluebird in the house.

Over the next few visits, he continued to see the female and the new male in the area. On one visit, he opened the house and found four nestling Bluebirds – obviously all four eggs were fertile. In time the four youngsters fledged. Immediately, a pair of Tree Swallows moved in and raised a brood of young. The blended family moved out of the area.

It is possible that this female Bluebird did find a new mate. Another possibility is that the new male was an adult son of the widowed female. Bluebirders who study banded birds have observed this in the past. An un-mated adult Bluebird of either gender will some-times assist its widowed mother or father with raising a brood of young.

Lucky Turkey Family

Last Spring, while Monitoring at the Transfer Station, Alan Batke saw a wild female Turkey. Later, he discovered a Turkey nest. This nest contained eleven eggs. The grass in the area had been recently mowed. Fortunately, the nest was not harmed. The tractor driver had, inadvertently, straddled the nest. Also the gang-mower had been set high enough (8”) so that the nest of eggs was not harmed.

On his next visit to the area, Alan checked out the nest. He found that all eleven eggs had hatched. Alan was unable to locate the family. That’s to be expected as hen Turkeys always lead their poults away from the nest soon after hatching. (Baby Turkeys are called poults which we learned last year.)

News from the Trails

Chickadees

In March, Alan Batke and Don B. discovered a pair of Chickadees on the Balkwill north trail. These birds were staying close to bird-house #1. In time, they built a nest. Unfortunately, in early April, they were usurped by a male House Wren. The Chickadees moved out of the area. This was the third Chickadees’ nesting attempt we’ve encountered. We have never recorded a successful Chickadee nesting.

Years ago, one affiliate Bluebirder told us about a pair of Chickadees nesting close to his backyard. The pair build a nest and laid a clutch of eggs. Unfortunately, a pair of English Sparrows usurped them.

A few years ago, a pair of Chickadees were discovered at Altenhof’s. They were found in March and were staying close to Bluebird house #4. In early April, they had started a nest. Unfortunately, a pair of Tree Swallows were also staying close to Bluebird next #4. The Swallows dive-bombed the Chickadees mercilessly. By mid-April, the Chickadees had moved out of the area.

In the City

In the Spring of 2012, there were reports of Bluebirds along the Ganatchio Trail in East Windsor. Some reported a single male Bluebird. Others reported a pair. Most sightings were at (or close to) the city's tree nursery. Denise Hartley confirmed these sightings; she spotted a single male Bluebird one morning.

Delayed Incubation in Bluebirds

Bluebirds and other small birds lay one egg each day. When the last egg of the clutch is laid, incubation usually begins. With Eastern Bluebirds there are three different paths which the mother Bluebird can take.

“Normal” start of incubation: The mother begins incubation on the day that the last egg in the clutch is laid. After fourteen days of incubation, all the eggs hatch on the same day. This is what we commonly see on our Bluebird trails.

“Next-to-Last” start of incubation: In this case, the female begins her incubation the day before the last egg is laid. In other words, she starts incubation when the next-to-last or second-last is laid. This results in most of the eggs hatching fourteen days after incubation has started. However, that last egg hatches one day after his nest-mates.

Being kept warm is not a concern for the last egg. The mother Bluebird broods her newly hatched nestlings as much as she did when they were eggs. We have seen several cases of “next-to-last” starts of incubation. In these cases, the late hatching youngster is successful. Apparently, being only one day younger than the nest-mates is not significant enough to cause any problems.

“Delayed” incubation: The mother Bluebird lays her clutch, then waits to start incubation. Sometimes the wait is a few days; in other cases the wait can be a week or more. Each year we see a few cases of delayed incubation in Bluebirds. Some Blue-birders write the “estimated hatch date” in their notes. One Bluebirder was scratching his head when he first encountered a delayed incubation. He hadn't heard of this. “I'd written in my notes that the hatch-date was May 6,” he told me. By May 10, the eggs had not hatched. “I feared the eggs were all duds. I checked the house again on May 15. Four of the five eggs had hatched and the nestlings were a few days old.” In some cases of delayed incubation, I have seen the male Bluebird stay close to the house. He will drive away house-hunting Tree Swallows.

This year, Don B. had his biggest case of delayed incubation. One female Bluebird at the Harrow Research Station delayed incubation by at least sixteen days. On April 3, a complete Bluebird nest was found with three eggs – in birdhouse #3. The adults were absent. Over the next few visits, it appeared that the pair of Bluebirds was gone for good. A pair of Tree Swallows stayed close to the house. Don parked his truck ¼ mile away and watched the house, using binoculars. Still, no Bluebirds could be found. Don had a nice surprise on Tuesday, April 24. As he approached the bird house, the female Bluebird exited the house. On Saturday, May 5, the house was inspected. All three eggs had hatched! The nestlings were two days old, making their hatch date May 3. By counting back fourteen days before the hatch date, the start of

incubation is revealed: in this case, the math brings us to April 19.....sixteen days from when the full clutch was discovered. The pause may have been longer. The clutch was found on April 3. Had the clutch already been there for one day? Two days? Three days? Some Bluebirders found egg laying began this year on the last days of March. These three young Bluebirds fledged successfully on May 20. The pair had a summer nest of four young. Again, the female Bluebird delayed the incubation. This time, the delay was ten days. Perhaps she will always be a procrastinator.

Dried Mealworms

Bluebirders and Martiners may want to check this out! Recently, while shopping at Harrow Home Hardware, I came across "Stokes Select Dried Mealworms." The 100 gram (3.5oz) container has a re-sealable lid. The instructions say they can be re-hydrated by soaking in warm water for thirty minutes. It's likely available at other Home Hardware stores (\$5.99 + HST).

Red Bud Trees for Sale!

Thanks to everyone who purchased a Red Bud tree! 20% of the sales were donated to the Bluebird Committee. More Red Bud trees will be available for sale through Don's Land-scaping in October of 2013. Planting is also available. Again, 20% of the sales will be donated to the Bluebird Committee. Call Don Bissonnette at 519-738-3279 for more information.

The Brunch Meeting

Our 2012 Brunch Meeting was held in the "fireplace room" at Rose's Kitchen in Essex. Sixteen people gathered to share their Bluebirding experiences and discoveries. Thank you to Rose and Staff – food and service were excellent.

This year, we were joined by JoAnn Grondin and Cathy LePain. These two ladies are cousins and Baillee Bird-a-Thon participants. They spoke to us about their experiences. Both JoAnne and Cathy contribute financially to our Committee by their involvement in this Baillee Bird-a-Thon. Thanks again to JoAnne and Cathy for sharing with us and for keeping the Committee running! During the brunch, the "Top Bluebird Producer" for 2012 was revealed.

Congratulations to the team of Claire and Marg Calder! They Monitor seventeen Bluebird houses on two properties. They produced a total of 50! fledgling Bluebirds in 2012. Our "Top Tree Swallow Producer" for 2012 was Gil Breton. Gil Monitors a total of 49 Bluebird houses. Most of these houses are on the Woodland Hills Golf Course. In 2012, Gil counted 154 fledgling Tree Swallows. Gil was also the Top Tree Swallow Producer for 2011! Congratulations!

Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 23

The Walpole Island Purple Martin Project is hosting the "Birds and Nature, Right in Your Own Back Yard Conference". It will run from noon to 5:00 p.m. A free, light lunch will be available. Guest speakers, vendors, and exhibitors. (Members from our Ontario Purple Martin Association will have a display set up.) Free admission. Donations accepted. Info: www.ontariopurplemartins.ca

Saturday, March 16

The Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society Annual Meeting will be held at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton. A special meeting is planned to celebrate the Society's 25th Anniversary. Info at: www.oebs.ca

Friday, April 5 and Saturday, April 6

The Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania is joining with the Purple Martin Conservation Association to host the Joint Bluebird-Purple Martin Conference. Guest speakers, silent auction, door prizes. Info: www.purplemartin.org or www.thebsp.org

This year, there will be two Bluebird tours. Both will meet at the Greenway parking lot on Arner Town Line at 9:00 a.m. This park-ing lot is less than a kilometer north of County Road 18. Don Bissonnette, along with Bluebird Committee volunteers, will lead the tours. We will drive to nearby Bluebird trails. PLEASE WEAR BOOTS!! NO PETS PLEASE. Tours usually last 2.5 hours

1st tour: Saturday, April 27, 2013 9:00 a.m. 2nd tour: Saturday, May 3, 2013 9:00 a.m.

October 3, 4, and 5, 2013

This year's North American Bluebird Society's Annual Conference is being hosted by the South Carolina Bluebird Society, in Aiken, South Carolina. Tours, guest speakers.

Info: www.nabluebirdsociety.org

Info: www.southcarolinaBluebirds.org

Upcoming Events

THANK YOU

Thanks to the clean-up crew. These folks took advantage of the mild January 2012 weather. By late January, they had all the club's birdhouses washed and inspected. In early February, we finished washing most of the affiliate birdhouses which we monitor. In mid-February, we set up new bird houses.

Thanks to EVERYONE! Joan Affleck, Graham Brown, Alan Batke, Bob Tanner, Monica Poisson and everyone else! Everyone involved with our winter clean-ups say they enjoy these outings. We often spot wildlife, discover animal tracks, and hear a lot of tall tales.

THANK YOU for T.D. Canada Trust. Their "Friends of the Environment Foundation" gave us a grant in late March 2012 for printing and mailing of the 2011 Bluebird Report.

THANK YOU to all those computer-savvy people who emailed out the 2011 Bluebird Report – Caroline Biribauer, Graham Brown, John Balga, and many more. Thanks a bunch!

THANK YOU to Bettie and Gerry Fraser. Over the years they have frequently contributed to our Bluebird Committee. This year the Bettie typed and photocopied this 2012 newsletter. Bettie and their daughter, Suzie, created this 2012 newsletter.

Welcome aboard to Allan Batke who is the latest addition to our Bluebird Committee. Alan has been monitoring his own birdhouses for some years now. In early 2012, Alan joined our

Committee. He monitored the Balkwill trails and the Transfer Station trail near Ruthven. Alan and his wife, Karen, write the column "Ask the Master Gardeners" in the Windsor Star.

SPRING IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER!!! Are your birdhouses ready?

Best wishes for the 2013 Nesting Season

Sincerely, Don Bissonnette

**Essex County Field Naturalists' Club
Bluebird Committee 2012 Production
Chart**

Trail	Monitor	Houses	Successful BB pairs	BBs Fledged	Successful TS Pairs.	Tr Sws. Fledged	Wren Pairs
Club Trails							
	Don						
Altenhof's	Bissonnette	7	1	6	5	28	3
Bailey's	Denise Hartley	2	0	0	2	10	0
Balkwill N	Alan Batke	5	0	0	5	22	0
Balkwill S	Alan Batke	2	0	0	0	0	2
Caney Creek	Bob Tanner	2	2	9	2	5	1
Doyle Godard	Bob Tanner	5	1	4	4	19	2
Grosso's	C&M Calder	3	2	8	2	10	0
Harrow R. Stn.	Don Bissonnette	3	1	7	2	11	2
Howling's	Denise Hartley	2	1	4	2	11	0
Lucchese's	Ron Muir	3	1	5	2	11	0
O'Neil's	Ron Muir	6	2	13	5	18	1
Pollard's	Graham Brown	3	1	6	2	12	0
Sartori's	Bob Tanner	2	1	1	2	11	0
Woodiwiss'	Bob Tanner	3	1	4	2	12	1
Club Total		48	14	67	37	180	12
Affiliate Trails							
Ambassador B.	Dennis Shady	2	0	0	2	8	0
Amherstburg	Dan Mustar	3	0	0	1	5	0
Batke's	Alan Batke	2	0	0	1	4	0
	Don						
Braithwaite's	Bissonnette	1	1	4	0	0	1
Breton's	Gil Breton	49	0	0	39	154	0
Brown's	Graham Brown	1	0	0	1	6	0
Creek House	Reffle-Chepeka	1	0	0	1	3	0
Coulter Sd. Rd.	Don Bissonnette	4	0	0	4	15	0
Dunn Road	A&S Michinski	27	1	7	19	96	3
Essex Landfill	Don Masse	4	0	0	4	11	0
Ford's	W&N Ford	5	0	0	4	18	0
Fryer's	Bob Tanner	2	1	9	1	5	0

Green Way	Alan Batke	9	0	0	7	25	2
Hamel's	Paul Hamel	1	0	0	1	3	0
tt	Marie Knapp	3	0	0	0	0	0
Kraus Farm	Dave Kraus	40	0	0	15	61	0
Mother-wood	C&M Calder	14	5	42	6	38	0
Poisson's	C&M Poisson	6	1	3	3	11	1
	Don						
Santarosa's	Bissonnette	2	0	0	2	8	0
Stoney Cliff	Mary Celestino	6	0	0	5	20	0
Transfer Stn.	Alan Batke	7	0	0	13	51	0
Tuckette	Don						
Farm	Bissonnette	2	0	0	2	9	0
Waldron's	Gerry Waldron	12	0	0	9	38	0
Wilamette	Don						
Farm	Bissonnette	2	0	0	2	11	0
Affiliate Total		205	9	65	142	600	7
Grand Total		253	23	132	179	780	19

ERCA's Bev Wannick honoured for Excellence in Watershed Education!

(This article appeared in *The Shoreline*, December 14, 2012. Submitted by Betty Learmouth)



Bev Wannick, a conservation educator for the Essex Region Conservation Authority, was recognized for Excellence in Watershed Education at the provincial conference of the Watershed Interpreter's Network (WIN) recently.

With over 30 years of experience, Wannick has introduced over 100,000 young people around the Essex Region to the wonder of conservation and outdoor education with joy and enthusiasm.

Since 1981, she has been developing hands-on curriculum based outdoor education programs, in-class environmental education programs, and teacher activity resource booklets.

"Bev is truly a leader and mentor in the field of outdoor education" said ERCA general manager Richard Wyma.

"Bev has built most of our regional outdoor education programs from scratch, and has encouraged other conservation authorities and environmental groups in the southwest region as they have developed their own programs."

Wannick has also worked with various local community groups to host a variety of events and programs including the CAW's Youth Environment Network, Windsor YMCA and Urban Youth field trips, has hosted field trips with the Ornithology Team at the University of Windsor and also, has delivered courses for Canterbury College's Eldercollege, for seniors aged 55 and up.

“Her passion is second to none, she goes above and beyond of what’s expected in order to develop the best possible program, ensuring that the children grasp the materials and are inspired to lifelong environmental learning,” added ERA director of communications and education Danielle Breault Stuebing.

“Bev partnered with school board curriculum consultants on various projects to develop skills that could then be transferred to outdoor learning. She continues to teach kids with great enthusiasm, lighting an environmental consciousness in them at a young age.” Wannick continues to enhance her skills outside of teaching.

She is a founding and life member of the Essex County Field Naturalists’ Club. She has also hosted numerous interpretive events since 1981 including cross country ski, bike and canoe hikes, owl prowls, Holiday Beach hawk run, music and outdoor festival, and a variety of nature walks and assisted with ERCA events such as Earth Day.

She is an assistant bird bander, and annually plans and implements the Festival of Hawks and Shore and Songbird Festivals with the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory, where she has served as a board member and newsletter editor for more than 20 years.

“There are countless occasions when people of all ages remember Bev and the experiences she has shared with them,” said Wyma. “She is truly an inspiration in the world of environmental education, and we can think of no one more deserving of this honour.”

Congratulations to ECFNC Member Betty Learmouth!

Our very own Betty Learmouth has been nominated and chosen as one of the 40 Conservation Champions in Essex County by ERCA to celebrate their 40th year of conservation in the county! Way to go Betty!

Ojibway Nature Centre Receives LEED Award

By: Betty Learmouth

On February 13, 2013, the City of Windsor’s Ojibway Nature Centre received recognition from the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program. This program is administered through the Canada Green Building Council (CAGBC). LEED is a third party certification program and an internationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. LEED promotes a holistic approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in six key areas of human and environmental health.



The six key areas of human and environmental health are: 1) Sustainable Sites; 2) Water Efficiency; 3) Energy & Atmosphere; 4) Materials & Resources; 5) Indoor Environmental Quality; and 6). Innovation and Design Process. The following summary is of each key area of human and environmental health.

- 1) **Sustainable Sites:** Rain water from the roof is diverted to the Matchette Road pond and the bird viewing water feature. Reflective white TPO roof membrane is used to reduce heat lose in the winter and heat gain in the summer. Living green roof was installed and covers approximately 30% of the roof area.
- 2) **Water Efficiency:** Drought-tolerant plant material was used for landscaping; there is no irrigation system. A tertiary sewage system was used, reducing potable waste water by 100%. Potable domestic water is reduced by 30%.
- 3) **Energy & Atmosphere:** The building achieves a 22% reduction in design energy cost relative to ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigeration & Air –Conditioning Engineers) reference building.
- 4) **Materials & Resources:** Features innovative reuse of granite sets, cut granite blocks that once covered the road bed of the Ambassador Bridge. These granite sets were (i) salvaged in 1970 during repaving works of the bridge (ii) given to the city for use in parks (iii) used inside the feature walls and for the fireplace (iv) prominently used on the exterior wall.



Photo: Larry Onysko

Construction Materials = **20%** Recycled Content. Eastern White Cedar, a sustainable lumber from Ontario, was used for exterior cladding and interior finishing.

Regional Materials = **52%** of construction materials were regionally extracted and manufacture.

5) Indoor Environmental Quality: Use of low-emitting VOC adhesives, sealants, paints and coatings. Use of non-formaldehyde adhesives for plastic laminate. Use of low-emitting VOC carpeting.

6) Innovative & Design Process: Ecological Responsibility. The overall construction program emphasized ecological responsibility. This held especially true with the decommissioning of the former nature centre and picnic shelter.

Local Habitat ReStore salvaged doors and window, building materials, plumbing and electrical fixtures.

Fieldstone from the fireplace and construction rubble was recycled for the construction of a snake hibernaculum.

Metals and other recyclables were properly handled according to LEEDs strict protocols for proper management of construction debris.

The Ojibway Nature Centre has been awarded a Silver LEED certification.

The presentation of the Silver LEED certification was chaired by Helga Reidel, CAO City of Windsor. Councillor Fulvio Valentini represented Mayor Eddie Fancis upon the unveiling of the Silver LEED plaque. A number of staff from the City of Windsor Parks and Recreation attended the event as well as staff from NORR Architects.

Staff monitors the use of the new Nature Centre and is pleased to report the wonderful upswing in use of the facility from 2010 (old facility) to 2011 in the new facility. Visitors have shown a 310% increase. Program Participation has shown a 750% increase. Rentals have shown a 760% increase. Revenue has shown a 320% increase.

Students from St. Peter's School assisted Essex County Field Naturalists' President Phil Roberts with the release of two Red-tailed Hawks to mark the event.

Nineteenth Annual ECFNC Weekend Trip to Pelee Island
Saturday May 4th and Sunday May 5th

Leave at 10:00 am Saturday from Leamington Dock
aboard the M.V. Jiimaan (be at the dock by 9:20 am)
We will return to Leamington Dock by 5:45 pm Sunday

We will very likely see: migrating waterfowl & warblers, wildflowers such as trilliums & phlox, basking turtles and snakes, bullfrogs, historic sites, and hear a chorus or two of American Toads, to suggest a few of the many enjoyable experiences on Pelee Island in spring. We should also get a chance to visit the Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO bird banding station) and some of the recently acquired Nature Conservancy of Canada properties: Red Cedar Savannah ESA, Stone Road Alvar ANSI, Brown=s Point and woods, and Brown=s Road Alvar. We will have plenty of time to walk, observe, and relax on the excursions to some of Pelee's most beautiful natural habitats, including: Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve, Lighthouse Point Provincial Nature Reserve, the Stone Road Alvar Complex, Sheridan Point ESA, and many other stops along the way. Should we experience inclement weather, we can visit the Pelee Island Heritage Centre, tour the island in the comfort of our rented bus driven by ECFNC member Sharon Medeiros, or possibly take in the hospitality at ECFNC members John and Mary Celestino's Mill Point cottage.

I have arranged for bus transportation while on the island - no vehicles are necessary or desired on this trip. There is parking at the Leamington Dock area. I have reserved space on the ferry for all registered, walk on passengers attending this trip - we will meet in the ticket office at the dock on Saturday morning.



Dave Kraus. Photo: Jeff Lambe

Accommodations have been reserved at the Anchor and Wheel Inn. The motel and bed and breakfast style rooms are comfortable and are situated on spacious grounds. Reservations are generally set for two persons per room. However, people do not need to register in pairs or groups - everyone is welcome and will be comfortably accommodated !!!

The Anchor and Wheel Inn contains a clean and comfortable restaurant where I have arranged for our delicious meals. We will break for meals regularly (lunch ~ noon and dinner ~ 6:00 pm on Saturday, breakfast ~ 8 am and lunch ~ noon Sunday)

and hot meals and snacks are also available on both ferry crossings.

The total cost will be \$ 175 this year. This cost will include: the two ferry trips, weekend bus transportation, four hot meals, overnight motel accommodations, and all taxes and tips. The \$ 175 cost will include all expenses for the weekend other than alcoholic drinks, souvenirs, and snacks or meals on the ferry. All interested persons need to do is: sign up with me and then show up at the Leamington Dock by 9:20 am Saturday morning with warm outdoor clothes and accessories, overnight necessities, \$ 175 cheque (payable to David Kraus) or cash per person, and a few additional dollars for extra snacks, etc. if desired.

I will contact each person that registers should any time or location changes for the ferry occur, otherwise the above outline is the basic schedule, rain or shine. I will hand out more detailed schedules on the Saturday morning of the trip, but with our own driver and rented bus, we can be flexible and able to see many more sites now.

To register for this trip: see me at the ECFNC meetings, call, or write:

Dave Kraus phone: 519 825 7491

mailing address: 1515 Mersea Road 7, RR 3, Wheatley, Ont. N0P 2P0

email address: david_kraus@gecdsb.on.ca

I look forward to your company on this ECFNC outing!!!

2012 Pelee Island Group, Photo: Jeff Lambe



POINT PELEE BIRDS — ANNUAL SUMMARY FOR 2012

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This 2012 summary pertains to the official Point Pelee Birding Area, which is a standard 15-mile diameter CBC circle centred slightly north of Concession Road B. The area includes all of Wheatley and Wheatley Provincial Park to the northeast, and all of Seacliff and Leamington to the northwest.

It was an excellent year at Point Pelee, with many significant sightings to report. A total of 293 species was found, which is well above the long-term annual average of 280.8 species dating back to 1980 inclusive ($n = 33$). Remarkably it was the second-highest annual total every recorded at Point Pelee, exceeded only by the 301 species that were found in 2005. In contrast the lowest annual totals were tallied in both 1989 and 1984, when only 271 species were found in each of those years.

The entire 13-page report for 2012, illustrated with 27 colour photographs, can be seen here:

<http://essexcountynature.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/point-pelee-birds-2012.pdf>

**The Birds of Point Pelee**

Point Pelee bird sightings (both current and historical) can be sent to:

wormington@juno.com

The Point Pelee database is used for multiple purposes:

- Annual Summaries (such as this current one for 2012)
- Seasonal sightings that are published in the journal *North American Birds*
- For a major publication currently in progress — *The Birds of Point Pelee*

Activities and Excursions!

For further information concerning the ECFNC excursions, visit www.essexcountynature.com, or contact Sarah Renaud (sarah.renaud@gmail.com) or Sarah Baldo (519-300-0039). Let us know your ideas for upcoming excursions. Consider volunteering as an excursion leader.

March 16 - The Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society will hold its Annual General Meeting at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington. A special meeting is planned to celebrate the Society's 25th Anniversary. To view the website: type in Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society, click and the website will appear. Call Don Bissonnette at 519-738-3279 for further information.

March 12-April 15 (9:30-12pm) – Li'l Nature Nuts (ages 2.5-4) - Take a walk on the wild side at Ojibway Park. Enjoy this fun-filled program that includes woodland walks, animal games and nature themed crafts. \$59/6weeks

March 12 or 13 (9:00 a.m.-noon OR 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.) – Frogs, Snakes and You, Ojibway Nature Centre – Enjoy a morning or afternoon filled with activities about slimy, scaly critters. Pre-registration is required. Ages: 4-6. Cost: \$16.00.

March 14 or 15 (9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.) – Wildlife Discovery, Ojibway Nature Centre – How do plants and animals survive in the wild? Discover the secrets at this hands-on camp. Pre-registration is required. Ages: 7-11. Cost: \$34.00.

March 15 (1:30-3pm) – Maple March Break for Families, John R. Park Homestead -
Arrive early, dress warmly and wear boots! Families tour the site with a costumed guide and discover the sweet process of making maple syrup and sugar the pioneer way. Help carry the sap using pails and a wooden yoke. Try your hand at the brace and bit drill. See the trees tapped and the sap evaporating. Learn the history of this sweet springtime treat as you help to make and taste maple sugar. Admission: \$6 adults, \$4 children (3-16), Family Maximum: \$20 For more information, contact the Homestead: 519-738-2029, or jrph@erca.org

March 28 (6:30-8:30pm) – Thrilling Thursdays at Ojibway - March through November, Ojibway Nature Centre will be open in the evening on the last Thursday of each month. Please sign up early for these special programs we will be offering. Adult: \$8, Child: \$7

March 28 – Owl Prowl

April 25 – Tadpole Discovery

May 30 – Building a Butterfly Way Station

April 2 – May 14 (10am -11am)- Spring Hiking at Ojibway (Adults)- Exercise your body and brain! These brisk morning walks with one of Ojibway Nature Centre's naturalists will introduce you to the many plants and animals in our area. Explore the Ojibway Prairie Complex and meet new friends. Senior discount available. \$31/7weeks.

April 10 (6:30pm) – Member Meeting – Walk in Devonwood – enjoy this outdoor member meeting in spring with a walk through Devonwood with Dave Kraus and Phil Roberts. Make sure you dress for the weather!

April 14 (9am-11am) – Early Spring Birding at Hillman Marsh - Join Kory Renaud to see waterfowl and early Spring migrants at Hillman Marsh. Trip will run rain or shine, so dress for the weather! Please meet in the parking lot at Hillman Marsh Conservation Area at 9:00am with your binoculars and field guides. Kory will have his spotting scope available for use. See <http://erca.org/conservation-areas-events/conservation-areas/hillman-marsh/>

April 19 – Canada South Land Trust Annual Dinner and Silent Auction – The Land Trust's Annual Dinner and Auction will be held on Friday, April 19, 2013 in the Windsor Room of the Caboto Club in Windsor. Guest speaker will be Land Trust director Terry Anderson who will discuss the American Chestnut. Terry is President of the Ontario Chestnut Council. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. with dinner served at 7:00 p.m. A silent auction will be held. Please call ahead for pick up or delivery of your donations towards the auction. Cost: \$35.00. Please call Betty at (519) 944-0825 with regard to the auction and tickets.

April 21 – Friends of Ojibway Prairie Annual General Meeting - Guest speaker, FOOP activities update, refreshments and more!

April 23 (10am-3pm) – Friends of Ojibway Prairie Spring Cleanup - Help us beautify our local natural areas. Lunch provided.

April 28 – Annual Bake Sale for Earth Day at Malden Park - Donations are greatly appreciated. Please bake as much as you can. Baked goods, individual or multiples must be clear wrapped for health reasons. Call Cathy Lapain if you have questions 519-776-6097.

April 28 (10am-3pm) – Earth Day at Malden Park (all Ages) - Buy Local Food Challenge. I Like My Food, Naked, Near & Natural! - This year the Earth Day Committee wishes to bring fresh ideas to Windsor Essex Earth Day by introducing our community to the numerous environmental benefits to locally grown, organic food. Highlights include: Canning, Container Gardening and Composting Demonstrations, Interactive Food Kiosk, Container Garden Planting Station, Seed Exchange and more! Ojibway Park staff will be running a woodland and pond exploration activity, be sure to bring your walking shoes! The Friends of Ojibway Prairie will be running a meadow planting at Malden Park from 1-2:30pm as part of the day's activities. Bring a shovel! **Contact Averil Parent at (519) 253-7111 Ext. 290 or aparent@city.windsor.on.ca for more information.**

May 8 (7:30) – Member Meeting – Nature Walk – Join us on a members walk lead by our very own Gerry Waldon on Linda Menard Watt's beautiful property.

May 26 – Ojibway Prairie Walk - Enjoy a walk on the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Preserve with Betty Learmouth. We will observe late spring flowering plants. Meet in the parking lot of the Ojibway Nature Centre at 2:00 p.m.

9 June (9am) – Reptile and Amphibian Hike at Rowsom Conservation Area- Join Tom Preney and Jonathon Choquette to learn more about reptiles and amphibians while exploring Rowsom and Big O Conservation Areas! Observations will be submitted to the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas to help scientists study the populations for these fascinating creatures. The hike will start at Rowsom Conservation Area at 9:00am. Rowsom's Tilbury West Conservation Area is located at 15172 S. Middle Road, in the Town of Lakeshore. See <http://www.lowerthames-conservation.on.ca/Rowsom%27s.html> for a map.

Birdathon

Sign up for the annual Birdathon! Please register as a Club Birder or you can sponsor JoAnn Grondin or Cathy Lapain! Register at www.birdscanada.org and get more information there too!

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Essex County Field Naturalists' Club Membership Form – Due January 1, 2013

Individual membership \$20.00 / year _____ Family membership \$25.00 / year _____
Student (full-time) \$10.00 / year _____ Sustaining membership \$30.00 / year _____

Tax Receipt Eligible: Life membership \$500.00 / year _____
Donation _____

Publications: Wildflowers of the Canadian Erie Islands by Mary Celestino \$15 _____
Fishes of Essex County and Surrounding Waters By Lynda D. Corkum \$25 _____
www.fishesofessexcounty.com

Name _____

Street _____ City _____

Province _____ Postal Code _____ Phone Number _____

E-mail _____ ☐ I wish to receive the Egret by email.

☐ Please contact me to volunteer at ECFNC events!

Thank you!

Make cheques payable to: **Essex County Field Naturalists' Club**
Devonshire Mall P.O., P. O. Box 23011, Windsor, Ontario N8X 5B5