



The Egret

the newsletter of the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club

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ECFNC Monthly Meetings

Except for 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. We also have monthly outings, posted in the 'Activities and Excursions' section of this newsletter as well as on our website. 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 Events:

January 9th - Little River Area Bird Excursion

January 13th - Little River Enhancement Group History

January 14th - Being Saved From Extinction (Canada South Land Trust Event)

January 30th - Waterfowl Hike

February 10th - Flight of the Monarch

March 9th - Annual General Meeting

March 13th - Native Tree Walk



Pictured above: Our president, Jesse Gardner-Costa, receiving an award on behalf of the ECFNC from the University of Windsor as part of the Faculty of Science's "Celebration of Success".

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

c/o Ojibway Nature Centre
5200 Matchette Rd.
Windsor, On. N9C 4E8

Information

ECFNC website
www.essexcountynature.com
Egret email
sheeva.nakhaie@gmail.com
ECFNC fax # 519-839-4795

Ojibway Nature Centre
519-966-5852

Point Pelee National Park
519-322-5700

Essex Region Conservation Auth.
519-776-5209

ECFNC Contacts

President: Jesse Gardner Costa
(zissoucosta@gmail.com)
Vice-President: Tom Prency (tomprency@hotmail.com)
Secretary: JoAnn Grondin (519-734-0056)
Treasurer: Cathy Lapain (519-776-6097)
Membership Secretary: Carl Maiolani
(carlmaiolani@cogeco.ca, 519-972-1399)
Directors:
Linda Menard-Watt (519-734-1879)
Dave Kraus (519-825-7491)
Kory Renaud (koryrenaud@gmail.com)
Sarah Baldo (519-300-0039)
Claire Sanders (sandersc@uwindsor.ca)
Steve Marks (steve.marks66@gmail.com)
Tom Prency (tomprency@hotmail.com)
Jessica Rose (roset@uwindsor.ca)
Paul Pratt (naturalist@primus.ca)
Jeremy Hatt (hattjeremy@hotmail.com)

Chairpersons/Liaisons:

Ontario Nature Liaison: JoAnn Grondin
ERCA Liaison: Sarah Baldo
ERCA Conservation Areas Advisory Committee for park management: Sarah Baldo and Tom Prency
Bluebird Committee Chairman: Don Bissonnette
Essex County Land Stewardship Liaison: Linda Menard-Watt
Ojibway Liaison: Tom Prency
Citizens Environment Alliance Liaison: Jesse Gardner Costa
Windsor Essex County Environmental Committee: Jesse Gardner Costa
Canada South Land Trust Liaison: Dave Kraus
Detroit River Canadian Cleanup Liaison: Claire Sanders and Steve Marks

Committees:

Egret Editorial: Sheeva Nakhaie (chair), Sarah Baldo, Betty Learmouth, Jessica Rose
Field Trips: The Executive
Heritage: JoAnn Grondin (coordinator), Dave Kraus, Betty Learmouth, Jim McAllister, Bruno Sfalcin, Gerry Waldron, Shirley Grondin, Cathy Lapain
Little River Enhancement Group: Ian Naishitt (chair), Jesse Gardner Costa
Fish Book: Dave Kraus, Jesse Gardner Costa
Website: Sarah Baldo, Kory Renaud (co chairs)
Social Media: Kory Renaud and Sarah Baldo

Outing Report: Reptile and Amphibian Walk at Dave Kraus's Property

by: Jeremy Hatt

On September 27, eight people participated in a reptile and amphibian hike on Dave Kraus's property. It was a beautiful fall day with t-shirt weather and good company. The walk was led by Tom Preney, Steve Marks, and Dave, who graciously gave us the tour of his property. The aim was to learn techniques for finding herptiles and how to properly submit records via smart phone to the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas using Ontario Nature's atlas app. Tom Preney is a volunteer coordinator for the Atlas in Essex County.

No sooner did we start the hike than we found a Northern Leopard Frog hopping across the lawn, one of many seen on the walk. Our first submission to the atlas was made. The atlas app requires you to submit a photo of the reptile or amphibian you encounter. Of course, sometimes a photo isn't possible (try getting a picture of a snake slithering away with a smart phone!), so in this case you can simply take a photo of the surrounding habitat. Drop down menus allow you to provide details of weather, habitat type, behaviour (ex. basking, laying eggs, dead on road), and age. There is also description box where you can write additional details like the number of individuals, location name, and comments on identification if you weren't able to take a sufficient photo. The app uses your smart phone's GPS to automatically obtain the coordinates of your location. Atlassing made easy!



*Members submitting a Northern Leopard Frog record
(photo by Jeremy Hatt)*

Next we made our way to a wetland area where some standing water held a large number of Green and Northern Leopard Frog tadpoles. Tadpole records can and should be submitted to the atlas as well. With a bit of searching we found a couple of Green Frogs and two Western Chorus Frogs, more often heard than seen and a highlight of the outing. Our only other amphibian was an American Toad.

We then proceeded to a tree line bordering a soy bean field at the back of Dave's property. In-between the tree line and the field is a buffer strip containing various native grasses, flowers, and shrubs. Prior to the hike, Dave had set up a series of tin sheets in this area. Providing warmth, these tin sheets are a surefire way to find snakes and we were not disappointed. Under the first tin we lifted, a Dekay's Brown Snake darted away, escaping so quickly only two people in the group got to see it. We also found an Eastern Garter Snake hiding under another sheet.

Our final stop on the hike was a pond next to Dave's house where we found our only turtles of the morning, four Midland Painted Turtles. This brought our final herptile count to seven species and we were able to submit plenty of records to the atlas.



*Left: Members searching wetland area for frogs (photo by Tom Preney)
Right: Western Chorus Frog held by Tom Preney (photo by Jeremy Hatt)*

Of course, as with most ECFNC outings, we used our combined knowledge to identify as many flora and fauna as we could!

Fall migration was evident in many bird species. Blue Jays were migrating in moderate numbers throughout the hike and we ended up with a final count of 328 jays. Raptors included Sharp-shinned Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel. Migrant passerines were also on the move and we saw Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Magnolia Warbler, Palm Warbler, and American Goldfinch. Many Song Sparrows were flushed as we walked along the field edges.



Members look on as Louis Gagnon carefully lifts a tin sheet to search for sunning snakes (photo by Tom Preney)

Butterflies were also identified and counted. We found a few southbound Monarchs, several Orange Sulphurs and Cabbage Whites, Black Swallowtail, Viceroy, and a Bronze Copper.

Other insects observed included Spotted Cucumber Beetle, Chinese Mantis, Large Milkweed Bug, Black-horned Tree Cricket, and Black Saddlebags to name a few. Keen observers on the lookout for spiders were fortunate to find two of our most beautiful arthropods: Banded Argiope, identified by its striking black and yellow legs and gold- and white-striped abdomen, and Shamrock Spider, an orb weaver with black and white legs and a bulbous abdomen.



Banded Argiope (upper left; photo by Tom Preney), Shamrock Spider (upper right; photo by Jeremy Hatt), female Chinese Mantis (lower left; photo by Jeremy Hatt), and Black-horned Tree Cricket (lower right; photo by Tom Preney)

The Ontario Nature Reptile and Amphibian Atlas app is available to iPhone and Android users for free. Records can also be submitted online.

Visit http://www.ontarionature.org/protect/species/herpetofaunal_atlas.php for more information on the atlas and how you can get involved.

American Toad... Familiar, yet fairly unknown!

By: Steve the Snake Guy

If you ask most people, they don't know the difference between frogs and toads. There are a few differences, most notably being that toads generally have dry bumpy skin, and frogs have smooth moist skin. Of course, technically speaking, toads actually are frogs, merely being a single scientific Family with the Anurans, called Bufonidae. This Family has representative species in Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia and the Americas.

In Canada, there are five types of toads. The American Toad, Canadian Toad, Fowler's Toad, Western Toad and Great Plains Toad all live in our country, with only the American and Fowler's Toads inhabiting the Province of Ontario. Essex County used to have populations of Fowler's Toads, both on the Lake Erie Islands and on Point Pelee, but they've been extirpated since 1949. They are indeed an Endangered Species in Canada.

And so, the toad that we all know, is the American Toad. This species is found in every single county in Ontario! There are even documentations on the shore of Hudson's Bay! This is the toad that likely lives in your back yard. Yet as familiar as they are, most know very little about them!

Toads come in several colours. The skin colour is either brown, grey, olive, yellow or reddish, and there are raised spots (most think they're warts, but they are not, and toads can't give you warts either!) usually within markings of a darker colour. They can be quite homely, or very beautiful! But that's a matter of opinion! But here's the kicker... the skin colour can change! Temperature, and sometimes other stressors, can cause the toad to lighten or darken in colour, bringing out extra pattern, or obscuring it. Females are larger than males, at up to 11 cm (4 ¼ in) in length, while males may reach about 6.25cm (2 ½ in).



A freshly metamorphosed toadlet on a dime. (Photo from Google)



A gorgeous american toad in Central Ontario (Photo by Steve Marks)

Adult American Toads use the same breeding location year after year and over 80% of males marked as juveniles have been found to return to the pond at which they were spawned!

Breeding occurs in the spring, starting with the all-familiar trilling – the male's advertising calls. They go on and on – up to 30 seconds or more; overlapping with competing males, they sound like they never end! Once the male is approached by a female he hugs her from behind, jamming his

thumb spurs into her armpits so that he cannot fall off, and the embrace can last for hours – even days! Really excited males will amplex your thumb if you offer it!

Females lay 4000 to 8000 eggs in two rows, and the male fertilizes them as they are laid. When each row of eggs is stretched out, it can measure up to 20m long (66 ft.)! Each individual egg is 1.5 mm in diameter. The eggs mature fastest at higher temperatures. They generally hatch in 3 to 12 days. The tiny black tadpoles are less than 5mm long. After developing for 40 to 70 days, the tadpoles transform into tiny adults called toadlets. In Essex County, that happens in late June and July. At this time, they are as small as 7.5mm long (just over ¼ inch!). They reach sexual maturity at around 2 to 3 years of age.

Adult American Toads are purely predators, but toad tadpoles are considered omnivores, because they graze on aquatic vegetation like algae, and dead animal matter. Adult toads

don't have the long tongue that some frogs do. Their tongue is short, making the capture of prey a little more challenging, but they are tenacious!

American Toads have three lines of defense against predators. Firstly, they hide and rely on their natural camouflage. If that fails, they inhale air until their body is all puffed up! This allows them to look big and fierce... more formidable to smaller predators. This is particularly effective against snakes, who usually attempt to consume maximum sized meals on a regular basis. The last line of defense is Bufotoxin. This is a milky white substance that exudes from two large glands behind the head of a toad. The object of this fluid is to convince a predator to let go of a toad during a predatory attempt, and it works really well! The substance tastes extremely disgusting and is a complicated concoction of enzymes, proteins and hormones!

The effectiveness of Bufotoxin is evidenced nicely by the learning ability of our beloved pet dogs! People have had dogs get sprayed by skunks, only to have them get sprayed again and again... Dogs get a snoot full of porcupine quills, a very painful experience, and subsequent extraction procedure, but they go back and investigate and squabble with porcupines time and time again... Dogs only go after a toad once. They learn the first time that they do not ever want that experience again!



A huge female American Toad (photo by Steve Marks)

Toads are commonly found in gardens and are fantastic to have around! Toad houses are great to offer them – a simple clay flowerpot upside down, with a doorway broken into it works really well! These shelters offer them the perfect spot to hide and wait for nighttime, when they'll begin eating all your garden pests, as they eat a wide variety of insects and other invertebrates, including snails, beetles,

slugs, and earthworms, and will prey upon anything they can overpower, and fit into their mouths.

There's so much about toads that people just don't know, yet we believe we are quite familiar with them. If one takes the time to appreciate these little animals, one can see how gorgeous their eyes are! They can have as many as 8000 eggs inside them at a time! The tiny all-black tadpoles turn into adults that can change colours!

Toads are awesome!

Outings Report - Holiday Beach Owl Prowl

By: Jeremy Hatt

Owl Prowls have always been a popular outing for the ECFNC and the prowl on November 7 through Holiday Beach Conservation Area was no exception. A determined group of 16 people led by Kory Renaud made their way into the woods at 7:00pm in hopes of hearing the three expected species in the fall: Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, and with a bit of luck, Northern Saw-whet Owl.

Kory began with a few guidelines on finding and hearing owls. Owling requires patience, he told us, and often involves periods of standing still and silent to listen for distant calls. He brought along a speaker to hook up to his phone while playing calls, hoping to get a response or even lure an owl to us. Great Horned Owls in particular are very territorial so the presence of another owl will often cause them to investigate. Flashlights are a must for walking in the dark but we were careful to aim the light beams to the ground and not into the trees as a bright light can temporarily blind an owl (and owlers!). Similarly, flash photography is not a good idea. Kory brought along a red light that wouldn't affect an owl's vision if shined over the bird to see it in the dark.

Owl calls were played so we knew what to listen for. Eastern Screech-Owls have two songs: a short descending whinny and a long, even whistling trill. Many birders can learn to imitate the screech-owl's song and it has the same effect on songbirds as pishing, bringing them in close to investigate the sounds. If you ever hear a daytime screech-owl, beware. It might just be a birder! Everyone is familiar with the Great Horned Owl's series of deep hoots, reminiscent of a Mourning Dove. Northern Saw-whet Owls repeat a series of whistled toots that sound almost as cute as they look.

Early arrivers had to strain their ears to pick up on the distant whinny of an Eastern Screech-Owl but it stopped by the time the prowl began. Once the group was assembled, we entered the woods. Stop after stop, we listened attentively, but wind was not in our favour. A calm night is ideal for owling so you can hear their calls travel long distances. Unfortunately a steady breeze out of the west gradually turned into wind.

For one exciting moment, we started to hear a Northern Saw-whet Owl but quickly realized it was just a recording playing on a loop from the Holiday Beach banding station where they band saw-whets daily during their peak migration. Kory had made arrangements with the station that if they caught an owl while we were there, we would visit and get a lesson in capturing, banding, and releasing. We never got the chance though as only one owl was banded that night after our group had already left.



Left: Barn Owl caught at Windsor Airport (photo by Tom Preney)

Right: Barred Owl in Kingsville (photo by Michael Dick)

We did manage to hear some wildlife during the walk: a few Mallards quacking away from the marsh, Tundra Swans flying over, and the chip note of an American Tree Sparrow. On one trail, there was a loud crash nearby when a White-tailed Deer was startled by our presence. It gave us prowlers quite the jolt!

After spending 2 hours trying for owls, we came to a final stop back at the parking lot. No sooner did we stop than an Eastern Screech-Owl began its whinnying song from the nearby woods. It even got a response from a second owl further to the north. We listened to the two owls whinny and trill away in the night, excited that everyone was able to hear one of our targets.

Rare Owls in Essex County

It has been a great year for owls in Essex County so far with eight species recorded including two exceptional rarities: a hatch-year Barn Owl caught and banded at the Windsor International Airport on September 29th and a Barred Owl photographed in Kingsville on November 10th. The Barred Owl constitutes Essex County's first documented record of the species, bringing the county's total owls to ten! Other single-record species for the county include the famous Great Gray Owl of 2011/12, first seen near Point Pelee and eventually spending most of its time in Kingsville, a Burrowing Owl on Pelee Island in 2008, and a Boreal Owl in Windsor in 1996.

A Jamaican Adventure

By Jeremy Hatt and Mark Field

From December 7 to 13, 2015, we took a trip to Jamaica. The trip wasn't entirely a birding trip, however. Jeremy's brother was getting married at the Grand Bahia Principe resort in Runaway Bay and a trip to Jamaica without birding was an unbearable premise so Mark was invited and the plans for maximizing birding time around the wedding started to fall into place.

Our main targets on the trip were the 26 species endemic to the country. Our itinerary included Montego Bay Sewage Lagoons, Rocklands Bird Sanctuary, an overnight stay at the Windsor Research Station in Trelawney, and two days of guided hikes with Wendy Lee, who we found from a review on Trip Advisor.

The first day of our trip was spent on the resort. This gave us a chance to spend some time with Jeremy's family before the birding started and they wouldn't see us again until the wedding. Some of the birds that were seen around the resort included Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Magnificent Frigatebird, Bananaquit, Greater Antillean Grackle, White-crowned Pigeon, Zenaida Dove, Common Ground-Dove, Loggerhead Kingbird, and Yellow-throated Warbler. We also saw all three endemic hummingbirds, the Streamertail, the Vervain Hummingbird (the world's second-smallest bird), and the Jamaican Mango. Quite a spectacle came at the end of the day when at least 100 White-collared Swifts flew over the resort.

Our second day was spent with Wendy, who is based in Runaway Bay. She is a valuable guide to have for those staying on the north shore of the island, knows the right locations to take visitors to maximize the number of species they see on their trip, and will cater your hikes to specific species you desire to see.



The Doctorbird, Jamaica's national bird. The official name for the species is Streamertail. Jamaica has two subspecies, Red-billed and Black-billed. We saw the Red-billed on this trip; the Black-billed is isolated to the northeast corner of the island. Photo by Mark Field.

Wendy picked us up at the resort and took us to Stewart Town, about an hour drive into the interior of the island. The trail consisted of an old road no longer passable for vehicles, but an important route for area farmers bringing their produce to market. The geography is such that agriculture occurs along isolated valleys tucked beneath tall, steep mountains. We encountered a number of friendly farmers along the way.

One of the benefits to hiring a guide is that they usually know where to find day-roosting and hard-to-find species. Wendy introduced us to "Stewart", a Northern Potoo that often sleeps in a particular tree along the route. She also took us to a spot where Crested Quail-Dove, a declining endemic, can be found, but we didn't find any.

We took some time before the trip to familiarize ourselves with the sounds of Jamaican birds, and found it paid off quite handsomely once we arrived. Many of the birds were in dense vegetation, and photography proved quite difficult. Despite this, we picked up many of the endemics including Jamaican Tody, Jamaican Woodpecker, Jamaican Pewee, Sad and Stolid Flycatchers, Arrowhead Warbler, Jamaican

Spindalis, and Jamaican Oriole. Black-billed and Yellow-billed Parrots passed overhead, but good views were brief. We were quite pleased to pick up Blue Mountain and Jamaican Vireos, which offered some of our best looks of the day.

We found Wendy to be a most pleasant guide, willing to talk to us about local customs, conservation issues, and many of the natural things we encountered. One of the highlights of the day was when we returned to the vehicle at the end the hike. We stopped to appreciate a beautiful endemic butterfly, and just as we were about to take photos, a previously unseen Sad Flycatcher swooped in, snatching the butterfly out of midair. It was a surprise, but a welcome one: getting to witness an endemic eating an endemic.

We had decided early on that we would spend as much time as possible off-resort. To do this, we rented a car from Salem Motors, a local company that Wendy also uses. Having been quite pleased with our first day out, we picked up a rental car early the next morning and decided to head straight back to Stewart Town hoping for a better look at the parrots and another chance for the quail-dove. It provided us with a known route on which to familiarize ourselves with driving in Jamaica and we had to pick something close by so we could get back in time for the wedding that afternoon.

Wendy had told us about some special John Crows (Turkey Vultures) in the area that were

partially leucistic, and we spotted one of them soaring above the valley as we arrived. This beautiful bird was not new for our list, but a highlight of the day regardless. While we couldn't refind Stewart, we found two accommodating birds in its preferred tree, a Jamaican Becard that captured a walking stick insect and a Jamaican Spindalis quietly feeding on citrus fruit. We checked twice more for the Quail-Dove without success, but found an intriguing Soldier Crab which somewhat lessened the blow.



Blue Mountain Vireo in Stewart Town. Photo by Mark Field

The wedding took place along the shore at the resort. Although we couldn't bird during the ceremony (though we did, a little bit), we managed to find a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron on our walk to the reception. While the celebrations lasted late into the night, we ducked out early, our 6am alarm and the promise of more endemics dancing in our heads.

Wednesday was an ambitious day. We plotted a route from Runaway Bay and through Montego Bay to get to Rocklands Bird Sanctuary. Our itinerary was lacking on pond and wetland habitat so we stopped along the way to investigate two

areas we thought might be suitable for shorebirds and waders. We were not disappointed as our first stop had mudflats where we saw highlights like Black-necked Stilt and Wilson's Plover, and a few other shorebird species.

Our journey through Montego Bay proved to be a stressful driving experience. There is only one main route through the city and we arrived in the middle of rush hour while still getting used to driving on the left side of the road. Despite this, we managed to navigate through, arriving at Rocklands Bird Sanctuary only an hour behind schedule. The drive up to the sanctuary was extremely steep, so we were excited at the chance to relax and let the birds come to us once we had arrived.

Rocklands was started by Lisa Salmon, known locally as the Bird Lady. Since she passed away, a long serving employee named Fritz has taken over hosting tourists at her former home. Here we were able to sit and hold small bottles of sugar water that the two larger hummingbird species would come to and feed from. It takes some patience to get the birds perched and feeding, but it is an amazing experience. Citrus fruit placed around the sanctuary attracted Jamaican Orioles and numerous Orangequits. Caribbean Dove, White-winged Dove, Common Ground-Dove, and Yellow-faced and Black-faced Grassquits afforded great looks coming to seed placed on the walkway. This location is highly recommended for photographers. Fritz also gave us a tour of the grounds, managing to pick out birds we may have overlooked if not for his skilled eye. At the end of the tour, we nailed down our only White-eyed Thrush on the trip.

On our way back from Rocklands, we stopped at the Montego Bay Sewage Ponds. This large series of lagoons is a worthwhile visit, though a bit tricky to find safe parking along a busy road. A staggering number of Black-necked Stilts were present and a great assortment of water birds including Least Grebe, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, Glossy Ibis, and a single Caribbean Coot. Two Northern Jacanas were also a highlight.

Our next leg of the trip was the most daunting. We were on our way to the Windsor Research Station, a remote facility located in the heart of Cockpit Country, accessible only by a one-lane dirt path with no road signs. At times it felt like the road wouldn't be wide enough for our vehicle, which was scraping vegetation as we slowly made our way along, wondering what we would do if we somehow met another vehicle on this stretch. As the proprietor of Windsor quipped, "we provide the directions; it's up to you to get here."

It was with great relief that we arrived at the station before dark and had time to explore a bit of the area. The Windsor Caves are nearby and we stood at the vast entrance to the caves in awe of how deep they cut into the mountain. Later that evening we saw many bats that use the caves for roosting during the day.

We didn't venture far from the research station on our first night. On our walk we came across a trio of entertaining and noisy Smooth-billed Anis in the fields, along with a Merlin and Cattle Egrets in abundance. After a long and sometimes stressful day, we enjoyed a peaceful moment as the last of the sun's light faded and we heard the distant hoots of two Jamaican Owls, a lifer for both of us and our only encounter with this species.



*Orangequits (left: female, right: male) at Rocklands.
Photo by Mark Field.*

Our hosts in Windsor, Mike Schwartz and Susan Koenig, were knowledgeable of just about everything you could ask about Jamaica's wildlife, the many research projects happening across the island, and issues of conservation. They, and Wendy as well, told us about the losing battle to protect a significant area of limestone forest near Runaway Bay that was led by local conservationists and environmentalists. Sadly, this valuable habitat was destroyed to build our home for the week, the Grand Bahia Principe.

The next morning we woke up before dawn to explore Windsor, home to just six people. The area consists of a few houses and agricultural fields surrounded by miles of forest and mountains. Here we enjoyed seeing a number of our common wood-warblers on their wintering grounds as well as Worm-eating and Prairie Warblers. Jamicrows (Jamaican Crow) filled the air with raucous chorus. We also had our best looks at Chestnut-bellied Lizard-Cuckoos, surely one of Jamaica's most magnificent endemics. Unfortunately, our skills in song identification failed us and we somehow managed to miss one of our target endemics,

the Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo, which Susan said had been calling around the research station all morning.

Olive-throated Parakeet was abundant here and we saw more than 80 birds on our walk. We also hiked up the mountainside on the Windsor-Troy Trail hoping to get a closer look at Black-billed Parrot, which up to this point we had only seen in flight. It turned out to be a great decision since we were able to see the parrots within thirty feet of the trail, perched at head height. We left Windsor in the early afternoon, proud of the adventure into the deeper reaches of Jamaica, and returned to the resort.

Our last day of birding was spent with Wendy who took us to the Sussex Estate south of Ocho Rios. This area was closer to the coast and was primarily rolling foothills with large houses built into the side of the hills. Here we had fantastic looks at the Rufus-throated Solitaire, a species we had previously only heard. We also had additional looks at species such as Green-rumped Parrotlets, Hopping Dick (White-chinned Thrush), Rufus-tailed Flycatcher, Greater Antillean Bullfinch, and Jamaican Euphonia.



*Black-billed Parrots in Windsor.
Photo by Mark Field.*

From here we traveled to a small park in Ocho Rios where a feral population of Yellow-billed Parrots has become established. Though we had seen this species in the mountains as flyovers, here we had stunning looks at them perched not far above our heads. The park was also home to a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron colony, and a field of flowering plants that attracted a wide array of butterflies.

Our final stop on the way back to the resort was at Fisherman Beach in west Ocho Rios. Fishers on this beach were throwing offal from their catches into the ocean and a number of Magnificent Frigatebirds were flying in close, providing excellent opportunities to photograph these wonderful birds. On the drive back, we saw many Antillean Palm-Swifts flying over the coastal lands, and when we returned to the resort about 75 Cave Swallows were flying overhead.

Over the course of a week, we recorded 96 species including 22 endemics and submitted 36 eBird checklists. Nineteen species occurred only once during the trip, and there were seven species represented by a single individual. The most frequently encountered species was Cattle Egret, and 13 species were common enough to be recorded on more than 30% of our checklists. Of the endemics, only Jamaican Crow and Streamertail appeared this frequently. We totaled 42 species while on the resort, but just three of those were endemics.



*Left: Rufous-throated Solitaire at Sutton Estate. Photo by Mark Field.
Right: Feral Yellow-billed Parrots in Ocho Rios. Photo by Mark Field.*

If you might like to visit...

When traveling to Jamaica, safety concerns are often discussed. We only had one instance where we felt uncomfortable, an encounter with an aggressive car window washer in Montego Bay. Driving can be stressful and one should be prepared to be bold on the road. Drivers travel fast not only on highways but on back roads as well, despite sharp turns and often bad road conditions. Car horns are used often to indicate an oncoming vehicle around a tight corner, when you pass someone or are getting passed, and even as a greeting. We only drove at night once.

We found Salem Car Rental to be professional and reasonably priced. It is conveniently located for anyone staying at the Grand Bahia Principe or other resorts near Runaway Bay. The resort itself is family-oriented, consisting of an 812-room hotel and a couple of smaller buildings. There is minimal bird habitat around the resort apart from an egret roost that can be seen by looking past a nude beach to see the birds beyond. A scope proved useful at this and several other locations, but is of limited value inland.

Mosquitoes were a nuisance in all forested areas and bug repellent is a must. In the last few years, the chikungunya virus has become prevalent in Jamaica. The virus causes flu-like symptoms and muscle aches that can linger for weeks. It is carried only by tiger mosquitoes, a large, non-native mosquito seen near the coast and populated areas. We saw these mosquitoes on the resort but none of our group contracted the virus.

Blue Kestrel Café at the Hawkfest Sep. 12-13, 2015

By Carl Maiolani

Once again members of the club operated a food concession on the first weekend of the Hawkfest this year at the Holiday Beach Conservation Area. Organizers were led by JoAnn Grondin and included Shirley Grondin, Cathy Lapain and Carl Maiolani. Additional volunteer support on the weekend was provided by Denise Hartley, Ruth Hart, Shirley and Rob Dunlop, Conrad Dippel, Linda Menard-Watt, Pauline Renaud and Andy Paul. As usual, Cathy, Shirley and JoAnn baked all kinds of muffins and cookies and did not ask for compensation for their costs and time. Thanks ladies for all your efforts. Hot dogs from Brenners and sausages from the Sanson Estate Winery were the main lunch items. The hotdogs sold out first but the sausages were also sold out before the concession closed both days. The net proceeds of approximately \$600 was credited to the Heritage Committee account of the club which is used from time to time to assist with the purchase of properties for conservation purposes. Much credit should also be given to the youngest of the volunteers Andy Paul as he willingly accepted the responsibility of arranging really good weather for both days.

Annual ECFNC Dinner, November 14, 2015

By: Betty Learmouth

This year's annual dinner was held at the Fogolar Furlan Club. The event was also celebrating 30 years of both the Citizens Environmental Alliance and the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club.

ECFNC President Jesse Gardner Costa welcomed everyone to the dinner. Tom Preney was the Master of Ceremonies.

Our dinner was delicious, beginning with small plates of celery, black olives and green olives. Platters of penne served with a light blush were placed on each table. Eggplant Parmesan was enjoyed with special sliced meats and small baked potatoes. Dessert was cake and ice cream, tea or coffee.



Photo by Steve Marks

Frank Butler of the CEA mentioned the many projects that the ECFNC and the CEA have been engaged together over the years. Recent activities by ECFNC include awards from ERCA, the Bio Blitz, the Pelee trip and working toward the protection of Ojibway Shores and restoration projects.

Denise Hartley was this year's recipient of the Achievement Award. For many years, Denise maintained the ECFNC's membership.



Photo by Steve Marks

Our guest speaker for the evening was Naturalist Paul Pratt who has recently retired from this position with the City of Windsor. Paul was City naturalist since 1975. Paul was also Rondeau Provincial Park and Algonquin Provincial Park naturalist. Paul is assisting with a new banding site in Wheatley.

Paul introduced his talk with an image of a bear eating a dandelion in the Yukon, within the great space of Canada's north. Then Paul introduced his audience to birding in Brazil, in particular the coastal Atlantic forest, which is just a small area of what is left. It is a highly treasured area with a semi – mountainous region in the south. There are 160 endemic species of birds in this area.

Another treasured area is the Pantanal, which is flat open wetland and forest. Visitors to the Pantanal fly into Sao Paulo to meet birding guide Edson Endrigo. Paul suggested visiting birders watch the feeders for hummingbirds. Look for the Scaly-throated Hermit, Wood Nymph and Brazilian Ruby. Other species to be observed include Scarlet Tanager, Green-headed Tanager, Magpie Tanager, Toucan species and Saffron Toucanet. The area has wonderful waterfalls and many species of Flycatchers. Look for Southern Lapwing and Tropical Mockingbird. Look for the Streamer Tailed Tyrant which may be located in groups of up to twenty individuals. These birds don't like to be apart. There is an incredible variety of plants including bamboo shoots, Passionflower and ginger plants.

The entrance to the Pantanal is enhanced by a wooden frame. Beyond the entrance, visiting birds are delighted to see a wetland with many egrets, some of which are perched in an umbrella like tree. Other bird species include the Whistling Heron, Giant Storks, Toco Toucans,

and Amazon Kingfishers. Animals of note included Caiman, Giant Ant Eater, River Otter, Neotropical Anteater, Black and Golden Howler Monkeys and Spider Monkeys. Christolina Lodge has built a 150 foot steel tower, which provides an up-close viewing. Other species observed included Yellow-headed Vultures. Great Pootoo at night as well as Long-tailed Pootoo.

There are 713 protected natural areas in the Eastern Atlantic forest. Plans are underway to undertake reforestation.

Thank you to Paul for an informative talk with wonderful images of wild life in South America!

**ECFNC 31st Annual Dinner, Celebrating 30 years
for the ECFNC and the Citizens Environment Alliance
Saturday, November 14, 2015
by JoAnn Grondin, Heritage Committee Coordinator**

People continue to amaze me with their commitment and dedication to helping out. Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank several people for their help with our fabulous 31st Annual Dinner. This dinner could not take place without their help.

Selling tickets: Carl Maiolani, Ojibway Nature Centre staff, Pelee Wings staff, the CEA staff and me.

Set up: Shirley Grondin, Carl Maiolani, Pauline Renaud and me.

Desserts: Dave Kraus for arranging for and delivering the cake.

Reception Desk: Pauline Renaud and Kathy Lesperance.

Cashiers: Shirley Grondin, Bonnie Ross and Cathy Lapain (and for Denise Hartley for being a backup if we needed one).

Our MC: Tom Preney.

To Frank Butler from the Citizens Environment Alliance for his talk regarding the CEA.

Congratulations to Denise Hartley, the recipient of our Outstanding Achievement Award. Denise has been a Club member for 25 years. She acted as our Membership Secretary for many years while she was on the Executive. She continues to help at our fund raising events. She is very deserving of this Award.

Guest Speaker: Paul Pratt. Paul shared his experiences and working vacation pictures from his visits to the Brazilian Rainforests - "Exploring the Brazilian Rainforest: Images of the bold, beautiful and bizarre." He discussed 3 major regions of Brazil: Atlantic and Amazon Rainforests and Pantanal wetlands. Paul is a very entertaining speaker with spectacular pictures – he did not disappoint!!

Tom Preney for introducing our guest speaker and Jesse Gardner Costa for thanking him.

A special thank you to Pauline Renaud for drawing the names for the door prize winners.

The people who donated door prizes: I know that I don't have all the names of the people who donated door prizes, so rather than miss someone, I will thank everyone collectively.

For the donation of silent auction items. Please see the separate list of those who donated and what they donated. I am missing the bid sheet for #84 – the camera bag from Henrys. Please contact me if you know where it is.

Thank you to Fogolar Furlan staff. The meal was very good and the service was great, including serving the cake and ice cream!!

Thank you to all who attended. It was a full house and a great evening!!

31st Annual Dinner, Nov. 14, 2015
Donations to the Silent Auction - Thanks to All!!

Article/Name	Donated by
Framed picture of Friends of the Detroit River	Lynda Corkum
Goat Cheese Baker	Rose Edwards
Two Bone China mugs, blue trim	Rose Edwards
Silver Framed picture of man and woman by "Sandy"	Ruth Beckman
Gold framed picture of woman with green coat, red hat, brown purse (unable to read artist)	Ruth Beckman
Silver framed picture of woman on dock with flowing white dress and white hat (unable to read artist)	Ruth Beckman
Framed picture of woods and path "Believe"	Ruth Beckman
Small framed picture of little girl and boat	Ruth Beckman
Silver framed picture of woman on dock with flowing white dress and white hat (unable to read artist)	Ruth Beckman
Silver framed picture of woman in white wicker chair with flowing yellow dress by "Coby"	Ruth Beckman
Very large framed brown/sandy tones herbarium, approx. 30 1/2 " X 36" (unable to read artist)	Ruth Beckman
Framed abstract greens and pinks, approx. 25" X 30 1/2"	Ruth Beckman
Framed two girls in gold tones, 18" X 24"	Ruth Beckman
National Geographic "Global Birding Traveling the World in Search of Birds" by Les Beletsky	Bob & Patricia Sanford
Bird-by-Bird Gardening by Sally Roth	Bob & Patricia Sanford
Birds and Birding at Cape May by Clay & Pat Sutton	Bob & Patricia Sanford
Birder's Conservation Handbook by Jeffrey V. Wells	Bob & Patricia Sanford
The Double Crested Cormorant Plight of a Feathered Pariah by Linda R. Wires	Bob & Patricia Sanford
Machine Appliqued and Hand Quilted Wall Hanging	Shirley Grondin
Basket of Jams	Shirley Grondin
Bowman Renaud Tax Services - 2 Basic Personal 2015 Canadian Tax Returns	Bowman & Renaud
Bowman Renaud Tax Services - 2 Basic Personal 2015 Canadian Tax Returns	Bowman & Renaud
Wok - never used	JoAnn Grondin
Bird House	JoAnn Grondin

Miscellaneous items for office or student	JoAnn Grondin
Wooden Loon Planter (Made by Don Masse and painted by Cathy Lapain)	Don Masse
Six 8 oz jars of jams/jellies	Cathy Lapain
Collectors Plate "Curiosity Asian Elephants" with frame	Cathy Lapain
Collectors Plate "The Snowy Owl" with frame	Cathy Lapain
Cardinal Mug/Box/Coaster	Cathy Lapain
Framed Set of Birds	Cathy Lapain
Birder's Guide to Texas by Edward A. <u>Kutac</u>	ECFNC
Fifty Places to go Birding Before You Die by Chris <u>Santella</u>	ECFNC
The Everglades River of Grass by Marjory <u>Stoneman</u> Douglas	ECFNC
The American Bird Conservancy Guide to The 500 Most Important Bird Areas in the United States - American Bird Conservancy	ECFNC
The Bedside Book of Birds by Graeme Gibson	ECFNC
Peterson Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies	ECFNC
An Enchantment of Birds by Richard <u>Cannings</u>	ECFNC
The Visitor's Guide to the Birds of the Central National Parks United States and Canada by Roland H. <u>Wauer</u>	ECFNC
The Grail Bird Hot on the Trail of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker by Tim Gallagher	ECFNC
World of Beauty Canada's National Parks	ECFNC
Wild Wings - The Hidden World of Birds by Michael	ECFNC
The Ontario Butterfly Atlas	ECFNC
North American Marsh Birds by Gary Low and William <u>Mansell</u>	ECFNC
Sibley's Birding Basics - new book	JoAnn Grondin
The Windsor Star from the Vault - A Photo History of Windsor - new book	JoAnn Grondin
The Amazing Book of Mazes - new book	JoAnn Grondin
House Rules by Jodi <u>Piccotti</u> - new book	JoAnn Grondin
500 Greatest-Ever Vegetarian Recipes - new book	JoAnn Grondin
Butterflies of North America by Jeffrey <u>Glassberg</u> - new book	JoAnn Grondin
Sparrows and Finches by Chris G. <u>Earley</u> - new book	JoAnn Grondin
Warblers by Chris G. <u>Earley</u> - new book	JoAnn Grondin
The Natural Knitter by Barbara Albright - new book	JoAnn Grondin
The Rug Hook Book - Edited by <u>T. Boswell</u> - new book	JoAnn Grondin
Ultimate dog grooming	JoAnn Grondin
The Encyclopedia of Birds - Volume 1 - <u>Adelie Penguin</u> to Hoopoe and Volume 2 - House Sparrow to Yellow-billed Cuckoo - both are new books	JoAnn Grondin
<u>Pharaonic</u> Civilization - History and Treasures of Ancient Egypt - new book	JoAnn Grondin
Waterfowl of Eastern North America by Chris G. <u>Earley</u> - new book	JoAnn Grondin
Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie - new book	JoAnn Grondin

Two Premium Windsor Spitfire Tickets for Nov. 27 th , Game 12, Sec. 115, Row K, Seats 5 and 6, VIP parking and more	CEA/AM 800
Two Premium Windsor Spitfire Tickets for Nov. 27 th , Game 12, Sec. 15, Row K, Seats 7 and 6, VIP parking and more	CEA/AM800
Two Windsor Spitfire Tickets for Nov. 29 th , Game13, Sec. 120, Row G, Seats 3 and 4	CEA/AM800
Black Elephant	Anonymous
Pumpkin Cookie Jar	Ralph Benoit
50 lb. Bag of black oil Sunflower Seeds	Bob <u>Wickett</u> /Two \Jays
Camera Bag from Henry's	Linda Menard-Watt
Briefcase	Linda Menard-Watt
Freshwater Fishes of Canada, published 1973	Linda Menard-Watt
Loons – new book	Linda Menard-Watt
Atlas of Birds Migration – new book	Linda Menard-Watt
Loon Statue	Cathy Lapain
2000 Proof Set of Coins	Cathy Lapain
i-bar	Bob-Hall Brooks
Antlers	Steve Marks
Best Loved Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen - new book	JoAnn Grondin
18 cm/7" small plate - Winter Twilight - Owl 1974, Royal Copenhagen (#39 last year)	Regal Gift Shop
15 cm/6 " small plate -Hare & Young - Mothers Day 1981, Bing & <u>Grondahi</u> Copenhagen Porcelain (#36 last year)\0	Regal Gift Shop
10 3/4 inch. Large plate - Yellow Peony Plate (#43 last year)	Anonymous
Plate - Pond Inlet - <u>N.W.T.</u> by Charles Falkner, Christian Bell <u>Porcelain</u>	Regal Gift Shop
731A Numbered Plate - Kindness - A Mother's Love Collection by Jan Anderson	Regal Gift Shop
20 cm/7 3/4 large plate - The Apprentice by <u>Nori</u> Peter, num <u>bered</u> plate 293/7500 (#40 last year)	Regal Gift Shop
Wall hanging - "Fallen Leaves"	Mary Hall-Brooks
Wall hanging - "Peak <u>Colours</u> "	Mary Hall-Brooks
Framed Photo of Woodlot Scene	Arlene Douglas
Over the Hill to the <u>Moorehouse</u> by Stewart Moore	CEA
DVD - The Big Year	Jeremy Hatt
The World Until Yesterday by Jared Diamond - new book	Anonymous
My Spy Birdhouse	Anonymous
Butterfly print ready for framing by Robert Bishop	Anonymous
Rainforest by Thomas <u>Marent</u>	Anonymous
Cubic Zirconia gold plated bracelet	Anonymous

Activities and Events

For further information concerning the ECFNC excursions, visit www.essexcountynature.com, or contact the executive (please see contact page). Let us know your ideas for upcoming excursions. Consider volunteering as an excursion leader!

Upcoming Christmas Bird Counts:

Dec 19 Cedar Creek, Paul Pratt
naturalist@primus.ca

Dec 20 Blenheim (Rondeau), Keith Burk
keithburk2@xplornet.com

Dec 21 Point Pelee, Sarah Rupert
sarah.rupert@pc.gc.ca

Jan 1 Detroit River, Paul Pratt

January 9th - Little River Area Bird Excursion

Detroit River & Surrounding Areas - joint outing with Ontario Field Ornithologists

Leaders: Kory Renaud, Jeremy Bensette, Jeremy Hatt

Meet 9a.m. at Lakeview Park Marina - 9200 Riverside Drive East in Windsor.

Winter is an excellent time of year to observe waterfowl, gulls and birds of prey using the often open water of the Detroit River. We will start the day at the marina, make a visit to the Little River Corridor, continue down river to check a few more spots and finally end at Ojibway Park.

Be sure to dress for the weather, pack some snacks and bring your scope if you have one. Due to the duration of the outing (9-3), we will make a brief stop for lunch.

January 13th - Little River Enhancement Group History

7:30 pm at Ojibway Nature Centre

Ian Naisbitt was an elementary school educator for 30 years and created the Habitat 2000 Club at Concord School in 1989, organizing 6 river cleanups of the "old channel" of Little River in East Windsor. In 1991, he helped establish the Little River Enhancement Group, which consisted of educators and representatives of the City of Windsor, Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy, Essex Region Conservation Authority, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Habitat 2000 Club Concord Public Elementary School (1989-1990).

Accordingly, Lil' Reg "adopted" the Little River Watershed, which drains portions of the Town of Tecumseh and the City of Windsor into the Detroit River. Local schools and community volunteers have helped with Lil' Reg's efforts to improve the quality of the watershed ecosystem. The group coordinates beneficial environmental activities throughout the river basin using a multi-stakeholder approach in the community and both Ian and Lil' Reg have won numerous awards for their contributions. In 2007, Lil' Reg restructured and became a committee of Essex County Nature.

January 14th - Being Saved From Extinction (Canada South Land Trust Event)

Todd Pepper is our Land Trust speaker for Thursday, January 14, 2016 at the Essex Civic Centre in Room C. This is a fund raising event with donations of \$20 received. Refreshments.

Todd forwarded the following:

Being Saved from Extinction – New Zealand's Native Birds

The native birds of New Zealand have been at risk ever since humans set foot on the islands in 1280. By 1900 the western settlers had essentially cleared 80% of the country of its dense, primordial, 80 million year of forest to create sheep habitat. This resulted in the extinction of another 11 species and put the remaining 50 or so endemic forest dwelling species at risk.

January 30th - Waterfowl Hike

10 am. Meet at Lakeview Marina, dress for the weather.

February 10th - Flight of the Monarch

Although a number of insect species migrate, the Monarch migration is truly amazing, rivalling that of many bird species. Vic Bernyk of Native Trees and Plants (NTP) will give a general overview of the Monarch from its life cycle to the behavioral and morphological changes it must undergo to make this migration possible. The role of native plants utilized for reproduction and food will be explored. In addition, some little known facts and personal observations and thoughts on this species will be presented.

March 9th - Annual General Meeting**March 13th - Native Tree Walk**

Join Club Member Dave Kraus for a workshop on tree identification. The event will be held at Ojibway Nature Centre and outdoors if the weather permits. There is no cost for this workshop. It starts at 2:00 pm.

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**Essex County Field Naturalists' Club
Membership Form**

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

Mailing Address:

c/o Ojibway Nature Centre

5200 Matchette Rd.

Windsor, On. N9C 4E8