The Egret

the Newsletter of the Essex County Field Naturalists

Volume II, Number 2 Spring 1996

SEED COLLECTION REPORT 1995

Natural Habitat Restoration Program

Prepared by D. Sale and G. Waldron, Seed Collection Coordinators

Introduction

The primary goal of the Natural Habitat Restoration Program (NHRP) is to collect seed from native Essex County plants, and distribute these seeds among local growers. This plant stock is then available to plant on public and private lands, and when planted will help preserve Essex County's plant biodiversity.

In past years a seed collection coordinator was hired in September to oversee the collection of seeds for a four month period. In 1995 the decision to hire a coordinator was not made until October. The coordinator's position was shared by the two authors of this report. Organized seed collection did not begin until the middle of October due to the delayed decision to hire the coordinators. This limited the number of species that were collected. In 1994, 771,460 seeds from 41 species were collected. Of these, 27 were trees and 14 were shrubs and vines. In 1995, 579,350 seeds from 31 species were collected. Eight were shrubs and vines. Table 1 lists the species collected and the amount of seed collected for each.

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There were two other major changes in the seed collecting program in 1995. Seed was not sent to the Ministry of Natural Resources Tree Seed Plant to be processed. Also, this was the first year seed was sold to the growers.

Seed Production and Collection

Oaks produced a very small crop in 1995. In 1994 a total of 65,150 oak seeds were collected from 6 species. This year 13,600 seeds were collected from 4 species. Over half of those seeds were from Black Oak. Only one Bur Oak tree was found with a seed crop. A few Red and Shumard Oaks were found with a small crop. These trees probably produced a crop because they were in a disturbed area. The cut seed viability of the acorns from these trees was 80 - 90 %, but over time they proved to be heavily parasitized. These seeds were picked over twice during a two to three week time period, before being sent to growers. But, even then, growers complained about the infested acorns. In the future it may be better to avoid disturbed trees or store the seeds for longer periods before shipping, and risk a somewhat reduced viability.

Four species of hickory were collected this year, yielding 13,700 seeds, compared to 27,000 in 1994 from 3 species. Pignut Hickory was added to the collection this year. Fewer Shagbark Hickory nuts were collected in 1995 compared to 1994, but not all were sold. All of the other hickories sold out.

Two species deserve special mention, because their seed numbers inflate the total seed count. Both Sycamore and Trumpet Vine have a large number of very small seeds collected together in a fruiting body. Even though several pods would provide more than enough seed, it is desirable to collect several pods from different sources to ensure a seed source with more genetic diversity.

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 be acquainted with and understand our natural world through identification, maintenance and preservation of natural areas of Essex County and surrounding regions. ECFNC is affiliated with the *Federation of Ontario Naturalists* (FON).

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:

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

Information

ECFNC Birding Hotline
252-BIRD

Ojibway Nature Centre
966-5852

Point Pelee National Park
322-2365

E.R.C.A.
776-5209

E.C.F.N.C. Contacts:

President: Tom Hurst (519) 839-4635

Vice-President: Dave Kraus

Secretary: Pat Arseneault

Treasure: Peg Wilkinson

Denise Hartley, Pam Simpson, Phil Roberts, Michael Malone, Donna Sale, Karen Cedar, Gerry Waldron, David D'hondt

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F.O.N. Liaison: Phil Roberts
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N.H.R.P. Committee Chairman: Dave Kraus

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Fund-raising: Pam Simpson, Peg Wilkinson, Tom Hurst, Pat Arseneault

Speaker:Gerry Waldron, Phil Roberts, Karen Cedar

Field Trip: Heritage Committee

Annual Dinner:/Margaret Jennings, Betty Learmouth, Phil Roberts

Bluebird: Don Bissonette, Betty Learmouth, Bill Balkwill

N.H.R.P.: Dave Kraus, Donna Sale, Gerry Waldron, Linda Kennette

Heritage: Betty Learmouth, Muriel Kassimatis, Margaret MacDonald, Lois Thurgood, Jim McAllister, Gerry Waldron, Peg Wilkinson

Tree Study: Donna Sale, Gerry Waldron, Dave Kraus, Linda Kennette, Pat Arseneault, Bill Balkwill.

The President's Report

Even though I find myself writing this report in February I am sure that by the time Field Naturalists read this the promises of spring will already be evident. As much as I have enjoyed our winter field trips I am looking forward to the day when gloves and "long johns" are no longer a necessary accessory. However, before that happens I think it is appropriate reflect upon some of the events of the past season.

First of all I would like to congratulate our Editor Dave D'hondt on his remarkable accomplishments of producing the Egret and his first child in the same week last December. Well done Dave! Compliments to you , the Editorial Committee and Nicole.

Secondly, I would like to thank Setterington's Fertilizer Service Ltd. of Leamington which twice sponsored The Egret and made additional financial contributions to the club inn 1995. This in part was due to our participation in the company's "Friends of the Birds" night by Mike Malone, Phil Roberts and Dave Kraus. I hope they and Setterington's will keep up the good work.

Similarly I would like to congratulate Margaret Jennings and Betty Learmouth on a successful ECFNC Annual Dinner. This years format was a pleasant change and the eighty six people who attended generously bolstered our Heritage Fund.

I would also like to thank the Little River Enhancement Group on behalf of the Club. On November 21st Lil'Reg honored many groups and individuals who have assisted their efforts in restoring the Little River watershed. Thanks to the efforts of the NHRP volunteers the ECFNC was included in this distinguished roster. By the way our 1995 Seed Collector Donna Sales produced excellent results even despite a poor acorn crop and administrative problems within the chairless NHRP umbrella group. As the government Green Fund support for NHRP comes to a close our club's NHRP committee headed by David Kraus is actively pursuing ways to continue NHRP programs for future years. It may be difficult but it is an important goal for the Club as NHRP provides services essential to the county's ecological health.

ERCA has also presented its 1995 awards to community organizations and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the region's environment. Among those recognized was past club director and stalwart supporter Tom Hince for his work in the education field. Although he is not a club member I would like to recognize the achievement award of Emil Pociluyko who at his own expense has put NHRP trees and principles to work at his KOA campground. Likewise, the Town of LaSalle certainly deserves recognition for its new zoning bylaw to protect 85 hectares of the LaSalle Woodlot Environmentally Significant Area. LaSalle councillors deserve our support for their foresight and courage.

While on this topic the municipalities of Windsor and Essex also deserve words of encouragement. Developers and Essex councilors last year worked together on a compromise which preserved a major portion of Tully's Bush; the only remaining natural habitat of the town. In 1995 Windsor councillors have deferred the dismemberment of Oakwood Bush and are looking for ways to preserve it. Ratepayers should hasten to vocalize their approval of these municipal government actions.

Unfortunately Windsor's only undeveloped shoreline; Ojibway Shores, appears to be destined to become an industrial rather than a natural park. Thankfully an expanded Natural Heritage Candidate Site No. 38 and a 30 metre natural corridor along part of Broadway drain will be spared this fate but the City must be convinced to reconsider its management plans for the rest of Ojibway Shores.

An Executive meeting at the end of January saw installation of the Club's new governing body. Well not exactly new but we should all be grateful that those who did such a fine job in 1995 have consented to stay on in 1996. There has been some minor rearranging of committee positions and the Club has a new Officer. Linda Kennette is now Secretary of the ECFNC and we are grateful to her for taking on this responsibility.

As of late much of the executives' attentions have been devoted to the Club's finances. Like other organizations we find that we are financially constrained from undertaking projects for our members. We do hope to ease this problem through increased membership numbers and fundraising events so any advice in this regard would be appreciated. So far wonders have been accomplished with your volunteer labour and materials but there are some things only money can buy. One of these things are audited financial statements which so far has been financially out of our reach. Our Treasurer has done an excellent job of keeping our financial affairs in order but as the Club takes on more projects like NHRP and the FON annual General Meetings the Executive feels that outside validation of our financial affairs would not be unwarranted. In the same regard, year end financial reports to Revenue Canada are a dreaded annual hurdle to those of us unschooled in the art of accountancy. Still the Executive is determined to take a more professional approach to its financial affairs. As a beginning club members Carl Maiolani and Brian Schentag have volunteered to computerize Peg's work and make her accounts more readily accessible to the understanding of the Club and its Executive. Finance is not the first love of any executive member so if you are capable feel free to give us direction.

As you know we are planning to host the 1997 FON-AGM in August of that year. In preparation for that event I feel that we should have strong representation at the 1996 convention. The Sault Naturalists have an exciting program

set for May 24, 25 and 26 1996 in Sault Ste. Marie. Several of us plan to be there to join the fun and put in a good word for Essex County in 1997, I hope you will consider going as well. If you do plan to go please let Karen Cedar at the Ojibway Nature Centre know so we can coordinate our plans with each other. Refer to your Seasons Magazine or write to FON Conference 96 c/o Linda Kehoe, 177 Wilcox Ave. Sault Ste. Marie Ontario, P6B 1V6 (705)945-1487.

Whether it be in the Sault or in Essex County 1996 promises to be an eventful year for field naturalists. I hope to see you out and about often in this leap year.

Respectfully,

Thomas Hurst

NHRP seeds - continued

Volunteers accumulated a total of 181 hours, all but 34 of those hours were spent gathering seed and in a few cases removing seeds from pods.Volunteers met on Saturday mornings and gathered seed for an average of three hours. A few volunteers went seed collecting with the coordinators during the week. Experienced volunteers sometimes collected on their own

Seed Processing

In previous years seed was delivered to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Tree Seed Plant at Angus. The processing services provided by the Plant included: Removal of defective nuts and acorns, extracting seeds from fleshy fruit, dewinging samaras, counting seeds, and determining % viability. Last year it was decided that NHRP could process its own seed to give a satisfactory product and assure a fresher more viable product. This decision was based on the long nine hour round trip to the Seed Plant with a very heavy load, and the shipping costs to return the seed. In addition it appeared that the ministry would initiate a fee, to process the seed on a cost recovery bases. Previously this service had been free.

The seed coordinators and volunteers processed the seed by hand. It took approximately 35 hours of volunteer work to dehusk 6,600 walnut and 3,400 butternut seeds. In addition the seed coordinators spent many hours cleaning, counting, and packaging seed. Acorns were picked over by hand. Those that were cracked, discolored or had holes, were discarded. When floated, large numbers of the discarded seed appeared viable when cut, so this method was not used. Hickory nuts were shelled and picked over by hand. The shells of some nuts were difficult or impossible to remove. When these seeds were cut, about 90% of them were not viable. The pods of Honey Locust and Kentucky Coffee Tree were opened, and the seeds removed by volunteers, at the time of collecting.

Fleshy fruits such as Flowering Dogwood and the Viburnums, were placed in a blender with a bit of water, and processed until the fruit was removed. The water with the fruit was decanted and the seeds left in the bottom of the container were spread out to dry. This method works well as long as the blades of the blender are reversed, so the seeds are not cut by the sharp edge of the blade. Wrapping the blades with tape also works well. The most arduous species to process was the Sweet Crabapple. The flesh of this fruit is quite hard and thick. Each fruit was smashed with a sledge hammer and scraped into a bucket of water. This mix was then stirred with an electric paint stirrer to further break the seeds from the pulp. The pulp and floating seeds were decanted, leaving viable seeds and some pulp in the bottom of the bucket. The pulp and remaining seed was then processed in a blender, and rinsed and decanted, until most of the pulp was removed. The seeds were spread out on paper to dry.

Pawpaws were left to rot for several weeks to soften the fruit. They were mixed with water and agitated with a paint stirrer which removed most of the fruit. The fruit water mix was decanted and the seeds spread out to dry. Hackberry seed was not cleaned, but its fruit was drier rather than fleshy. Samaras were not dewinged.

All of the processing was very labor intensive, and would have been impossible if volunteers had not done some of the work. It is doubtful if the number of seeds collected in 1994 could all have been processed by hand, without much more volunteer help. While the appearance of cleaned fleshy fruit was satisfactory, it was not as good as the mechanically cleaned fruit from the Ministry Seed Plant. Flakes of dried pulp usually remained in the seed. This should not affect the germination of the seeds.

The amount of seed from a given species was determined by one of three methods: 1. Small seeds, such as Elderberry, and Black Cherry, were estimated by volume. Seeds in a small volume, 1/4 teaspoon to 1/4 cup, were counted. The average was then calculated for a larger volume, and the total number of seeds determined. 2. Larger seeds, such as acorns and nuts, were weighed, and the average number in a pound determined. The appropriate number of pounds were sent to the growers. 3. The USDA Agricultural Handbook #450, *Seeds of Woody Plants in the US* lists the average number of seeds in a given weight for each species. These figures were used for Sycamore. Its seeds were too small to count and can cause allergic reactions.

As seed was collected and cleaned, it was stored in plastic bags if the seeds were small, or grain bags if large. The bags were stored on a cool concrete floor of a garage. This may not be a satisfactory storage method during warm years. Seed was distributed to growers as soon as was possible after processing. Seed was delivered by the coordinators to Williams Nursery and Boardwalk Gardens. Seed was shipped via UPS to Bakers Nursery.

Seed Price

Seed price was calculated using several criteria:
1. Price of seed in seed catalogs.
2. Availability of local seed.
3. Difficulty in processing seed.

Generally seed prices in catalogs were used. The local crops of some species were small due to poor cropping (oaks), or a small local population (Pawpaw). A price based on this fact, was charged. Sycamore and Trumpet Vine seeds are easy to collect and process, and the price of these was therefore low. Anytime the price of the amount of seed ordered by a grower fell below $5.00, a minimum price of $5.00 was charged. The time taken to collect and process seed must be considered in the prices. Seed was also sold to some property owners and gardeners. A small amount of seed was packaged in small envelopes and sold at an Essex County Field Naturalist Club Meeting. Each packet was sold for $2.00. A total of $30 was made at one meeting. In the future NHRP may want to package seed and sell it at the local Horticultural Clubs. A total of $63 was made by selling small amounts of seed.

Three nurseries bought NHRP seed this year: Baker Nursery, Williams Nursery and Garden Center, and Boardwalk Gardens.

The Future

At the end of this financial year the original funding and organization of NHRP comes to an end. Discussions are now occurring as to reorganization and continued funding. Based on past experience the following goals should be pursued:

1. Continue to collect and sell native seed.
2. Develop a more professional business organization, particularly in the processing and marketing stages.
3. Produce a seed catalog to mail to prospective buyers in early spring. This catalog could list the species that have been collected in the past and state that availability is subject to seed production by the trees. Prices could be listed, subject to change due to seed availability. It could also state that native seed can be collected upon consignment.
4. Hire a part-time coordinator to produce the catalog, and collect summer ripening seed. There was a request for White Elm this year. It, along with Red and Silver Maple, and Serviceberry are tree seeds that NHRP could sell. Since long term storage of these seeds is a problem, orders for summer species should be made before June, and by September for all the others.
5. Sell seed by weight, one half ounce, ounce, pound, or metric equivalents. The average number of seeds per unit weight can be given in the catalog. Presently when a grower orders 500 seeds, he is given this amount by weight or volume averages, as previously explained. It would be better business to state up front that seed is sold by weight.
6. Invest in good quality scales.

TABLE 1: SEED COLLECTED TO DEC. 30, 1995

Common Name	Scientific Name	Total Collected
Ash, Pumpkin	*Fraxinus Profunda*	3800
Basswood	*Tilia americana*	3400
Beech, American	*Fagus grandifolia*	300
Cherry, Black	*Prunus serotina*	4000
Crabapple	*Malus coronaria*	1050
Dogwood, Flowering	*Cornus florida*	900
Elderberry	*Sambucus canadensis*	5800
Hackberry	*Celtis occidentalis*	5000
Hickory, Bitternut	*Carya cordiformis*	2600
Hickory, Pignut	*C. glabra*	1500
Hickory, Shagbark	*C. ovata*	9700
Hickory, Shellbark	*C. laciniosa*	3000
Honey Locust (a)	*Gleditsia triacanthos*	280
Honey Locust (au)	*G. triacanthos*	1600
Hoptree	*Ptelea trifoliata*	1100
Kentucky Coffee Tree	*Gymnocladus dioicus*	3500
Maple, Black	*Acer saccharum spp. nigrum*	500
Maple, sugar	*A. saccharum*	6550
Oak, Black	*Quercus veluntina*	7000
Oak, Bur	*Q. macrocarpa*	4000
Oak, Red	*Q. rubra*	1960
Oak, Shumard	*Q. shumardii*	640
Pawpaw	*Asimina triloba*	800
Redbud	*Cercis canadensis*	1100
Sycamore	*Plantanus occidentalis*	405000
Trumpet Vine	*Campsis radicans*	75000
Tuliptree	*Liriodendron tulipifera*	13700
Walnut, Black	*Juglans nigra*	6600
Walnut, Buttemut	*J. cinerea*	3480
Viburnum, Mapleleaf	*Viburnum acerifloium*	2190
Viburnum, Nannyberry	*V. lentago*	3300
		Total 579350

7. Growers should be given the following information when their orders are delivered:
   a. Common and species name.
   b. Weight of seed
   c. Price
   d. Cut seed viability for this years seed.
   e. Information on seed stratification if requested.
8. Procure seed cleaning machinery. Many hours were spent by the seed coordinators and volunteers processing seed. Volunteers may not always be able to help in this endeavor, and certainly large volumes of seed could not be processed by the labor available.This year approximately $3,900 of the $5,000 contract for the coordinators position will be recovered. In a year with a better seed crop, proper advertising, and an earlier start, it is likely that the costs could be completely recovered. It is even probable that a profit could be realized, which could offset any equipment costs.

One of the main lessons from 1995 is that a coordinator needs to be in place at the beginning of September to assess the seed crop, and ensure that the amount of seed ordered can be collected. By having a coordinator start in June, summer ripening seeds could be included in the collection, and a seed catalog produced and sent to prospective clients.

RONDEAU BAY WATERSHED REHABILITATION PROJECT

A letter from Vicki McKay, Project Coordinator to the Club

The first ever Rondeau Byay Rejuvenation community shoreline clean-up event, hosted by the Rondeau Bay Watershed Rehabilitation Project on Sunday, June 4th,1995 was a great success. In all, 107 enthusiastic volunteers removed almost 8 metric tonnes of garbage, in a period of 3 hours, as they walked, boated and canoed along Rondeau bay's northwest shoreling and SCUBA dived in the channel entering Rondeau Bay.

On Sunday, June 9th, 1996, the Rondeau Bay Watershed Rehabilitation Roject will once again host Rondeau Bay Rejuvenation, in an effort to remove the remainder of the garbage that has accumulated along the shoreline and in the Bay and channel over the years. The clean-up has been scheduled for a Sunday as this day is traditionally recognized as a family day. The clean-up presents a perfect opportunity for families and friends to spend an enjoyable afternoon together supporting an environmentally friendly endeavor. The combined effort of the public, business, industries, service club, schools and special interest groups all over the area promise to make this event a success.

We hope to involve people of all ages and walks of life in this event. The combined efforts of the public including individuals, service groups, businesses, industries, schools, conservation clubs, recreational groups and other public interest groups, and shoreline property owners promise to make this event a success. We extend a special invitation to members of the Essex County Field Naturalists and their families to assist with the clean-up. Clean-up activities will be guided by team leaders who have received training in safety and general clean-up procedures.

For your comfort and safety. please wear light coloured clothing that covers your arms and legs, footwear with thick soles (rubber boots or waders if you have them), work gloves, sunglasses, a hat, sunscreen and insect repellent. You may also want to bring rain gear along depending on the weather forecast. Much of the clean-up will take place from the water so we encourage everyone wwho has a small motorboat or canoe that they don't mind having garbage in to bring it along. Boat ramp fees be waived for the day. you don't have to bring a boat to participate though, volunteers on foot are welcome and needed. In addition, volunteers interested in SCUBA diving should come prepared. Southwest SCUBA centre will be providing free tank fills as well as free rentals to clean-up divers on a first come first serve basis (354-9110 - 25 King Street East, Chatham). Please contact them in advance if you are interested in renting gear.

Following the clean-up day, all participantsare invited to join us at 6p.m. at Rondeau Provincial Park for a barbecue and prize draw in celebration of Rondeau Bay's Rejuvenation.

Please join the Rondeau Bay Watershed Rehabilitation Project in undertaking this clean-up which promises t be enjoyable, educational, and above all environmentally friendly. To volunteer, please contact Vicki McKay , Rondeau Bay Watershed Rehabilitation Project Coordinator at (519)358-5261. Thank you for your assistance and we hope you will join us in Rejuvenating Rondeau Bay.

DIRECTIONS: All volunteers are to meet at 1 p.m. at Kenterieau Heritage Beach Park in Erieau. Follow County Road 12 into Erieau. Follow the right hand fork (Mariner's Road) to its end. Turn right (Nichols Road), then follow the bend to the left (Mariner's Road). Kenterieau Heritage Beach Park is located on the right side of the road.

Annual Dinner Guest Speaker Announced

Judy Yerkey of Detroit has accepted an invitation to be our guest speaker at this year's annual dinner scheduled for November 16, 1996. Our guest has been a monitor of the Peregrine Falcon nesting sites in downtown Detroit for the four years which is a year round activity as the resident Peregrine, Judy and Pop, are very protective of their nest site. This slide talk and presentation promises to be most entertaining as another female Peregrine at another Detroit nesting site is presently looking for husband number 7. We're sure to hear more about this Peregrine and her activities at the November dinner. There is a possibility of a small group to make a trip to see immature Peregrine Falcons in early June at a Detroit location. Notify Betty Learmouth at 944-2292 (days).

EcologicallySensible Spring Planting

by Dave Kraus

Natural Habitat Restoration Program (NHRP) Trees and Shrubs:

"Naturally Essex" tree and shrub seedlings are available this spring at a **special ECFNC member rate of $ 1.95 each** from:

Roger Beaulieu,
Boardwalk Gardens
18725 Tecumseh Road (County Road 2)
Tilbury, Ontario. N0P 2L0
phone: 519-682-3326
or fax: 519-682-3107

Tulip tree - David Kraus

-some species available include: Burr Oak, Shumard Oak, Paw Paw, Hop Tree, Hackberry, Black Walnut, Butternut .....

- NHRP or `Naturally Essex' tree and shrubs are only species native to Essex County
- plants are derived from seed collected by ECFNC members from native plants within Essex County
- the seedlings offered for sale are on average approximately 8 inches tall with the root mass held together as a peat cork
- you may wish to call and confirm availability first
- bring a bag or box to place seedlings into for transportation and protection from drying heat, sun, wind, etc
- plant trees and shrubs in appropriate locations (suitable soil, drainage, moisture and sunlight/shade requirements) - ask grower, look under `habitat' section in field guide, or ask knowledgeable ECFNC member if unsure of proper conditions
- place corked root mass into hole at same soil depth as top of existing peat level (that is, do not bury deeper than current soil level as roots need aeration)
- fill surrounding hole with soil and use percolating water to loosely pack down soil (don't over pack soil with feet or hands)
- may wish to protect plants from rabbits, mice, etc using a 2 litre plastic pop bottle with both ends removed as a cylindrical, open greenhouse for first few years - just push cylinder into soil around the tree and if necessary tie cylinder to stick or stake - can also push cylinders together to form a taller protector if desired
- no need to directly stake trees or shrubs - may cause injuries
- water as needed (in first summer especially) but no chemical sprays or fertilizers are ever needed as they will do more ecological harm than good
- the other local NHRP member and grower; Mark Williams, Williams Nursery (Hwy 3 east of Leamington, phone 519-326-6911) will have some seedlings available in July - call for prices and species

Native Essex County plants are the only ecologically sensible choice, especially for natural habitat restoration and wildlife friendly plantings in Essex County !!!

The Holiday Beach Raptor Banding Station

by Betty Learmouth

During Holiday Beach Conservation Area's weekend Hawk Festival, visitors at these events are treated to raptor talks vonducted by Phil Roberts. At these popular talks, raptors with newly applied bands appear magically in Pringle's Potato Chip cylinders. Phil is a raptor bander but doesn't have many moments during the hawk festival to actually do that work. Who then is responsible for making the banded raptors available?

One of the banders behind the scenes at the Holiday Beach Banding Station is Tom Carpenter. Tom is a doctoral student at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Since 1989, Tom and his father Art Carpenter have been banding raptors at Holiday Beach.

Tom began his banding with a subpermit under Art Carpenter in the autumn of 1976. Although his initial interst was banding passerines, Tom began banding wintering Amierican Kestreals during January 1977. The interest in kestrel banding was derived from John Covert, a Livonia High school teacher who has banded kestrels for a number of years. Tom's interest soon broadened to include spring banding of migrant raptors at Whitefish Point, a project that lasted from 1979 through 1988 and resulted in the banding of 2469 raptors.

During the spring of 1989 Tom contacted Shannon Managhan, then biologist with the Essex Region Conservation Authority, about establishing a raptor banding station at Holiday Beach. With Shannon's assistance, the appropriate permits were obtained and banding commenced on a trial basis in the upper part of the park on weekends from October 22 through November 12, 1989. Although only 17 raptors were banding in 1989 (and a Golden Eagle which was relaesed unbanded due to lack of appropriate authorization to band it), it was obvious that Holiday Beach offered great potential as a site for a raptor banding station. Thus, with the assistance of Al Knutsen, a raptor banding station was established in the fall of 1990. Raptor banding has been carried out every fall since resulting in the banding of 3991 raptors.

Many factors affect the annual number of raptors banded. Banding efforts is an important factor. Tom bands every weekend, weather permitting, from September through November. Coverage during weekdays is provided by Art Carpenter, Phil Roberts, Martin Wernaart and Steve Dickson. Weather is another important factor. The best days to catch raptors are not necessarily the best days to count them. Ideal trapping conditions occur when large numbers of hawks pass by at low altitude on westerly winds or light to moderate northerly winds.

The species of migrating hawk is also important. Accipters and falcons are generally easy to capture, especially Sharp-shinned Hawks, whereas harriers and buteos are usually more difficult to capture. Broad-winged Hawks are almost never captured, even though they are usually the most numerous raptor that migrates past Holiday Beach. There is much day to day variation. Days occur when large numbers of species tht are normally easily captured fly by at low altitude and simply do not pay attention to the trapping station, and hence are not captured.

Banders are often envied as they are privileged to handle raptors. However, Tom cautions that banding requires close attention to the task. Any distraction can result in a missed opportunity to trap a hawk, in errors in recording banding data, or even in being taloned" by a hawk! For these reasons, only banders are permitted at the banding site, and it is paramount that nonbanders do not stop by to visit. Banding isn't as glamorous as it may seem. Many hours are spent sitting quietly simply staring at the skyline. There are often long periods of inactivity particularly late in the season.

Yearly Summary of Raptors Banded at Holiday Beach Conservation Area, 1989-1995

Species	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	325	681	359	550	431	537	2883
Cooper's Hawk	6	33	39	13	41	22	74	228
Northern Goshawk	0	0	2	6	5	2	5	20
Northern Harrier	0	6	1	1	1	11	2	22
American Kestrel	0	25	41	23	44	68	68	269
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	1*	0	0	0	0	1*
Merlin	0	3	8	2	4	4	7	28
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	4	1	1	1	2	11	21
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Red-tailed Hawk	10	19	49	42	17	30	226	393
Golden Eagle	1*	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total Hawks Banded	17	415	822	449	664	570	932	3867
Northern Saw-whet Owl	0	0	74	22	13	1	7	117
Eastern Screech Owl	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	5
Long-eared Owl	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Snowy Owl	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total Owls Banded	0	0	78	23	15	1	7	124

Late season banding can be exciting. The reward could be the capture of more unusual raptors such as male Northern Harriers or possibly Rough-legged Hawks, a buteo that has not yet been banded at Holiday Beach.

Migrant passerines are usually never recaptured after they are banded. Raptors, however, can be expected to be caught again, either by another banding station, or even by the same bander! For instance, a Sharp-shinned Hawk that Tom banded at Whitefish Point in May 1987 was recaptured at Holiday Beach in October 1993. Similarly, a Cooper's Hawk banded at Holiday Beach was retrapped by Tom the following spring in northwest Ohio. Spring banding stations located along the shores of the Great Lakes regularly recapture hawks banded at Holiday Beach.

The Holiday Beach Raptor Banding Station regulary recaptures hawk banded elsewhere, especially from Hawk Cliff Raptor Banding Station. These recaptures elucidate the migration routes taken by hawks before and after they pass Holiday Beach, and the distance that migrant hawks travel each day.

Operations of a banding station requires a considerable committment of time, money and labour. Like residential yards and homes, the banding sites and blinds require regular maintenance. Equipment and supplies are expensive, particularly mist nets which need to be replaced regulary. The recently established Adopt-a-Banded Bird of Prey programme provided funds essential to the operation fo the banding station. Tom points out that the station is in critical need of steel 10 ounce juice cans, the size required for male Sharp-shinned Hawks and kestrels. This size can isunavailable in the Unitee Staes, and only V-8 and tomato juice are sold in this size in Canada. If you acquire any of these cans, pleae remove the lid from one end with a cann opemer, then plenty of cylinders (especially Pringles cans; everybody loves Pringles, including all the banders!) for the other species, so please don't save other sized cylinders.

Another exciting component of the banding operation involves banding migrant owls. In 1991, 78 owls were banded, mainly Saw-whet Owls. For every Saw-whet Owl observed at a roost, there are probably many more that go undetected. Thus, without attemps to capture and band owls, the extent of their migration in unknown.

The fall of 1995 was the best banding season ever, especially for Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks. It was, however, a poor year for owls. The Sharp-shinned Hawk flight was poor during much of the fall, but several days of good trapping conditions in late October increased the total number banded to slightly above average.

The Holiday Beach Raptor Banding Station has grown consideralby since the trial banding in 1989. Two blinds, built with grants obtained from the Community Wildlife Improvement Project (CWIP), are in operation every fall. Scales and other banding equipment have been purchased with grants obtained from Canada Trust's Friends fo the Environment Foundation, the James L. Ballie Memorial Fund of the Long Point Bird Observatory and the Adopt-a-Banded Bird of Prey programme. Who knows what exciting raptors will be banded or recaptured in the fall of 1996, and well into the future?

Windsor Airport Raptor Control

by Betty Learmouth

Windsor and Essex County birders know that the Windsor Airport can be a good location to view birds of prey. The open airport habitat is most inviting for these birds which are attracted to the grassy strips about the runways. Not everyone shares the birders' enthusiasm for the birds that are attracted to the airport. Transport Canada, the federal agency which presently operates the Windsor Airport, considers all birds on airport property as potential threats to the public safety.

Transport Canada recognizes that the chance of birds strikes is low considering the thousands of flights that occur in Canada yearly but still incidents have occurred. Three years ago at the Windsor Airport, a Snowy Owl smashed through an aircraft windshield and a Great-horned Owl struck the nose wheel of an aircraft, causing dange to the wheel door. A young Peregrine Falcon, hacked in Detroit, was also struck during the same time period. This past summer, an American Kestrel was struck. Gulls, waterfowl, ground birds and flocking birds are all concerns to Transport Canada. Birds of prey are always potential hazards, particularly owls which tend to fly low during darkness.

Despite the small size of birds, speed tends to exaggerate weight. A flock of starlings or an owl in collision with a Dash 8 aircraft at a landing speed of 120 kilometres/hours can inflict a great deal of damage. Mammals such as deer and coyotes have been in collision with aircraft. Even a jackrabbit has been involved in an airport accident when the unfortunate animal was hit by the nose wheel, then ingested into an engine upon landing. These incidents for the most part are uneventful or cause only minor damage but the potential for major damage and hupe repair bill or injury to the two hundred thousand passengers served yearly by the Windsor Airport must not be discounted.

Transport Canada has long recognized the need to control birds at airports. Diligence at an airport can reduce the possibility of bird strikes. Today the preferred methods of bird control are varied but in the past mainly scare tacitcs were employed along with simply shooting the offending

birds. Large airports such as Toronto's Pearson International Airport employ a full time person in charge of bird control. Smaller airports may designate personnel such as the airport's firemen for such duty. The Windsor Airport employs a bird control expert from early winter through early spring.

Three winters ago there was an influx of Snowy Owls into southern Ontario. Airports are especially attractive to these northern owls as the open expanses resemble the northern tundra plus mowed grassy strips support a vole population as a food source. That winter Phil Roberts, coordinator of the Holiday Beach Banding Stations, was assisting in the relocation of trapped and banded Snowy Owls from Toronto's Pearson International Airport to a more southerly location here in Essex County. Unfortunately, an aircraft at the Windsor Airport suffered a collision with an unbanded Snowy Owl, indicating that the local airport had its own problem with owls. Phil was asked to take on the responsibilities of bird control at the Windsor airport, a position in which Phil has been employed for the last three winters.

A variety of trapping techniques are used to capture raptors at the Windsor Airport. One of the most successful is the Swedish Goshawk trap, essentially a large box, which is very effective for diurnal and noctural raptors. A comfortable perch is on the top of the box which can be appealing to a raptor in the airport's open habitat. When a raptor lands on the perch, the upper portion of the box collapses with the bird falling into the box through soft mesh. To make this particular trap more enticing, lure birds such as rock doves, are placed in a separate, protected compartment with food and water. The lure birds at the Windsor Airport have been "on duty" for three seasons thus are unruffled by close proximity to raptors on the Swedish Goshawk trap. The bow net, resembling a large flat clam when laying on the ground with a lure such as a dead rabbit, is spring loaded and activated by the bird control personnel. This trap is used to trap birds that are too wise to be attracted by the Swedish Goshawk trap or for birds that have already experienced that trap. Passerines and ground birds are trapped in a maze trap which can be likened to a lobster trap in that the bird are enticed inside, then can not retreat back through the same passage.

Scare techiques are employed to urge birds away from airports. The "firecracker method" works well with Golden and Black-bellied Plovers which will relocate to other agricultural lands. Propane bangers are well known as scare tactics for gulls and crows. Distress calls such as the sqawk of a Ring-billed Gull played from a moving vehicle can be very effective.

Habitat control is another method of bird control used a the Windsor Airport. The amount of mown grass has diminished in recent years with more land devoted to various crops which are closely regulated as to what crop may be grown and cultivated. Tebnding the existing grass is closely monitored as various grass lengths attract certain bird species.

The Windsor Airport does not use falcons as a means of bird control. At Toronto's Pearson International Airport, falcons are an important part of the bird control programme along with live trapping. The January 1996 issue of Nova Scotia Birds includes and informative article about trained falcons engaged in airport falconry.

Phil Roberts possesses a master banding permit from the Canadian Wildlife Service which allows Phil band under the federal Migratory Bird Act. All banding data from raptors trapped and banded at the Windsor Airport is collected and forwarded to the CWS. Through a Scientific Collection Permit issued by the Chatham Ministry of Natural Resources office, Phil can hold these birds for a minimum of three days in captivity. This is the period of time when the birds forget that they were on territory. The birds are then transported from the Windsor Airport forrelease at a minumum of fifty kilimetres (30 miles) from the airport. The time of year of transport and releases determines the direction of the releases. If the release is in the fall or winter, then the release would be 50 kilometres to the south, or, in early spring, the release would be to the north east such as to Tremblay Beach Conservation Area,coinciding with bird movements at particular times of year. The Windsor Airport is not an attractive breeding habitat, rather it is a staging and foraging area within a migration corridor at specific times of the year.

Species	93-94	94-95	95-96*	Total
Red-tailed Hawk	8	22	4	34
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	1	1
American Kestrel	0	1	1	2
Great-horned Owl	0	0	1	1
Short-eared Owl	0	0	1	1
Canada Goose	0	4	0	4
Ring-necked Pheasant	0	2	3	5
Snow Bunting	0	0	70	70
Horned Lark	0	0	31	31
Total	**8**	**29**	**120**	**189**

*February 1, 1996

As Phil Roberts was providing this information for *The Egret* during a conversation held in the Windsor Airport's restaurant, a Red-tailed Hawk was noted perched on airport equipment near the terminal building. This Red-tailed Hawk, nicknamed Homey, is the resident hawk that has been declared"runway smart". Due to the continued presence of this bird, the territory at the airport is occupied with no intrusions from other Red-tails. Homey raises young each spring, then urges them away from the airport. When Phil has approached her nest during nesting season, homey has dive bombed Phil, quiete unusual Red-tailed behaviour.Phil has some memories of particular incidents while trapping raptors at airports. Phil recalls capturing Snowy Owls at the Pearson International Airport using a toy mice and fishing gear to attract these unwary Arctic Owls, then slapping a fishing net over the birds once they were within the proper range. Captured raptors were often taken to Mountsberg Centre outside Toronto. While banding a Great-horned Owl there, Phil lost his concentration on the task and was "taloned" through his thumb joint. Phil had to throw the bird upward to be released from the talon. At the Windsor Airport, Phil remembers driving out to the Swedish Hawk trap one day, to be surprised by a duck in the trap. Upon looking more closely, the duck turned out to be stuffed. Co-workers enjoyed Phil's reaction to their practical joke!

Eastern Bluebird Committee News

by Bill Balkwell

Update

In 1995 the Eastern Bluebird Committee monitored a total of 293 boxes. These boxes were home for 35 pairs of Bluebirds, 116 pairs of Tree Swallows and 78 pairs of House Wrens. The Eastern Bluebirds produced 128 fledglings.

The Matchette Road trail produced a first for the Eastern Bluebird Committee. A pair of White-breasted Nuthatches raised a family in a bluebird house! This is the Bluebird Committee's first report of a nuthatch nesting in any Essex County Bluebird house.

Brunet Park Trail

The Brunet Park Bluebird Trail was vandalized several times in the past few years. As the surrounding area continues to develop, this problem will compound. The last thing this committee wants is to attract birds to an unsuitable area. Thus the Brunet bluebird houses have all been relocated to a farm near Harrow and the owners have reported bluebird sightings during the last two years.

The Eastern Bluebird Slidshow

In January the slideshow was edited. It now has an accompanying script. The slideshow portrays the activities of the Bluebird Committee, cavity nesting birds, trail monitoring and the life cycle of the Eastern Bluebird. Any club members who are teachers or youth group leaders are welcome to borrow this educational and entertaining slideshow. Simply contact the committee chairperson Don Bissonnettee at 738-3279.

Winter Chores

All through January and February, the bluebird monitors were busy. The bird houses were relocated, inspected, repaired. rewired and replaced. Every T-bar post was greased to prevent predation. All the monitors who haven't done their usual winter trail inspection will be racing out to their trails this weekend. As usual, most Essex County bluebird return to their nesting grounds now, in early March. Although they may not start nest building until early April, they are already house hunting.

Good Luck to all the bluebird monitors. Remember the immortal words of Ruth Grayer...

Just Do Your Best

Just do your best
In whatever you do,
Though sometimes it may not
Be easy for you.
Half-heartedness never
Accomplished a good,
And positive thinking
Is food for the soul
Just do your best,
That's all one can ask,
In spite of the odds,
Whatever the task.

Saturday May 4 & Sunday May 5, 1996

Second Annual ECFNC Weekend Trip to Pelee Island

Leave at 9:00 am Saturday from Leamington Dock (be at dock by 8:30)
Return to Leamington Dock by 6:00 pm Sunday

We will undoubtably see many spring bird migrants (before they arrive at Point Pelee), abundant emerging wildflowers, and basking turtles, frogs and snakes to suggest a few. We will have plenty of time to walk, observe and relax on each of the three main excursions to some of Pelee's beautiful natural areas (Fish Point, Lighthouse Point and Stone Road Alvar). This time of year is my favourite on the island to observe the awakening of the diverse wildlife surviving on Pelee Island. Carl Maiolani will hopefully arrange excellent weather again ?

I have arranged for transportation while on the island - no vehicles are necessary or desired on the island. There is parking at the Leamington Dock area (for a reasonable fee) or have someone drop you off. I have reserved space on the ferry (Jiimaan) for all walk on passengers attending this trip - mention the group and purchase your tickets independently at the booth.

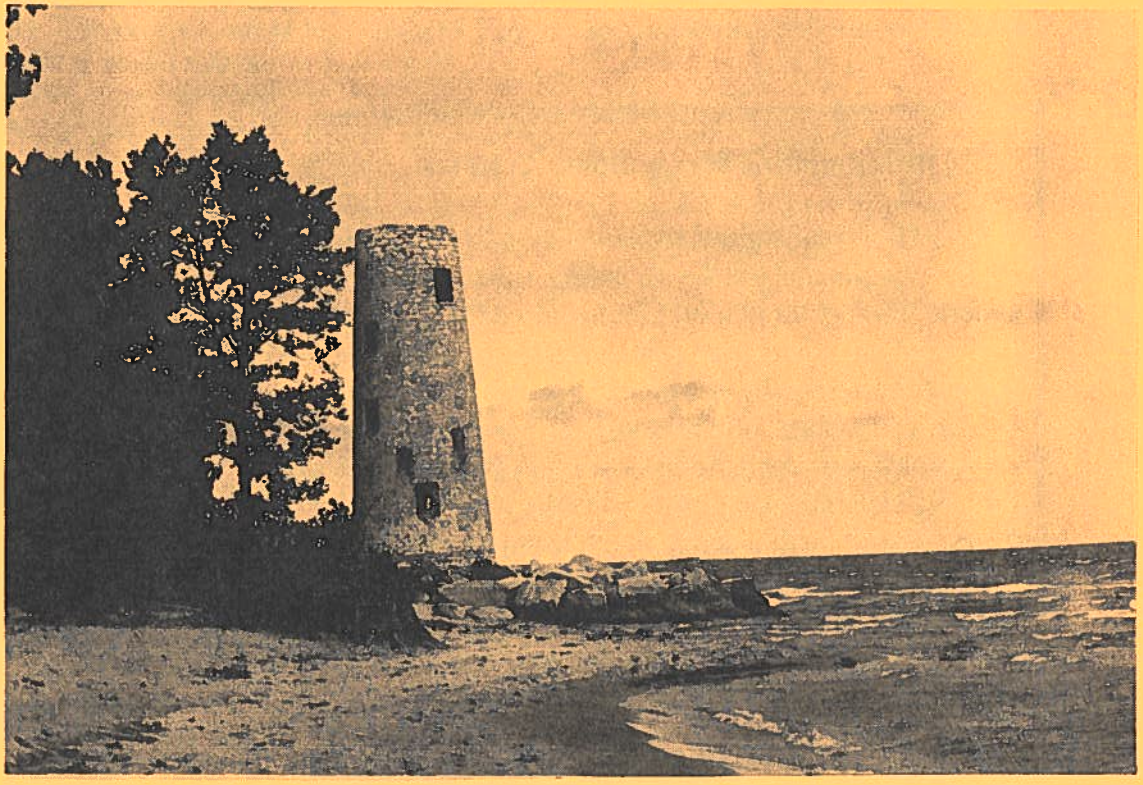
x Accommodations have been reserved and consist of a large, clean, modern cottage at the west dock area. The cottage has two washrooms with showers, two full kitchens, large bedrooms and living rooms. There are regular beds, bunk beds and roll out beds (bring your pillow and sleeping bag for convenience). The cottage is within a 5 minute walk to the two taverns/restaurants, ice cream stand, trading post collectibles store, liquor/beer store, west dock (ferry access), and the Pelee Island Heritage Centre (museum).

We will break for meals (lunch on Saturday ~ 2 pm, dinner ~ 7 pm Saturday, buffet breakfast ~ 9 am Sunday) at the restaurants and meals and snacks are also available on both ferry crossings. Costs for ferry crossings, meals, snacks, etc are the responsibility of each individual. I will be collecting a $ 10 deposit (which will be applied to fees for accommodations and island transportation) from each person upon signing up with me in order to ensure reservations. I expect I will need to collect an additional $ 15 from each participant, once on the island, to fully pay for the island transportation and accommodations. Including all costs for the cottage, island transportation, ferry transportation, snacks and meals, the complete trip will probably cost each person approximately $ 75.

All interested persons need to do is: sign up with me & provide a $ 10 deposit, show up at the Leamington Dock by 8:30 am Saturday morning with a sleeping bag, pillow, warm field clothes and accessories, overnight necessities (as if camping indoors), and I recommend about $ 90 per person should more than cover your expenses for the weekend - even for a very hardy appetite. The ferry and restaurants do take a few of the major credit cards.

The maximum that can sign up to stay in the cottage is 14 people. Sign up early to reserve your place and only sign up if you will definitely be attending the trip !!!

I will contact each person that signs up should any time or location changes for the ferry occur, otherwise the above outline is the schedule, rain or shine. I look forward to your company on this ECFNC outing !!! Dave Kraus
home/business phone: 519 733 9578
fax: 519 733 9828



Lighthouse Point, Pelee Island - David Kraus

FIELD TRIP REVIEWS

Gesto's Winter Birds
by Betty Learmouth

Northerly winds and a chill factor did not keep naturalists at home on January 7, 1996 when a convoy of ten vehicles followed Tom Hince around the Gesto area for several hours. Gesto is a mid county location that can be counted on for a variety of raptors although Tom cautioned that the winds were not in our favour.

The first stop was at Gestwood Camp where we searched for winter birds in the flood plain woodlands. We were not disappointed as we found male and female White-breasted Nuthatches, a Downy Woodpecker and a Hairy Woodpecker. Tom explained that certain winter birds such as Brown Creepers, Downy Woodpeckers and Nuthatches will form "guilds" in that they feed together but each feeds in its particular manner. Hairy Woodpeckers are found in small numbers in Essex County, usually in mature woodlands as these birds prefer that habitat. In contrast, the frequently encountered Downy Woodpecker may be found feeding in shrubs, small trees or even on goldenrod galls.

Our group moved to another location where we found a flock of sparrows, including Tree Sparrows, Song Sparrows and a lone Field Sparrow, in the weedy edge of agricultural lands. A Rough-legged Hawk passed by which gave us good looks at this large raptor which is a winter visitor to our area. We crossed the road into a white pine plantation where we "worked" those coniferous trees for owls, keeping a positive attitude and the belief that we would find owls. Despite a fine effort, we only found some "white wash", probably left by a Cooper's Hawk that had used small, edge of the woodlot trees, as perches. Last winter there were Long-eared Owls in this plantation and there probably will be in the future as the densest population of wintering Long-eared Owls found in Canada is right here in this County.

Then our convoy set off along the County roads for Horned Larks and Snow Buntings. We encountered a flock of five Eastern Meadowlarks feeding along the road's edge in exposed grasses. They are an uncommon bird to see in the winter in this area. We spotted Horned Larks and a flock of Snow Buntings swirling about in blowing snow over agricultural lands.

In the Paquette Corner area, the last four cars in the convoy lost the leader and the rest of the group as these birders stopped to watch a large raptor over a distant woodlot. Its white and black pattern was striking but the group was left wondering what raptor they had spotted. The other part of the convoy was treated to a Peregrine Falcon in pursuit of a Red-tailed Hawk.

Thank you, Tom, for introducing us to Gesto and its winter birds. We'll use your "tips" for finding winter birds in the future.

Pat and Jim Watson's Leamington feeders should be mentioned as the Watson's feeders always seem to attract an array of interesting winter birds. On January 6, there were two Cooper's Hawks in the willow across the street from the Watson's home. Likely the birds were male and female as there was a decided difference in the size of each bird. On the backyard slope, all day on January 7, a single Long-eared Owl sat on a banister between two coniferous trees. A flock of seven cardinals flew into the apple tree nearby, ignoring the owl. Flocks of White-crowned Sparrows and Snow Buntings visited the feeders and at least one of the Cooper's Hawks was in the yard on January 7, hunting successfully.

Breeding Bird Survey Route Available

Audrey Heagy, biologist at the Long Point Observatory, is the coordinator of the Breeding Bird Survey in Ontario who has written requesting our assistance. All the existing routes in southwestern Ontario are currently being surveyed with one exception: the Kent Bridge route north of Chatham. To conduct such a survey, a birder needs to have the ability to identify birds by sight and song. The volunteer who takes on the route must make a commitment to survey the route on long-term basis. To learn more about this volunteer opportunity, please contact Audrey Heagy at the Long Point Bird Observatory, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario N0E 1M0 (519) 586-3531

Owling at Holiday Beach
by Betty Learmouth

Twenty eight naturalists joined ECFNC President Tom Hurst on January 14, 1996 for another successful owling excursion at the Holiday Beach Conservation Area. The weather was excellent, with blue skies, no wind and temperatures hovering about 0 degrees Celsius. The group first walked the nature trail near the park's entrance which leads to a grove of white pines that can appeal to Long-eared Owls as a day time roost. The movement of the naturalists among the pines caused two Long-eared Owls to leave their roosts, so that most naturalists were able to glimpse these birds as they flew about the pines, looking for a secure roost for the remainder of the day.

Other birds sighted during the two hour excursion included an immature Northern Harrier just as the group was approaching the pine grove. A female Purple Finch was sighted at the tip of a maple tree. Cedar Waxwings were seen in a juniper, along with a White-throated Sparrow near the base of the juniper. The afternoon concluded with a successful search for a Northern Mockingbird at the waterfowl feeding area, just a short drive from the park's entrance. Thank you Tom for hosting another excellent birding excursion.

Birding the Ojibway Provincial Prairie Nature Reserve

Sunday, January 21, 1996
by Silvia Thys

It was a sunny winter day. As many as 25 people arrived at the crowded parking lot of Ojibway for the birdwalk under David D'hondt's guidance. The frozen ditch along the road was a colourful sight. Skaters of all ages were skating for fun or playing hockey.

The birder's group soon spotted a downy, some tree sparrows and chickadees in the trees and ditch at the end of the lot. The littlest participant could find them too as others helped her.

Next the feeding station was visited. The area was very busy with the same birds with the added bonus of a goldfinch and a bright-eyed tufted titmouse. A motionless mourning dove sat in the tree, while a squirrel was greedily eating at the hollowed out a tree stump. Where a few birds also tried to snatch a morsel.

Across the road the group followed a path through the prairie area. It took a while before a lonely immature red-tailed hawk was discovered in a group of tees to the right.

The ground was hard frozen and in some places rough, but eyes were focused on eye level an above to detect members of the avian family.

Not much luck though! One small unidentified bird flew back of us, then a lonely blue jay crossed our path. At last high in the top of a stand of trees Dave spied a flock of rusty blackbirds, there colours enhanced by the sunlight. Later several were heard in the bushes. Nearer to Malden Road a sharp-shinned hawk sailed over the filed. Not many birds to report. Maybe the early arrival of winter induced many species to seek a warmer climate.

All in all, the healthy exercise, good company and the sunny clear winter day made it an enjoyable experience.

The Ojibway Prairie in Winter

by Betty Learmouth

Twelve naturalists joined Ojibway naturalist Karen Cedar on a chilly January 28, 1996 afternoon for a closer look at the tallgrass prairie. Our excursion took two hours as we walked a trail parallel to Matchette Road which is accessible in spring and early summer, but completely taken over by prairie plants in mid-summer. We examined various prairie grasses and a variety of flowering plant species that were quite recognizable even at mid-winter. Karen provided us with a great deal of information about the prairie and its plants which added to our enjoyment of this unique plant community.

The four main grasses that we encountered were Switch Grass, a grass that can be grown in backyards; Big Bluestem Grass which can reach heights of six feet; Cord Grass that is an indicator of wet prairies and the attractive Indian Grass which has fluffy seed heads that the Friends of Ojibway Prairie enjoy collecting during their fall seed collection. All these grasses are good fodder for cattle. Cord Grass can tear flesh if one is unwary of the "teeth" along the long blades. The Friends do not usually collect the sees of this grass.

As we walked the trail, Karen pointed out many prairie plants. The accompanying naturalists especially enjoyed viewing the Fringed Gentian in winter. Despite its faded flowers and leaves, the identity of the plat was not in dispute. This delightful plant is the last prairie plants to bloom as its flowers appear in September and October. There can be an abundance of blossoms on these plants as Karen recalls one plant with seventy blooms. Fringed Gentians are biennials, producing leaves one year and flowers in the second year. Patches of Fringed Gentian can be extensive but the following year the patch may relocate at some distance from the present

patch. This year seems to have been a good one for Fringed Gentian as the group recalled a fine patch observed in the Oakwood Woodlot this past Thanksgiving.

Another prairie plant that we were attracted to was Thimbleweed which is not a weed but an anemone. The stalk of this plant was about three feet tall, topped with the seed heads which were just coming away in soft fluffy golden clumps.

We spoke of the annual burn which is so important to the Ojibway Prairie as fire revitalizes the prairie. Dead vegetation (the tall grass stalks and all the flowering plant remnants) will collapse by spring and if allowed to remain will act as insulation, keeping the prairie soil cool. If fire occurs in April the bare soil will warm and plants will begin to grow earlier. We noted that prairie plants need full sun to thrive. The soil surface in several thickets of dogwoods was devoid of plant species. The prairie plants will grow if the opportunity is provided as the roots are still below in the soil. Several clumps of poplars were being cut to give prairie plants an opportunity to grow in place of these invasive species. There was a remarkable difference in the richness and diversity of prairie plants as we walked in the prairie at a distance from our entry on the trail at Titcombe Road. This portion of the Provincial Prairie Reserve was once agricultural lands which is being encouraged to regenerate as prairie. Sample plots are being monitored to determine if prairies can benefit from additional introduction of prairie seeds. It seems that where the prairie has been encouraged that it has thrived.

The Friends of Ojibway Prairie are in the process of producing a publication that will assist gardners with ideas for the establishment of prairies within home gardens and backyards. Gardners will be able to learn such "prairie plant tips" as how to prepare the soil for prairie plant seeds and which prairie plants would be suitable to attract butterflies. Watch for this new publication!

Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle Project

by Dave Kraus

In the spring of 1995, the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club was awarded $ 1000.00 by the Community Wildlife Involvement Program (CWIP). This Ontario Ministry of Natural Resource's (OMNR) sponsored grant to the Club was initiated by Lisa Tulen at the Chatham OMNR office. The project also conformed as part of the Detroit River Remedial Action Plan. The grant money was directed to sponsor habitat improvements for the "Threatened" Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle. A project outline was developed by Lisa, myself, OMNR ecologists, members of the national recovery team for this species, and several local residents. The area for the work was chosen to be OMNR owned property near the mouth of the Canard River. This Ontario government owned wetland property was within an area known to support a population of ES Softshell Turtles.

Almost the entire Canadian population of the Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle is found in sections of the Thames River between London and Chatham, sections of the Sydenham River between Dresden and Strathroy, Rondeau Bay, Long Point, and the Canard River mouth area. A few scattered local sightings from Lake Erie shoreline areas of Pelee Island, Point Pelee and Hillman Marsh have also been reported over recent years. The entire Canadian population of this species is roughly estimated to be about 2000 individuals, hence its `threatened' listing.

The predominant threats to this species' continued survival in Canada are thought to be habitat loss and predation. Artificially elevated raccoon populations (due to increased food and habitat, and absence of predators) in urbanized areas such as Essex County are very efficient in locating and devouring turtle eggs. Shoreline stabilization and alteration projects often

destroy suitable turtle nesting and basking habitat. Shoreline protection structures such as armourstone walls prevent turtles from being able to leave the watercourse to bask in the sun or reach upland nesting areas. Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtles are very wary and avoid human disturbance. They require isolated open sandy beaches, sparsely vegetated accessible shorelines, or dynamic riverine islands for basking and nesting. Spiny Softshell Turtles also require deep pools for hibernation and warm, shallow waters for foraging for prey. They feed on aquatic insects, crayfish, fish, etc. Disturbance from recreational boating, off road vehicles, free running pets (especially dogs), and other human activities can directly injure and kill turtles, as well as making otherwise suitable habitat unavailable. The effects of chemical contamination in the general environment and prey is also a concern for this species. Most of these negative impacts are a concern for the long term health of other local turtle populations as well.

The aim of this ECFNC project was to partially compensate for these increasing negative pressures on local turtle populations and specifically, the Eastern Spiny Softshell population. Eight dried ash logs (donated by Club members, Bill and Jack Balkwill) were drilled and then chained to concrete blocks (donated by the Waldron family farmstead) and placed in a large shallow pond. The logs were anchored away from shore, hence providing safe and sunny basking sites for turtles. This OMNR owned ponded area is open to the deeper Canard River channel but is too shallow for powerboats. The area is also relatively isolated from residential and other disturbance. Four truckloads of sand were placed along a portion of the south facing shore of the pond. The main purpose of the sand is to provide suitable habitat for the seven species of turtles in the area to dig nests and deposit eggs. The existing shore was heavily vegetated and composed of a hard, dredged clay substrate. The impenetrable vegetation, including the introduced Purple Loosestrife, was covered by the sand and the area will hopefully remain somewhat open for nesting and basking. Finally, screen and anchoring rods were purchased so a local resident can cover turtle nests before predators devour them. He travels the area in June (turtle nesting period) looking for Softshell Turtle nests. He covers the nests for several months, then removes the screen before hatching occurs. The $ 1000 grant was used to purchase materials such as sand, chain, bolts, steel screen and anchoring rods. Club members donated over 100 hours of their time and ERCA donated the permit for placing fill along a waterway.

The effort was made extremely enjoyable by the company of numerous Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtles curiously watching my activities from the safety of their aquatic home. In the summer of 1995, Erie Wildlife Rescue released an ESS Turtle into this enhanced area. These activities generated media interest and provided an opportunity for increasing public awareness about our local species at risk and the ECFNC. Please report any sightings of this threatened species to: Mike Oldham, Natural Heritage Information Centre, P.O. Box 7000, Peterborough, Ontario. K9J 8M5. Include location, habitat, date, number observed, behaviour, and any other relevant information.

Technical Report

Essex Count Crataegus (HAWTORNS)

by Bill Balkwell

In 1991 Gerry Waldron and myself made the decision to study local hawthorns, with the use of the following manuals:

●THE AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD GUIDE OT NORTH AMERICAN TREES *(eastern region)*
●WOODY PLANTS OF OHIO *by E. Lucy Braun*
●MANUAL OF THE TREES OF NORTH AMERICA *by C.S. Sargent*
●MICHIGAN FLORA *by Edward Voss*
●A TAXONOMIC REVISION OF CRATAEGUS ON ONTARIO *by J.B. Phipps and M. Muniyamma 1980*
We also took specimens to the Department of Plant Science, University of Western Ontario to be identified by Dr. J.B. Phipps. Dr. Phipps made two trips in the spring and one in the fall of 1995 for field inspections.

THE RESULTS:

●ENGLISH HAWTHORN (Crataegus monogyna) was fond on a creek bank in Colchester South, probably escaped from a living fence planted about the turn of the century, a half a mile away. Several trees were also found on Peche Isle.

●COCKSPUR HAWTHORN of series Crus-galli - There are three species in this series: C. crus galli a common dense round topped, thorny shrub or small tree, with ten stamens, pink or cream anthers, 1 to 3 styles and shiny green spatulate or elliptical leaves. Twigs brown or red-brown. Thorns straight or curved, medium to long, dark. We have found specimens wit 10, 15, 18 to 20 yellow anthers. Phipps and Muniyamma describe C. fontanesiana now called C. tenax as having 20 stamens and pink anthers. The Flora of Michigan states that C. fontanesiana (C.tenax) has 10 stamens, anthers pink, or 20 stamens anthers pink or yellow with olive or yellow green young twigs. We have not yet found any cus-galli with 20 pink anthers other than a very rare broad-leafed type called C. persimilis that Gerry found in LaSalle

●DOTTED HAWTHORN of Series Punctatae. C. punctata is a common hawthorn found throughout Essex county. C. punctata my be a shrub or a small short-trunked, round-topped tree with pale gray bark and layered limbs. Thorns straight or curved, long (one bush had thorns 6 cm. long)or short. Stamens, anthers small, pink or white in variety C. aurea. Fruits red to purplish, yellow in variety aurea. Leaves obovate with deeply sunken veins and a cuneate (tapering) base.

●FLESHY, SUCCULENT AND PEAR HAWTHORN are some of the common names for some of the members of Series macrancanthae. We have three species in this series. C. macracantha or (C. succulenta var. macracantha) our single specimen was spreading, many trunked shrub four metres high, wider than tall with reddish peeling bark. This shrub had very few short, curved thorns. The flowers were 19 mm. wide with ten stamens and large, very pale pink anthers. The leaves were broad elliptical to obovate with a cuneate base.
C. succulenta is very similar to C. macracantha except it has twenty stamens and tiny red, pink, purple or whit e anthers. There are several variations of this thorn in Essex County. Most have many stout, medium to long curved thorns. One white anthered type has fine straight needle
like thorns, but very few.
C. calpodendron (Pear Thorn) blooms late usually after June tenth. It usually has twenty stamens and pink anthers. Its leaves are larger and more pubescent that other macracantha. Thorns are few and fine, fruits are small and orange. This thorn is some times called urn-tree because its many trunks form a vase shape.

●SERIES BRAINERDIANAE has two species in our area. C. brainerdii has large flowers 20 to 24 mm. wide, 18 to 20 stamens and pale pink anthers, styles 3. Fruits are small, dull-red and taper towards the calyx. Leaves are ovate, sub-cuneate, thin and pale green. Thorns curved, stout, dull-gray, numerous and 4 to 5 cm. long. Discovered near Gesto, full range unknown.
C. sylvestris has large flowers, 20 mm. wide, 20 stamens, purple-red anthers. Our specimen has 5 styles, both Sargent and Phipps say three styles. Leaves ovate with a cuneate base or broad ovate and slightly cuneate at the base, often on the same brach. Fruits ripen through an orange stage to dull red. Fall 1995 fruits ripened orange-red, mottled yellow-green. Immature thorns red-brown maturing a brown-black. We found this thorn north of Arner west of the McCormick side road, north to the fifth concession road, then north along th Ferris's side road to Gesto, then west tot eh Canard River Conservation Srea.

●FROSTED THORNS, so named becasue their fruits are pruinose, covered with a pale bloom belong to

Series Pruinosea. We have fond three species in this series. C. pruinosa var. pruinoas is a wied spread very thorny, somewhat variable shrub with smooth-glabrous leaves. Flowers ae large with 20 stamens and pink athers. Fruitssize variable, pink or ed, oftne mottled with green, pruinose with the clayz raised on a collar. Thorns curved, slender, medium to long, dark.
C. pruinosa var. cognata is quite similar to C. pruinosa but athers are with. leaves are narrower and more blue-green. Thorns shorter, back angled ratrh then curved. C. cognata leaves emerge and flowers open, later than C. pruinosa.
C. pruinosa var. dissona similar to above, stamens 10 anterhs rose or pink. Leaves darker greeen, blooms even later than C. cognata, bark on mature twigs dark.

●SERIES SILVICOLAE. In this series we have found only C. populnea which looks similar to C. pruinosa but is actually quite different. The larger leaves are scabrous (having small bristles) giving it a feeling of roughness. The flowers have 6 to 8 stamens, rose or pink anthers. Fruit about 14mm, red-pink. Thorns curved, chestnut-brown, dark-tipped, 4.2cm long. A thicket forming shrub 3 metres tall.

●SERIES TENUIFOLIA (Macrosperma complex). I find this group a difficult one. There is a lot of variation in leaves, thorns and fruit. One type of C. macrosperma differs from the others. This one has two variations. One resembles Sargant's description of C. Paucipina (C. macrosperma). New growth. leaves and flower buds emerge bronze. Inflorescence slightly pubescent, fruit elongated, pink-red, pruinose, calyx small and weak. The other emerges red, inflorescence glabrous, fruit pyriform, pruinose, pink red to red. Calyx entire or serrate, slim, weak, raised on a tiny collar. Both have flower buds emerging packed with light-green, linear bracklets with gland-crowded edges. At petal drop most of the bracklets have been shed. leaves rounded at the base, elliptical, acuminate at the tip, some bristles on the upper side. Thorns sparse, or numerous, slender, yellow-brown, dark-tipped. Flowers 17 to 20 mm. wide; stamens 8 to 10, anthers rose.
C. macrosperma var. matura is a thorny shrub with short, coarse, curved, dull-gray thorns. Leaves broad ovate with either a truncate or rounded base; leaf tip acute. Flower width 18 mm., stamens 8 to 10 anthers purple. Fruit oblong, calyx entire. Calyx clasps the orange-red fruit.
C. macrosperma var. acutiloba a very thorny thicket forming shrub 4 to 5 metres high. Thorns short, dark-tipped, chestnut-brown. Flowers 15 mm. wide, stamens 6 to 8, anthers red, calyx serrate. Fruit globular, red, calyx spread out and retained. Leaves broad ovate, base cuneate to broad cuneate, tip and lobes acute. Another type is very similar, but differs in having 8 to 9 stamens with pink anthers. Armed with only a few thorns that are shorter, dull chestnut-brown and dark-tipped. Fruit elongated elliptical. Calyx entire clasping fruit when green, shed when ripe. Leaves broad ovate with rounded base, leaf tips acute, leaf lobes reflexed.
C. iracunda as identified by Dr. Phipps. A very interesting hawthorn, some leaves are as broad or broader than long. They have an appearance of being almost round. The leaf base is between rounded and broad cuneate leaf lobes reflexed, terminal lobe acute. The thorns are orange-brown with a waxed appearance, dark-tipped, medium in length , and slender with a slight curve. inflorescence pubescent. Flower width 15 mm., stamens 8 to 10, anthers purple-pink. Fruit 14 mm. long, 12 mm. wide, dark red, retains calyx, ripens and falls early in September.
C. schuettei is a small tree or shrub with slender, dark-tipped, chestnut-brown thorns of medium length. Flowers flat, width 20 mm., stamens 20, anthers purple and calyx serrate. Fruit pyriform, deep-red, calyx shed when ripe. Leaves round or truncate at base, deltoid with an acuminate terminal lobe.
C. cuneata? C. tortilis? Phipps and Muniyamma describe C, cuneata as having pubescent corymbs as this variety has, but give no other description. Michigan Flora does not mention whether the corymbs of C. tortilis are pubescent or glabrous. A tree-like, thicket-forming shrub with larger leaves and flowers than C. schuettei. Flowers 20 to 23 mm. wide, stamens 20, anthers rose, calyx serrate. Fruit suborbical, red calyx retained. Leaves deltoid with rounded or broad cuneate base, tip acute. Thorns coarse, dark tipped, dull chestnut-brown on the long side of medium in length.

●SCARLET HAWTHORNS are member of SERIES COCCINEAE. We have four species in this series.
C. coccinea is the common hawthorn of this series. A small tree or a tree like shrub. Thorns may or few, thorns are short 25 to 35 mm., slender or coarse with a stout base, straight or curved, first year red-brown second year yellow-brown with dark tips. Flowers width 17 to 20 mm., stamens 6 to 8, anthers pink, calyx serrate. Inflorescence villous. Fruit large, orbical, scarlet to a dull crimson. Leaves are broad-ovate with either a round or truncate base, and a acute tip, scabrous.
C. holmesiana is very similar to the abouve. Leave narrow elliptic, base round or broad cuneate. Inflorescence glabrous. Flowers smaller, stamens 6 to 8, anthers pink, sometimes purple. Fruit pyriform or elongated, crimson. Thorns to 45 mm., orange-brown with a dark tip. C. pringlei has the form of a small tree about 3 to 4 metres high. It has small, long limbs that noticeably zig-zag. thorns short to medium, a clear, dark-tipped, chestnut-brown, on the stout side of slender.

Inflorescence villous. Flower width 20 to 22 mm., stamens 6 to 6, anthers pink. New growth twigs are pubescent and, light green, maturing to olive and becoming glabrous; second year twigs olive-gray. fruit orbixal, immature fruit villous, some pubescence remains near the fruit stem when ripe. Ripens through an orange stage to a true scarlet. Leaves ovate, scabrous, leaf tip acute.

C. corusca. Inflorescence villous. flower width 23 mm., stamens 20, anthers pink, small, calyx serrate. Fruit 15 to 17 mm., ovate, red. Leaves broad-ovate or almost orbical, some are as wide as long; base rounded, cordate or truncate, tip acute, scabrous on the upper side, pubescent mainly along the veins below. Thorns slender, red-brown the first year orange-brown, and dark-tipped the second year. Thorns have a slight curve.

C. hillii. To me this one appears to be more like C. mollis. Inflorescence, new growth, young leaves and leaf stems are villous. The young leaves feel soft and silky on both upper and lower surfaces, not rough and scabrous. Flower width 21 mm., stamens 19 to 20, anthers pink or purple, normal size. Leaves large, broad-ovate or deltoid with a rounded or truncate base and acute tips. Thorns stout, coarse, to 6 cm. long yellow-brown.

●SERIES DILATATEA C. dilatata (Broad-leaf Hawthorn). Inflorescence villous. Flower width 20 to 25 mm., stamens 20, anthers rose, calyx large, serrate. Fruit subglobular with a raised calyx, red. Leave deltoid with a truncate or cordate base and acute at the apex. There a five lobes on each side of the leaf, prominent at the base diminishing towards the apex. New growth, young leaf stems, and along the ribs of the under side of young leaves stems, and along the ribs of the under side of young leaves are villous. A few scattered hairs on the upper side of the leaf. At maturity upper side of leaves and twigs are glabrous. Some pubescence remains along the midrib of the underside of the leaf. C. glarosa. Flower width 25 mm., stamens 18 to 20, anthers cream, calyx serrate. Fruit short-oblong 16x14mm, pink-red, pruinose, calyx raised. Very thorny, thorns medium, wine red, curved. New twigs olive.

●SERIES MOLLES. Downy Hawthorn is a perfect title for C. mollis. New twigs, leaf stems, leaves, inflorescence and fruit are pubescent well into maturity. A very common shrub or more frequently a small tree with a short trunk and wide spreading libs, when growing in a open space. Growing in the woods in sometimes becomes a slender tree 10 metres high with trunk nearly clean to 3 metres and an open top. Thorns sparse or absent, occasionally very thorny. Thorns usually fine but sometimes coarse, short or long, straight or curved. Flower width 17 to 23 mm., stamens 20, anthers cream, calyx serrated. Fruit 1 to 2 cm., red, some hairs still remaining on ripe fruit. Leaves ovate, very broad ovate, elliptical or deltoid. Base rounded truncate or cordate. Tip rounded or acute. Leaves large to very large, lobes small or large, leaf teeth fine to very coarse.

Christmas Bird Count Results

1995 CEDAR CREEK CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by Paul D. Pratt

The eleventh Cedar Creek CBC attracted thirty-three participants who tallied 86 species and over 100,000 individual birds. Record high counts were observed for Redhead, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, and Red-winged Blackbird. Turkey Vulture, Marsh Wren, Eastern Phoebe and Common Redpoll have only been recorded on one or two previous counts. The Kingsville group found an impressive total of 75 species but the award for hard work must go to Area 3. They acheived their highest total ever with 47 species. After a long day of birding everyone decended on Anne and Brian Barbour's for the tally and a pot luck dinner.

130 species have been recorded on the past eleven counts. Cedar Creek holds the all-time Canadian record for numbers of American Crow (94,200) and Swainson's Thrush (1). In addition, the Count has recorded the annual Canadian high count for twenty-four species on one or more occasions (Canada Goose, Turkey Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, Sora, Mourning Dove, Eastern Screech-Owl, Long-eared Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Horned Lark, Blue Jay, American Crow, House Wren, Mountain Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, Brown Thrasher, Orange-crowned Warbler, Dickcissel, Rufous-sided Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow and Meadowlark). Species present during the count week but not on the count day

are indicated by 'CW'. The master list below is divided into four columns: (#) the number of counts recording this species, (*AVG*) when seen, the average number recorded, (*MAX*) maximum number recorded, and (*1995*) results for this years count.

SPECIES	#	*AVG*	*MAX*	*1995*
Common Loon	1	2	2	
Pied-billed Grebe	1	1	1	
Horned Grebe	2	2	2	
Red-necked Grebe	1	1	1	
Eared Grebe	1	1	1	
Great Blue Heron	11	11	35	6
Tundra Swan	6	6	12	8
Mute Swan	1	3	3	
Snow Goose	7	3	7	4
Canada Goose	11	5508	8554	7273
Wood Duck	5	4	10	
Am Black Duck	11	31	114	24
Mallard	11	500	2807	287
Northern Pintail	4	3	4	
Blue-winged Teal	1	1	1	
Northern Shoveler	1	4	4	
Gadwall	3	2	2	
American Wigeon	2	2	2	
Canvasback	3	30	85	
Redhead	5	27	110	110
Ring-necked Duck	3	1	1	
Greater Scaup	7	36	187	1
Lesser Scaup	4	63	178	
Com Goldeneye	11	9	30	13
Bufflehead	8	4	8	1
Hooded Merganser	7	4	9	2
Common Mergansr	11	868	5515	1838
Red-br Merganser	11	366	2449	466
Turkey Vulture	3	2	4	2
Bald Eagle	11	2	4	4
Northern Harrier	11	12	28	9
Sh-shinned Hawk	11	4	11	6
Cooper's Hawk	11	5	9	4
Northern Goshawk	3	1	2	1
Red-shd Hawk	1	3	5	2
Red-tailed Hawk	11	66	89	89
Rough-leg Hawk	10	11	25	4
American Kestrel	11	36	61	37
Peregrine Falcon	1	1	1	
Ring-n Pheasant	11	10	24	10
Sora	1	1	1	
American Coot	cw			
Killdeer	8	9	42	
Dunlin	1	1	1	
Common Snipe	5	2	6	
Am Woodcock	1	1	1	
Little Gull	2	2	2	
Bonaparte's Gull	10	1612	5620	2
Ring-billed Gull	11	1826	4280	180
Herring Gull	11	611	1333	467
Thayer's Gull	1	1	1	
Lesser Bl-bk Gull	cw			
Glaucous Gull	1	1	1	
Great Bl-bk Gull	1	65	193	27
Black-leg Kittiwake	1	1	1	
Rock Dove	11	402	771	206
Mourning Dove	11	1380	2016	1058
E Screech-Owl	11	42	56	39
Great Horned Owl	11	16	29	11
Snowy Owl	1	1	1	
Long-eared Owl	0	7	14	5
Short-eared Owl	5	2	3	
N. Saw-whet Owl	2	3	4	
Belted Kingfisher	9	2	4	1
Rd-hd Woodpecker	8	3	9	1
Rd-bellied Woodpr	11	6	13	13
Y-bellied Sapsucker	5	1	2	1
Downy Woodpr	11	131	215	177
Hairy Woodpr	11	7	10	5
Northern Flicker	1	30	54	27
Eastern Phoebe	3	1	1	1
Horned Lark	11	688	3152	105
Blue Jay	11	326	712	231
American Crow	11	59426	94200	80047
Bl-cap Chickadee	11	116	526	54
Boreal Chickadee	1	1	1	
Tufted Titmouse	4	5	12	12
Red-br Nuthatch	10	7	19	19
White-br Nuthatch	11	41	66	66
Brown Creeper	11	29	44	34
Carolina Wren	11	14	26	17
House Wren	3	1	1	
Winter Wren	10	5	11	4
Marsh Wren	2	1	1	1
Golden-cr Kinglet	11	25	61	22
Ruby-cr Kinglet	3	2	3	1
Bl-gr Gnatcatcher	1	1	1	
Eastern Bluebird	10	11	22	15
Mountain Bluebird	1	1	1	
Swainson's Thrush	1	1	1	
Hermit Thrush	10	5	17	3
American Robin	10	14	33	12
Gray Catbird	4	1	1	1
N Mockingbird	5	2	4	2
Brown Thrasher		3	1	2
American Pipit	1	1	1	
Cedar Waxwing	11	52	102	35
Northern Shrike	5	1	1	1
European Starling	11	3281	5797	2716
Orange-cr Warbler	1	1	1	
Y-rumped Warbler	9	8	21	9
C Yellowthroat	1	2	2	
Northern Cardinal	11	278	422	314
Dickcissel	1	1	1	

Rufous-s Towhee	9	3	7	1
Am Tree Sparrow	11	587	1858	696
Chipping Sparrow	4	7	11	7
Field Sparrow	11	14	33	28
Vesper Sparrow		2	1	1
Savannah Sparrow	3	2	4	
Fox Sparrow	4	2	3	2
Song Sparrow	11	215	301	255
Lincoln's Sparrow	1	1	1	
Swamp Sparrow	11	53	90	7
White-thr Sparrow	11	84	195	30
White-cr Sparrow	10	25	126	40
Dark-eyed Junco	11	452	859	425
Lapland Longspur	7	9	30	3
Snow Bunting	10	607	3185	60
Red-wg Blackbird	11	29	80	80
Meadowlark	8	11	59	5
Rusty Blackbird	9	24	157	1
Common Grackle	10	5	8	2
Brown-hd Cowbird	11	257	874	396
Pine Grosbeak	1	3	3	
Purple Finch	10	20	60	16
House Finch	11	779	1682	840
Common Redpoll	3	158	451	21
Pine Siskin	7	23	86	2
Am Goldfinch	11	190	432	281
Evening Grosbeak	3	12	26	
House Sparrow	11	2715	5804	2128
"merganser" species				210
"buteo" species				6
"gull" species				206

PARTICIPANTS: Matt Baker, Bill Balkwill, Brian Barbour, Anne Barbour, Wayne Beemer, Jim Burk, Keith Burk, Bernard Calhoun, Karen Cedar, Paul Desjardins, Dan Dufour, Bonnie Foley, Glenn Gervais, Denise Hartley, Tom Hince, Hank Hunt, Peggy Hurst, Thomas Hurst, Margaret Jennings, Dave Kraus, Dan L, Dale Larson, Betty Learmouth, Brad Liptrot, Carl Maiolani, Jim McAllister, Ethan Meleg, Allan Merritt, Paul Pratt. Wayne Wannick, Bev Wannick, Bob Wickett, John ZochPoint Pelee

1995 Point Pelee Christmas Bird Count

by Dan Dufour

Fifty observers recorded a total of 89 species during Point Pelee's 43rd Christmas Bird Count. Many thanks to all who participated and a special thanks to the Friends of Point Pelee for once again hosting the compilation dinner.

Observers: Lizanne Bacon, Lynn Baker, Matt Baker, Martin Blagdurn, Ken Bondy, Jim Bricker, Lucy Bricker, Rick brown, Lloyd Brown-John, Ernie Carhart, Mike Chomyshyn, Paul Desjardins, Tammy Dobbie, Dorothy Dobrik, Dan Dufour (compiler), Andy Garlatti, Alexander Gervais, Glenn Gervais, Paul Gervais, Cathy Gibbs, Bob Graham, Tom Hince, Randy Horvath, Mark Jennings, Elizabeth Jolly, Bill Kilburn, Rosann Kovalcik, Kelvin Leddy, Matt Maisonville, Jim McAllister, Ethan Meleg, Derek Mercer, Dick Meyers, Charles Miller, Matt Mills, Kate Parr, Paul Pratt, Mark Randall, Lindsay Rodger, Sarah Rupert, Diane Shartner, Gisela Shartner, Jeff Skevington, Robert Smalley, Amy Tesolin, Jason Vaughn, Anton Van Eerd, Pat Watson, Sherry Wright and John Zoch.

Bold Bird Species = rare bird for count
Bold number = unusually high number

* = first record for Pelee Count

Common Loon	**2**
Horned Grebe	1
Great Blue Heron	4
Tundra Swan	13
Canada Goose	519
American Black Duck	2
Mallard	26
Canvasback	6
Greater Scaup	84
Lesser Scaup	15
Scaup (sp)	21
Oldsquaw	**14**
Black Scoter	1
Surf Scoter	1
White-winged Scoter	10
Common Goldeneye	296
Bufflehead	47
Hooded Merganser	2
Common Merganser	738
Red-breasted Merganser	1510
Merganser(sp)	87
Turkey Vulture	**4**
Bald Eagle	3 (2a, 1i)
Northern Harrier	17
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3
Cooper's Hawk	**6**
Northern Goshawk	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	1
Red-tailed Hawk	33
Rough-legged Hawk	12

American Kestrel	22
Ring-necked Pheasant	16
American Coot	1
Bonaparte's Gull	321
Ring-billed Gull	5642
Herring Gull	1831
Great Black-backed Gull	46
Gull(sp)	1582
Rock Dove	539
Mourning Dove	435
Eastern Screech-Owl	7
Great Horned Owl	11
Long-eared Owl	9
Northern Saw-whet Owl	**6**
Belted Kingfisher	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	**15**
Downy Woodpecker	140
Hairy Woodpecker	3
Northern Flicker	13
Eastern Phoebe	**1**
Horned Lark	55
Blue Jay	**126**
American Crow	1878
Black-capped Chickadee	34
Tufted Titmouse	1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	11
White-breasted Nuthatch	**62**
Brown Creeper	52
Carolina Wren	14
Winter Wren	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	38
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2
Eastern Bluebird	11
Mountain Bluebird	**1**
Hermit Thrush	3
American Robin	10
Cedar Waxwing	118
Northern Shrike	**4**
Starling	1599
Yellow-rumped Warbler	11
Northern Cardinal	378
Rufous-sided Towhee	4
American Tree Sparrow	692
Chipping Sparrow	**1**
Field Sparrow	26
Song Sparrow	139
Swamp Sparrow	16
White-throated Sparrow	34
White-crowned Sparrow	52
Dark-eyed Junco	**417**
Lapland Longspur	1
Snow Bunting	44
Red-winged Blackbird	16
Rusty Blackbird	2
Common Grackle	11
Brown-headed Cowbird	126
Purple Finch	5
House Finch	913
Common Redpoll	8
American Goldfinch	165
House Sparrow	1576

Total Species=89
Total Individual Birds=22,782

ROCKWOOD, MI CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by Paul Pratt

The Rockwood, Michigan Christmas Bird Count includes a tiny bit of Ontario along the Detroit River south of Amherstberg. Ten people covered this area on December 23,1995 and found 62 species by mid day.

Tundra Swan	8
swan sp.	12
Canada Goose	535
American Black Duck	47
Mallard	380
Northern Pintail	2
Northern Shoveler	1
Gadwall	6
American Wigeon	1
Canvasback	2400
Redhead	12
Greater Scaup	2
Common Goldeneye	215
Bufflehead	1
Oldsquaw	3
Common Merganser	720
Red-breasted Merganser	8
merganser species	200
Northern Harrier	2
Cooper's Hawk	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	1
Red-tailed Hawk	7
American Kestrel	3
Ring-necked Pheasant	1
Ring-billed Gull	58
Herring Gull	450
Great Black-backed Gull	430
gull species	800
Rock Dove	147
Mourning Dove	190

Eastern Screech-Owl	7
Great Horned Owl	1
Long-eared Owl	2
Red-bellied Woodpecker	3
Downy Woodpecker	48
Northern Flicker	17
Horned Lark	15
Blue Jay	57
American Crow	20
Black-capped Chickadee	5
Tufted Titmouse	2
Red-breasted Nuthach	1
White-breasted Nuthatch	5
Brown Creeper	3
Carolina Wren	5
Winter Wren	2
Hermit Thrush	1
Cedar Waxwing	1
Northern Shrike	1
European Starling	235
Yellow-rumped Warbler	9
Northern Cardinal	150
American Tree Sparrow	187
Field Sparrow	1
Song Sparrow	59
Swamp Sparrow	35
White-throated Sparrow	2
Dark-eyed Junco	69
Red-winged Blackbird	25
Rusty Blackbird	1
Common Grackle	2
Brown-headed Cowbird	276
House Finch	150
American Goldfinch	41
House Sparrow	360

PARTICIPANTS: Paul Desjardins, Tom Hince, Randy Horvath, Hank Hunt, Rene Kielbasa, Betty Learmouth, Carl Maiolani, Christopher Maiolani, Paul Pratt, Robert Reid.

Pelee Island Portion of the Erie Islands CBC (December 20, 1995)

by Allen Woodliffe

Total Species-54	Total Individuals-6808
* = new high number	** = new species

Great Blue Heron	1
Tundra Swan	3
Canada Goose	4
Greater Scaup	1
Oldsquaw	2
Common Goldeneye	1659*
Bufflehead	288
Common Merganser	1790*
Red-breasted Merganser	443
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1**
Cooper's Hawk	1
Red-tailed Hawk	11
Rough-legged Hawk	5*
American Kestrel	3*
Ring-necked Pheasant	15*
Ring-billed Gull	340
Herring Gull	230
Glaucous Gull	1**
Great-black-backed Gull	108*
Rock Dove	1
Mourning Dove	24
E. Screech Owl	6*
Great Horned Owl	4*
Red-bellied Woodpecker	20*
Downy Woodpecker	119*
Hairy Woodpecker	1**
Northern Flicker	26*
Blue Jay	26*
American Crow	3*
Black-capped Chickadee	166*
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1**
White-breasted Nuthatch	33*
Brown Creeper	34*
Carolina Wren	7*
Winter Wren	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	17*
Eastern Bluebird	4*
Hermit Thrush	11*
American Robin	2**
Northern Shrike	2**
European Starling	281
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1
Northern Cardinal	170*
Am. Tree Sparrow	280*
Song Sparrow	3
Swamp Sparrow	1
White-crowned Sparrow	2

Dark-eyed Junco	72*
Snow Bunting	105
Rusty Blackbird	2*
Brown-headed Cowbird	1
House Finch	10*
American Goldfinch	24*
House Sparrow	440*

DETROIT RIVER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by Paul Pratt

Nineteen hardy observers began the new year by participating in the Windsor portion of the Detroit River Christmas Bird Count on January 1, 1996.

Of the 75 species recorded, 66 species were seen on the Ontario side of the river and and 61 species on the American portion. An additional four species were recorded count week (CW) but missed on count day. Here are the species totals for the Ontario portion of this CBC.

Tundra Swan	2
Mute Swan	10
Canada Goose	525
Am Black Duck	24
Mallard	596
Gadwall	18
Canvasback	11,100
Redhead	3,540
Ring-necked Duck	40
Greater Scaup	3
Lesser Scaup	4
Com Goldeneye	420
Bufflehead	72
Oldsquaw	1
Hooded Merganser	38
Common Merganser	356
Red-breasted Merganser	10
Northern Harrier	1
Cooper's Hawk	3
Red-shouldered Hawk	2
Red-tailed Hawk	36
Rough-legged Hawk	CW
American Kestrel	15
Peregrine Falcon	CW
Ring-necked Pheasant	10
American Coot	1
Ring-billed Gull	151
Herring Gull	190
Iceland Cull	1
Glaucaus Gull	1
Great Black-backed Gul	I 8
gull species	40
Rock Dove	415
Mourning Dove	199
Eastern Screech-Owl	2
Great Horned Owl	2
Belted Kingfisher	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	14
Downy Woodpecker	53
Hairy Woodpecker	1
Northern Flicker	2
Blue Jay	213
American Crow	71
Black-capped Chickadee	95
Tufted Titmouse	16
Red-breasted Nuthach	8
White-breasted Nuthatch	44
Brown Creeper	3
Carolina Wren	4
Winter Wren	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1
American Robin	3
Northern Mockingbird	1
Northern Shrike	1
European Starling	1688
Northern Cardinal	252
Rufous-sided Towhee	CW
American Tree Sparrow	411
Field Sparrow	2
Song Sparrow	86
Swamp Sparrow	16
White-throated Sparrow	75
White-crowned Sparrow	40
Dark-eyed Junco	256
Snow Bunting	CW
Rusty Blackbird	1
Common Grackle	CW
Brown-headed Cowbird	244
blackbird sp	50
House Finch	210
Common Redpoll	3
White-winged Crossbill	1
American Goldfinch	117
House Sparrow	616

PARTICIPANTS: Karen Cedar, David D'hondt, Paul Desjardins, Pam Gerard, Mac Gillespie, Tom Hince, Barbara Horvath, Hank Hunt, Lydia Hunt, Margaret Krause, Betty Learmouth, Kelvin Leddy, Doug Macdonald, Christopher Maiolani, Carl Maiolani, Fred Maisonville, Kate Parr, Steve Pike, Paul Pratt.

Treasurers's Report 1995

1994 Balances forward:

Blue Bird	64.64
Current	540.79
Heinz 1	4151.18
Heinz 2	36492.49
Heritage	17336.38
NHRP	993.62
Reserve	2756.78
	62335.88

1995 Income:

Grant	7250.00
Donations	2304.64
Interest	1892.78
Membership	1730.00
Raffles	277.42
Sales	18672.55
	32127.42

1995 Expenditures:

Advertizing	60.00
Dinner	1746.40
Bank Charge	394.85
Dues	150.00
Gifts	55.18
Grants	6250.00
Insurance	260.00
Postage	740.42
Printing	576.76
Prizes	13680.00
Supplies etc.	1266.74
Telephone	290.58
Tax- GST	295.39
PST	216.57
	25982.89

1995 Balances:

Bluebird	37.72
Current	797.11
Heinz 1	5268.86
Heinz 2	36598.77
Heritage	21853.11
NHRP	1167.71
Reserve	2757.13
	68480.41

Please recycle this newletter, let a friend read it!

GARDENING TIPS

by Pat and Jim Watson

1. Save all the fluff from your dryer and spread it around the yard in the spring. The birds love it for their nests! Be careful of any long threads or strips - cut them into short pieces.

2. Put our your leftover tea on the garden all winter with the tea bags torn apart. All the bags will disappear either into nests or the soil.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Further information regarding E.C.F.N.C. Excursions is available from either Muriel Kassimatis (252-4801), Betty Learmouth (944-2292,days), or Margaret MacDonald (252-3515). Let us know about your ideas for future excursions in the fall.

MARCH - 1996

Mar. 13 - E.C.F.N.C. Membership Meeting
7:30pm at Union Gas.
Speaker: Ben Porchuk, Pelee Island's Blue Racer Snake researcher.

Mar. 17 - Friends of Ojibway Prairie Annual General Meeting.
At Ojibway Nature Centre at 2 pm, guest speaker Kim Delaney of the Rural Lambton Stewardship Network.

March 23 - FON Conference Meeting.
6:30 pm at Ojibway Nature Centre. Call Karen (966-5853) for details

Mar. 25, April 1, 8 and 15 - Captivating Critters
At Ojibway Nature Centre Programme. A programme for ages 3-5 from 1:00 to 3:00pm.

Mar. 27 - E.C.F.N.C. Executive Meeting

Mar. 29 - Thelon: A River Sanctuary
Presentation at St. Clair College by David F. Pelly, at 7:30pm. For info call Pete Imeson at 723-4706

Mar. 30-31 - Weekend on Pelee Island with Ben Porchuk
Join and assist him with Blue Racer research through building special structures over hibernating areas. Call Ben at 1-519-724-2655 to learn more about this volunteer activity.

APRIL - 1996

April 4 - Birding By Ear evening programme
Ojibway Nature Centre Programme 7:30pm at Ojibway Nature Centre

April 6 - Spring Bird Migration field trip
Contact Ojibway Nature Centre.

April 10 - E.C.F.N.C. Membership Meeting
7:30pm at Union Gas.

April 14 - E.C.F.N.C. Excursion
Join Phil Roberts and Gerry Waldron for an early spring hike along the River Canard. Meet at the Essex Civic Centre at 1:30pm.

April 18 - Birding For Beginners evening programme
Ojibway Nature Centre Programme 7:30pm at Ojibway Nature Centre

April 20 - Spring Bird Migration field trip
Contact Ojibway Nature Centre.

April 21 - Ojibway Spring Festival and Earth Day Celebrations.
Enjoy guided nature hikes, a variety of exhibits and more. Noon until 4:00pm at Ojibway Park and Nature Centre.

April 24 - Weekday Birding field trip at Point Pelee National Park
Contact Ojibway Nature Centre.

April 24 - E.C.F.N.C. Executive Meeting

MAY - 1996

May 1 - Weekday Birding field trip at Point Pelee National Park
Contact Ojibway Nature Centre.

May 4-5 - E.C.F.N.C. Excursion
Dave Kraus will again lead naturalists on a two day spring trip to Pelee Island. Please see the article in this issue of the EGRET for more information.

May 4 - Spring Bird Migration field trip
Contact Ojibway Nature Centre.

May 8 - E.C.F.N.C. Membership Meeting
7:30pm at the Union Gas Building.

May 10 - Ojibway Nature Centre Programme - Owls, Nightjars and Woodcock
Family programme at 7:00pm at Ojibway Nature Centre.

May 11 - E.C.F.N.C. Excursion
The Habitat Study Group will travel to Backus Woods and Springwater Conservation Area in the Norfolk-Haldimand region to examine old growth Carolinian forest. Call Donna Sale at 733-9972.

May 12 - E.C.F.N.C. Excursion
Join Tom Hurst for a visit to the Amer Woodlot for spring flowers. Meet at the Cedar Creek Conservation Area at 2:00pm.

May 15 - Weekday Birding field trip at Point Pelee National Park
Contact Ojibway Nature Centre.

May 17-20 ECFNC Camping at Pt, Pelee.
Call tom Hurst (839-4635) by May 4

May 18 - Spring Bird Migration field trip
Contact Ojibway Nature Centre.

May 18 - Ojibway Nature Centre Programme - Pond Life.
Family programmeat 8:00am at Ojibway Nature Centre.

May 24-26 - Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Annual Conference, Sault Ste. Marie.

Contact the FON at 355 Lesmill Road, Don Mills, Ontario M3B 2W8.

May 25 - Ojibway Nature Centre Programme - Spring Birds.
Family programme at 8:00am at Ojibway Nature Centre.

May 30, June 1, and 6 - Nature Photography
Contact Ojibway Nature Centre.

May 30 - E.C.F.N.C. Executive Meeting

JUNE - 1996

June 1 - Ojibway Nature Centre Programme - Reptiles and Amphibians.
Family programme at 8:00am at Ojibway Nature Centre.

June 2 - E.C.F.N.C. Excursion
Band late migrants with Phil Roberts at Hillman Marsh. Meet at the Hillman Marsh Nature Centre at 9:00am.

June 8 - Ojibway Nature Centre Programme - Insects.
Family programme at 8:00am at Ojibway Nature Centre.

June 9 - E.C.F.N.C. Excursion
Explore a neighbourhood woodlot with Parl Pratt. Meet in the Ojibway Nature Centre at 2:00pm.

June 12 - E.C.F.N.C. Membership Meeting
7:30pm at Union Gas Building.

June 15 - Ojibway Nature Centre Programme - Breeding Birds I.
Family programme at 8:00am at Ojibway Nature Centre.

June 16 - E.C.F.N.C. Excursion
Pat and Jim Watson will be our hosts as we visit their naturalized backyard. Meet in the Jones Fine Furniture parking lot on Highway 3 as one enters Leamington from Ruthven at 2:00pm.

June 22 - Ojibway Nature Centre Programme - Breeding Birds II.
Family programme at 8:00am at Ojibway Nature Centre.

June 23 - E.C.F.N.C. Excursion
Learn about the many beautiful moths that are found in Essex County with moth enthusiast Jeff Larson. Meet at the Cedar Creek Conservation Area parking lot at 9:00pm, then to Bill Balkwill's woodlot in Gosfield South Township.

June 26 - E.C.F.N.C. Executive Meeting

June 29 - Ojibway Nature Centre Programme - Butterflies.
Family programme at 8:00am at Ojibway Nature Centre.

June 30 - E.C.F.N.C. Excursion
Enjoy the Eastern Bluebirds of the Harrow Research Station during an evening walk with Don Bissonnette, Chairperson of the Bluebird Committee. Meet in the Harrow Research Station parking lot at 7:30pm.

Peggy Hurst
R.R. #3
Cottam On. N0R 1B0

Thomas Hurst
R.R.#3
Cottam On. N0R 1B0

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Individual Membership	-	20.00 per year	____
Family Membership	-	25.00 per year	____
Sustaining Membership	-	25.00 per year	____
Life Membership	-	200.00	____

Name: _____

Address: _____