



# The Egret

*the Newsletter of the Essex County Field Naturalists*

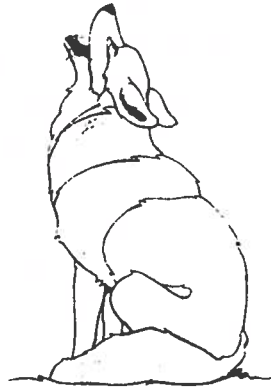
**Volume 13, Number 1**

**Spring 1997**

**It's here!**

## *New ECFNC Membership Brochure Produced*

*by Dave Kraus*



**T**hanks to the generous resources, talents and efforts of many ECFNC members and others, a beautiful and informative membership brochure has been produced. The recycled paper, double sided, two colour, four panel pamphlet contains: three

local photographs; information about some of our club's activities, committees and goals; and a tear out membership application. The pamphlet has been about three years in the making and has received financial and volunteer support from numerous individuals and organizations. The final result is 5,000 copies of an attractive and professional looking pamphlet to attract new members and better inform present members. The pamphlets are available through most executive members, myself, and at regular ECFNC membership meetings. Pick one up to refresh your memory about our club's goals and committees and pass it along to anyone you know who might share similar interests and possibly become a club member.

I will now try to list all of the generous supporters of this long lived project which in the end resulted in a great product at minimal cost to the club. Scott Hughes, Graphic Artist donated fees back to the club for design, layout, photograph prep, numerous editing, etc. of brochure - basically Scott put it all together and worked with the printer to produce the final product for us. Julie Bell assisted with the design and layout of the brochure. Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation (supported by Canada Trust and its contributing customers) -

Leamington Branch: grant of \$ 967.67 towards printing costs. Settrington's Ltd. donation of \$ 300.00 toward printing costs. (All printing costs were paid for by the above two donations). Jim Flynn donated the use of a beautiful photograph of a Great Egret. Dave Kraus donated the use of two local photographs, coordinated pamphlet production. Tom Hurst: donated gifts to some volunteers on project, assisted with production coordination. ECFNC donated 2 club T shirts and several one year memberships to non club member supporters. Peg Wilkinson handled cheques, invoices and receipts for the numerous financial transactions. Denise Hartley handled gift memberships information. Gerry Waldron and other club executive members assisted with project direction and coordination. Thanks also to Dunkley's Printing Centre for doing such a great job of printing the pamphlets. Thanks to anyone else who helped and I have forgotten.

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**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



**EEFNC Birding Hotline**

**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:** Linda Kennette

**Treasurer:** Peg Wilkinson

**Directors:** Denise Hartley, Pam Simpson, Phil Roberts, Michael Malone, Donna Sale, Karen Cedar, Gerry Waldron, David D'hondt, Heather Botsford

**Liaisons:**

**Membership Secretary:** Denise Hartley

**Public Information Officer:** Pam Simpson

**Meeting Speaker Co-ordinator:** Gerry Waldron

**Egret Editor:** David D'hondt

**F.O.N. Liaison:** Phil Roberts

**E.R.C.A. Liaison:** Michael Malone

**Friends of Heinz Bush Liaison:** Donna Sale

**Point Pelee Liaison:** Richard Bilinski

**Tree Study Chairpersons:** Linda Kennette & Donna Sale

**Bluebird Committee Chairman:** Don Bissonnette

**N.H.R.P. Committee Chairman:** Dave Kraus

**FON Conference Coordinator:** Karen Cedar

**Hotline Co-ordinator:** Jim McAllister

**E.C.S.N. Liaison:** Tom Hurst

**Ojibway Liaison:** Dave Kraus

**Two Creeks Liaison:** Richard Bilinski

**Tremblay Beach Liaison:** to be announced

**Oakwood Bush Liaison:** to be announced

**CHAIRPERSONS/CO-ORDINATORS:**

**Bluebird Committee:** Don Bissonnette

**Heritage Committee:** Betty Learmouth

**Field trip Committee:** Heritage Committee

**N.H.R.P. Committee:** Donna Sale

**F.O.N. Conference Committee:** Karen Cedar

**Heinz Bush Committee:** Donna Sale

**Fund Raising Committee:** Tom Hurst

**Egret Committee:** Heather Botsford

**General Meeting Committee:** Peggy Hurst

**Committees:**

**Egret:** David D'hondt, Karen Cedar, Betty Learmouth, Carl Maiolani, Heather Botsford

**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, Karen Cedar, Lizanne Bacon

**Bluebird:** Don Bissonnette, Betty Learmouth, Don Tupling, Carl Maiolani

**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

**T**he Annual General Meeting of the ECFNC on the

evening of January 8, 1997 was moderately attended by club members. Attendance was up slightly from the 1995 AGM but the opportunity to discuss and influence the Club's policies and programs did not compel members to jam the hall that evening. Perhaps I should consider this an indication of a vote of confidence by Club members in the management of the Club by the 1996 Executive. Hopefully this is the case as nominations of new directors to the Executive were not overwhelming either. Fortunately the majority of past directors elected to stay on for another term in 1997. I have found these individuals to be very capable and hardworking. I am quite grateful that they have committed themselves to continue working on our behalf. In 1997 the Officers of the Club remain unchanged. Tom Hurst is President, Dave Kraus is Vice-President, Linda Kennette is Secretary and Peg Wilkinson is Treasurer. The names and positions of the eight remaining Directors can be found elsewhere in the Egret along with several other committee members and liaisons. I look forward in 1997 to working with them and the membership as a whole to furthering the ECFNC.

A new bloom has risen amongst the patch of mature Club Directors in the guise of Heather Botsford. She is an Amherstburg bred graduate student and student newspaper volunteer at the University of Windsor. She is a relatively new Club member and a valuable addition to the Executive. I am sure her fresh insights will renew the Club and spur others to follow in her footsteps in 1998.

Now that spring is fast approaching signs of nature's renewal are everywhere. In Essex County many of these signs are coming from our environmental partners' projects. The Essex Region Conservation Authority has taken the Detroit RAP recommendations to heart and has initiated several restoration programs in local watersheds. In conjunction with the Great Lakes 2000 Program and in cooperation with many County stakeholders, including the ECFNC, ERCA plans to begin stewardship, planning and restoration work in the Little River, Turkey Creek and River Canard Watersheds. In the south ERCA is joining with Parks Canada (Point Pelee N.P.) to do similar work on the Sturgeon, Hillman and Muddy Creek Watersheds. These are all long term projects and will involve the cooperation of many individuals, businesses and groups. This ERCA initiative certainly bodes well for the long term health of the County's natural habitat.

The Essex County Stewardship Network of which the ECFNC is a member also plans to initiate a remedial action project in the Muddy Creek Watershed. This watershed in the southeast of Essex flows into Wheatley Harbour; a site recognized as being of environmental concern in the Great Lakes. The ECSN project will be complemented by Kent Stewardship's parallel initiative on the Two Creeks Watershed which flows into Wheatley Provincial Park.

The ECSN is also spearheading a Hemp production feasibility study in Essex County in 1997. Two local farmers are committed to experimenting with this new crop which has the potential of lessening commercial pressure on Canada's forests. And finally the ECFNC with the help of Point Pelee and ERCA plans to coordinate an "environmental visioning" project in Essex County. The International Countryside Stewardship Exchange which toured here last September made many recommendations to improve our environmental state of affairs. At the root of all of them was the fact that there is little coordination of efforts between groups and agencies and one universal goal or vision of what the County wishes to achieve in reference to harmonization of the national, agricultural or commercial components of our community. Such a vision shared by all County stakeholders would be a milestone by which we can measure the survival of nature in Essex County.

The City of Windsor has also given hope to Field Naturalists' by supporting proposals to protect natural components on both Peche Island and the Spring Garden ANSI in the Malden Planning District. This indicates that the municipality does recognize the value of nature to the well being of its citizens and should be encouraged by us to keep such values strong in their deliberations.

All the aforementioned initiatives by the ECSN, ERCA and Windsor are ambitious, foresighted and commendable. But the success of each of these projects are, as never before, dependent upon the cooperation and support of all levels of our community. A better quality of life in the future demands a commitment from all of us today.

Speaking of commitment let us not forget that the Canada's South Coast Conference is almost upon us. At the moment the Conference Planning Committee is looking for corporate sponsorships and donations to carry out the programs necessary



to make this event a success. If you have a contact or an idea Karen Cedar (966-5852) is standing by now to assist you in making an invaluable contribution to this national event.

*Respectfully,  
Thomas Hurst*



Please recycle the newsletter, let a friend read it!

## **WHAT HAPPENS ON THE HOT LINE WHEN A BIRDER FINDS A RARE BIRD**

*A story by Norm Chesterfield*

I'm in bed asleep and the phone rings -- little did I dream that by 7 a.m. the next morning I'd be in Cornwall, 450 miles from here.

It's Paul Pratt telling me that Bruce Di Labio of Ottawa just phoned that he had a Marbled Murrelet at Cornwall above the dam on the St. Lawrence River. A first record ever for Ontario. It is a small seabird that lives on the ocean in the North Pacific. How could it ever get so far from home?

Next thing I find myself calling to alert the Toronto hot line, and Ron Scovell answers. "Norm, did you say Marbled Murrelet?? YOU HAVE TO BE KIDDING --WOW--Better get in you car and head for Toronto. We'll be leaving here at 4 am so hurry it up and join us here. There will be Gerry, Eileen, Harry, John, Don and Jerry."

Since I'd had lots of sleep by now (a good half hour) I got ready in a hurry and going out the door, Jean's last words were "YOU KNOW YOU'RE CRAZY DON'T YOU!!" and I'm off to Toronto.

Yes we were in Cornwall by 7 a.m. but you don't always see the bird as it could have gone before you got there, or maybe you just couldn't find it. That's what happened in this case, but we returned a few days later for a second try and did see it then.

Another addition to your Ontario list. Crazy? Well maybe!! But it sure puts a little fun in your life. Excuse me I think I hear the phone ringing again.

**Norm Chesterfield  
October 25, 1993**

*by Paul D. Pratt*

Norm died suddenly on November 10, 1996 at age 83. He was best known for being listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the world record holder for number of birds seen. From 1983 to 1990 Norm led the world with over 6,660 species seen in over 130 countries around the world. Closer to home Norm's Canada list of 520 species is still far ahead of any other birder. Norm was also one of the very few birders to have seen over 400 species in Ontario. His last addition was Black-capped Petrel, number 407 for Ontario, seen at Fort Erie on September 14, 1996.

Point Pelee sparked Norm's first interest in birding and after forty years of birding he was still seeing new birds. In 1996 he added Painted Bunting and Swainson's Hawk to bring his all-time Pelee list to 319 species. A Gray Kingbird in front of Pelee Wings Nature Store last October would have been new for Norm's Canada list but he missed the bird by two minutes. He had spent too long on the phone making sure word of the rarity reached other birders before leaving the house.

I remember the time I phoned and Jean answered saying she wasn't sure where Norm was as he had gone into Windsor for something. It turned out Norm had gone into the Windsor airport and flown to British Columbia! Norm later told me he had been fighting the urge to fly out west for several days and just couldn't let the opportunity slip by. This tenacity was often repeated. He once took a 150 km winter tour of the Hudson Bay

lowlands with native trappers, camping at -40 degrees out on the tundra to search for Rock Ptarmigan.

I first met Norm when I was in high school. We met out at Bradley's Marsh, near the mouth of the Thames River and Norm kindly showed me a spot for Barn Owls. At that time Norm already had a life list ten times my own and he unknowingly served as a mentor for my personal vision of the potential of birding long before I ever birded more than days drive from home.

## BLUEBIRD NEWS

### Downy Woodpeckers and Bluebird Houses

by Don Bissonette



**D**uring the past few winters, the Bluebird Committee has observed Downy Woodpeckers using bluebird houses for warmth. They are especially attracted to the deeper bird houses.

Several years ago, in early February, a male Downy was seen exiting Box #4 on the Willamette Farm Trail. In late February, he was again observed at bird house #4. This time he had a mate. All through March the pair stayed close the bird house #4.

In early April, several Tree Swallows returned to Willamette Farm. One Tree Swallow pair hung around bird house #4. During this time, the Downies were not observed at #4.

During the next week, the swallows moved to bird house #5. The Downies returned to bird house #4. The monitor knew that on rare occasions Downies have raised their young in bluebirds houses. He hoped this pair would nest in bird house #4. That would be something to see.

In late April, a new pair of swallows arrived at #4. A few days later they moved on. The Downies continued to come and go.

In early May, the monitor opened #4. It was filled with carpenter ants! The walls were filled with ant holes. No wonder the swallows would not use it.

The Downies nest was later discovered in a nearby dead elm. The Downies continued to visit #4 all summer. Obviously, they like to eat carpenter ants. By October, the Downies had pecked so many holes in the bird house, it fell apart one night.

### Feeding the Bluebird

In the United States, a few people have had success feeding wintering Eastern Bluebirds. Feeding shelves are stocked with raisins, dogwood berries, mountain ash berries, cotoneaster berries, rose hips and pyracanthas berries. The Bluebird Committee has had no reports of anyone feeding bluebirds here in Essex County until now.

Bill Balkwill has been feeding bluebirds all winter. Bill lives at Chewick Farm outside of Kingsville where he has a bluebird trail. This winter Bill has had four wintering bluebirds, two males and two females.

In early winter, Bill placed whole wheat bread crumbs on the driveway to feed the juncos. Sometime before Christmas, Bill observed some juncos eating the bread crumbs. A bluebird sat nearby, watching the juncos. Then the bluebird flew to the juncos, and ate bread crumbs with them.

Soon after, Bill put raisins out on the driveway. Ever since, the four bluebirds have been coming, almost daily. They eat the raisins and the occasional bread crumb.

Bill reports that the bluebirds have an unpredictable feeding schedule. They may arrive once in a day, or a few times in a day. If it is cold, they eat quickly and head to a nearby bird house for warmth.

As far as the Bluebird Committee knows, this is a "first" for Essex County.

Five years ago, one woman near Paquette Corners was pretty sure she had a male bluebird visiting her backyard sunflower feeder in January. After some investigation, that "bluebird" turned out to be a Red-breasted Nuthatch.

## Bluebird Committee Report, March 1997

The Bluebird Committee has a busy winter. All bluebird houses were washed out. Three new bluebird trails were created. These new trails are "Hickory Acres", "Emerald Woods" and "Cooper's". All three trails are close to the 4<sup>th</sup> concession of Colchester South Township.

A big thank you goes out to Mr. Jim McCoy for his financial contribution towards the work of the Bluebird Committee. Another thank you to Peter and Erika Braithwaite of Harrow for their contribution of oak boards. Using these contributions, the Bluebird Committee was able to build eleven new bird houses and repair forty-five bird houses.

During the past autumn and winter, I assisted several bluebirders in trail repairs and renovations. On almost every visit to the trails, wintering bluebirds were seen. As usual, most of the wintering bluebirds were males. On Groundhog Day, a few bluebirders were out working on their trails. Birds observed were Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, a single Turkey Vulture, Black-capped Chickadees and Cedar Waxwings.

Hey, spring's a-coming! Perhaps even as you read this article, a male Eastern Bluebird is inspecting one of our club's bird houses. Perhaps a flock of migrating bluebirds is just a few hours away from home sweet home - Essex County.

The Bluebird Committee sends best wishes to all Essex County bluebirders. Enjoy the 1997 nesting season. Let's make Essex County the Eastern Bluebird Capital of Canada.

### Third Annual ECFNC

## Weekend Trip to Pelee Island

*Saturday May 3 & Sunday May 4, 1997*

*Leave at 9:00 am Saturday from Leamington Dock  
(be at dock before 8:30 am)*

*Return to Leamington Dock by 6:00 pm Sunday*

We will undoubtedly see many spring bird migrants (before they arrive at Point Pelee), abundant wildflowers, basking turtles and frogs, and hopefully singing toads 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 most beautiful natural areas (Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve, Lighthouse Point Provincial Nature Reserve and Sheridan Point). This time of year is my favourite on the island as it is a time to observe the early spring awakening of the diverse flora and fauna of Pelee Island.

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 registered, walk on passengers attending this trip - this year we will need to meet and form a group and I will purchase our tickets as a group (using some of the deposit money) in order to receive a 10% group discount over and above senior and youth discounts - a group ticket purchase was also necessary this year in order for



The Friends of Point Pelee  
wish to extend membership benefits  
to members of  
The Essex County Field Naturalists Club.  
Purchase items in the  
Nature Nook Book Store  
located in Point Pelee National Park's  
Visitor Centre and receive a 10% discount  
(15% for members over 65)  
on presentation of a valid  
E.C.F.N.C. membership card.

### THE NATURE NOOK BOOK STORE

Open Daily April-October 10-5 daily  
November-March 10-4 weekdays  
10-5 weekends

All proceeds fund Park Programs.



me to reserve space for our group.

Accommodations have been reserved at the Pelee Island Hotel (the cottage we used for the previous two years was sold and was getting too small for our group of ~ 18 people anyway). Each motel style room has two beds and one bathroom with shower. Reservations are set up for two persons per room - any family wishing a room with two double beds and more than two persons per room please let me know in advance and arrangements can easily be made to accommodate your wishes. A Sunday morning all you can eat buffet breakfast is included as part of our group room rates. There will be no need to bring towels, a sleeping bag or pillow this year.

The hotel contains a homestyle restaurant where I have arranged for our meals and is within a 5 minute walk to another restaurant/tavern, ice cream stand, Trading Post collectibles store, liquor/beer store, West Dock (ferry access), and the Pelee Island Heritage Centre (P.I. natural and human history museum). The Pelee Island Winery is only a ten minute walk from the hotel/dock area should anyone wish to skip an excursion and visit the winery or museum, etc. instead.

We will break for meals (lunch on Saturday ~ 2 pm, dinner ~ 7 pm Saturday, buffet breakfast ~ 9 am Sunday) at the restaurant area and meals and snacks are also available on both ferry crossings. Costs for lunch and dinner on Saturday, snacks, etc will be the responsibility of each individual.

I will be requesting a \$ 15 deposit (which will be applied to your fees for accommodations - Sunday breakfast, ferry transportation to and from the island, and bus transportation on the island) from each person upon signing up with me in order to ensure reservations. I expect I will need to collect an additional ~ \$ 40 from each participant (a little less for seniors or several family group members in one room) once on the island, to fully pay for the two ferry trips, bus transportation, accommodations and Sunday breakfast. Including all costs for the rooms, island transportation, ferry transportation, snacks and meals, the complete trip will probably cost each person approximately \$ 90 (max).

All interested persons need to do is: sign up with me & provide a \$ 15 deposit, show up at the Leamington Dock by 8:30 am Saturday morning with warm field clothes and accessories, overnight necessities, and I recommend about \$ 80 per person should more than cover your expenses for the weekend - even for a hardy appetite. The restaurants do take a few of the major credit cards for Saturday's lunch and dinner but please have cash to pay me for our group rated accommodations and transportation.

Sign up early to reserve your place. Please only sign up if you will definitely be attending the trip as hotel



room reservations, etc. are required well in advance and your deposit will be lost if you do not cancel your reservations through me well in advance of our trip date !!!

I will contact each person that signs up should any time or location changes for the ferry occur, otherwise the above outline is the basic schedule, rain or shine. I will hand out detailed schedules on the Saturday morning of the trip.

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

Dave Kraus home/business phone: 519 733 9578/ fax: 519 733 9828

## Oh Where, Oh Where, Can Comet Hale-Bopp Be?

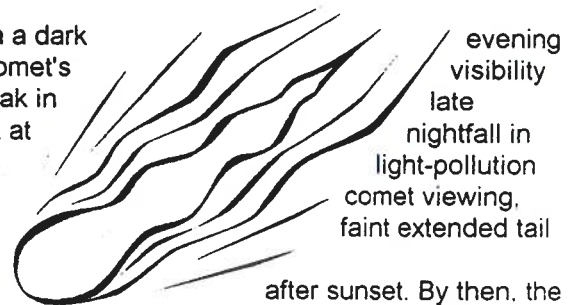
*Edited by Paul D. Pratt from Abrams Planetarium, Comet Hale-Bopp Page:  
<http://www.pa.msu.edu/abrams/halebopp.html>*

**F**rom southern Ontario, Comet Hale-Bopp can be observed in a dark sky from early March into May. Prime factors affecting the comet's are its brightness (not accurately predictable, but expected to peak in March), and its altitude above the horizon (best when it's highest at late March and early April). Twilight, bright moonlight, and from such man-made sources as streetlights all poorly affect reducing the contrast between comet and sky, and making the difficult to observe.

Depending on the date, the time is about 1-1/4 to 1-1/2 hours sky has become quite dark. If you look for the comet much and if you look later, the comet will be lower in the sky and Earth's atmosphere will diminish the comet's brightness.

By March 15, Comet Hale-Bopp will be 13 degrees up in northwest as darkness falls, but the Moon, half full, will brighten through gibbous phases toward full in the following week. During the deep partial lunar eclipse on March 23, there's a respite from full moonlight, but the comet has nearly set by the time of deepest eclipse, 11:39 p.m. Two nights later, on March 25, the Moon isn't up yet as darkness falls!

Nightfall on March 25 begins a spectacular string of 14 consecutive moonless evenings for comet viewing, through April 7. During this prime fortnight the comet is expected to reach greatest brilliance, closest approach to Sun, and highest altitude. The Moon returns to the evening sky on April 8 as a thin crescent, and it's still less than half full on April 13. Another moonless window begins April 24, but with the comet fading and getting lower. At dusk on May 8, a pretty conjunction of a young Moon with the soon-to-depart comet prepares us to bid Hale-Bopp farewell.



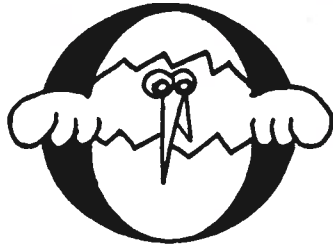
evening visibility late nightfall in light-pollution comet viewing, faint extended tail after sunset. By then, the earlier, twilight will affect viewing.

## PROVINCE GIVES \$100 MILLION TO DESTROY HAMILTON'S LARGEST PARK

*Edited by David B. D'hondt from the Hamilton Naturalists' Club News Release*

The provincial government has given \$100 million for the construction of an expressway down the middle of Hamilton's largest park and natural area, and is actively considering providing even more money. The expressway will be entirely inside the 700-hectare environmentally sensitive Red Hill Valley and will cross its creek 22 times. It will replace 10,000 trees with pavement and vehicles in a city infamous for its poor air quality. The valley contains 600 plant species (representing 22% of Ontario's native flora); 47 butterflies species; 25 mammals including mink, beaver, coyote and southern flying squirrel; and 75 breeding bird species. It is also a highly significant bird migration corridor used by 177 species in 1995. The provincial subsidy for this road is already more than \$10 from every person in Ontario. Please call or write to your MMP and suggest what else they could do with this money. Send a copy of your letter to your local newspaper. You can find more info on the Hamilton 'Freenet' (search for Red Hill) or by contacting Friends of Red Hill Valley at (905) 8796.



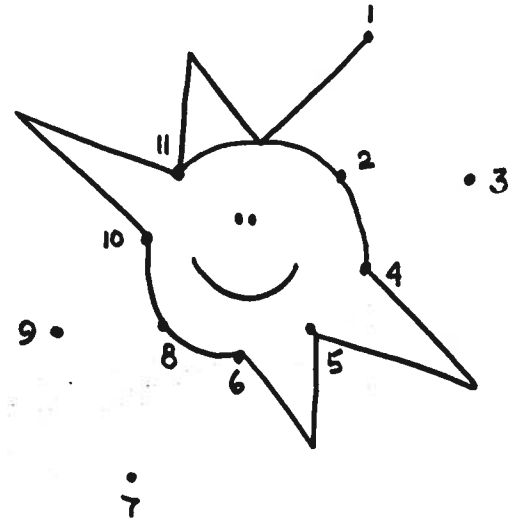


# The Egret Egg

Children's Nature Notes by Susan Walker



Connect the dots to reveal something that we see a lot more of with the return of Spring!



## Sunday Sun Watch

Did you notice this winter that you were still awake long after it had gotten dark outside?

You got to stay up later than the Sun did! Ah, those were the days. But do those days last forever? Does the Sun ever get to stay up later than you do? Or does the Sun have the same bedtime every night?

Use this chart to record when the Sun sets each Sunday over the next few weeks and the answers to these questions will become as clear as night and day!

Remember, never look directly at the Sun.

Sunday	Sunset
March 2	6:22 pm
March 9	
March 16	
March 23	
March 30	
April 6	
April 13	
April 20	
April 27	
May 4	
May 11	
May 18	
May 25	

*Wacky Astronauts: We have built a spaceship that will allow us to fly to the Sun!*  
*Reporter: Once you get close to the Sun won't you and your spaceship burst into flames?*  
*Wacky Astronauts: Not a problem. We plan on flying at night!*



## FIELD TRIP REVIEW

### Owl Prowling at Holiday Beach Conservation Area

by Betty Learmouth

**C**risp winter weather greeted thirteen hardy, well attired naturalists who joined ECFNC President Tom Hurst for an afternoon's search for owls at Holiday Beach C.A. on January 12, 1997. The group assembled at the park gates where the first birds of the day were several Dark-eyed Juncos and White-throated Sparrows foraging on the grassy edge and a Downy Woodpecker tapping at a decayed Juniper trunk. Don Bissonette and Les Kummer brought an owl pellet that had just been found on the top of a bluebird box at the Arner Point bluebird trail. A Great Blue Heron flew overhead as the group headed to the nature trail.

As we walked on the trail we checked all the coniferous trees until we reached the grove of pines where we dispersed to look in each coniferous tree within the grove. A Red-tailed Hawk flew overhead as we headed out to seek owls. Long-eared Owls roost in coniferous trees during daylight hours and have roosted at Holiday Beach C.A. in the past. We found no owl pellets or "whitewash" that indicated Long-eared Owls had roosted in the trees. Northern Saw-whet Owls are another species found roosting in coniferous trees but our search did not reveal any members of this species. Our group checked the coniferous trees around the site of the old classroom but no luck.

Another group checked the junipers along Highway 50 and discovered two American Robins feeding on the juniper fruit.

Our leader suggested that we move to the pine plantation across from the Conservation Area. As we drove along the edge of the plantation, we noted three American Crows sitting in a tree on the plantation's edge. Hank said that there were raptors nearby. As predicted, two Red-tailed Hawks flew from the pine plantation as we

stepped from our vehicles. We walked into the pine plantation, then scattered throughout the plantation looking for pellets and tell tale whitewash. When we gathered at the other side of the plantation, Hank Hunt reported that he literally walked up to four deer, a buck and three does, that were lying under the pines. Dave Kraus said that he was under a tree when a large bird flew away. Very likely this bird was a Long-eared Owl.

Our group had a delightful afternoon looking for owls and learning the correct technique so that we can return to search another day. Thank you Tom for leading us about the Conservation Area.

One group reported a large flock of hundreds of Snow Buntings feeding on agricultural lands along Anderdon Concession 5 as they were driving home after the field trip. In a clump of trees further along Concession 5, a streamlined hawk caught everyone's attention. The raptor was identified as a Cooper's Hawk which flew across the concession road. The Cooper's Hawk struck a bird on which it was standing amongst the stubble of a cornfield. Altogether, a very eventful drive home after a good outing.

### Winter Birding in a Big Creek Woodlot

by Betty Learmouth

**D**espite a morning snowstorm on February 16, 1997 that left roads slushy, twelve naturalists joined Hazen Price and two of Mr. Price's neighbours for a walk through the back portion of Mr. Price's farm which is located on the outskirts of Amherstburg. Mr. Price's farm is the old French

ribbon plan, a narrow portion on the Detroit River and the rest extending inland. Since the walk back to the woodlot would be time consuming, we carpoled to the first wooded area by a tributary of Big Creek which was planted some fifty years ago by Mr. Price and his father. As we walked through the area we observed a large flock of Northern Cardinals flying across the tributary.

There were two causeways to cross before we reached the woodlot which provided shelter from a strong wind that was bringing snow squalls to the area. As we walked along the edge of a wooded area

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that has been allowed to regenerate as it tends to flood, we spotted a single Turkey Vulture that retreated to the north. Other birds observed were two Northern Flickers and four Song Sparrows at a created wetland which Mr. Price's neighbours developed two years ago.

We all enjoyed the walk through Mr. Price's twenty acre woodlot with its 150 year old trees which are likely among the oldest such trees in the county. Mr. Price does not cut within his woodlot thus trees that die continue to stand, providing shelter and food for wildlife. We found two sleeping raccoons in a large cavity within an old trunk. Another ancient trunk had been resculptured by the drilling of woodpeckers and flickers. Still another dead trunk, likely a Basswood, was completely covered by holes created by Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. Massive poison ivy vines were found on a number of trees. Various tree species were identified such as hickories and hackberry trees. A single Brown Creeper was observed as we left the woodlot.

As we walked back to our vehicles after enjoying the tranquillity of the woodlot, we found a mixed flock of birds including at least six Yellow-rumped Warblers, three pairs of Downy Woodpeckers and six Black-capped Chickadees.

Many thanks to Mr. Price for guiding us through his beautiful woodlot. We will accept Mr. Price's invitation to return during another season to view the spring display of wildflowers.



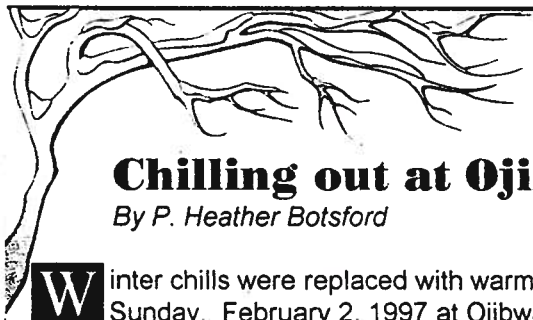
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## Chilling out at Ojibway's Winter Festival

By P. Heather Botsford

**W**inter chills were replaced with warm hearts and bright smiles matching the degree of the sunshine Sunday, February 2, 1997 at Ojibway Prairie Complex's Winter Festival. With free admission and hot apple cider for all visitors, the day was packed with planned activities and many people enjoyed the day in their own ways, some walking their favourite furry friend, cross-country skiing, sledding or just strolling along the kilometres of trails available throughout the park.

Ojibway Nature Centre employee Karen Cedar, contributed the "beautiful weather and loads of snow" to "the excellent turnout of over 500 people in the centre and on the grounds." Nature crafts are a specialty at Ojibway and the festival was no exception. Karen commented on the new activity, "sculpting and painting snow animals was a hit, although making pine cone bird feeders was the best attended." Over 50 people gathered around to create and colour snow sculptures of every shape and size. Rabbits were the favourite of the day, Karen says "reflecting the children's admiration for the centre's live-in rabbit Frisky", who is commonly found scampering throughout the centre daily. The bird feeders were made by melting suet and peanut butter, dipping the pine cones in the gooey mixture and dragging them through seed. All this but there's more. The festival wasn't just for kids, Ojibway's Winter Challenge led visitors through the trails, answering questions on nature facts corresponding to certain areas. A Venture's group and several adults enjoyed a 45 minute tree identification



hike led by volunteer, Erin Pocock, and Ojibway staff member, Candace Newman, who demonstrated how to identify many woody species by their bark, overall shape and buds.

Back at the Nature Centre a diverse range of information pamphlets, and books are available on almost every aspect of the park and its inhabitants. Covering an area over 720 football fields in size, the Ojibway Complex has forest, savanna, pond and a unique tall grass prairie habitat with a variety of plant and animals species. Birding is a main attraction at Ojibway and Naturalist, Paul Pratt commented that the "first cardinals giving their spring song" were heard at the festival. The centre's birding window, looking out to a specially landscaped for wildlife area, was busy all day. Ojibway is one of Windsor's great achievements in conservation and Karen points out "it (the park) can be appreciated by many whether interested in the environment and nature or those who just want to get active and out of the city, without ever having to leave the city."

Having Windsorites 'Get Active' was the theme of the Windsor Essex County Active Living Coalition's information table at the festival. Coalition members spoke with visitors, gave out t-shirts and books in a free raffle as well as stickers and informative pamphlets. The coalition was formed by a number of groups in the area to promote active living 'by making physical activity a part of how you live.' Their combined efforts are to demonstrate how active living can be 'fun, easy and affordable.' Ojibway Park is no exception to the coalition's mottoes with programmes for all ages available through the nature centre (which is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week) and free admission to the park and centre throughout the year. In the words of Karen Cedar the festival was "a fantastic family event and a great success".

## Annual General Meeting

The Friends of Ojibway Prairie

welcomes

Harry Brumpton

speaking on The History of Ojibway



Sunday, March 16

2:30 pm

Ojibway Nature Centre

Join us for  
Board of Directors Elections  
Volunteer Recognition  
Refreshments  
and more!



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## UNTAXING NATURE

Naturalist and forestry groups applaud Harris proposal

*Edited by Heather Botsford from FON/OFA News Release*

**O**n January 16 the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Ontario Forestry Association applauded a move by the Harris government that, effective 1998, will ease the tax burden on people who want to protect the natural areas they own, such as wetlands, woodlots and other conservation lands.

Ernie Eves announced that woodlands and conservation lands will no longer be assessed as residential lands or at residential tax rates. Woodlands will have a tax rate set at 25 per cent of the residential rate, the same treatment that has now been set for farmlands. The property taxes for the most significant of our conservation lands, our wetlands, areas of

natural and scientific interest, endangered species habitat and escarpment natural areas, have now been removed!

The lands owned by local Conservation Authorities have also had very heavy residential taxes for many years. From now on, their lands will be treated the same as those of other landowners, and taxes on their woodlands.

conservation lands and farmlands will be reduced in the same way. Both the FON and OFA have long supported tax changes for conservation lands and woodlands because keeping such lands in the natural state has always been in the public interest. The whole rebate system was adopted as an interim measure to make the tax situation fairer and to remove the incentive to clear, drain or develop natural areas. But the rebate system was cumbersome to administer, incomplete in its coverage.

## Treasurer's Report - 1996

January 1 to December 31

by Peg Wilkenson

	Income	Expense	Balance
<b>Bluebird Committee</b>	37.72		
.....Donations	100.00		
.....Expenses		12.20	125.52
<b>Current</b>	797.11		
.....Brochure - Ex		2763.03	
.....Brochure - Grant	967.67		
.....Brochure - Don.	1832.67		
.....Dinner	1855.00	1403.46	
.....Egret	725.00	1379.59	
.....Dues		190.00	
.....Donations	300.00		
.....Meetings		92.49	
.....Memberships	2098.69	757.60	
.....Sales	10.00	180.00	
.....Miscellaneous	520.02		1072.32
<b>Heinz Bush</b>	41867.63		
.....Interest	1783.11		
.....Misc. Expense		145.47	43507.27
<b>Heritage</b>	21853.11		
.....Donations	3608.52		

.....Sales	1625.00	310.07	26776.56
<b>NHRP</b>	1167.71		
.....Grants Rec.	16309.96		
.....Grants Given		14500.00	
.....Misc. Expense		2791.04	
.....Sales	4934.18		5120.81
<b>Reserve</b>	2757.13		
.....Interest	232.88		2990.01
<b>Woodlot Owners</b>			
.....Grant	2000.00		
.....Bank Charge	10.00	35.00	1975.00
<b>ECSN Grants MNR</b>	40000.00		
.....Credit Union		5.00	
.....Interest	74.32		
.....Conference Ex.		5518.44	34550.88
	146201.76	30083.39	116118.37

FON & CNF Conference Planning Committee Meeting  
March 21, 1997

Contact Karen Cedar 966-5852.

## ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Further information regarding ECFNC 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

**March 12** - ECFNC Monthly Meeting  
Union Gas Building, 7:30 pm.  
Speaker: Casey Colthurst, ERCA forester: Reforestation within Essex County.

**March 13, 14** - Ojibway Nature Centre Program  
Snake Tales (Ages 7-11).  
Learn what reptiles, amphibians and you have in common. Join us for swamp walks and nature fun. Limited enrollment.  
Thursday or Friday, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm. Fee: \$15. Contact Ojibway Nature Centre 966-5852.

**March 16, 23** - 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
"Wings of Spring '97" - 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Spring Bird Migration Festival will be at Rondeau Provincial Park. See a variety of birds through spotting scopes and enjoy "ART AT THE PARK": artists, nature carvers and photographers. (Refreshments provided at the Visitor Centre). Sponsored by Friends of Rondeau, and Bushnell. For more info, call 519-674-1774.

**March 17, 24, April 7, 14** - Ojibway Nature Centre Program  
Captivating Critters (Ages 3-5).

Wildlife explorations and nature fun for the younger set. Monday 10:00 am - 12:00 pm or 1:00 - 3:00 pm. Fee: \$20 for 4 weeks. Contact Ojibway Nature Centre 966-5852.

**March 21** - FON & CNF  
Conference Planning Committee Meeting  
Contact Karen Cedar 966-5852.

**March 26** - ECFNC Executive Meeting  
Contact Tom Hurst 839-4635.

### April

**April 3, 5, 19, May 3, 17** - Ojibway Nature Centre Program  
Spring Bird Migration Field Course. A series of field trips to observe the incredible variety of bird life which migrates through Southwestern Ontario. An evening will be dedicated to improving birding by ear skills.  
Thursday, April 3 (birding by ear program) 7:30 pm at Ojibway Nature Centre. Saturday (all other dates) morning field trips. Fee: \$3 2 for 5 dates. Contact Ojibway Nature Centre 966-5852.

**April 9** - ECFNC Monthly Meeting  
Union Gas Building, 7:30 pm.  
Speaker: Paul Desjardins: Landscape and wildlife of southeast Arizona and New Mexico.

**April 18** - FON & CNF  
Conference Planning Committee Meeting  
Contact Karen Cedar 966-5852.

**April 20** - Earth Day Celebrations at Ojibway  
Fun for the entire family: environmental exhibits, entertainment, children's activities and much more! Sunday 12:00 - 4:00 pm at Ojibway Park.

**April 23, 30, May 14** - Ojibway Nature Centre Program  
Weekday Birding at Pelee. Discover the most popular outdoor hobby in North America through a series of morning field trips at Point Pelee. Wednesdays at 8:30 am. Fee: \$21 for 3 dates.

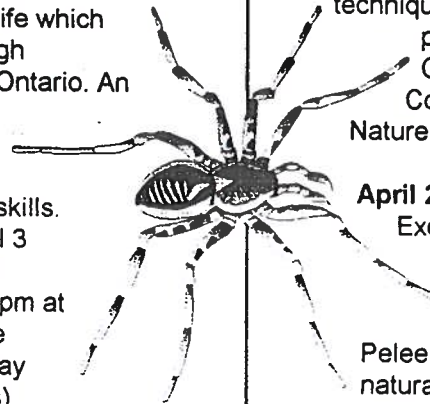
**April 24** - Ojibway Nature Centre Program  
Birding for Beginners. An evening program devoted to the basics of bird watching, field guides and binoculars. Learn birding by ear techniques. Thursday at 7:30 pm at Ojibway Nature Centre. Fee: \$7.  
Contact Ojibway Nature Centre 966-5852.

**April 26** - ECFNC Spring Excursion  
Flying squirrels were recently introduced to Point Pelee National Park. Join naturalist Dan Dufour on an evening excursion to learn more about this nocturnal squirrel. Meet at the Interpretive Centre, Point Pelee National Park at 8:15 pm.

**April 30** - ECFNC Executive Meeting  
Contact Tom Hurst 839-4635.

### May

**May 3, 4** - ECFNC Weekend Excursion  
Join naturalist Dave Kraus for another wonderful early spring weekend exploring the natural





areas of Pelee Island. Call Dave at 733-9578 for more information.

**May 4 - ECFNC Spring Excursion**  
With care our native woodland plants will transfer from areas threatened with development to undisturbed and future naturalized areas in our backyards and gardens. Join naturalist Gerry Kaiser for a plant dig in the Town of LaSalle. Be sure to bring work gloves, a good shovel, plastic shopping bags and/or containers such as wooden grape boxes, sturdy cardboard boxes or even recycling boxes. Call Gerry at 944-0650 for details. Meet at the end of Suzanne Street off Malden Road in the town of LaSalle at 9:00 am.

**May 9 - FON & CNF Conference Planning Committee Meeting**  
Contact Karen Cedar 966-5852.

**May 9, 23, June 7, 21 - Ojibway Nature Centre Family Program**

Nature programs for everyone! Six and under must be accompanied by parent. Seven and up may attend alone or with parents. Come spend a couple of hours discovering nature at Ojibway Nature Centre.

**May 9 - Owls, Nightjars and Woodcocks.** Friday at 7:00 pm.

**May 23 - Pond Life.** Saturday at 1:00 pm.

**June 7 - Reptiles and Amphibians.** Saturday at 1:00 pm.

**June 21 - Butterflies and Insects.** Saturday at 1:00 pm

Fee: \$5/child/2 hours, accompanying parents are free. Contact Ojibway Nature Centre 966-5852.



**May 10-17 - The Prince Edward County Field Naturalists presents its first annual "Prince Edward County Birding Festival."** Picton, Ontario - Guided tours, presentations, workshops Great birding at prime locations including Prince Edward Point (rivals Point Pelee). Contact 613-476-1506 or e-mail: tsprague@limestone.kosone.com

**May 11 - ECFNC Spring Excursion**  
Our Essex County woodlots are renowned for their outstanding floral displays. ECFNC President Tom Hurst will lead us to one of his favourite spots, the Arner Woods. Meet in the parking lot of the Cedar Creek Conservation Area at the corner of Highway 3 and the Arner Townline at 2:00 pm.

**May 14 - ECFNC Monthly Meeting**  
Union Gas Building, 7:30 pm.  
Speaker: Donna Cowie:  
African Safari (Kenya and Tanzania). Plant sale night.

**May 18 - ECFNC Spring Excursion**  
Explore a Lake Erie ravine with Lloyd Brown John, proud owner of this natural area. Meet at Lloyd's home at 1:00 pm.

If you are travelling from Windsor to Ruthven via Highway 3, at the Ruthven intersection proceed directly south to Highway 18. At the Highway 18 intersection, turn left. Proceed 1.4 kilometres to Ravine Line. Turn right onto Ravine Line. Lloyd's home is 1533 Ravine Line.

**May 22, 24, 29 - Ojibway Nature Centre Program**  
Nature Photography. Learn photographic techniques for wildlife, flowers and insects.

Thursday (May 22, 29) at 7:30 pm and Saturday (May 24) at 8:00 am at Ojibway Nature Centre. Fee: \$20 for 3 dates. Contact Ojibway Nature Centre at 966-5852.

**May 23, 23, 25 - ECFNC Camping Weekend**  
Enjoy a camping weekend at Point Pelee National Park. Contact ECFNC President Tom Hurst by May 11 to reserve your space.

**May 25 - ECFNC Spring Excursion**  
Visit the Ojibway Prairie in late spring with a staff member of the Ojibway Nature Centre. Meet at the Ojibway Nature Centre at 2:00 pm.

**May 28 - ECFNC Executive Meeting**  
Contact Tom Hurst 839-4635.

**May 30 - FON & CNF Conference Planning Committee Meeting**  
Contact Karen Cedar 966-5852.

**May 31 - ECFNC Spring Excursion**  
Join Detroit Peregrine Falcon coordinator Judy Yerkey for insight into the lives of Detroit's Peregrine Falcons which have established nesting sites in downtown Detroit, just minutes away from Windsor. Meet at 9:30 am in the front parking lot of the Windsor Board of Education, 451 Park Street West. We can carpool for the drive through the tunnel to our meeting place at a parking lot near the Book Building in downtown Detroit. Maps will be provided. Our guide will take us to New Centre and the Penobscot Building for views of the nesting Peregrine Falcons. Lunch at one of Detroit's famous Coney Burger restaurants just a few doors away from the Penobscot at the end of our tour (optional). Call Betty Learmouth for more details about this excursion.

## June

### June 8 - ECFNC Spring Excursion

Enjoy a visit to Eleanor and Bruno Sfalcin's very large garden featuring naturalized areas. Meet at 2:00 pm at 3661 Howard Avenue, Windsor.

### June 11 - ECFNC Monthly Meeting

Union Gas Building, 7:30 pm. Speaker: Kim Delaney, Tallgrass Prairie Specialist with the Rural Lambton Stewardship Network: Prairie restoration.

### June 12, 14 - Ojibway Nature Centre Program

Damsels and Dragons. Learn a new group of insects this summer with this short program on damselflies and dragonflies. Eight different kinds are found locally. Thursday (June 12) at 7:00 pm and Saturday (June 14) at 10:00 am at Ojibway Nature Centre. Contact Ojibway Nature Centre 966-5852.

**June 20 - FON & CNF Conference Planning Committee Meeting**  
Contact Karen Cedar 966-5852.

### June 21 - ECFNC Summer Excursion

Explore the Stone Road Alvar of Pelee Island with members of the Heritage Fund Committee who have been studying this unique habitat within their committee. Please call Betty Learmouth to reserve a space and to volunteer your vehicle for car pooling. We have reserved for five vehicles for this excursion. Fares will be higher this year for vehicles and passengers, with a ten percent for groups over ten persons. An itinerary will be provided to all who reserve for this excursion.

Meet at 8:15 am at the Leamington Dock.

### June 25 - ECFNC Executive Meeting

Contact Tom Hurst 839-4635.

### June 28 - ECFNC Summer Excursion

Enjoy the winged creatures of the summer night with naturalist Jeff Larson on the edge of Bill Balkwill's woodlot in Gosfield South Township. Jeff has a new generator which should produce a good light to attract moths. Meet at 9:00 pm in the parking lot of the Cedar Creek Conservation Area, then we will drive to Bill's farm.

### June 29 - ECFNC Summer Excursion

Join Eastern Bluebird Committee Chairperson Don Bissonette for an early evening tour of an Eastern Bluebird Trail. Eastern Bluebirds are guaranteed! Meet at 7:00 pm in the parking lot of the Harrow Research Station.

## July

### July 5 - North American Butterfly Count

Join us for Windsor's 4<sup>th</sup> annual butterfly tally. To help with this exciting and valuable field inventory of Windsor's butterflies contact Ojibway Nature Centre 966-5852.

### July 8 - August 26 - Ojibway Nature Centre Program

Budding Biologists. Wildlife viewing, field studies and hands-on nature activities for ages 10 - 15. Tuesdays, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Fee: \$15/day. Contact Ojibway

Nature Centre 966-5852.

### July 9 - August 27 - Ojibway Nature Centre Program

Young Naturalist Day Camp. Swamp walks, wildlife viewing, nature games and crafts for ages 7 - 9. Wednesdays, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Fee: \$15/day. Contact Ojibway Nature Centre 966-5852.

### July 10 - August 28 - Ojibway Nature Centre Program

Kids 'n Kritters. Nature fun for the younger set. Wildlife exploration and nature-oriented activities for ages 4 - 6. Thursdays, 10:00 am to noon or 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Fee: \$7 1/2 hours. Contact Ojibway Nature Centre 966-5852.

### July 11 - FON & CNF Conference Planning Committee Meeting

Contact Karen Cedar 966-5852.

### July 12 - ECFNC Summer Excursion

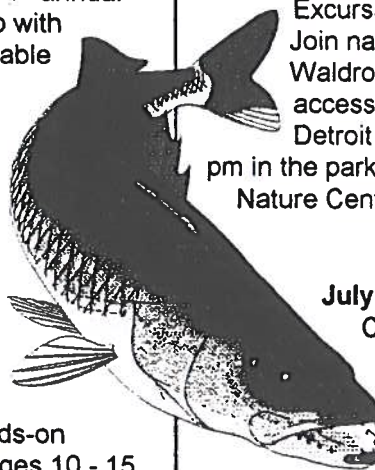
Learn about the dragonflies that inhabit our wetlands in the summer. Naturalist Paul Desjardins will share his enthusiasm for these fascinating insects. Meet at 1:00 pm in the parking lot of Ojibway Nature Centre.

### July 20 - ECFNC Summer Excursion

Join naturalist Gerry Waldron for a tour of accessible wetlands on the Detroit River. Meet at 2:00 pm in the parking lot of Ojibway Nature Centre.

### July 25 - FON & CNF Conference Planning Committee Meeting

Contact Karen Cedar 966-5852.



**August**

**August 8 - FON & CNF  
Conference Planning Committee  
Meeting**

Contact Karen Cedar 966-5852.

**August 14, 15, 16, 17 -  
Federation of Ontario Naturalists  
and Canadian Nature Federation  
Joint Conference**

Field trips are planned for  
Sunday, August 17 to a number of  
natural areas within Essex, Kent  
and Lambton Counties. Plan to  
register for this outstanding event  
hosted by the ECFNC.

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