



The Esfret

the Newsletter of the Essex County Field Naturalists

Volume 14, Number 1

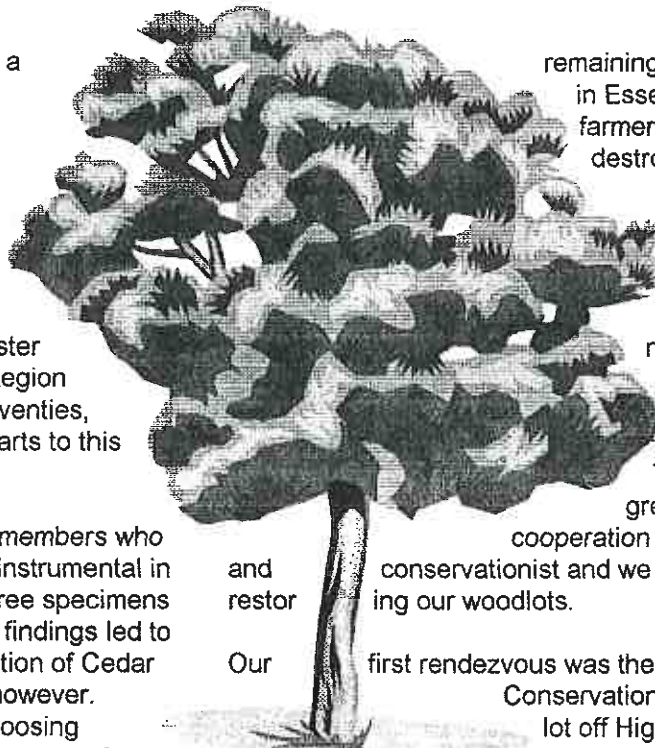
Spring 1998

QUEST FOR THE CHESTNUT

by Mary Celestino

On Sunday, December 7, 1997, a group of ECFNC naturalists gathered together at Cedar Creek to learn the skills of identifying trees in winter. Braving the elements were Pat and Jim Watson, Tony Collings and John and Mary Celestino. Our leaders were Ontario Tree Atlasser, Paul Desjardins and special guest leader, Wayne Wannick, former forester and conservationist with the Essex Region Conservation Authority during the seventies, and active conservationist in these parts to this day.

Wayne was one of the original team members who first surveyed Cedar Creek and was instrumental in discovering and identifying the rare tree specimens growing in this district. These valued findings led to the ultimate preservation and acquisition of Cedar Creek. It was not without a struggle however. Wayne recalled how farmers feared losing their lands to conservationists and because of an impending act by government to protect the



remaining forested areas in Essex County, many farmers chose to destroy their wooded areas and

turned them into agriculture. The bill was never passed. Since then, much had been learned.

Today, there is a greater sense of

cooperation between farmer

and restor conservationist and we are slowly ing our woodlots.

Our first rendezvous was the Cedar Creek Conservation Area parking lot off Highway 23.

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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:



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252-BIRD

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E.R.C.A.
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Treasurer: Peg Wilkinson

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Patricia Rhoades

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Egret Editor: David D'hondt

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Friends of Heinz Bush Liaison: Donna Sale

Point Pelee Liaison: Richard Bilinski

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

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Hotline Co-ordinator: Jim McAllister

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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

Egret Committee: David D'hondt

Heritage Committee: Betty Learnmouth

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

General Meeting Committee: Peggy Hurst

Committees:

Egret: David D'hondt, Karen Cedar, Betty Learnmouth, Carl Maiolani, Nicole D'hondt, Shirley Grondin

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

Speaker: Gerry Waldron, Phil Roberts, Karen Cedar

Field Trip: Heritage Committee

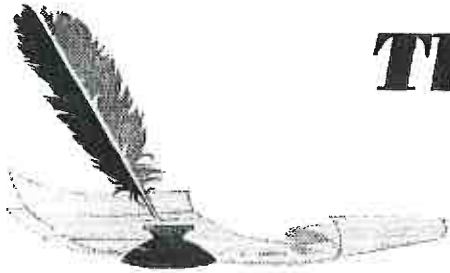
Annual Dinner: Heritage Committee

Bluebird: Don Bissonnette, Betty Learnmouth, Don Tupling, Carl Maiolani

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

Heritage: Betty Learnmouth, 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

It may not be spring yet but the mild weather afforded us this past February encourages us all in the belief that nature's renewal is just around the corner. Indeed some species have not been content to wait for the calendar. Many grackles and redwing blackbirds have already returned while some mourning doves have already begun to nest. House finches and song sparrows have begun to sing and tufted titmice have become more vocal. The buds of pussy willow and maple have started to open and green frogs are swimming in local drainage ditches. These are sightings that would brighten any field naturalists' winter.

Encouraging nature sightings have been made indoors this winter as well. A "fallout" of over one hundred concerned citizens representing dozens of groups and agencies descended upon London, Ontario the last weekend in November. They met for the first annual Carolinian Forum to set the goals and priorities for the next ten years for the reconstituted Carolinian Canada Forum. Our representative, Gerry Waldron, reports that both the number of attendees and the group's emphasis on a grassroots approach to organization bode favourably on the future prospects of Carolinian Canada. We can look forward to Carolinian Canada continuing to play a leadership role in the preservation of natural habitat in southwestern Ontario.

A similar "fallout" was witnessed right here on the shore of the Detroit River. On the second last weekend of January forty to fifty people met at the University of Windsor to discuss the future of the Detroit Remedial Action Plan (RAP). As you might remember, RAP was set up by the federal government as a bilateral committee of U.S. and Canadian representatives to study water quality problems in the Detroit River. You might also remember that public disagreements between RAP members in recent years have marred its progress. Even though some hostility was evident at this January meeting, I was quite encouraged by the fact that all delegates to this meeting were determined to reconstitute the Canadian RAP committee into an effective agency of environmental enhancement. Out of this meeting a steering committee was struck which quickly restructured the RAP into a more community based organization. Although this structure still has to be ratified by the committee of the whole, it appears that RAP is poised to become an effective agency of positive change. This important as the federal government, which has pledged its' full support to the local committee, has declared the research stage of RAP to be complete and has entrusted the RAP to undertake what they call an implementation stage. As field naturalists we must encourage the Detroit RAP Committee to zealously work to enhance the natural components of the Detroit watershed that will not only benefit local water quality but the quality of life of all those who live in proximity of what was once a natural wonder.

Another indoor highlight of the winter season occurred at the 1998 inaugural meeting of the Full Authority of ERCA. At this meeting Jim and Pat Watson were presented with the Authority's Individual Volunteer Award. ECFNC members Pat and Jim are well known in Leamington for their active participation in the town's Horticultural Society. The ERCA award, however, brings to our attention the numerous volunteer hours spent being host to the many visitors to Hillman Marsh Conservation Area. Not only does their presence during peak visitor hours make one's visit to the C.A. more enjoyable but due to ERCA's financial constraints Hillman's facilities would most often be closed without their commitment. Make sure to tip your hat to this charming couple on your next visit to Hillman this spring.

As mild as this winter has been in Essex County there are potential storm clouds on the horizon. Once it became clear that the federal government intended to download the Windsor Airport to the municipality, land developers began to circle the site. This is not necessarily a bad thing but the Executive of the Club is concerned about the fate of three woodlots on the property. We estimate the woodlots on airport property to total approximately 100 acres. This acreage represents approximately one quarter of the forest cover for the City of Windsor and Sandwich South Township combined. As these woodlots are part of the Little River watershed and Lil'Reg has done restoration work on adjacent property, the Little River Enhancement Group has recommended to Mayor Hurst that they be preserved. They further recommend that the woodlots "be connected to create one "mega-woodlot" ". The ECFNC urges the City and future developers to find a way to preserve this remnant of our natural heritage.

At the other end of the County a proposal has been made to the Town of Leamington that a parcel of

land containing the Bennie Woodlot be rezoned for future development. This property is on the corner of the First Concession and the Bevel Line and adjacent to Sturgeon Creek. On your way to Point Pelee it is on your left, across the agriculture fields on the road you turn down which leads over the Sturgeon Creek Bridge. Not only is this woodlot rich in diversity with Carolinian flora but it is one of the few migrant bird traps outside of the national park. In the recent past Leamingtonites have expressed their concern for natural heritage by lobbying for the preservation of the Heinz Bush. It is obvious that the Bennie Woodlot could be used as an added attraction for the dollars ecotourism brings the town each spring. It is my hope that the value of the Bennie Woodlot is obvious to Leamington's municipal leaders and that they will take this opportunity to preserve this rare commodity for us and future generations.

On a positive note I am pleased to announce two recent additions to the Club's Executive. Both these individuals are committed and talented and have arrived as "a breath of fresh air" at our monthly Executive meetings. Please join me in thanking Patricia Rhoasdes and JoAnn Grondin, our new Secretary, for coming to our assistance.

Respectfully,
Thomas Hurst

Recycle this newsletter!

Let a friend read it!



Dream Adventure Sweepstakes

WIN

1. A Trip for 2
to Costa Rica

2. Elite Binoculars, 60 mm Elite
Spotting Scope &
ManFrotto Monopod



3. Numerous other prizes to satisfy the nature lover in you!

All prizes have been donated. Proceeds benefit the Point Pelee National Park Visitor Centre Exhibit Project.

Draw Date: Sunday, May 31, 1998 at 5:30 pm.

Point Pelee National Park Visitor Centre. **Tickets \$20 ea.**
Purchase by Phone 519-326-6173, Fax 519-326-7925.

Mail order: Friends of Point Pelee, 1118 Point Pelee Dr.,
RR 1, Leamington, ON N8H 3V4.
Permit Number 345942



working together to



make a difference

(Continued from page 1...)

It had been a day mixed with cloud and rain. By two o'clock in the afternoon the sun came out and momentarily focused on a cluster of Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera* Michaux) growing just west of the parking lot. As we passed by the scattered cedars, oaks and pines which surrounded the area, we came upon a low depression in the land where Wayne recalled seeing hundreds of Sweetflags or Calamus (*Acorus calamus* L.) growing in the moist flood bank. He was not disappointed. Traces of mature, brown, scaly fruit and fleshy tubers lay hidden in the undergrowth. Wayne explained that the calamus plant have medicinal qualities. A good example is the "cala-mine" lotion used for relief of poison ivy and insect bites.

Our next stop was Lundy's Lane on Highway 18 (now County Road 20) just east of Highway 23. We parked along the roadside and entered a narrow strip of conservation land leading toward the Cedar Creek basin and the forested area below. The lane was flanked by farm lands which extended from the highway to the edge of the creek. As we walked down the path we noticed deer tracks along the way and sighted an immature bald eagle flying overhead in a southerly direction toward the waterways along Cedar Creek.

A stand of white pines planted some twenty years ago stood to the east of us. They were tightly planted without much room between them. Wayne said that this former method of planting trees, row upon row, was no longer recommended. Conservationists are now following the laws of nature by combining a variety of compatible species with more random spacing.

Paul shared a valued lesson on how to identify White Pine (*Pinus strobus* L.) He detached a bundle of needles from a nearby pine tree and counted five needles. By recalling that the word "white" has five letters we can associate these two memory joggers together and will always remember how to identify the white pine. A lesson well learned, as Paul is also an acclaimed scout master and has great teaching skills. Growing along side the pine tree area were scattered clusters of Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina* L.) displaying their velvet-coated antlers.

As we entered the forested area, we encountered our first Carolinian tree specimen, the Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum* (Nutt.) Nees). Mounds of sassafras leaves carpeted the forest floor. The leaf is unmistakably lobed with a "friendly-ghost" outline. The bark of the sassafras is strongly ridged and deeply furrowed. We even chewed some of the smaller twigs which tasted a bit like "root-beer." The branches when snapped were also aromatic. Paul noted that the younger, immature stems of the sassafras also were a distinct reddish-brown colour.

Within the same vicinity, we were introduced to the Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina* Ehrh.). This tree was fun to identify. When young, the bark of the immature black cherry tree is smooth and wraps itself around the slender trunk with horizontal white staccato lines and dashes. As the tree matures, the bark breaks up into an assemblage of black pieces of bark similar to "corn flakes." (Not golden flakes but black flakes. Thanks to Paul's keen observation). Many of the separated "flakes" found on the mature trees still displayed the tell-tale horizontal white lines of the younger black cherry tree. (By now, the reader must be aware that we used every means possible, scientific or unscientific to describe and identify the trees around us. It also made it more fun.)



While we were thus engrossed with our adeptness in locating more black cherry trees, Paul and Wayne were on to something else. They were pointing to the sky. Their gaze was fixed on a cluster of dangling branches high up in the upper canopy. On each branch hung a bud-like appendage. These dancing appendages swayed and danced with every movement of the wind. This elegant ritual belonged to none other than the Tulip-Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera* L.). A stately specimen, it towered above all others in the upper canopy of the forest. The trunk was straight and tall. And although this particular tulip tree had a noticeable bend in the middle due to some early misadventure, it continued its growth upward till it reached the open sky. The bark was a reddish-brown with closely-knitted furrowed ridges. The bud shapes we saw dangling from the uppermost branches are easily spotted in winter and provide an excellent means in identifying tulip trees. We were told that these

appendages are last year's fruit and will eventually open and re-seed themselves. Each leaf has four distinct lobes, bearing a strong tulip-like resemblance. Using her binoculars, it wasn't long before Pat Watson made more sightings of "dancing tulip buds."

One of the key things we learned in winter tree identification was to examine the barks of trees. Our next examination was the trunk of the Northern Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis* L.) which was extremely coarse with heavily ridged corky layers of bark. It bears a dark purple berry-like drupe which could be seen hanging down from its bare branches. It is a favourite food source with migratory birds.

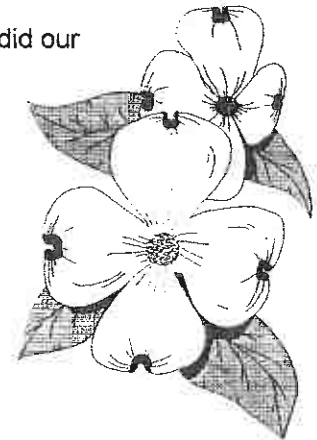
At this point we were informed by our leaders that the ultimate goal of this excursion was to locate the famous American Chestnut (*Castanea dentata* (Marsh.) Borkh) which is the largest and only existing native chestnut tree growing in this region. Wayne related how he had seen it for the first time in the mid-seventies while he was canoeing throughout these waterways. We all wanted to see it and we didn't mind what hardships we would endure to see this great chestnut.

Spurred on and excited by this new revelation, we stopped briefly to examine a number of White Ash (*Fraxinus americana* L.) growing along the way. The bark of the white ash is a light-gray with somewhat flattened ridges and is not as textured as the hackberry.

Nearby we took note of a Spice Bush (*Lindera benzoin* (L.) Blume), easily identified because of the unique round-shaped buds growing in double clusters along the terminal ends of the branches. These round back-to-back buds remain on the twigs and branches all winter long and are readily recognized as one ploughs through the underbrush.

A single Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida* L.) caught our attention. And just how did our leaders know this was a Flowering Dogwood? "Because," we were told, "the branches of the Flowering Dogwood extend outward and upward with a broad, flat, sweeping motion; as if holding something." These grand sweeps are more evident in the winter.

We also came upon an Hop-hornbeam or Ironwood (*Ostrya virginiana* (Miller) K. Koch), a member of the birch family. The bark of the hornbeam tree was noticeably finer in appearance than all the other trees we had examined. Instead of coarse ridges, these were narrow and elongated, running up and down the tree in a vertical and linear fashion. The outer edges of each scaly bark appeared shreddy.



Phase II - Crossing the land bridge toward the peninsula

By now, we had reached the edge of the forest and were about to cross a small body of water by way of a land bridge, when two adult bald eagles flew overhead. While we were observing the circular movements of the eagles, six cedar waxwings were patiently observing us. We were bemused with their silence and lack of activity. Finally, one of the waxwings flew down and began eating some rose hips nearby. We were standing in the middle of a briar patch and had inadvertently interrupted their lunch. Apologetically, we hurriedly crossed the land bridge which led to the peninsula containing the famous chestnut tree.

While crossing over, Wayne found remnants of a seed head belonging to the Swamp Rose-Mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos* L.). He recalled having seen this plant growing profusely in the same spot many years ago. We were delighted that it still continued to do so. Wayne also remarked that the area and habitat had not changed much in all these years. The sudden shrill cry of a red-tailed hawk caught our attention as we paused to listen to its calls.

The crossing marked the last leg of our excursion. We followed no fixed path as we headed in an easterly direction toward the farthest point of the peninsula. The peninsula is shaped like a cherry leaf with an elongated point. The understory was thick and virtually impenetrable. We had to pick and claw our way through. Thorny branches swept past us as we struggled for a foothold through the tangled vegetation, emerging with bruised limbs and scratched faces. The sun had disappeared for the rest of the afternoon and

the weather had turned cold. Some of us had to turn back.

Those who remained were soon rewarded with the sighting of a Bitternut Hickory (*Carya cordiformis* (Wangenh.) K. Koch). The sulfur-yellow colouring of the winter buds is a distinguishing factor in singling out the bitternut. Apparently, all the other hickories have brown buds. Again we encountered groupings of Hop-hornbeam and black cherry trees growing in this densely wooded area. Amidst the barren branches, the blue-black berries of the Nannyberry or Sweet Viburnum (*Viburnum lentago* L.) stood out visibly.

Paul taught us another valued lesson while we grappled trees for support. In this thick underbrush, many plants and trees were intertwined with Poison-Ivy (*Rhus radicans* L.) and Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia* L.). Paul indicated that the tendrils of the Virginia Creeper have a set of well defined suction cups, while the tendrils of the Poison-Ivy are more sinister and wiry in appearance, including the "finger-like" projections pointing at the unwary passerby.

We were then led to an American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia* Ehrh.) growing some twenty feet from the shoreline. The bark is likened to an "elephant's leg." The rather smooth bluish-gray skin stretches tightly around the trunk of the tree. Often a temptation to carve one's initials, this beech was no exception for it sadly displayed someone's lack of resistance. The young bare shoots of the beech have sharp tips. The buds are elongated, and firm to the touch.

Paul brought our attention to another variation of the beech tree growing in the same vicinity. Paul called in the "blue-beech." In all respects it was similar to the previous beech we had just examined with the one exception: these branches were angular, flat and bone-like, while the branches of the previous one were round.

We were getting nearer to the point of the peninsula and could see the farm buildings and red barn on the other side. A kingfisher flew along the shoreline which was anchored by a Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata* (Mill.) K. Koch). The shagbark hickory was growing so near to a beech tree that these two trees seemed to merge from one common base. Shellbarks (*Carya laciniosa* Michx. f.) are also known to abound here. Since shagbarks and shellbarks both have a shaggy bark, the best way to tell them apart, according to Wayne, is by counting the number of leaves along the central stalk. The shagbark has five to seven while the shellbark has seven to nine.

We could see water on both sides of the peninsula and knew we were entering the final tip of the "leaf." A huge fallen log momentarily blocked our path. Wondering how to climb over it, Wayne called out that it was pointing right in the direction of the renowned chestnut tree. And there, with massive limbs spreading out horizontally in all directions, was the last survivor of its kind. We estimated the height to be at least seventy feet and the diameter to be approximately thirty inches. The chestnut was once an abundant species in these parts, but because of a blight, very few native trees are left. And this was one of the survivors. Chestnut burrs lay scattered around the base of the tree. We noticed also that it was growing near the embankment which had no adverse effects on its massive structure.

After our discovery of the chestnut tree we reached the end of the peninsula. Wayne told us that the tip had lost nearly ten feet of its original shoreline since the seventies. To the west of us, some forty mergansers scattered in flight from their resting spots in the nearby marshes. We still had enough daylight to examine a Black-Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica* Marsh.) growing along a well defined path on the western part of the peninsula. It can be recognized by its numerous suckers and dark blue berry-like fruit. Along the same path was a Trembling Aspen (*Populus tremuloides* Michx.), a member of the Willow Family. It had slender reddish-brown twigs. The whitish bark was smooth with a pale green tinge.

It was now getting very late in the day. The sun had hidden itself long ago behind the dark grey clouds and all the trees in the woods began to look similar. It was time to go home. And as we headed back along the west trail, we heard the final call of the kingfisher rattling far off in the distance.

Our thanks to Paul and Wayne for an afternoon in the woods which we shall never forget.

Discovering Owls at Holiday Beach Conservation Area

by Betty Learmouth

Tom Hurst's annual mid January ECFNC owling excursion seems to be falling into a familiar pattern. On a selected cold January Sunday afternoon, an astonishing number of local naturalists bundle up and meet with Tom at the Holiday Beach Conservation Area entrance. Tom informs the expectant group that he scouted the area on the previous day for owls but with no luck. Then the group heads out, with its objective of spotting an owl usually achieved by late afternoon.

This past January 25, 1998, twenty-two hardy naturalists gathered at the park's entrance way on a gray day that had snow flurries until noon hour. During his introduction to the group, Tom mentioned that several owl species could be possible encounters but that the actual target species for the owl prowl was the Long-eared Owl, a beautiful strictly nocturnal owl that roosts in secure places such as pine plantations during the daytime.

We choose not to walk the nature trail near the park's entrance as a family was exercising their many sled dogs and puppies. Instead, we hiked across County Road 50, then down Collison Side Road to the back of the pine plantation where we were able to enter on a trail that leads through the area. Tom urged everyone to proceed slowly, meanwhile searching each evergreen for roosting owls.

We had been in the woodlot only a few moments, when Paulette Drouillard pointed upward and exclaimed, "There's one! There's an owl!" Everyone hurried towards Paulette and looked in the direction Paulette had pointed. There, at the top of a gnarled pine, an elongated Long-eared Owl squinted down at us. We all marveled that Paulette had stood in just the right position to look up at the exact moment to have seen this well camouflaged owl in its roost.

Two telescopes were set up. For those peering through Tom's scope, the view was of the owl's face, its facial disk and yellow eyes. Through Paul Desjardin's telescope, one could marvel at the owl's talons and its beautifully marked wing and breast plumage. As Tom admired the owl, he remarked that he had missed the Long-eared Owl as a species on the Cedar Creek Christmas Bird Count, thus this bird was a special find. Several others said that the owl was a new species for them, a "lifer."

After everyone had viewed the owl, the group spread out to seek more owls and signs of owls. A lucky find was a single medium sized owl pellet, a compressed wad of wet fur and concealed bones, spotted on the fresh snow beneath a solitary Staghorn Sumac along the shoulder of County Road 50. Small bones could be seen protruding from the dark wet mass of fur. With the pellet carefully tucked away, the group gathered near the trail entrance beside Collison Side Road. Paulette volunteered to hold the owl pellet while Tom undertook a pellet investigation. Once the wet fur was pulled apart, several small bones were found, including a skull and jaw bone with its tiny row of teeth. (The bones were later identified by Paul Pratt as those of a Meadow Vole. Paul noted that the base of the skull was crushed as the brains of the Meadow Vole are particularly relished by Long-eared Owls.)

A Red-tailed Hawk glided over County Road 50 as the group returned to the Conservation Area to explore the nature trail. Several naturalists spent time looking along a row of pine trees on the nature trail for signs of owls. Their persistence was rewarded as owl excrement was seen caked on several branches. This "whitewash," as it is called, is very white, thick and cakey, not at all like pine sap. No further owls were located. The group enjoyed viewing a vocal group of



Northern Saw-whet Owl on the Moore's Pine Plantation
by Anne Barbour

Red-breasted Nuthatches.

About mid afternoon, the sun emerged from behind storm clouds. Under blue skies, the group enjoyed searching cedars and junipers for Northern Saw-whet Owls along the park's main road as we made our way back towards the vehicles. Many thanks to Tom for his encouragement and sharing his expertise as we searched for the reclusive Long-eared Owl at Holiday Beach C.A.

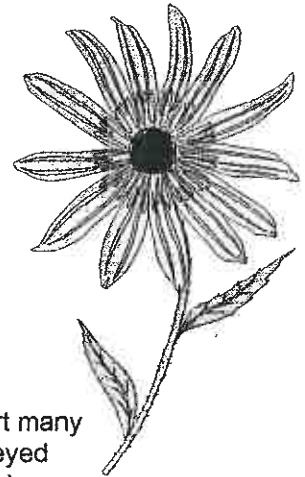
"Hands-On" with Prairie Seeds

by Mary Celestino

Have you ever thought of converting your backyard into a field of wildflowers? Well, Karen Cedar will help you do just that.

On Sunday, January 25, 1998, at the Ojibway Nature Centre, Karen introduced us to the art of "prairie seed cleaning." Patience is a virtue. Releasing seeds from tightly enclosed capsules or plucking seeds from downy pods such as the Butterfly-weed (*Asclepias tuberosa* L.) was not a task to be rushed.

These seeds which are sold by The Friends of Ojibway Prairie will be used to convert many green lawns and open public spaces into prairies of wildflowers ranging from Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia hirta* L.) to the spectacular Dense Blazing-star (*Liatris spicata* (L.) Willd.).



When asked what was the easiest way to go about this conversion, Karen recommended using "Round-up" intermittently during the first season to kill off succeeding weed growth. By spring of the following year, prairie seeds may be planted without fear of weed competition. The seeds are scattered by hand over the designated area and nature takes care of the rest.

Once established, prairie seeds are virtually heat and drought resistant requiring very little maintenance. However, watering is recommended during the first year to speed the growth process and to strengthen the plants.

The preferred month for planting is May. The soil is much warmer by that time and seeds need only to make contact with the soil and the warmth of the sun to germinate.

If seeds are sown in the fall, there is a danger of losing them to birds and foraging animals throughout the winter and early spring. Seeds should be stored in a cool dry area and kept in paper bags. It was also recommended to use only those seeds gathered within a fifteen mile radius as these are all from the same area of origination. Imported seeds are hybrids and may not perform as well as the originals.

Seeds are best collected in the fall. Each year volunteers participate in this annual event providing an on-going source for future prairie conservation.

A seed list which includes costs is available at the Ojibway Nature Centre. Anyone interested in learning more about preparing a prairie garden is more than welcome to attend a weekly seed cleaning session held each Tuesday afternoon between two and four at the Ojibway Nature Centre. For further information, call Karen Cedar, at 966-5852. Your lawn cutting days are over!

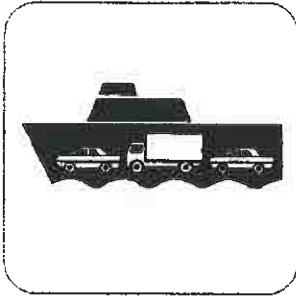
Renew your membership today!

Your membership dues help support our monthly newsletter, speakers at our meetings, and other projects. We need your support. Membership form is on page 15

Fourth Annual ECFNC

Weekend Trip to Pelee Island

Saturday May 2 & Sunday May 3, 1998.



by David Kraus

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 numerous migrating birds (on their last stop before Point Pelee), abundant wildflowers such as trilliums and phlox, basking turtles, snakes and frogs, historic sites, and hopefully hear a chorus or two of toads; to suggest a few of the many enjoyable experiences on Pelee Island in spring. 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 hopefully a new location for the third). This time of year is my favourite on Pelee, as it is a chance to enjoy the early spring awakening of diverse flora and fauna.

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 - we will need to meet and form a group before boarding 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 is also necessary in order for me to reserve space for our group.

Accommodations have been reserved at the Pelee Island Hotel. Each motel style room has two beds and one bathroom with a shower. Reservations are tentatively set for two persons per room - any family wishing a room with two double beds, or anyone wanting more or less than two persons per room (with accompanying cost adjustments), 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.

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 ~ 2 pm and dinner ~ 7:30 pm on 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 ~ \$ 45 from each participant (a little less for seniors or several family group members in one room) once



Looking at the West Dock on Pelee Island by Dave Kraus

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. 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 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, and such are required well in advance and your deposit will likely 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 phone: 519 733 9578

BIRDING LA SALLE WOODLOTS

by Betty Learmouth



Balmy weather was the order of the day as twelve ECFNC naturalists joined birder Fred Urie for an afternoon of birding on February 15, 1998. Fred had been investigating La Salle's remnant woodlots over the last few weeks, and, luckily for us, chose to share his discoveries with us.

The first woodlot was located behind Ramblewood Drive off Morton, just a few doors from Ann and Brian Barbour's home. The woodlot is reached by a path between the homes with a path leading walkers to Turkey Creek. Sadly, during the few weeks since Fred's last visit to the area, developers had entered to clear the interior of the woodlot. Despite the approaching loss of habitat, the birding group found wintering birds such as Tufted Titmice, Black-capped Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches, Downy Woodpeckers and Carolina Wrens that were a favourite as several birders had only seen them briefly in the past and for several the wren was a "lifer." Overhead a Red-tailed Hawk circled. The Titmice called loudly as the group walked through the woodlot. Perhaps these Titmice were the ones that attempted nesting in Ann's nesting box last season, only to lose their eggs to an unknown predator.

Stop two was at woodlot reached off another section of Morton Drive from Malden Road. We parked our cars and walked into a wooded area off McNab, walking in a large circle that brought us along the banks of Turkey Creek. Various wintering birds such as Downy Woodpeckers, Black-capped Chickadees and a Northern Flicker were seen. As the group stood on the banks of Turkey Creek, Fred pointed out a loose flock of birds that were returning Horned Larks, a sure sign of changing seasons.

After asking the group if they were ready for yet another woodlot, Fred lead the group down Malden Road to Laurier, where we parked our cars and walked in behind the homes on Laurier. We were quite amazed to discover an extensive wooded area behind the Laurier homes with ready made trails. Two parallel sidewalks that were laid in anticipation of a building boom for the proposed industrial city of Ojibway some sixty years ago provided good walking paths from Malden to Matchette. We quite enjoyed the late afternoon walk on which we located Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Downy Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatches and Black-capped Chickadees. Fred is anxious to revisit the area as the spring migration progresses. Wet areas and thickets could be very inviting to migrating songbirds. Many thanks to Fred who shared with us some of the little known woodlots of La Salle.

Kensington Metropark Field Trip

by Don Bissonnette

Sunday, February 22, 1998 was a beautiful day, mostly sunny, warm and calm. Eight ECFNC members met at the Ojibway Nature Centre, filled two vehicles and set out for Kensington Metropark at twelve o'clock noon.

Kensington Metropark is close to Milford, Michigan, just off the I-96. This large park offers picnic areas, playgrounds, swimming beaches, a group camping area, boat launches, a farm centre, a fishing area, a golf course, bicycle trails, several nature trails and a nature centre. Kent Lake covers almost half the park's area. There are also numerous ponds, creeks and a marsh.

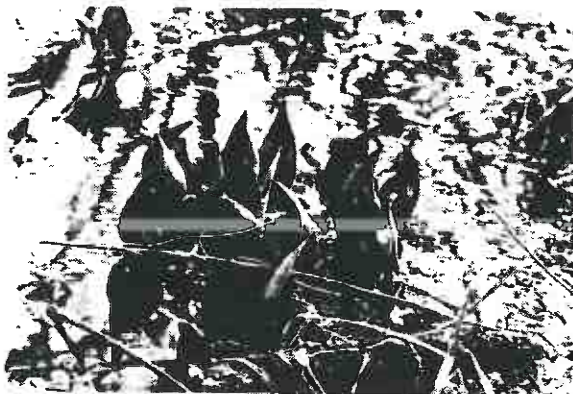


ECFNC Members at Kensington Metro Park by Don Bissonnette

Our group visited three nature trails. For the first part of the walk, we focused on winter tree identification. Although deciduous trees lose their leaves in fall, species identification is still possible. We learned to identify trees by studying their shape, buds, bark, seeds, fallen leaves, twigs and habitat. Some of the trees we discovered were White Ash, Black Ash, Black Oak, Red Oak, White Oak, Nannyberry, Flowering Dogwood, Tamarack (Eastern Larch), Shagbark Hickory, Bigtooth Aspen, Black Cherry, American Hornbeam, and Ironwood. (Many thanks to Don who shared his enthusiasm for winter tree identification with us.)

In the top of a very large tree, we noticed five nest like shapes in the highest twigs. After some research, these mystery plants turned out to be American Mistletoe, a first for all of us. The following information was located in Peterson's A Field Guide to Trees and Shrubs, page 69:

American Mistletoe is the only shrub which is parasitic on the branches of broad-leaved trees. The thick green leathery leaves are evergreen and wedge-to egg-shaped. There is nothing else like it. Dwarf Mistletoe is very small; it has tiny needlelike leaves and occurs only on conifers. Fruits are eaten by many birds and mammals; apparently the plant is spread principally by birds.



Shunk Cabbage by Don Bissonnette

In a shallow seep, we discovered a cluster of Skunk Cabbage, an unusual plant that starts growing in late winter. Recent research has revealed that this plant can maintain a temperature of 15 to 22 degrees Celsius in its inflorescence for several weeks in late February and March. If the area about the Skunk Cabbage is frozen, the plant's heat will melt the surrounding ice.

Kensington Park is famous for its friendly winter birds. Visitors can feed birds right out of their hands. Along Wildwing Trail we observed White-breasted Nuthatches, Tufted Titmice, Black-capped Nuthatches and Downy Woodpeckers.

We came prepared to feed the birds. Within a minute, we were all standing at the trail's edge with our palms laden with sunflower seeds, raisins and walnut pieces. Black-capped Chickadees and a Downy Woodpecker were soon feeding from our hands! Due to warm weather, the birds were not too anxious to return quickly to our hands. Other visitors were also feeding the birds.

At Wildwing Lake, we discovered another first for most of us, an easily viewed heronry. Within this lake is a small island covered with large trees on which we counted 22 herons' nests. Just a few years ago, there were only four nests. Every year, more pairs of Great Blue Herons come to this heronry.

We watched eight Great Blue Herons at the heronry. Most of the birds were resting at or near the nests. Another first for most of us was the view of two pairs of Great Blue Herons in courtship display. During

courtship, both male and female stand facing each other, either on an old nest or at a potential nest site. The birds lean forward, lifting their crests. Nest material may be rearranged. Occasionally the birds will lock their bills together, rocking back and forward.

Unfortunately, we had to leave. The afternoon had passed all too quickly. We had a pleasant time. Tundra Swans were observed on Kent Lake as we departed from the park. As we drove away, all we could talk about was another trip to Kensington. Thanks to the Field Trip Committee for planning this wonderful day.



Kathy Lesperance feeding Black-capped Chickadee by Don Bissonnette



2nd Annual (1997) Point Pelee

Butterfly Count

by Alan Wormington

The second Point Pelee butterfly count was held on August 9th, 1997. The count area (a standardized 15-mile diameter circle) is the same as that used for the annual Christmas Bird Count. The results of our census have been forwarded to the North American Butterfly Association (NABA), where it will be compiled and published with other counts from across the continent. In 1997 the 47 observers (45 field observers + 2 garden watchers) logged a total of 49 party hours on foot (plus an additional 1.5 hours by car). The 1997 count produced 39 species and a total of 6,005 individual butterflies.

Overall the diversity and number of butterflies was down from 1996, perhaps due to very dry conditions during the period prior to count day. Nonetheless, the coverage did produce some interesting sightings. The most unusual discovery was the colony of Broad-winged Skipper found at the old quarry complex on the western outskirts of Leamington. This is the first record of Broad-winged Skipper in our area; elsewhere in Essex County this species is known only from the Ojibway Prairie Complex in Windsor. Another highlight was the observation of the second brood of European Skipper, with 33 individuals found. Not only were these found at the same site as in 1996 (a disturbed site west of Wheatley Harbour), but all individuals were within an area not much larger than a large living room. I can think of no explanation as to why this species (which can be found virtually anywhere during the month of June) would consistently produce a second brood at this locality.

Point Pelee is well-known as an excellent location in Ontario to detect various species of southern immigrants that may be present. Although several years in the 1990's have been extraordinary for such movements, both 1996 and 1997 were, however, rather uneventful years (and this is reflected in count results). Surely we are overdue for a banner year for southern immigrants, in which case the comprehensive coverage of the annual count could very well produce some excellent discoveries in terms of both species and numbers. Maybe in 1998!

Count Participants: Dave Alderdice, Mary Lynne Alderdice, Roberts Bowles, Lloyd Brown-John, Graham Bryan, Joanna Chapman, Barbara Charlton, Ted Cheskey, Gerry Clements, Cathy Crowell, Paul Desjardins, Rob Dobos (Area 1 leader), Larry Drew, Dan Dufour, Alfred Falkenberg, Nancy Falkenberg, Brenda Gadbois, Luc Gadbois, Peg Given, Hanna Heger, Kim Henderson, Moaz Jivraj, Carolyn King, Jan Kraft, Ben Kulon (Area 3 leader), Brenda Kulon, Jeff Larson (Area 5 leader), Kathy Lesperance, Ross Mackintosh, Sandy Mackintosh, Paul McGraw, Brian McKibbin, Kevin McLaughlin, Leslie Moir, Paul Pratt (Area 2 leader), Richard Roman, Alfred Senior, Joe Sleiman, Amy Tesolin, Dino Tesolin, Anton Van Eerd, Bette-Jean Whittaker, Christine Wilson, Arlene Wood, Irene Woods and Alan Wormington (Area 4 leader and compiler) Count

Sponsors: Point Pelee National Park and The Friends of Point Pelee.

The 1988 count is scheduled for Saturday, August 8th - everyone welcome!

Area 1: PPNP, from the Tip north to include White Pine Picnic Area and Tilden's Woods.

Area 2: PPNP, all areas north of - but not including - White Pine Picnic Area and Tilden's Woods; also included is the west section of North Dike.

Area 3: Wheatley Provincial Park and the vicinity of Wheatley

Area 4: All areas north of PPNP including the east section of North Dike,

Hillman Marsh, east side of Leamington, etc., to include the east-west railway line north of Highway #3.

Area 5: All areas west and north of Leamington, to include all areas north of Area 4.

Summary of Point Pelee Butterfly Count

Species	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Totals
Black Swallowtail	-	13	42	172	35	262
Giant Swallowtail	92	80	7	3	1	183
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	5	4	12	1	2	24
Spicebush Swallowtail	4	-	37	121	3	165
Cabbage White	273	400	140	805	290	1,908
Common Sulphur	1	-	7	17	7	32
Orange Sulphur	223	104	111	414	74	926
Bronze Sulphur	-	3	-	18	-	21
Eastern Tailed-Blue	-	3	3	13	6	25
Summer Azure	155	43	5	14	16	233
Snout Butterfly	1	-	-	-	-	1
Great Spangled Fritillary	1	-	-	-	-	1
Orange Crescent (cocyta)	45	46	2	399	28	520
Summer Crescent (tharos)	-	-	-	2	1	3
unidentified crescent	-	4	-	-	-	4
Question Mark	2	1	-	-	-	3
Eastern Comma	1	3	-	-	-	4
Mourning Cloak	-	-	1	2	-	3
Milbert's Tortoise-Shell	-	-	-	1	-	1
American Lady	1	-	3	-	-	4
Red Admiral	14	11	1	15	1	42
Common Buckeye	-	-	1	-	1	2
Red-spotted Purple	9	-	4	7	1	21
Viceroy	7	26	11	82	26	152
Hackberry Butterfly	3	1	-	-	-	4
Tawny Emperor	20	27	-	-	-	47
Northern Eyed-brown	2	2	1	10	-	15
Common Wood-Nymph	10	-	215	34	80	339
Monarch	83	71	43	329	52	578
Silver-spotted Skipper	-	-	-	1	-	1
Common Sooty-wing	-	-	-	54	3	57
Least Skipper	2	46	87	181	42	358
European Skipper	-	-	-	33	-	33
Peck's Skipper	-	-	7	5	1	13
Tawny-edged Skipper	-	-	-	-	2	2
Northern Broken-Dash	-	-	1	-	-	1
Broad-winged Skipper	-	-	-	-	5	5
Dion Skipper	-	-	-	1	-	1
Dukes' Skipper	3	-	1	3	-	7
Dun Skipper	3	-	-	1	-	4
Total Party hours (on foot)	10.0	14.25	6.0	11.5	7.25	49.0
Total Species	23	19	23	28	22	39
Total Individuals	960	888	742	2,738	677	6,005



A RECORD 1997 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT ON PELEE ISLAND: MOST "OBSERVERS" AND MOST SPECIES YET

by *BEN PORCHUK*

Volunteer run Christmas Bird Counts are held across North America to obtain both an accurate census of the number of bird species and a rough estimate of total number of individual birds observed within a 24-km diameter circle. Since 1900, the counts have been held on one full day within a three week window of Christmas and the information collected for the past 98 counts has proven to be an invaluable aid to scientists who measure long-term trends relating to winter bird distribution and abundance. Bird counts are popular. In 1995, in Ontario alone 2005 field observers participated in 82 bird counts from Hudson's Bay to Pelee Island, recording a total of 184 species and 1,191,184 individual birds!

The southern three-quarters of Pelee Island's land mass is included in the "Erie Islands Christmas Bird Count", which is centred on the Bass Islands. This count is young; it was only established in 1985. Pelee has fielded "parties" of observers in six (1986, 1993, 1997) of the twelve counting years, but 1997 was by far the most popular, as twelve people ignored the potential threats of chilly weather, to end up repeatedly kicking caked mud off their boots! This year's crew included Norm Beattie, Ann Rowley, Clyde Hooper, Allen Woodliffe, Mary Lou Atkinson, Roger Poisson, Dan Dufour, Tom Hince, Ethan Meleg, Ron Tiessen, Dave Kraus and yours truly.

Bird counts are social events, as many of the observers return year after year and become good friends with the local people. At the airpost on the 18th, I immediately felt the excitement of the evening to come: renewing friendships, sharing ideas, and enjoying food and drink, while planning the count strategy for the following day. Thanks to the hospitality of Ian Fisher and Ron and Lynn Tiessen, all of the visitors had roofs over their heads and full bellies the night before the count.

December 19th, 6:30 A. M.: Begin Bird Count. Experienced birders were paired with those not so experienced and each group was responsible for a certain region of the Island and/or off the shoreline as well. The weather was mostly sunny and a balmy 10°C by mid-day and such mild and calm conditions usually mean more birds. Excitement began to stir as many of the groups met up with each other and talked about their sightings. My most memorable experience occurred at about 9:30 A.M. when Mary Lou, Roger and I spotted a flock of on-coming Eastern Bluebirds in the Red Cedar Savannah, just west of the Winery's student bunkhouse. I alerted our group's expert, Ethan, who quickly instructed, "Look carefully in this flock, because once in a blue moon there is a Mountain Bluebird recorded on Pelee Island. But we weren't first. The same flock had flown past Allen on the Stone Road about 45 minutes earlier!

This year's count featured some top notch experts like Allen, Ethan, and Tom Hince (the "Wayne Gretzky" of birding) who really helped make the '97 count a record year, but in true team fashion, each group added a couple species that weren't seen by the others. The unofficial total is 73 species, easily surpassing the previous island high of 55 in 1995. A rare slender shorebird, called a Willet, was seen at Fish Point. Some of the other birds observed include: a Northern Shrike, 2 Bald Eagles, an Oldsquaw, Loons, Rusty Blackbirds, Snow Buntings, several dozen Carolina Wrens, Screech and Great Horned Owls, Coopers, Red Tailed and Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cardinals, Blue Jays, and a Red-Breasted Nuthatch at Nancy and Peter Pfeifer's feeder.

Thanks to all who participated and hopefully we will have as much fun and luck next year.

Now Available:

The Butterflies of Canada

by Ross A. Layberry, Peter W. Hall, J. Donald Lafontaine, with specimen plates by John T. Fowler. Approx 376 pages, 32 colour illustrations. Cloth (0-8020-0898-4) \$75.00, Paper (0-8020-7881-8) \$29.95. Co-publication of the University of Toronto Press and NRC Research Press (National Research Council of Canada) Text is taken from the Spring & Summer 1998 University of Toronto Press Catalogue:

Butterfly watching is a perennial summer activity, and as the growing popularity of butterfly conservatories in Ontario and British Columbia can attest, butterflies are a continuing source of delight and interest to Canadians.

The Butterflies of Canada is the first comprehensive guide to all the butterflies found in Canada. Based on the national butterfly collection maintained by Agriculture Canada, it contains descriptive individual accounts for all of the close to three hundred butterfly species recorded in Canada, including descriptions of early stages of individual species and subspecies, and a list of key features. Each species of butterfly has an individual distribution map based on a database of more than 90,000 location records.

More than just a field guide to identifying Canadian butterflies, however, The Butterflies of Canada includes chapters on butterfly gardening, photography, conservation, collecting and the history of butterfly study in Canada. It also contains new and unpublished information on butterflies, their ranges, larval food plants, abundance, flight seasons and noteworthy habitats. Thirty-two colour plates provide diagnostic details for each species, and also features butterflies in their natural habitats. There is also an extensive bibliography.

Beautifully illustrated and clearly laid-out, The Butterflies of Canada is an indispensable guide to all aspects of butterfly watching and collection. Ontario-Quebec coordinator of the annual summary of the Lepidopterists' Society from 1984 - 1996, Ross A. Layberry has been building a database of butterfly distribution in Canada since 1985, now at over 90,000 records. Peter W. Hall is presently Acting Director General, Strategies and Planning, Research Branch, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada. J. Donald Lafontaine is a research scientist at the Research Branch of Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, where he has worked in the Lepidoptera Unit in the Canadian National Collection of Insects (CNC) for the past twenty-six years.

Release date: April 1998

Orders to Canada, U.S., Australia and New Zealand: Customer Order Department, University of Toronto Press - 1-800-565-9523 (Toll Free in Canada and U.S.) or utpbooks@utpress.toronto.ca. With offices and distributors in England, Japan, India, and the United States (Seattle, Chicago, New York, Richmond (Va))

Treasurer's Report: January 1, 1997 to October 31, 1997

Accounts	Debits	Credits	Balance
Bluebird Committee		125.52	
Birdhouse upkeep	92.98		
Raffles, etc		186.40	
Bank Charges	6.16		212.78
Current-		1,072.32	
Egret Expenses	810.18		
Meeting Expense	25.00		
Services, phone, etc	749.83		
Brochure Donation		500.00	
Gift - K.C.	300.00		
Memberships		2,321.21	
Sales Expense - items	860.00		
Sales		887.00	2,035.53
E.C.S.N. - no report			
FON Conference - no report			
Heinz Woodlot Committee		43,507.27	
Interest		647.38	44,154.65
Heritage Committee		26,776.56	
Donations Received		1,268.70	
Grants		5,000.00	
Interest		598.31	33,643.52
N.H.R.P. Committee		5,120.81	
Donations etc.		60.36	
Grants given	4,999.99		
Sales		2,868.25	
Shipping expense	121.02		
Printing	19.26		2,909.15
Reserve (Life Members)		2,990.01	2,990.91
Woodlot Owners Association		1,975.00	
Bank Charges	50.00		1,925.00
Total			87,870.63

Activities Calendar

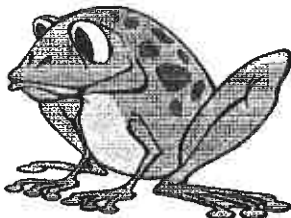
For further information concerning ECFNC excursions, please contact either Muriel Kassimatis (252-4801) or Betty Learmouth (944-0825). Let us know about your ideas for future excursions through the summer and fall.

MARCH

March 11 - ECFNC Monthly Meeting - Union Gas Building, 7:30 p.m. Annual meeting and nature quiz.

March 12, 13 - Ojibway Nature Centre Children's Programme - Snake Tales learn about what reptiles, amphibians and you have in common, ages 7-11. Contact Ojibway for details.

March 15 - ECFNC Winter Excursion - Explore the Lake St. Clair shoreline of Essex and Kent Counties for migrating waterfowl with ECFNC member Jim McAllister. Meet mid morning at 10:30 a.m. in the Tremblay Beach Conservation Area parking area near Stoney Point. Bring a lunch and dress warmly.



March 16, 23 - Ojibway Nature Centre

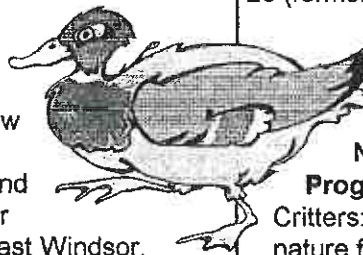
Children's Programme - Captivating Creatures: wildlife exploration and nature fun for the younger set, Ages 3-5. Contact Ojibway for details.

March 24 - Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) workshop - Wildlife nesting workshop at the Essex Civic Centre, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Charge of \$5.00 per adult, \$16.00 per family. Nesting boxes are extra. Learn how to build nesting structures at this evening workshop. Register two weeks in advance by calling Gwen at 776-5209, ext. 346.

March 29 - ECFNC Spring Excursion - Learn about a new development of trails, wetlands and homes now under construction in East Windsor.

ECFNC member Faye Langmaid of the City of Windsor's Department of Parks and Recreation will introduce us to this area within the Little River Watershed. Meet in the Sandpoint Beach parking lot on Riverside Drive East at 2:00 p.m. If you are driving east, the Sandpoint Park parking lot is located on the right at the next light after passing the lighthouse at Little River. Bring your binoculars as waterfowl can be expected in the new ponds.

March 25 - ECFNC Executive Meeting - Union Gas Building, 7:30 p.m.



APRIL

April 2 - Ojibway Nature Centre Spring Birding Introduction - 7:30 p.m. in the Nature Centre

April 4 - Ojibway Nature Centre Spring Birding Field Trip. Contact Ojibway for details.

April 5 - ECFNC Spring Excursion - Enjoy this second scheduled walk on the Chrysler Canada Greenway with ECFNC member Chris Allsop at 2:00 p.m. Our meeting place will be in the parking area of the old grain elevator at the corner of the Arner Town Line and County Road 20 (formerly Highway 18), just behind the Arner Stop restaurant and gas bar.

April 6, 13 - Ojibway Nature Centre Children's Programme - Captivating Critters: wildlife exploration and nature fun for the younger set, ages 3-5. Contact Ojibway for details.

April 8 - ECFNC Monthly Members Meeting, Union Gas Building at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Andrew Bially, a recent Master of Science graduate from the University of Windsor will present a slide talk on Lake Erie's aquatic invertebrates.

April 16 - Ojibway Centre Birding for Beginners - 7:30 p.m. in the Nature Centre

April 18 - Ojibway Nature Centre Spring Birding Field Trip

April 19 - ECFNC Spring Excursion - Little River is visited often by East Windsor birder Randy Horvath who will show us his favourite birding spots. We expect to see migrating shorebirds, herons and sparrows. At 2:00 p.m. meet in the parking lot near the water

treatment plant at the end of Little River Road which runs east off Lauzon Road between Tecumseh Road East and Wyandotte Street East.

April 21 - ERCA program - Naturalize your backyard workshop: create habitat for wildlife in your own backyard. Plantings for wildlife food and shelter, and habitat enhancement. Evening program at Essex Civic Centre from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. \$5.00 per adult, \$16.00 for the whole family. Register two weeks in advance by calling Gwen at 776-5209, ext. 346.

April 23 - Friends of Point Pelee Special Programme - Natural Gardens workshop. Contact the FoPP at 326-6173 or e-mail at fopp@wincom.net for more details.



April 26 - Earth Day activities at Ojibway Nature Centre from 12 noon through 4:00 p.m.

Bring the whole family for an enjoyable afternoon of environmental displays, entertainment and food. You may consider volunteering at the ECFNC display.

April 29 - Ojibway Nature Centre Weekday Birding at Point Pelee, 8:30 a.m. - 12 noon

April 29 - ECFNC Executive Meeting, Union Gas at 7:30 p.m.

MAY

May 1 - 18 - Spring Song and Shorebird Migration at Hillman Marsh. Thousands of birds cross Hillman's barrier beach to rest and feed in the marsh shallows. The Nature Centre and gift shop will be open for bird updates and refreshments. \$3.00 per vehicle.

May 1 - 31 - Festival of the Birds, Point Pelee National Park. A variety of activities are planned.

May 2 - Ojibway Nature Centre Spring Birding Field Trip

May 2/3 - ECFNC Spring Excursion - Visit Pelee Island's natural areas with ECFNC member Dave Kraus. Contact Dave at 733-9578.

May 3 - E.C.F.N.C. Spring Excursion. Meet Gerry Kaiser at the end of Suzanne in LaSalle for a plant dig. Bring your shovels, work gloves and containers. Time: 10:00am

May 5 - ERCA program - Bird Watching for Beginners: learn the basics for birdwatching, how to use the field guide and the best times and places to find different species of birds. 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Hillman Marsh. \$5.00 for adults, \$16.00 for the whole family. Register two weeks in advance by calling Gwen at 776-5209, ext. 346.

May 10 - ECFNC Spring Excursion - Enjoy a birding walk on the Ojibway Prairie with ECFNC member Paul Desjardins. To join this morning walk, meet at 9:00 a.m. in the Ojibway Nature Centre's parking lot.

May 12 - ERCA program - Wildflower Identification walk - Every spring Kopegaron Woods becomes a colourful carpet of wildflowers. Learn how to identify these delicate beauties. \$5.00 for adults, \$16.00 for the whole family. 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Register two weeks in advance by calling Gwen at 776-5209, ext. 346.

May 13 - Ojibway Nature Centre's Weekday Birding at Point Pelee.

May 13 - ECFNC Monthly Members Meeting, Union Gas at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: to be announced.

May 16 - Ojibway Nature Centre Spring Birding Field Trip

May 18 - ECFNC Spring Excursion - Join Muriel Kassimatis and Betty Learmouth for a Victoria Day morning birding excursion to Point Pelee National Park. We will meet at the front of the Visitors Interpretive Centre at 8:00 a.m. for a birding walk along the park road towards the Tip. Bring a lunch.

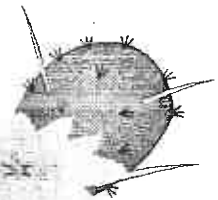
May 18 - ERCA program - Marsh Creature Family Fun Discovery Walk: Share the secrets of marsh habitat with your family on this guided program. Together we will catch water insects and learn about the birds, animal tracks and wildlife. Hillman Marsh, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Register two weeks in advance by calling Gwen at 776-5209, ext 346.

May 20 - Ojibway Nature Centre Weekday Birding at Point Pelee

May 21 - Ojibway Nature Centre Nature Photography introduction

May 24 - Ojibway Nature Centre Nature Photography field trip

May 22-24 - E.C.F.N.C. Spring Excursion. Camping at Point Pelee. Contact Tom Hurst. Cost: \$7.00/adult and \$3.50/under 12.



May 22

-24 -

Federati

on of Ontario

Naturalists' Annual Meeting and Conference, University of Guelph

May 22 to May 31 - Huron Fringe Birding Festival: A Spring Celebration. Participate in the first annual Huron Fringefest at MacGregor Point Provincial Park, Port Elgin. Sponsored by the Friends of MacGregor Point Park

this exciting new nature festival will have numerous activities to celebrate Spring along the Lake Huron Shoreline. Events include: "So You What to be A Birdwatcher" sessions, birding walks, a birding big day, a challenge to see which team can find the most birds, contests, children's events, bird carving demonstrations, art lessons, photography lessons, slide shows presented by Kathy and Martin Parker, and Scott Connop of Turaco Nature Inc., hikes to hear the birds of the night, a bird of prey demonstration. For more information on the exciting week write Kathy Parker at MacGregor Point Provincial Park, R.R.#1, Port Elgin, On., NOH 2C5 or e-mail at mkparker@bmts.com

May 27 - ECFNC Executive Meeting, Union Gas at 7:30 p.m.

May 28 - Ojibway Nature Centre Nature Photography evening program

May 30 - Ojibway Nature Centre Spring Birding Field Trip

JUNE

June 7 - ECFNC Spring Excursion
- Join an Ojibway Nature Centre staff person for a late spring walk through Ojibway's Tall Grass Prairie. Meet at 2:00 p.m. in the Ojibway Nature Centre.

June 10 - ECFNC Monthly Members Meeting. Union Gas Building, 7:30 p.m. Speaker to be announced.

June 14 - ECFNC Spring Excursion - Rondeau Provincial Park's Naturalist Pamela Burns will lead us on a morning walk along the Tulip Tree Trail. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot of Windsor's new SilverCity at the corner of Walker and Provincial Roads for carpooling. Admission to the park is approximately \$7.00 per car which can be shared. We intend to arrive at 9:30 a.m. for the morning walk. Bring a lunch and beverage.

June 16 - ERCA program - Explore the marsh by canoe at Hillman Marsh: Marsh plants, birds, turtles, and mammals are often easier to get close to by canoe. Come join our experienced guide to view the evening activities of marsh wildlife. 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. \$20.00 per canoe for rental and tour and \$5.00 per canoe for tour. Register two weeks in advance by calling Gwen at 776-5209, ext 346.

June 21 - ECFNC Summer Excursion - Explore the St. Clair National Wildlife Area with Wetlands Specialist John Haggeman who will guide us on a relaxing, quiet paddle through this Kent County wetland. We expect to encounter the locally breeding Least Bitterns and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. John has canoes on

hand with room for eleven naturalists. Please call Betty Learmouth to reserve your spot. If you are the owner of a canoe or kayak, please join this outing and let us know if you have extra room. We will meet in the parking lot of Windsor's new Silver City at the corner of Walker and Provincial Roads for carpooling at 1:30 p.m. as the canoeing is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. You will want to bring a snack and beverage.

June 24 - ECFNC Executive Meeting, Union Gas at 7:30 p.m.

June 25 - Friends of Point Pelee Special Programme - Natural Garden workshop. Contact FoPP at 326-6173 or e-mail at fopp@wincom.net for details.

June 28 - ECFNC Summer Excursion - ECFNC member Alan Wormington will introduce us to Point Pelee National Park's early summer butterfly population during a morning walk in the park. Meet Alan at the Visitors Interpretive Centre at 9:00 a.m.

June 30 - ERCA program - Backyard ponds for wildlife: Here's how you can create wetland and aquatic habitats in your backyard. Pond construction, maintenance, plants and animals will be the focus. Essex Civic Centre, 7:00 p.m. to 9 p.m. \$5.00 per person. Register two weeks in advance with Gwen at 776-5209, ext. 346.

**ESSEX
COUNTY
FIELD
NATURALISTS**



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