



The Egret

the Newsletter of the Essex County Field Naturalists

Snakes, Snakes and More Snakes

by Betty Learmouth

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Essex County Field Naturalists' Club (ECFNC) members enjoyed a presentation by Rob Willson, Pelee Island's Eastern Fox Snake researcher, at their monthly meeting, May 12, 1999, in the Essex Civic Centre. Rob is not a stranger to the Island as he arrived on Pelee as a volunteer in 1994 and was part of the Blue Racer Research Team headed up by Ben Porchuk of the University of Guelph. His task was to search for Blue Racer snakes, seeking these snakes in the savannah habitat that they prefer and under "snake furniture," such as tin sheets and old car parts. From 1995 through 1997, Rob worked at Killbear Provincial Park in the Georgian Bay area as part of a research team investigating the effects of human disturbance on Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes.

Rob has spent the last three springs on Pelee Island, beginning his own research on the Eastern Fox Snake in 1998 as a University of Guelph graduate student. Eastern Fox Snakes are a relatively unknown snake species, with only two previous studies occurring at Point Pelee and Georgian Bay Island's National Parks. Eastern Fox Snakes are very secretive, often found in rodent runways under dead grass, in and under old automobile bodies and quite often they make an appearance at people's sheds/barns or under the front porch; anywhere that rodents are plentiful.

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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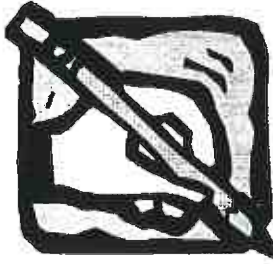
Field Trip: Heritage Committee

Annual Dinner: Heritage Committee

Bluebird: Don Bissonnette, Betty Learmouth, Carl Maiolani

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

Heritage: Betty Learmouth, Muriel Kassimatis, Jim McAllister, Gerry Waldron, Peg Wilkinson, Patricia Rhoads, Margerat Jennings



The President's Report

Without a doubt I find May to be the most exhilarating month of the year. While March and April are intriguing, daily offering up renewed acquaintance with species almost forgotten over winter's forced dormancy. The explosion of life in May in contrast is almost overwhelming. Everywhere one is greeted by the abundance and vitality of numerous flora and fauna determined to flourish and procreate. I am hard pressed to know where to focus my attention. Will I miss some remarkable flower or insect by training my binoculars on fleeting glimpses of Neotropical avian migrants? Inevitably I do miss out on aspects of May's bounty but I just as often find myself distracted from the quest after a Fish Crow by an Olive Hairstreak nectaring on an unidentified flower.

A small group of Field Naturalists and myself began the month by camping at Point Pelee National Park. As we bedded down for our second evening far from the noise of civilization we were serenaded by several Spring Peepers, American Toads, American Woodcocks, and a single Whip-poor-will. Most haunting, however, was the joyous chorus of a coyote pack. As I feel asleep I felt a visceral connection to the natural world and reverence for the complex life forces that surrounded me. Oh what a wondrous place is Point Pelee in May. What a treat to have such a treasure only minutes from my suburban door.

Earlier in the day, Charlie Wolf inadvertently reminded me of just how lucky we are to have such a resource at our doorstep. While stalking May's natural wonders in Tilden Woods, Charlie mentioned how much the site had changed since the time he rode the school bus daily to pick up a school chum at the Tilden homestead. I had all but forgotten that the natural beauty that surrounded me was once a farm and that much of the Park has until recently been devoted to the economic pursuits of man. Having acquired a passion for nature only in the early eighties I was filled with gratitude towards those who had come before with the foresight and the energy to set this piece of land aside and nurture it for my present enjoyment.

A small group of Field Naturalists and myself ended the month in a pilgrimage to Kingston to attend the 1999 Federation of Ontario Naturalists Conference. After escaping north from the pandemonium of Metro Toronto I gradually became jealous of the vast expanses of green space only lightly touched by the hand of man. I knew in my heart that nothing like this would ever exist in Essex County. Once in Kingston I was informed that

such abundance does not abrogate the need for vigilance on the part of local naturalists. The Kingston Field Naturalists have actively been protecting significant natural habitats since 1963 when they purchased their first sixty hectares near Otter Lake. They now own or helped to acquire 306.6 hectares of natural habitat in their region.

Acquisition is not the KFN's only tool for preservation. They are proud of their efforts to save Prince Edward Point, a major migrating avifauna staging area, from an airport and housing development in the 1970's. It was the vigilant monitoring of the site's

natural functions and petitioning that obliged the Canadian Wildlife Service to declare it the first non-game reserve in Canada. As Dr. Ron Weir pointed out; facts speak louder than emotions. More recently the KFN has enlisted landowner agreements and planning regulations into its arsenal. Conservation easements and other legal agreements allows for natural habitat preservation without infringing on private property rights. This can only occur with the education and sympathetic awareness of individual land owners. Involvement in land use planning offers even greater rewards and challenges. KFN's Conservation Committee Chairman notes, "As a democratic society we are given the opportunity to indicate our values toward the treatment of land, and, in turn, our wishes are reflected in the rules that govern the use of land."

During the Sunday field trip to view endangered Loggerhead Shrike I was reminded that gaining physical control over land was only a partial answer. Consideration of the private landowner's needs are also important. The habitat of the Ontario Loggerhead Shrike is maintained by the cattle of the Newburgh region. By finding funding to help cattle farmers maintain their fences and stay in business, concerned citizens feel confident that the cattle will continue to maintain this disappearing shrike habitat.

It is now barely June and I regret the opportunities to enjoy nature missed in May. May is the "busy month" at my place of employment. Although I tried to get out in the field most evenings I was often obliged to attend planning meetings, conservation meetings, and various committee meetings. But when I reflect upon the debt I owe those who gave me protected spaces to enjoy in Essex County my resentment dissipates.

The KFN is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. It has created a legacy of advocacy and preservation that its future members can enjoy and build upon. The ECFNC will be fifteen this year and still has much to accomplish. For our Club 1999 is a watershed year in regards to

protecting our natural heritage. Both the City of Windsor and the County of Essex are formulating major revisions to their land-use policies. The Detroit Cleanup Committee, The Essex Stewardship Network and the Conservation

Authority are undertaking new restoration initiatives. Several ESA's are under immediate development pressure. Also the ECFNC has extended itself in a fundraising drive to secure 60 acres of irreplaceable natural habitat on Pelee Island. Club

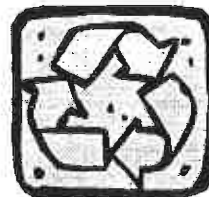
Fifteenth Annual ECFNC Dinner, November 6, 1999

Mark your calendars! The ECFNC annual dinner and fund raising evening will be held on Saturday evening, November 6, 1999 at Torino Plaza, 12049 Tecumseh Road East, Tecumseh (just west of Lesperance Road) in the facility's attractive banquet facilities. Biologist Jon McCracken, Program Manager at Bird Studies Canada/Long Point Bird Observatory, Port Rowan, Ontario, has accepted our invitation to be our guest speaker. The title of Jon's 45 minute talk will be "Endangered Species Now and Then." Jon writes that his talk "is set up as three distinct segments (one of which is a hard-hitting but toe-tapping musical/slide show segment) that all work well together as part of the overall unit. Roughly half of the talk has to do with endangered species, gives the story and sets the historical context, and the other half is all about how we apply this knowledge to Prothonotary Warbler recovery."

members who have always led the way in working to protect our natural environment have redoubled their efforts. I commend them and ask you to give them some assistance. Whether it be monitoring, lobbying or fundraising, your help has never been more required or likely to be more effective.

Yours truly,
Thomas Hurst

Please recycle this newsletter!



Let a friend read it!

(continues from page 1 . . .)

Snake researchers track and study their subjects through radio telemetry. Rob told us that individual snakes are anaesthetized for a thirty minute procedure that places a radio transmitter into their "roomy" (fox snakes can ingest large prey items) body cavity. The animal is then released into the field, where it is radio-tracked every two days. Through radio telemetry, researchers have been able to observe behaviours not often seen in the wild, such as courting activity which involves several flee/chase episodes.

Eastern Fox Snakes will occasionally climb trees to escape pursuers. They will also forage in trees for eggs, fledglings or even adult birds. Rob showed us a slide of an Eastern Fox Snake that had ingested an American Robin's egg, the yolk visible as the snake had broken the egg in its throat. Another slide showed a mouse captured by an Eastern Fox Snake. Throughout the summer Eastern Fox Snakes actively search for rodents .

One extraordinary Blue Racer, "Leah", was originally marked in 1992, radio tracked in 1994 and 1995, and recaptured at her hibernaculum this spring. Based on her body size in 1992, a conservative estimate of her age is at least eleven years old. Rob stated that the only way to accurately estimate a Fox Snake's age is to record its dorsal markings shortly after hatching or during the snake's first year. In Fox Snakes, these dorsal markings are unique to each individual, similar to finger prints. Presently it is thought that Eastern Fox Snakes may live twelve to thirteen years.

One particularly lucky observation during the fox snake research of 1998 was that of a five foot long pregnant Eastern Fox Snake which Rob spotted on the beach at Middle Point. Rob watched, unnoticed by the snake, as she moved slowly down to the water's edge, began to drink from the lake, then climbed up through the roots of an overturned cottonwood, and finally into a previously unnoticed cavity. Sometime during the next two days she laid her eggs in the tree cavity along with another Fox Snake Rob was tracking.

Researchers have discovered that Eastern Fox Snakes lay eggs in compost piles, wood chip piles, loamy soils and in decaying logs along Lake Erie's shoreline. Some snakes have laid eggs under sheets of metal which have proven fatal for the eggs as the

site overheats during the 40 to 45 day incubation period. Eggs are laid during the first three weeks of July and hatchlings emerge from late August through early October. Eastern Fox Snakes and Blue Racers heading towards suitable nesting sites often end up as road fatalities. Providing suitable artificial nesting sites in hollowed out cottonwood logs with a moist substrate has been an aim of the researchers.

Rob stated that few Blue Racers were captured emerging from hibernation in 1998 and there was concern the population was still declining. Encouragingly the numbers appear better this spring with forty Blue Racers found emerging from hibernation sites. This year the first Blue Racer was observed on April 2. Eastern Fox Snakes emerge three to four weeks after Blue Racers.

Jeremy Rouse, a colleague of Rob's, has initiated a study of another rare snake on Pelee Island, the Lake Erie Water Snake. This subspecies is found only on the islands of Lake Erie's archipelago and differs in body pattern from the more common northern water snake. The Lake Erie subspecies is primarily unbanded or shows only traces of pattern, whereas the northern water snake almost always has a banded pattern. Jeremy is investigating contaminant levels, such as PCB's, found in the snake's blood and tissue.

Pelee Island now has three snake species, Blue Racer, Lake Erie Water Snake and the Eastern Fox Snake listed as endangered and threatened by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). Rob stated that a series of protected areas is vital to the long-term survival of these snake species on Pelee Island.

Rob was asked how male and female Eastern Fox Snakes may be identified. The key to distinguishing the sexes is the size and shape of the tail, which begins after the vent (cloaca). A male's tail is rather broad and bulging immediately after the vent, whereas a female Eastern Fox Snake's tail continues to taper to its end, with no bulge. Males also tend to have longer tails than females of similar size.

Melanistic Garter Snakes (completely black with white chin) are relatively common on Pelee Island, and also occur on other islands in the Great Lakes as well as on Peninsulas such as Point Pelee. Frequently Common Garter Snakes exhibit unique combinations of colour and many are speckled with brown, red and black to go with their red lateral stripes. Northern Browns, the smallest of the island's snakes, are abundant and widespread.

Suitable habitat needs to be protected if Pelee Island's endangered snakes are to survive and avoid the fate of some of the island's previous serpentine residents. Three snake species have been extirpated from the Island in the last 100-200 years, including the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake, Timber Rattlesnake, and Eastern Hognose Snake. Rob applauded the ECFNC for its efforts to preserve and protect a portion of the Stone Road Alvar Complex, which has been found to be important for snake hibernation, breeding and foraging.

North American Butterfly Count - July 3

Attention butterfly watchers! Join us for Windsor's fifth annual butterfly tally. Help us with this exciting and valuable field inventory of Windsor's butterflies. Call Ojibway Nature Centre to register for this event. A \$3.50 participation fee is donated to the North American Butterfly Association.

Field Trip Review

A Walk on the West Side

by Betty Learmouth

Five ECFNC naturalists joined ECFNC member and City of Windsor Parks and Recreation Design and Development Co-ordinator Faye Langmaid, Faye's husband Paul and friendly family dog Alex, on February 29, 1999 for a tour of the newly dedicated Malden Park and Woodlands, located in West Windsor, close to both Micmac Park and Ojibway Park. A bike path connects the three areas via the Spring Garden ANSI. We gathered at the attractive new Malden Park Visitors Centre, constructed with the assistance of Human Resources Development Canada funding which provided on the job skill training for potential tradesmen. The Centre's main floor can accommodate seventy to eighty persons with the mezzanine providing meeting space for fifty persons. Large windows give light with a fine view of the park's hills, ponds and nearby woodlands. Kitchen facilities allow catering to groups.

Faye provided some insight into Malden Park site history. Originally the flat marshy area was owned by the Windsor Salt Company. In 1956, the City of Windsor arranged a land trade with the Salt Company, trading the Windsor Salt Company's land to the City for mining rights under the Ojibway area. Brine pump houses are now found at several sites within the Park, evidence of the activities underground. From 1956 through 1973, the City of Windsor used the area as a landfill site, with hospital, household waste and industrial waste dumped at the site. Inert landfill material (clay, brick and concrete) was placed in the site from 1972 to 1992 with household waste deposited during a 1981 municipal strike.

Upon closure in 1992, consideration was given to the landfill's potential long term use. Leachate and methane monitoring was set up, with little methane found escaping the site. In 1973, planners thought the site might be an appropriate as a golf course. Three golf holes (including greens and sand traps) were actually developed behind Sun Valley Drive, with the local raptor population adopting the unused golf holes as popular hunting grounds. In 1990, the City of Windsor determined that the site should be a park offering various recreational opportunities such as tobogganing, cross country running, a mountain bike course, a model airplane flying site, walking and hiking, and nature appreciation. Work continues on the site to provide a park for the community that will provide recreational opportunities not available elsewhere in the City of Windsor.

We left the Visitors Centre, passing the two ponds that flank the road entrance. Originally one pond was located at the Malden Road entrance, with an adjacent area over run with Phragmites. Upon removal of the Phragmites, the wetland filled, creating a smaller pond. The two ponds make an attractive entranceway to Malden Park. Model sailboaters are deserting these ponds for East Windsor's Blue Heron Lake which will provide steadier, stronger winds as the ponds at Malden Park are now sheltered by surrounding hills.

The woodland pathway meanders through the 25 acre woodlot which was never affected by the landfill operations nearby. Faye mentioned that a small American Chestnut is growing in the woodlot, although a distance from the trail. A small herd of deer use this woodlot, moving through this area into the nearby natural areas of Spring Garden Prairie and Ojibway Park.

Upon leaving the woodland, we hiked up a park roadway to the highest point in the Park which is noteworthy as it is also the highest point in all of Essex County at 26 metres. The site offers a panoramic view of Windsor, mainly a view of the city's urban forest canopy, and in the distance, Detroit and its taller buildings, and the Ambassador Bridge.

We noted the rock spillways on the hillsides which are designed to channel rainwater runoff into catch basins, which then take the water to the West Windsor Water Treatment plant. Plantings of small trees and shrubs are everywhere on the hillsides, with the Boy Scout plantings distinctive as every shrub and tree is wrapped in a white trunk protector.

Work at the site is ongoing with capping still underway on a hillside behind the toboggan hill. The original cost of capping and development of park facilities appropriate for multi function events was estimated to be \$8.5 million. So far, the cost has been \$3.5 million with more facilities to be completed such as good lighting along roadways for pedestrian safety during summer concerts.

Faye reminded us that if certain plans dating from earlier this century had occurred in West Windsor we likely would be looking at quite a different landscape today. U.S. Steel Corporation had envisioned the Ojibway project for West Windsor, a plan that involved a huge steel complex with a planned community to accommodate its workers. The steel plant located in Pittsburgh, the company town's legacy to West Windsor a series of narrow cement sidewalks in such natural areas as Oakwood, Laurier and La Salle woodlots. These areas had been divided into small residential lots which fragmented ownership, preventing any development. Luckily, these remnant natural areas, including the Ojibway Prairie Complex, survived with their significant plant communities recognized half a century later.

Many thanks to Faye who shared her knowledge of the planning that has transformed a landfill site into the Malden Park and Woodlands. We will want to return to enjoy the hills, the woodlot and ponds in other seasons.

A Spring Walk in McAuliffe Woods

by Betty Learmouth

Thirteen Little River Enhancement Group friends and two well behaved family dogs gathered on April 17, 1999 at the McAuliffe Woods Conservation Area for a nature walk around the area's trails for what would be the initial activity to celebrate Li'l Reg's tenth anniversary. Within Little River's watershed, Li'l Reg and its supporters have actively worked to enhance wildlife habitat and water quality over the past decade.

Stan Taylor of the Essex Region Conservation Authority drew everyone's attention to two signs at the McAuliffe Woods C.A. entrance. Through the support of a number of groups and the efforts of numerous volunteers, the trail system in McAuliffe Woods has

been put in place. What were originally muddy, impassable tracks are now pleasant walking paths which may be hiked with ease while enjoying the natural area. To construct the trails, filter fibre was laid on the trail surface, large stones were placed over the filter cloth, with quantities of gravel added.

Dan Lebedyk, Essex Region Conservation Authority's biologist, introduced the C.A., stating that McAuliffe Woods has a diversity of tree species, including several oak species, ash, maple, and sycamore. This type of southern Ontario forest is called a Carolinian forest as it is more typical of the southern forests found in North and South Carolina. One group member wondered how this forest will look in the future. Dan replied that eventually the forest will be a climax forest with large trees, but very few shrubs under the trees as many shrubs are shade intolerant. The spring wildflower ephemerals will always continue to bloom in the spring, enjoying full sunlight in early spring.

Dan emphasized that small natural areas need care and support. Litter and refuse needs to be picked up, particularly pieces that may cause harm to wildlife which may become entangled in debris. Brush piles can be constructed that give shelter to birds and small mammals. By the walk's end, four bags of garbage had been filled with litter through everyone's efforts.

Several of those enjoying the morning walk had not been into McAuliffe Woods previously, so were delighted to learn about the profusion of wildflowers in the woodlot. Dan introduced the group to Trout Lily, a plant that has speckled leaves resembling splotches on trout. Looking around the open woodland with its living green carpet, Trout Lily appeared to be the most abundant of the spring wildflowers. Some plants had large yellow buds that would bloom for Earth Day. We learned that those plants ready to bloom are seven years old or older. The rare white Trout Lily can be found around Essex County and, sometimes, the rarer hybridized form which is green.

A few pink and white blossoms of the dainty Spring Beauty were found. The unfurling leaves of May Apple, resembling umbrellas, were seen at several locations. This plant may have one or two flowers. Its totally ripe fruit may be eaten, tasting rather like a bland melon ball. If not fully ripe, the fruit is poisonous. We even located a patch of Wild Onion, its grass-like leaves attracting our attention.

Tree identification was not neglected. Dan showed us an elm tree that had somehow coiled around two maple trees as it had grown. Shagbark Hickory with its scaly bark was pointed out. Along the drainage ditch at the back of the woodlot, a single Red Cedar was found growing, Essex County's only native evergreen species. One sharp eyed naturalist noticed a cedar gall growing on the small tree. Thorny hawthorns are common at McAuliffe Woods, a good source of food for wildlife. Cottonwoods were noted growing about the woodlot, an early succession species. Several large oaks were found at different locations

Birds observed during the walk were Northern Cardinal and American Crow. Some early migrants, likely kinglets and possibly a Yellow-rumped Warbler, were calling and moving about overhead. Owl species known from this woodlot are Eastern Screech-owl and Great Horned Owl.

Many thanks to Biologist Dan Lebedyk for sharing his knowledge of Essex County's spring wildflowers and trees. A nature walk in McAuliffe Woods was a wonderful way to begin celebrations of Li'l Reg's tenth anniversary.

*Native Trees:**Making an Urban Comeback Within the City of Windsor*

by Betty Learmouth

Twelve ECFNC members, including toddler Emily Pancheshan, braved chilly winds to join City of Windsor Forester Bill Roesel on April 18, 1999, for a behind the scenes look at native tree stock maintained by the City of Windsor's Parks and Recreation Department. We met at the Parks and Recreation main building on McDougall, then moved to that building's backyard where dozens of trees are growing in containers. Many of these trees in this yard have been grown from seeds collected by ECFNC members on behalf of the Natural Habitat Restoration Program (NHRP). The City of Windsor does not propagate the seeds, instead Williams Nurseries Ltd. of Leamington undertakes that step, nurturing the trees for a year or two before sale. Young trees are purchased by the City of Windsor, then Parks and Recreation staff care for them until they are a suitable size for planting.

Bill pointed out a number of tree species which are growing well in their containers, including Hackberry, Pumpkin Ash, Kentucky Coffeetree, and Redbud. Four year old Hackberry were taller than Bill. Staff are particularly pleased with growth shown by the Pumpkin Ash. Kentucky Coffeetrees resembled a group of small coat racks. Tulip-trees on view had not been grown from local seed, but from seed obtained in the Niagara Region. Over the past winter, the Red Oaks in this yard have suffered damage from browsing rabbits which was not anticipated by staff as no protective coverings had been placed around the young tree trunks.

Although there is a movement towards planting native trees around the City of Windsor, Bill said there is still a need for ornamentals, particularly along such streets as Ouellette Avenue. Growing conditions in cities for trees is difficult as they must endure poor soil conditions, lack of water, poor drainage and salt spray. When trees are newly planted, the City of Windsor requests nearby homeowners to water these trees, as adequate water is critical during the first few years in the urban environment. Care must be taken when mowing near newly planted trees to avoid damage to the bark and underlying tissue. Presently every effort is made to plant a diversity of tree species along city streets, with the rule of no more than three individuals of one species together.

After admiring the trees in front of the Parks and Recreation building, which include a Blue Beech, an English Oak, a Honey-locust and a Black Walnut, we moved on to the Lanspeary Park greenhouses on Giles Boulevard. There we viewed numerous trees around the yard, all in pots, all well watered. As the young trees grow, they are transplanted to larger pots.

Bill showed us one pot from which the tree's roots were protruding, ready to be transferred to a roomier pot. No special care is provided to these trees, other than adequate watering.

Trees in the greenhouse yard included Tulip-tree, Hop-tree, Hackberry, Pumpkin Ash, Pawpaw, Red Oak, Honey-locust, Redbud, Kentucky Coffeetree, Hickory species, Basswood, Bur Oak, and Red Cedar. Bill commented that these native trees were doing well in their containers, except for the possible exception of the Red Oak. Although

cared for in a similar manner to other oak species such as Bur Oak, the Red Oaks are growing slowly. The small Hop-tree will prove to be useful for planting in locations such as hydro corridors where tall trees are undesirable. The attractive Redbud is suitable for boulevard planting. Our native Red Cedar has not been a popular tree for urban planting, and staff is undecided as where to plant these small conifers. The intended goal on behalf of Parks and Recreation staff is a yearly production of five hundred native trees to be planted about the City of Windsor.

Many thanks to Forester Bill Roesel for an enjoyable afternoon spent viewing and learning about the native tree stock under the care of the Parks and Recreation Department. We are looking forward to enjoying more and more of our native trees about the streets, parks and waterfront of the City of Windsor.

Fifth Annual Weekend Trip to Pelee Island

by Margaret Jennings

More than 20 (most so far) enthusiastic field naturalists met at the Leamington Dock bright and early on May 1st. After a smooth trip on the M.V. Jiimaan, we boarded the school bus for our first adventure - to Sheridan Point.

Here we observed lively Tree and Bank swallows among the trees along the road. In the quarry, Painted Turtles basked on logs. An Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle and Bullfrogs were also spotted.

Birds observed at this location were Red-winged Blackbirds, juncos, cormorants, Downy Woodpecker, Bufflehead, Eastern Phoebe, White-throated Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, House and Carolina Wrens, Turkey Vulture, Yellow-rumped Warblers, chickadees, cardinals, Broad-winged and Cooper's hawks, and a female Ruby-crowned Kinglet who stayed very close to us on low branches.

A Kentucky Coffeetree pod containing four viable seeds was found. Dave is planning to plant them on the Island. The biggest Chinquapin Oak on the Island was observed near Vin Villa.

Some flowers in bloom in this area were Spring Beauty, Downy Yellow Violet, Blue Phlox, Purple Dead Nettle, and Periwinkle. Cabbage butterflies, garter snakes, and a Fox Squirrel were also spotted at this location.

We checked in and ate lunch at the Pelee Island Hotel amid a crowd of Masons. Then we were back on the bus and off to Lighthouse Point. Great Blue Herons and a Wood Duck were observed from the bus. Birds seen at Lighthouse Point included Purple Martins, Great Blue Heron, egrets, cormorants, Bonaparte's Gull, Canvasbacks, a towhee, a Golden-crowned Kinglet, Common Tern, Brown Thrasher, Lesser Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitcher, House Finch, and Chimney Swift. We had a very close look at a Marsh Wren.

Carp were very active in the water, and Painted Turtles were basking on all the available logs. A Snapping Turtle was also found in this area.

We spent a delightful evening at the Pelee Island Winery. Enthusiastic staff members showed a video, conducted a wine tasting, and prepared a delicious barbecue which included buffalo burgers and all the wine we wanted.

On Sunday morning we ate breakfast at the hotel, then watched the field next door

where a Killdeer did her broken wing thing. On the way to Fish Point we drove down Stone Road to see the property the ECFNC is purchasing.

At Fish Point the trails have been rebuilt and there is a large platform over the mud flat. The woods were carpeted with Trilliums, Dutchman's-breeches, Cut-leaved Toothwort, and blue and yellow violets. Birds found here were Red-bellied Woodpecker, cowbirds, Mallards, chickadees, a phoebe, egrets, Black-and-white, Yellow-rumped, and Mourning Warblers, Swamp, Song, and White-crowned Sparrows, scaup, Red-breasted and Common Mergansers, a towhee, and a Bald Eagle.

We quietly and carefully gathered to observe a water snake which turned out to be dead. A spotted salamander, newts, and a raccoon were also seen at Fish Point.

We returned to the hotel in time to check out. Some of us squeezed in a little shopping at the Trading Post, others had lunch before boarding the ferry.

Thanks to Dave Kraus for another enjoyable weekend, and thanks to Carl Maiolani for the absolutely perfect weather.

Point Pelee Spring Birding

by Betty Learnmouth

Six ECFNC members joined Muriel Kassimatis and Betty Learnmouth for early morning birding at Point Pelee on May 16, 1999. We met at the Interpretive Centre, then headed off to the Tip via the shuttle train. Muriel suggested we walk along the boardwalk towards the tip and return via the West Beach Trail to the shuttle. At the train stop, we paused to watch Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Warbling Vireos in the trees above. We enjoyed views of a Red-headed Woodpecker through Carl Maiolani's telescope which Carl had thoughtfully brought along on the morning's walk.

Photographers with enormous telescopic lenses caught our attention as they crouched on the boardwalk, with perfect views of Yellow Warblers in the midst of nest construction. During the walk to the Tip which likely produced more birders than birds, we rubbed elbows with a TV Ontario television crew. At the Tip we scanned the gulls looking for a reported immature Little Gull, but with no luck. Offshore, two Great Blue Herons appeared to be headed towards Pelee Island. Overhead, flocks of Blue Jays and Cedar Waxwings were in reverse migration, as they headed out over Lake Erie.

Our walk back to the shuttle train was more productive, as our two groups reported Black-and-white Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Redstart and Scarlet Tanager. Once we reached the train shuttle, we decided to walk down the road to the next shuttle stop, entertained by numbers of orioles of both species. Following a brief rain shower, the sun emerged, bringing forth more birds with clearing skies and higher temperatures, including Blackburnian Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Everyone assisted with spotting, or calling the group's attention to bird song.

At the midway train shuttle stop, several of the group departed with the rest deciding to walk the nature trail to the Interpretive Centre. Birds viewed included Swainson's Thrush and a pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. The walk was delightful as the woodlands were crowded with plants in bloom including Sweet Cicely, Solomon's-seal, False Solomon's-seal and Starry False Solomon's-seal, although the invasive Garlic Mustard caused concern for the future of the Point Pelee woodland plants.

Following lunch, the group headed to Tilden's Woods. At the first large maple on the left, a crowd had gathered to enjoy Blue-winged and Black-throated Blue Warblers feasting on tiny insects in the tree's foliage. A few moments later, helpful birders on the trail pointed to a pair of White-eyed Vireos nest building just a few metres from the trail.

Lucky birders who had just seen a Connecticut Warbler reported its location. Several of the group rushed off to where the bird had last been seen, but were disappointed. Within Tilden's Woods, other enjoyable sightings were Parula Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, and Indigo Bunting.

The day's bird list was as follows:

Double-crested Cormorant	Barn Swallow	Blackburnian Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Blue Jay	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Canada Goose	American Crow	Bay-breasted Warbler
Red-breasted Merganser	Gray Catbird	Common Yellowthroat (H)
Turkey Vulture	Swainson's Thrush	Yellow-breasted Chat
Great Black-backed Gull	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Wilson's Warbler
Herring Gull	Cedar Waxwing	Canada Warbler
Bonaparte's Gull	White-eyed Vireo	American Redstart
Mourning Dove	Red-eyed Vireo	Red-winged Blackbird
Chimney Swift	Philadelphia Vireo	Orchard Oriole
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Warbling Vireo	Northern Oriole
Red-headed Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler	Common Grackle
Downy Woodpecker	Blue-winged Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Eastern Kingbird	Northern Parula Warbler	Scarlett Tanager
Empidonax flycatcher species	Yellow Warbler	Northern Cardinal
Eastern Peewee	Magnolia Warbler	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Tree Swallow	Black-throated Blue Warbler	Indigo Bunting
	Yellow-rumped Warbler	American Goldfinch
	Black-throated Green Warbler	White-crowned Sparrow

A Walk in the Green Dragon Woods

by Betty Learmouth

Ten ECFNC members joined Lisa Stewart on May 23, 1999 for a delightful walk through the woodlands near the Canard River adjacent to the Stewart's home. Unfortunately Lisa's son Randy was unable to join us as Randy is a horticulturist and spring is an extremely busy time for horticulturists. Lisa told us that the property we were to walk upon had deeply influenced Randy as a child and teenager as Randy chose to work with plants as a career.

The land we walked upon had been pasture land until 17 years ago but has simply been left to return to forest by the Stewarts. In 1994 the 81 acres around this section of the River Canard, including the channel and the floodplain as well as the valley slopes and adjacent uplands to the southwest, were designated an Environmentally Significant Area (ESA), to be called the Green Dragon Woods ESA.

As we walked past the Stewart's pond, Lisa remarked that the river will flood as far as this pond, inundating the entire area. White pines and other trees on the nearby slopes were planted by the Boy Scouts with other trees growing up naturally. The Stewarts have noticed frogs in their pond during past years, but this year there are fewer frogs present. A large patch of Canada Anemone along the trail, most of the plants still in bud, caught our attention.

We stepped from the trail onto the floodplain into a Red Ash Forest. Immediately we noted the debris clinging to the base of several trees, deposited during flooding conditions. We walked in single file through the woodland which was most attractive with the forest floor a carpet of green, while the trees formed a canopy over our heads. Some plants observed in this very uncertain place for plants to grow

were Giant Ragweed, Lady's-thumb, Canada Violet, Carrion-flower, sedges, Blue Phlox, Poison Ivy, Early Meadow-rue, Canada Moonseed, avens, Larger Blue Flag, Spring Cress, Cleavers, Wild Onion, Wild Cucumber, Daisy Fleabane and Pickereel Weed on the river's bank. Some naturalists wondered about the identification of plants with large shiny green leaves, deeply cut in three or five-parts, which have tentatively been identified as leaves of the Green-headed Coneflower, a rare plant in Essex County.

We stopped to admire a huge Cottonwood tree which had been damaged in last summer's severe storm. The tree had two trunks, but one had split away, leaving the second standing. The trunk below the break is enormous. We wondered if this tree was of record size. Following our walk, Randy Stewart commented that the Green Dragon Woods Cottonwood is eight feet in diameter, likely a tie on the Ontario Honour Roll of Trees with another handsome Cottonwood in Kent County.

Perhaps the most notable encounters on our walk by the Canard River were the discoveries of the rare Green Dragon growing at three locations. The leaf of the first plant we found were just unfurling into its points. Everyone admired the plant, a relative of the Jack-in-the-pulpit, with its long spadix far exceeding the narrow pointed spathe. Most of the group had not seen this plant before, but now began searching for others in earnest. Close to the Canard River, Ron Muir spotted another specimen, then nine more plants of various sizes were discovered in one spot, all admired with great interest.

Other observations during the walk were Black-winged Damselflies, Mallard ducks at the pond, Northern Oriole, Great-crested Flycatcher (heard), Red-eyed Vireo and a Downy Woodpecker.

Many thanks to Lisa Stewart who kindly lead us through the River Canard floodplain. Our fortunate discoveries of the Green Dragons were highlights of this spring's wildflower viewing.

Randy Stewart has kindly invited us back for a fall walk on which Randy will show us Pawpaw, Kentucky Coffee Trees and Tulip Trees. We'll look forward to viewing the Green Dragon Woods in another season.

Grand Opening, Fish Point Interpretive Nature Trail, May 14, 1999.

By Betty Learmouth

Ron Tiessen, Curator of the Pelee Island Heritage Centre, spoke with Paul Vasey, host of CBC Radio's Morning Watch radio show on May 14, 1999 regarding the opening of the Fish Point Interpretive Trail. Curator Tiessen said that the idea of a trail improvement and interpretive signage at Fish Point occurred to him about one and one half years ago. Through funding from Human Resources and Development Canada, work began on the trail late in late fall 1998.

The Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve was established in the early 1980's, encompassing 380 acres. This natural area is noted for its rich biodiversity, containing representation of approximately one sixth of Ontario's plant species. Thus the interpretive signage gives an introduction to the rarities and special status of Fish Point. Many plants have a southern flavour, such as Red Mulberry and Dwarf Hackberry.

Radio host Paul Vasey remarked that he remembered the large snakes that he and friends along with Ron Tiessen had found on a nature reserve walk several years ago. Ron said this species would be the Eastern Fox Snake, one of Ontario's largest snakes, noted for its docile nature.

Opening ceremonies are planned for 11:00 a.m. with a number of dignitaries attending including Susan Whelan, M.P., Bruce Crozier, M.P.P., representatives from the Windsor Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau of Windsor Essex County and Pelee Island, and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

The signage on the nature reserve is meant to be an introduction only. Visitors will want to visit the Pelee Island Heritage Centre for more information on this nature reserve and Pelee Island. The Heritage Centre is located directly across from the Pelee Island ferry dock. The nature preserve may be found by turning right at the ferry dock exit, then heading directly south.

Stone Road Alvar Complex, Pelee Island, Essex County, Ontario

**The Nature Conservancy of Canada and Essex County Field Naturalists' Club
Working Together to Purchase Pelee Island Natural Area**

Important Natural Area

A 60 acre natural area, part of the Stone Road Alvar Complex, identified as an Environmentally Significant Area, an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest and a Carolinian Canada site, is to be purchased through the co-operative efforts of The Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club.

Many natural communities such as Carolinian woodlands, prairie, savanna and alvar are found on the Stone Road Alvar Complex. Alvar plant communities have developed where the underlying limestone is close to the surface. A thin layer of soil covers the limestone, with flooding occurring in the spring, drought in the summer. Only plants that adapt to these stressful conditions will survive.

Vegetation communities on this property include Hawthorn-Red Ash Forest, Red Ash-Elm-Cottonwood Forest, Hackberry-Hawthorn Savanna, Dogwood Scrub with Hackberry and Hop-tree, and abandoned agricultural land, now valuable habitat as a dogwood thicket. Provincially rare plants found within this natural area include Alumroot, Blue Lettuce, Great Plains Ladies'-tresses, Hop-tree, Nodding Wild Onion, Prairie Rose, Rough-leaved Dogwood, Scorpion Grass, Standley's Goosefoot and Yellow Corydalis.

Location

The property is located in the northeast section of the Stone Road Alvar Complex adjacent to the 106 acre Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Nature Reserve and the 126 acre Essex Region Conservation Authority's protected property.

Natural Habitat Preserved for Wildlife

Wintering, migrating and nesting bird species occupy the woodlands. Gray Fox, Fox Squirrel and other mammals are inhabitants of this natural area. Blue Racer Snake, Eastern Fox Snake, Common Garter Snake and Northern Brown Snake are all found on this property. The area is an especially important breeding and hunting territory for the both the Blue Racer Snake and Eastern Fox Snake. A large population of Blue-spotted Salamanders calls this area home.

Your Donation Welcome

Donations towards the purchase of this property may be made to The Nature Conservancy of Canada, 110 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 400, Toronto,

Pelee Island, May 1-2, 1999

by Teresa

There once was a trip with Dave Kraus
To the alvar, Fish Point and Lighthouse
The flora was dense
And the fauna immense
Pelee's a great place to share with your spouse!

Thanks Dave! Joe and I loved every minute!

Ontario M4R 1A3 or to the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, Devonshire Mall P.O., P.O. Box 23011, Windsor, Ontario N8X 5B5.

Please indicate your donation is to be directed to the Stone Road Alvar. Charitable income tax receipts will be issued for gifts of \$10 or more. A certificate of appreciation, illustrated with a photograph from the property, and a subscription to the newsletter On the Alvar will be a gift to all donors who contribute to the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club fund raising.

* Yes, I wish to contribute towards the preservation of Essex County's natural habitat.

Enclosed is my donation:

Name:.....

Postal Code:

Address:.....

E-mail:

City:.....

Telephone:

Province:.....

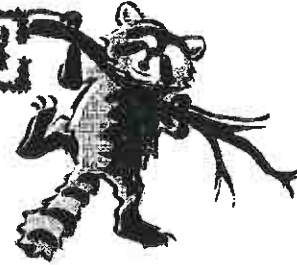
Every ECFNC Member Can Be an Egret Contributor

Every member of the ECFNC is welcome to make a contribution to the Club's newsletter The Egret which appears four times per year. The Egret welcomes submissions of all kinds that will share sightings, events, accounts of field trips or activities that are of interest to ECFNC members.

Everyone is invited to make submissions. Your submission may be hand written or typed, the form in which it is received is not important. Please forward your submission to typist Betty Learmouth who will be pleased to type your submission on her computer. Your submission will then be forwarded by electronic mail to The Egret's editor Dave D'hondt who will receive your submission on his computer. This means that the editor does not have to type or retype submissions, but can simply "flow" the submissions into an attractive newsletter format using a computer program, Corel WordPerfect, that specializes in that technique. To make the editor's job as easy as possible, we try to submit all articles to the editor up to a month but no later than two weeks before The Egret is scheduled to appear. For instance, the June 1999 issue of The Egret is to be distributed to members on June 9, 1999, then the articles need to be received by the Editor in mid May. Writing for The Egret is easy and fun. Share your experiences with fellow naturalists.

THE WILD SIDE

by Bob Wickett



"Seagulls" are probably one of the most commonly observed creatures on any ErieQuest dive trip. These much maligned birds gather by the hundreds at local marinas and are a constant presence while out on the lake. But, for all the emotion "seagulls" generate, how much do we really know about the birds we all love to hate?

You may be wondering why I keep putting seagulls in quotations. Well, because there really is no such thing as a seagull. When most of us say seagull, whether we realize it or not, we usually mean a group of birds that could be more accurately described as gulls and terns. In the ErieQuest region there are seven regularly occurring species of gulls and terns. These are the Bonaparte's gull, Ring-billed gull, Herring gull, Greater black-backed gull, Common tern, Forster's tern, and Caspian tern. Several other species appear sporadically but for simplicity's sake we will ignore them. Let's begin with how to tell a gull from a tern. Next time you are aboard the Vida C for a day on the lake take a close look at the bills and tails of all those "seagulls". The birds with a rounded bill and tail are gulls and the birds with a sharp, pointy bill and forked tail are terns.

Now that you can say whether it is a gull or a tern, how do you tell apart the various species of each? Again, for simplicity's sake, let's ignore birds with immature and winter plumage (feather colour patterns). We will only attempt to distinguish adult birds in the summer. Adult gulls can be distinguished, in part, by size alone. Bonaparte's gulls are the smallest of the gulls with a solid, jet black head. Ring-billed gulls are a medium size gull that, as their name suggests, have a black ring around their bill. The two large gulls are the Herring gull and Greater black-backed gull. Compared to a Ring-billed gull these gulls look like they are on steroids. Both have a yellow bill with a red dot on the lower portion. A Herring gull though is light gray across the back and wings, while the slightly larger Greater black-backed gull, again as the name suggests, is black on its back and wings.

Size is helpful too, in separating the Caspian tern from the other two tern species. The Caspian tern is a large tern with a big, bright red-orange bill that is easily visible from quite a distance. Forster's and common terns are very similar looking birds, that can be frustrating to separate. Look for dark wing tips and a brighter red-orange bill and feet on the Common tern. Forster's terns have frosty white wing tips and a duller orange on the bill and legs. Practice your ID skills until...

NEXT MONTH: "Seagulls": A Day in the Life.

Spring & Summer Activities and Excursions

For further information concerning the ECFNC excursions, contact Muriel Kassimatis (252-4801) or Betty Learmouth (944-0825). Many thanks to everyone who has volunteered to lead an excursion. We appreciate leaders sharing their time and expertise with others. Let us know about your ideas for upcoming excursions.

June

June 9 - ECFNC Monthly Meeting - University of Windsor's Department of Biological Sciences staff member and ECFNC member Lynda Corkum will speak about gobies, exotic fishes now found in Great Lakes waters. Location: Essex Civic Centre at 7:30 p.m.

June 10 - Ojibway Nature Centre Spring Event - Damsels and Dragons - Learn a new group of insects this summer with this short programme on damselflies and dragonflies. Eighty different kinds are found locally. Meet at 7:00 p.m. Fee: \$15/2 days

June 12 - Ojibway Nature Centre Spring Excursion - Damsels and Dragons - Meet at 10:00 a.m.

June 12 - August 12 - Audubon's Wilderness Palette: The Birds of Canada. A national touring exhibition of painting by James John Audubon will be at the London Regional Art & Historical Museums for two months before moving on to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and Fredericton Beaverbrook Art Gallery.

June 12 - 13 - Ojibway Nature Centre Spring Activity - A Weekend with Nature - Join Ojibway Nature Centre staff for a camping weekend at Wheatley Provincial Park. Guided hikes, activities and canoeing will be available. Call the Centre at 966-5852 for details.

June 13 - ECFNC Spring Excursion - Join Rondeau Provincial Park naturalist Elaine Wake for a guided walk along the Tulip Trail. Since we visited the Park last June, a severe storm has caused a great amount of damage in the Park. Elaine will bring us up to date on the storm's aftermath. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Visitors Centre in the Park or if you would like to carpool, met in the SilverCity parking lot at the corner of Provincial and Walker Roads at 8:00 a.m.

June 19 - ECFNC Special Event - An evening at Kingsville's Pelee Island Winery, including a delicious dinner and guest speaker Tom Hince and his new publication "A Birders's Guide to Point Pelee and Surrounding Areas." Contact Ojibway Nature Centre for more details and tickets.

June 20 - ECFNC Spring Excursion - Butterfly enthusiast Alan Wormington will meet us at 9:30 a.m. at the Point Pelee National Park Visitors Centre for a morning of butterfly watching at areas that have good numbers of butterflies, with lunch afterwards at the Fish Place. This is an excellent opportunity for butterfly photography with good closeup views of a variety of species. Be sure to wear light weight garments for sun protection. Bring water to drink while we walk.

June 24 - Point Pelee National Park - Natural Garden Workshop - Plants and animals of your natural garden. Call the Visitor Centre for more details. **June 27 - ECFNC Summer Excursion - Eastern Bluebird** Chairman Don Bissonnette will share his love of Eastern Bluebirds with us on an evening excursion to view Eastern Bluebirds. Meet in the parking lot of the Harrow Research Station at 7:00 p.m. Our chosen location to view Eastern Bluebirds will be determined by nesting activity on the various trails.

June 30 - ECFNC Executive Meeting

July

July 3 - North American Butterfly Count - Attention butterfly watchers! Join us for Windsor's fifth annual butterfly tally. Help us with this exciting and valuable field inventory of Windsor's butterflies. Call Ojibway Nature Centre to register for this event. A \$3.50 participation fee is donated to the North American Butterfly Association.

July 5, 12, 19, 26 or August 9, 16, 23, 30 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Captivating Critters (Ages 3-5) Wildlife exploration and nature fun for the younger set. Time: Monday 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon or 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Fee: \$18/4 weeks plus \$2.00 material fee.

July 6, 13, 20, 27 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Art in the Wild (Ages 10 -16) - Explore art and nature using a variety of natural and traditional materials in an outdoor setting. We will have an early drop-off starting at 8:00 a.m. and a late pick-up available until 5:00 p.m. All materials will be provided. Time: Tuesday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Fee: \$23

July 8 - August 26 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Kids 'N Kritters (Ages 4-6) Wildlife viewing and nature-oriented activities for children. Time: Thursday 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon or 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Fee: \$6/2 hours plus \$1 material fee

July 7 - August 25 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Young Naturalist Day Camp (Ages 7 - 12) Swamp walks, nature games and crafts for children ages 7 -12. We will have an early drop-off starting at 8:00 a.m. and a late pick-up available until 5:00 p.m. Time: Wednesday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Fee: \$22.00/day

July 11- ECFNC Special Event - At Ojibway Nature Centre, a late afternoon and early evening festival of food, music and nature. Contact Ojibway Nature Centre for more information and tickets.

July 12 - 16 or August 16 - 20 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Windsor Wildlife Watchers (Ages 7 -12) Discover Windsor's wildlife through activities, hikes and field studies of our natural surroundings. We will be exploring Ojibway Park, Malden Park, Spring Garden area, Black Oak Heritage Park, Tallgrass Prairie Heritage Park, and Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve. We will have an early drop-off starting at 8:00 a.m. and a late pick-up available until 5:00 p.m. Time: Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Fee: \$85/week plus \$5 material fee

July 16, 17 and 18 - Savanna Festival Weekend at Pinery Provincial Park. The third annual Savanna Festival honours Parks Day and celebrates Pinery's 40th anniversary. Displays, shows, workshops, speakers and hikes. Why not make a weekend of it? Nature interpretation programs change daily and many feature oak savanna themes. Call the Park Naturalist at (519) 243-8545.

July 17 - Point Pelee National Park - Parks' Night - Come celebrate Parks' Day with a Wildlife Night Hike! Meet at the Visitor Centre for a hike from 9:00 - 10:00 p.m.

July 17 - Another Prairie Summer '99 Activity - Tour a variety of prairie remnants, restorations and recreations, sponsored by The Rural Lambton Stewardship Network. The RLSN staff are leaders in prairie conservation and this will be your opportunity to "ask an expert." Gather at MacDonald Park on the St. Clair Parkway, north of Wallaceburg. at 10:00 a.m. Bring a lunch, the tour will last until about 4:00 p.m. Contact Don Gordon at (519) 873-463.

July 24 - ECFNC Summer Programme - Join ECFNC members for a Saturday afternoon get together and evening bonfire/picnic at Patricia and Chuck Rhoads' home in Woodslee. Gather from 2:30 p.m. onward with activities in the afternoon planned for children such as a hay ride, games, a splash pool and lawn horse shoes. A donation of \$5.00 will cover your BBQ food (includes vegetarian choices), plates and drinks. Bring a salad or dessert per family for the buffet which will be served at 5:00 p.m. Call Patricia at 975-4629 for more details. Patricia and Chuck's home is on County Road 46 (old Highway 98) about one kilometre from the intersection with the Belle River Road in Woodslee with the flashing yellow light and stop sign. The house number is #183 with the Rhoads' home on the north side of the road.

July 28 - ECFNC Executive meeting

July 31 - August 6 - Point Pelee National Park - Butterfly Daze - Meet at the Visitor Centre at 1:00 p.m. daily from July 31 to August 6 for daily butterfly hikes. All skill levels welcome. Fee: \$5.00. Evening presentation on August 6 with a special guest, 7:00 p.m., \$5.00.

August

August 7 - Point Pelee National Park - 4th Annual Butterfly Count. Please call the Visitor Centre to register for this event.

August 7 - Another Prairie Summer '99 Activity - Join Allen Woodliffe, Ministry of Natural Resources ecologist, for a tour of the natural wonders of Walpole Island. Numbers are limited and reservations will be accepted after July 1 by calling Programme Coordinator Don Gordon at (519)873-4631. This program is part of "Another Prairie Summer '99" sponsored by the Ontario Tallgrass Prairie and Savanna Association.

August 8 - ECFNC Special Event - Pelee Island Getaway including transportation, delicious luncheon, Pelee Island Winery tour, and tours of Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve and Stone Road Alvar. Contact Ojibway Nature Centre for more details and tickets.

August 3, 10, 17, 24 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Outdoor Adventures (Ages 10 -15) Learn a variety of techniques for outdoor exploration, from map reading to first aid and from tying knots to wilderness camping. We will have an early drop-off starting at 8:00 a.m. and a late pick-up available until 5:00 p.m. There will be an additional fee for an optional sleep over on August 24. Time: Tuesday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Fee \$23

August 14 - ECFNC Summer Activity - Phil Roberts has invited ECFNC members to attend a passerine banding workshop at Holiday Beach Conservation Area on Saturday morning, August 14 at 9:00 a.m. Meet at the Education Building in the park (near the tower) which has parking and is close to the area where the

mist nets are situated. After the morning's activities, you might want to bring a picnic lunch to enjoy near the Lake Erie shoreline.

August 19 - Ojibway Nature Centre Summer Event - Plovers, Peeps and Phalaropes - Learn to identify up to 36 species of shorebirds during the peak of their migration. Evening program at 7:00 p.m. Fee: \$13/2 days

August 21 - Ojibway Nature Centre Summer Excursion - Plovers, Peeps and Phalaropes - Meet at 10:00 a.m.

August 25 - ECFNC Executive meeting

September

Sept 1 - 26 - Point Pelee National Park - Monarch Butterfly hikes daily at 8:00 a.m. Join a Park Interpreter and count migrating monarchs, hawks, and dragonflies. Fee of \$15/adults includes official Monarch Counter T-shirt and fee \$5/child includes Monarch toy.

Sept 8 - ECFNC monthly members meeting

Sept 11 and 12 - Festival of Hawks - Holiday Beach Conservation Area

Sept 18 and 19 - Festival of Hawks - Holiday Beach Conservation Area

Sept 23 - Point Pelee National Park - Natural Garden Workshop - Preparing for next year. Call the Visitor Centre for details.

Sept 25 and 26 - Festival of Hawks - Holiday Beach Conservation Area

Sept 29 - ECFNC Executive meeting

Oct 13 - ECFNC monthly members meeting - Henry Kock of the University of Guelph's arboretum will speak on growing native plants as well as presenting his new publication.