



The Egret

the Newsletter of the Essex County Field Naturalists

Wings and Wine

by Betty Learmouth

Through the generous sponsorship of Kingsville's Pelee Island Winery, the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club held an enjoyable fund raising evening on June 19, 1999 with the proceeds to be placed towards the acquisition and protection of a sixty acre property on the Stone Road Alvar Complex. Pelee Island Winery generously donated wine and the Winery's wine cellar for the entire evening. The ECFNC Special Events Committee, chaired by Karen Cedar, planned the evening which attracted fifty-five naturalists and friends to the event. An attractive advertising flyer was designed by Josie Hazen for the event. Phone calls were made to ECFNC members who responded with enthusiasm by attending this special event.

The evening's activities began with everyone gathering for a glass of wine on the upper level in the attractive gift and wine shoppe. Pelee Island Winery staff member Nathalie led an informative and enjoyable wine tour through the Winery. A delicious dinner of barbecued chicken, mixed vegetables, baked potatoes, green salad, freshly baked breads, trifle and coffee was served buffet style in the wine cellar. Caterer Deb Waugh decorated the tables with floral herbal arrangements and festive tablecloths. Following dinner, everyone was invited to the upper level's lecture room for guest speaker's Tom Hince's entertaining and informative slide presentation entitled "Birding is everything," which included behind-the-scene looks at New Jersey's World Series of Birding.

Following dessert and a draw for door prizes, Eleanor Sfalcin, an ECFNC member and executive member of the

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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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Point Pelee Liaison: Michael Malone

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

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Ojibway Liaison: Dave Kraus

Two Creeks Liaison: Richard Bilinski

Field trip Committee: Heritage Committee

General Meeting Committee: Peggy Hurst

Committees:

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

Speaker: Patricia Rhoads, Gerry Waldron, Phil Roberts, Karen Cedar

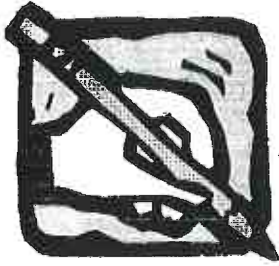
Field Trip: Heritage Committee

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, Margaret Jennings



The President's Report

In the last President's Report I indicated that I was hard pressed to know where to focus my attention in May because of the abundance of natural dramas that were occurring simultaneously. Well, the past summer months have been just as perplexing for other reasons. Events have unfolded such that the E.C.F.N.C. is involved in three major new projects at one time. All Members should be aware of the Pelee Island Property fund raising project which is striving to preserve 60 acres of Carolinian Habitat. In the meantime the crisis of the Marshfield Woods E.S.A. and a decision by another local environment group has propelled us to embrace another even more demanding fund-raising drive and to direct two substantial tree planting projects in the County. As it is often said, "It never rains but it pours."

Despite what you may have heard about fund-raising deadlines for the Pelee Island initiative, efforts to preserve this site continued unabated. A combination of personnel changes at The Nature Conservancy of Canada and a delay in zoning amendments on the island have pushed the deadline to an unspecified date in the future. Locally the Club's Heritage Committee had teamed up with the Special Events Committee to touch the wallets of our local residents at every opportunity. To their credit, several of their fund raising schemes have been quite pleasurable for the participating victims. Club members who participated in the "Wings and Wine," the "Pelee Island Getaway," or who helped pack the Windsor Film Theatre August 2nd know exactly what I mean. Those were first class events that would have reflected well on the E.C.F.N.C. even if their ultimate purpose had not been so noble. These events were organized using the "free" time of your friends and associates. To show your appreciation and save the invaluable natural habitat, write and mail your cheques today.

If only the golf course proposal for Marshfield had been submitted a year later or if only the ratepayers had convinced local politicians to provide legal protection for this and other natural sites years earlier, that we would not be faced with our current dilemma. Like all mishaps it did not occur at a more convenient time. Considering that it is one of the last remnants of interior forest in the region, neither the E.C.F.N.C., nor the Friends of Marshfield Coalition, nor any responsible individual can stand idly by while its destruction is imminent. We owe it to each other and to our children to ensure its' preservation. This will take an expenditure of voice, time and money from each of us to preserve Marshfield. Ready or not, the time is now to show your support.

In this region, major tree planting projects undertaken by E.R.C.A. and others have taken place on private property. Although public property plantings, on school yard sites, for example, have received the most recognition, the 95% of remaining land in private hands give naturalists the best hope of ever attaining the 12% natural cover necessary to sustain a healthy local environment. Fortunately there is a growing number of individuals and businesses willing to devote part of their property to the enhancement of natural values. Earlier this year Project Green negotiated and received funding from Eco-Canada 2000 for two such sites in Essex County comprising 33 acres. Subsequently these projects were threatened with cancellation

when the Project Green Board of Governors decided to give up their "not for profit" status. At this point the E.C.F.N.C. was offered the opportunity to become the lead agency in these projects. Our N.H.R.P. Committee was receptive and after careful consideration, Committee members Nancy Pancheson and Patricia Rhoads were charged with this new responsibility. The E.C.F.N.C. is pleased that it can both forward the tree planting goals of the original multi-agency N.H.R.P. movement and find local homes for the bounty of its ongoing seed collection efforts. It still promises to be a major project and Nancy and Patricia have been soliciting "in kind" support from many groups and individuals. Nevertheless, it is their hope that many Club members will come forward and do their part in "the greening" of the Essex Region.

Having briefly outlined these three new initiatives, it is clear to me the E.C.F.N.C.'s activities have reached a new plateau. This is not to say that we can neglect previous commitments. Fall seed collection is now underway and its continued success has become more important than ever before. As well the annual Holiday Beach Hawk Festival is underway. Indeed Alan Chartier's passerine banding station has been operating since mid-August. The success of the Festival has been growing annually in no small part due to the contribution of individual E.C.F.N.C. members. Both of these programs are important to the natural health of the region and I am confident that we can continue to give them the support they deserve. In concluding, I must admit that the current tasks before the E.C.F.N.C. will be challenging for us all. Rest assured though, that which we are attempting to accomplish now will pay dividends far in excess of the time and energy we need to expend. These dividends will also benefit our region's environmental health long after our lives have run their courses.

Yours truly,
Thomas Hurst

Fifteenth Annual ECFNC Dinner, November 6, 1999

Mark your calendars! The ECFNC annual dinner and fund raising evening featuring a silent auction 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."

The evening's dinner will be served family style, including tossed salad, pasta, roast chicken, vegetables, fresh bread, ice cream with a topping, and coffee and tea. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. with a cash bar and the silent auction underway. Dinner commences at 7:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$27.00 per person, available at the ECFNC monthly meetings in September and October and at the Ojibway Nature Centre. After October 13, 1999, tickets will be \$32.00 per person. Be sure to purchase your ticket early for this special evening.

Donations towards the evening's silent auction are very much appreciated. Contact members of the

(continued from page 1 . . .)

Greater Windsor Horticultural Society presented a \$2,000.00 cheque from the Society to be placed towards the acquisition of the Pelee Island property. A round of appreciative applause greeted Eleanor's presentation of this fine donation from the Greater Windsor Horticultural Society.

The evening wrapped up with a book signing by Tom Hince of his newly published book entitled "A birder's guide to Point Pelee (and surrounding Region). Tom's new book may be purchased at Ojibway Nature Centre, Pelee Wings Nature Store or the Nature Nook at Point Pelee National Park's Visitors Centre.

The Race is on to Save

Marshfield Woods

Let us secure for future generations the last great unprotected forest in Essex County ...

Marshfield Woods—a 300 acre Carolinian forest, with 4 distinct habitats and over 40 species of trees and shrubs and the headwaters of Cedar Creek, has been selected for a very large golf course development on a 194-acre portion of it.

However, the owners (The Hearn Group) have offered the land for sale for a limited time. The Marshfield Coalition, composed of dozens of groups and individuals, has made an offer to purchase.

We can do it! and this is how!

- 1. Write, fax, call the Essex Town Council to tell them how you want them to help in preserving this forest land, intact. The Town of Essex, 33 Talbot South, Essex, Ontario N8M 1A8 Phone: 776-7336; Fax 776-8811**
- 2. Send a tax deductible donation of \$20.00 or more, payable to the Essex County Field Naturalists - Marshfield Woods. (Charitable reg. 597422) Marshfield Woods, P.O. Box 135, Essex, Ontario N8M 2Y2**
- 3. Call the Marshfield hotline at 776-4462.**

Talk to family, friends, neighbours and co-workers. The time is now! Let's secure Marshfield' future for the New Millennium.

Field Trip Review

Kopegaron Woods

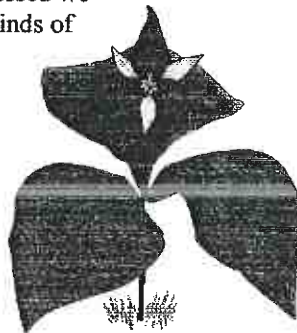
by Muriel Kassimatis

Wayne Wannick guided an enthusiastic group of twenty members on a Sunday afternoon walk through one of his favourite spots, Kopegaron Woods Conservation Area. After the distribution of some written guides and maps supplied by ERCA and a discussion of several books recommended as aids to recognition of species, we advanced into our walk to observe and identify local spring plants. Our first step was to admire Dwarf Ginseng blooming in the damp earth just off the trail. This plant has an umbel of tiny white flowers above a whorl of three compound leaves. Wayne pointed out that this is the only place in Essex County where this plant is to be found. Along the way were great areas of Wild Geranium with its pale pink to lavender five petalled flowers above attractive deeply toothed, lobed leaves.

Further along the trail we met Jack-in-the-Pulpit. Jack is actually the spadix of the plant which bears separate male and female flowers at its base. This interesting plant was just reaching its most photogenic stage although Wayne pointed out that in late summer it bears a cluster of attractive shiny red berries. A few rare Red Trillium were found among masses of beautiful White Trillium. As we progressed we were helped to identify four kinds of fern along the trail: Sensitive Fern, Cinnamon Fern, Wood and Royal Fern.

White flowers were again seen on the Running Strawberry, the Wild Lily of the Valley or Canada Mayflower and the Starry False Solomon's-seal.

Yellow was added to the colour palette by the Early Buttercup and Yellow Violets. Columbine seemed to be near the end of its flowering season in this location. In the drier section we found Wild Sasparilla with its large umbrella-like leaves. Other observations along the way were the several suckers of the Black Gum Tree, many seedlings of the Yellow Birch, Paul's possible Pipevine Butterfly, and the poor condition of some of the Flowering Dogwoods.



Overall it was a pleasant, instructive outing with the musical accompaniment of many chickadees along the way. With thanks to Wayne for his leadership.

Snake Tunnel's Environs

by Betty Learmouth

Joanne Goggin and her husband Mark, landowners on Texas Road, Amherstburg, were kind hosts to members of the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club who attended a walk at the Goggin's home on May 30, 1999. Among the plants viewed in the Goggin's woodlot during this late spring walk were Canada Anemone, Hairy Honeysuckle, Wild Onion, Buttercup sp., Blue Phlox, Wild Iris, False Solomon's-seal, Mayapple, Tall Meadow-rue, hawthorn trees, Shagbark Hickory, Black Walnut, Cottonwood Poplar, Meadow Willow, Sumac and Gray Dogwood.

Joanne's notes about the day's activities were: We were also lucky enough to watch a female Wood Duck fly into one of our houses. We also found what I am sure is the nest of the Red-tailed Hawks that have been regulars here. They (the Field Naturalists) really liked the scenic old railway arched tunnel that the locals here call Snake Tunnel. It is an old limestone arched tunnel over a stream. Bill Langlois took a lot of pictures of this. It was a great day!

Many thanks to the Goggin's for hosting this excursion. We hope to return as the Goggin's wish more help with tree identification within their woodlot.

Summer Wings: Butterfly Observations at Point Pelee National Park

by Betty Learmouth

Fifteen Essex County Field Naturalists' Club members eager to learn more about Point Pelee National Park's butterfly population joined naturalist Alan Wormington on June 20, 1999. This excursion has been lead for several years by Alan, with the increasing numbers of attendees indicating the growing popularity of butterfly watching. Alan always has an interesting programme planned, with a special emphasis upon identification. Before heading out to the observe the

Park's butterflies, we joined Alan in the Visitor Centre's programme theatre where we enjoyed a wonderful selection of butterfly portraits by photographer Jim Flynn. Alan's comments during the slides gave us more insight into identification and the natural history of these colourful insects.



Massing of Monarchs at the Point's Tip is well known but the phenomenon is erratic and unpredictable. During clear but cool weather, the Monarchs will "clump up." Temperatures may be 70°F during the day, but dip to 45 F at night.

Alan feels the phenomenon

is very complicated with strong southerly winds slowing the butterflies, while north winds facilitate flight.

A large black dot on a vein of each hindwing identifies male Monarchs while the female Monarchs have wider veins, with no black dot. The female Monarchs' orange colour appears slightly different from male colouration.

There is no relationship between the Viceroy and the Monarch, the Viceroy a smaller butterfly and a less strong flyer. The Red-spotted Purple is closely related to the Viceroy. Hybridization may take place between these two species on very rare occasions although not yet recorded at Point Pelee.

Close-up photographs of a Tiger Swallowtail's hind wings allowed us to see individual scales on the wings. Alan explained that each scale was reflecting a particular light; for instance, blue scales were reflecting blue light, yellow scales yellow light. We were not seeing pigment but reflected light.

The spectacular Giant Swallowtail is common in Point Pelee National Park. Spotted Knapweed, growing along the Park's West Beach, is fantastic for nectar, attracting this species and others from now until November.

Swallowtail butterflies that are black in colour embrace three or four species, with identification difficult. To be certain of identification, a very good look is required. Among the black swallowtails are Pipevine Swallowtail, Black Swallowtail, Spicebush Swallowtail, and Tiger Swallowtail. The female Tiger Swallowtail may have normal colouration or appear as a black form. Female swallowtails seem to be naturally scarcer, hiding from the males. Certain swallowtail species are attracted to wet mud, such as the Giant

Swallowtail and the Spicebush Swallowtail.

One slide clearly showed the identification mark on the underside of the Question Mark's hind wing, a small silver comma with a dot beneath. There are two seasonal forms of this butterfly, the summer form with its dark upper hindwing and a later, paler form flying in the fall.

Alan remarked that the Milbert's Tortoise-shell is a rare northern butterfly sometimes seen at Point Pelee National Park. The Red Admiral, American Painted-Lady, and Painted-Lady come into our area as a southern immigrants, but they do not over winter. Another southern immigrant is the Buckeye with its astonishing eye spots. This species arrives in mid June, flying until October. Alan recalled that this species went missing only two years during the past two decades. The earliest known sighting was on May 20, 1998.

Bronze Coppers, a tiny butterfly the size of a dime, may be found in marsh areas and ditches. Another dime-sized butterfly is the Eastern Tailed-Blue. A tiny blue butterfly abundant everywhere is the Summer Azure, with its flying time starting in early June and continuing until early October. The Spring Azure is an uncommon butterfly at Point Pelee, observed from the middle of April until early May.

The Olive Hairstreak is another dime-sized butterfly that occurs in association with Red Cedar, the food host of its larvae. A population occurs within the Park and in the Kingston area. The Gray Hairstreak is another immigrant, with eye spots and tails which are mechanisms for escape.

The Snout Butterfly arrives yearly in June at Point Pelee, with its population apparently wiped out each year by our winter weather. During one exceptional year, Alan reported 800 individuals observed in one day. Possibly a few had survived the following winter (as chrysalids) since seven extremely fresh individuals were found in immaculate condition the following spring. The larvae of this butterfly species feed upon Hackberry.

The Hackberry Butterfly is a permanent resident species within Point Pelee National Park. This species will often land on observers' hands, looking for salt on exposed skin. Alan commented that we might see the Little Wood Satyr, a few of which were still about.

Orange and Common Sulphurs can be confusing. The females of these species may be orange, yellow or white. The Eight-spotted Forester, a common day-flying moth, is sometimes reported by butterfly watchers.

Equipment that butterfly watchers might wish to acquire are binoculars with close focus, a net, and good guides to butterflies. BioQuip has an excellent catalogue with reasonably priced supplies and books: BioQuip, 17803 LaSalle Avenue, Gardena, California 90248

Following Alan's slide presentation, discussion of

useful books and a chance to look at mounted specimens, our group headed towards West Beach. In the Visitors Centre's parking lot we found several European Skippers, which can be abundant at times. This species was introduced into Ontario at the turn of the century. Now it is found throughout North America. Other species observed in the parking lot were Cabbage White, a Monarch, a Comma (we were shown the small silver mark by Alan), and Orange Crescents, another species which can be abundant. Later, we found a Question Mark, a worn female, laying her eggs on Hackberry. Alan showed us the field mark on the lower underwing, a comma with a dot.

Everyone was fascinated by an Eyed Click Beetle, a common beetle species found in rotting logs where it feeds upon insects, but not often observed flying about. Paul Desjardins showed us how the beetle will lie quietly on its back for a few moments, then flip, with a click. This large elongated black-and-white beetle has two large eye-like spots on its thorax.

Along the West Beach trail we were able to observe some of Point Pelee's rare plants. The Eastern Prickly Pear Cactus was in full bloom, its yellow flowers attracting everyone's attention. Clumps of Hairy Puccoon were observed along the trail. Fragrant Sumac's small fuzzy red fruit was visible on the small shrubs which favour this hot dry site. Hop-tree seeds resembled many small wafers. This small tree is the food host of the Giant Swallowtail's larvae.

A variety of butterfly species were observed during our walk. Alan pointed to a Little Wood Satyr resting on a sumac leaf. Then a worn Olive Hairstreak was found resting on vegetation by the path. Alan commented that this species is a Point Pelee specialty, its larvae feeding on Red Cedar. This species is a permanent resident, with two broods each season. A Silver-spotted Skipper, known for its quick, strong flight, was observed.

Certainly the highlight of the morning's walk was a Compton Tortoise Shell, a northern species, common in Algonquin Park, for example, but uncommon here with few records for all of Ohio. Alan declared this individual to be the 14th record for this species in the Park. Despite its reputation as notoriously difficult to catch, Alan did manage (with a very deft backhand swing) to capture this lovely insect for everyone to admire. When released, the butterfly headed directly to the nearby woodland. Alan commented that this species likely over winters, in a similar manner to its close relative, the Mourning Cloak. The individual we observed was a product of this spring's egg laying. It would now live through the summer, over winter, and lay its eggs next spring.

Alan showed us several individual Orange Sulphurs, which are abundant in fall. If the insect has a

solid black outer wing border, the individual is a male. Females may appear as orange, yellow or white, but the borders of the females' wings are spotted. We were able to observe a worn month-old female laying her eggs on tall white sweet clover.

Alan netted and later released a female Tiger Swallowtail, a dark individual which retained faint stripes on the wing. Another sighting was of a Snout Butterfly, resembling a dried leaf as it perched on nearby vegetation. Leaving the West Beach Trail, we hiked to the Sparrow Field, where we knew Common Milkweed would be attracting a variety of butterfly species.

We were not disappointed as butterflies were swirling above the milkweed. Standing in the cool shade of a large Red Cedar, we observed Great Spangled Fritillaries, pugnacious Silver-spotted Skippers, Monarchs, Orange Sulphurs, Cabbage Whites, an American Painted-Lady, a Mourning Cloak, and a single Nessus Sphinx moth.

Spot-winged Dragonflies and Black Saddlebags flew overhead in a blue sky, while a few birds passed by including a Turkey Vulture, a Black Tern, Northern Oriole and Blue Jay.

Butterfly watching at Point Pelee has been excellent over the last few weeks. Alan reported that a Northern Hairstreak was observed June 14, 1999 by Henrietta O'Neill, a rare southern species, now called Southern Hairstreak. The northern subspecies ("Northern Hairstreak") was described from a specimen collected in 1868 at Port Stanley, Ontario, whereupon it received the word Ontario in its Latin name. The type specimen still resides in the Canadian National Collection in Ottawa, but the species was not recorded again in Ontario until found at Point Pelee in 1999, 131 years later!

Another southern species, a White-M Hairstreak was found on June 18, 1999 by Barb Casier, the fifth record for this species in Canada, its normal range southeast United States.

We gathered at Paula's Fish Place Restaurant, for lunch after a most enjoyable morning of butterfly watching. Everyone expressed their appreciation to Alan for organizing the morning's workshop.

Useful references:

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- Layberry, Ross A et al. The Butterflies of Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Mitchell, R. T. and H. S. Zim. Butterflies and Moths. New York: Golden Press, 1987.

Nielsen, Mogens C. *Michigan Butterflies and Skippers*. East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1999.

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Leamington, ON: Ontario Natural History Press, 1998.

Belle Isle Nature Walk

by Betty Learmouth

On June 26, 1999, several ECFNC members crossed the Detroit River to join a Saturday morning excursion planned by the Michigan Botanical Society, lead by Belle Isle Senior Naturalist Suzan Campbell. When Suzan is not involved with her own Nature Centre's activities, Suzan may often be found on Tuesday afternoons involved with the Friends of Ojibway Prairie as the Friends plant, gather or clean prairie seeds at the Ojibway Nature Centre.

As we drove up to Belle Isle's Nature Centre's (just a fifteen minute drive from the Windsor Tunnel to the north end of Belle Isle), we found fifteen volunteers from the Commerce Township Target store busily transplanting aquatic vegetation to the wetland under restoration in front of the Nature Centre's. June 26, 1999, had been declared Water Works Day, a day to celebrate and improve the rivers and wetlands around the United States.

After admiring the wetland restoration, we enjoyed the Nature Centre's prairie restoration that Suzan, her staff and volunteers have lovingly cultivated over the last few years. The prairie restoration, behind a cedar log fence, is a delightful mix of prairie plant species, including Butterfly Milkweed, Wild Bergamot, Thimbleweed, Coreopsis, Dark-eyed Susan, Stiff-leaved Goldenrod, and Tall Ironweed. The plants are arranged in lavish groupings, taller plants at the back, with some species such as Purple Milkweed tucked in around the plant groupings. This truly wonderful garden will surely inspire Detroit's gardeners to embark upon backyard prairie restorations.

For our guided walk, we drove to a parking area adjacent to the Belle Isle woodland. Park architect Frederick Olmsted's design for Belle Isle included this woodland as part of the island's overall plan. Trees have never been cut in this area. Despite Belle Isle's popularity, the woodland trails are uncrowded. We met one other person, a cyclist, as we ambled about the shaded walkways, which were completely free of mosquitoes, one happy consequence of our early summer drought.

We noted White Avens, Virginia Creeper, Early Meadow-rue, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, and Poison Ivy beside the pathway. By the first bridge, adjacent to a man

made channel, Suzan showed us a Swamp White Oak/Chinquapin Oak hybrid which will turn bright yellow in the fall. This is the tree that ECFNC President Tom Hurst looked at last year during the ECFNC August excursion and recognized as a hybrid. Nearby Suzan called our attention to a small tree, likely a Pumpkin Ash, but, as Suzan remarked, not quite fully certified by Michigan botanist Dr. Wagner. Two Shumard Oaks stood together, their shade leaves not so deeply lobed as leaves exposed to full sunlight in the trees' upper portions.

Within these damp woods, Spicebush is common, lining the edges of the paths. Suzan said the woodland is especially pretty in the spring when these shrubs are in bloom. Now the fruit of this shrub species was green, but will turn red, then black as it dries. Botanist Donna Kuchapsky remarked that during the Civil War, fruit from this shrub was used to give added flavour to foods. Rough-leaved Dogwood was still in bloom in areas of shade. This dogwood is found in a narrow corridor along the Detroit River. Snowberry was spotted, but was felt to have been introduced to the area perhaps sixty or seventy years ago, possibly from Europe.

An interesting find was Squawroot, a parasitic of tree roots, especially oak trees. The brown, scaly stalk resembled a slender pine cone, with round yellow fruit protruding from the upper portion of many of the stalks.

A huge Burr Oak, with a Swamp White Oak and a hybrid Burr Oak/ Swamp White Oak were shown to us by Suzan. These trees had long baffled biologists at the Belle Isle Nature Center. Suzan said that through her work with leaf print T-shirts and young naturalists, Suzan had considerable time to think about these trees and their identities. Gerry Waldron's *The Tree Book*, with its description of local trees and communities in Essex County, has been described by Suzan as invaluable, helping to make sense of Belle Isle's tree community.

Suzan led us to the largest Shumard Oak known in Michigan or Ontario, this enormous tree towering over us. This giant, estimated to be over 200 years old, appeared to be in good health. Buttresses protruded from the base of its huge trunk. Nearby Suzan showed us a grove of towering Pumpkin Ash.

The seeds of this ash species were noted to be big and broad, nearly one centimetre wide. The leaf is long and narrow, with a long petiole. Confirmation was received on December 7, 1998 from Michigan botanist Dr.

Wagner that these trees were Michigan's third locality for this species.

Biologists know of Belle Isle's historical flora, recorded in *The Flora of Detroit*, by Oliver Farwell, an early botanist, who worked for Parke Davis. His collection of plant specimens is housed at the Cranbrook Institute of Science, but is not arranged by locality, much

to the dismay of Belle Isle biologists. The Flora of Detroit gives some interesting insights into the Belle Isle flora one hundred years ago. Spicebush appeared to be rare, but Wahoo was common. European Fallow Deer were introduced this century to Belle Isle, a probable cause in species abundance reversal as Spicebush is now common, Wahoo rare. Yellow Trout Lily was common according to The Flora of Detroit, now the White Trout Lily is common.

Other plants along the trails were Prickly Ash, the alien Dame's Rocket which was pulled, grape leaves heavily infested with galls, Wild Garlic with its seed set, Golden Alexander, and various sedges and rushes. We noted Blue-Beech in several location along the channels, its fruit hanging in clusters.

Various dragonfly species were seen over the Nature Centre's wetland and island channels, including Spot-winged Glider, Black Saddlebags, Twelve-spotted Dragonfly, Eastern Amberwing, Common Whitetail, Eastern Pondhawk, Prince Baskettail, Common Darner, Widow Skimmer, and Blue Dasher. Everyone had good views of an Appalachian Eyed-brown butterfly as it rested on vegetation beside the trail. A large wasp devouring a Mayfly was an unusual observance, the wasp casting its victim's wings and abdomen aside, feeding only on the thorax. Mammals observed were a single Chipmunk and several European Fallow Deer. We noted a turtle's nest which had been predated, the shells scattered by the pathway.

Visitor who wish to sample Belle Isle's natural delights are advised to drop into the Nature Centre's for maps and specific directions to Belle Isle's uncommon tree species. Many thanks to Suzan Campbell for sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm of Belle Isle's woodlands with us.

Harrow Research Station's Eastern Bluebirds

by Betty Learmouth

Eleven Eastern Bluebird enthusiasts joined ECFNC Eastern Bluebird Chairperson Don Bissonette for an early evening walk on June 27, 1999 to observe Eastern Bluebirds on the Harrow Research Station's property adjacent to the Chrysler Canada Greenway. We drove to the site, an area devoted to fruit and grain crops. Don first showed us a single nesting box, located on a T-bar post next to the fence line, but in an open area facing a young orchard which provides a variety of perches. This type of set-up seems to discourage House Sparrows which prefer to have some dense areas of vegetation nearby into which they can move. This single box had been moved twice this spring, attracting Tree

Swallows, followed by Eastern Bluebirds which, on the evening of our visit, were in the process of raising two young. Don opened the box, allowing a glimpse of the babies. The nest itself was particularly large, resembling a tidy tornado constructed of fine grasses. As we prepared to leave, the adult Eastern Bluebirds flew in, perching together on the wire fence.

Further down the fence, two nesting boxes had been placed together, or "paired." In late March, Don had checked these boxes prior to the nesting season. The roof of one box was replaced, as a crack had developed which allowed moisture into the box. Eastern Bluebirds building a nest on the ridge (an esker) to the east, came to watch, then sat on the repaired box. These birds abandoned their partially constructed nest in the ridge box, returning to the repaired box which Don felt offered a better habitat with the young orchard nearby. Five eggs were laid, four hatched, but all young were later found dead. Orchard spraying may have contributed to the loss.

Eastern Bluebirds are not particularly aggressive, causing some monitors to pair boxes with Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds nesting side by side. These particular paired boxes had seen a fair amount of activity this spring. Tree Swallows had abandoned a box when House Sparrows moved in. House Wrens arrived, then Tree Swallows moved back.

When the incubating female Tree Swallow left the nest, Don opened the nest, revealing the usual white hens feathers adorning the nest. Six tiny House Wrens could be seen in the other box. As we walked away, both Tree Swallow and House Wren parents returned to the boxes.

Don monitors his nesting boxes frequently, at least twice a week, but no more than five days apart. Don remarked the birds know him, not showing apprehension as he monitors the boxes. The boxes on the trail are either the upright or Peterson's style. Don feels that habitat is ideal for Eastern Bluebirds on this property, a woodlot nearby, good perches offered by the young orchard and a grassy area offering insects. One or two day old Eastern Bluebirds are fed soft foods such as slugs, leafhoppers and spiders. Grasshoppers are Eastern Bluebird's preferred food.

We looked at a new box which Don had placed this season along the fence line, adjacent to a wheat field. House Sparrows had tried to nest in it this year, perhaps it will attract Eastern Bluebirds next year. We noted that the boxes faced east or to the south. Wood one inch thick is used to construct the nesting boxes, as such construction seems to provide more protection, encouraging earlier nesting and second broods. Drilled air ventilation holes seem to discourage nest box invasion by hornets.

Leaving the Eastern Bluebird trail, we stepped on to the Chrysler Canada Greenway. A number of plants were recorded including Rough-fruited Cinquefoil, Yellow Goat's-beard, Poison Ivy, Purple Vetch, Butterfly-weed, Bouncing Bet, Bladder Campion, Wild Bergamot, Hoary Alyssum, Lady's Thumb, Tall Coreopsis, and Tumble Mustard. Sassafras trees formed a thicket on the Greenway's south side, Black Walnut on the north side with Common Elderberry in bloom. We found a gall on a Black Walnut leaf vein, a reddish velvety pile, caused by a mite.

With all those inquiring naturalists, within a short time we found a variety of beetles which Paul Desjardins assisted us to identify. A large red and black beetle found on Butterfly-weed was identified as a female Swamp Milkweed Leaf Beetle. The lack of spurs on the tibia indicated this insect to be female. A Dogbane Leaf Beetle was observed, a beetle that comes out of the ground at this time of year. A small yellow and black beetle was thought to be a Four-lined Plant Bug. Two fuzzy yellow caterpillars were found, tentatively identified as Yellow Woolly Bear.

Many thanks to Don for a pleasant and informative evening on the Harrow Research Station's Eastern Bluebird trail. The walk along the Chrysler Canada Greenway with its plants, trees and variety of insects was an added bonus to the evening's walk. Driving homeward, scores of Fireflies were seen in the ditches along County Road 20.

Rural Lambton Stewartship Network Tallgrass Prairie Restoration Tour

by Betty Learmouth

Tallgrass prairie enthusiasts from throughout Southwestern Ontario gathered on July 17, 1999 in Lambton County for a tour of four selected prairie restoration sites, an event publicized by the Ontario Tallgrass Prairie and Savanna Association, one of a series of events known as "Another Prairie Summer '99." Tallgrass Prairie Specialist Kim Delaney was tour leader assisted by Rural Lambton Stewartship Network (RLSN) staff members Lauren Harris and Ron Gould.

RLSN staff members are dedicated to the restoration of tallgrass prairie in Lambton County, a globally imperiled ecosystem and one of the most endangered ecosystems in Canada. In southern Ontario, tallgrass prairie once covered 1000 km², with less than



three percent remaining. Tallgrass prairies provide habitat for a huge number of wildlife species, including many that are officially designated as rare at the global, national or provincial level.

We met at MacDonald Park north of Wallaceburg on the St. Clair Parkway, where a restoration project has enhanced fish spawning and wildlife habitat along the Chanel Ecarte and two large canals, a watercourse which possesses areas of highly developed shoreline. Tallgrass prairie plant plugs were planted in the three acre area between the canals and the channel. This was done to enhance the waterfowl nesting habitat as well as provide habitat for other riparian and prairie species of wildlife which require this type of native vegetation cover.

The second restoration site visited was on Stag Island, a heavily developed residential island, opposite Corunna in the St. Clair River. The tallgrass prairie restoration project is located on a forty acre site at the island's southern tip which was created by river dredging and dumping of tailings by the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers approximately thirty to forty years ago. Silt runoff from the compacted dredge material has been a concern. Testing has determined soil pH as 7, while soil

organics were judged to be 2 percent, well below a poor rating of 4 percent. RLSN were informed that little would grow on the site. Staff was told that twenty years ago attempts were made to revegetate the site with non native shrubs such as high bush cranberry. Most of these plantings have died off.

Nevertheless, RLSN staff set out to prepare the site for prairie plant planting. A bulldozer and root-rake system removed existing vegetation, then planting of prairie plant plugs was undertaken. Prairie plant plugs are one inch in circumference, placed in the soil by specialized machinery available from R J's in Blenheim. Twenty acres on the site were planted, using 200,000 native prairie plant plugs representing thirty-eight prairie species, with plant species approximately fifty percent each of grasses and flowering prairie plants. The planting was done in rows, with adjustments to the machinery allowing the prairie plant plugs to be placed 30, 40 or 60 centimetres apart. A water tank on the machinery provided one and one half cup of water per plant.

Overall RLSN staff are pleased with the Stag Island project. Natural habitat is being restored which will reduce surface erosion, thereby improving nearby aquatic habitat for fish. Certainly the prairie plant plugs have suffered from the shock of transfer from the greenhouse into the Stag Island soil conditions. Despite difficult soil conditions, Kim commented that Big Blue Stem and Little Blue Stem are doing well. We noted Gray-headed Coneflower was blooming everywhere on the site, despite growing on "horrible" gravel. Stiff Goldenrod has been successful although Gray Goldenrod has not done well, nor have the Black-eyed Susan's which have disappeared. Staff would like to undertake seeding between the rows to "fill in" exposed soil. Although "prettiness" is a low priority on this site, we enjoyed observing various prairie plant species, while remarking upon their success, such as Dense Blazing-star's tall mauve spikes, a single blooming Obedience Plant, and a Silver-spotted Skipper nectaring on Wild Bergamot.

No weed control has been undertaken, although Black Locust is invading the site. Canada Thistle, Sweet White Clover and Queen Anne's Lace are other species that will need control. Plant debris will have accumulated by about 2001, with a burn planned yearly thereafter.

The Marthaville Wildlife Management site was the

third area visited. This site is well used by the local community as trails lead through the area near a small wetland, a woodlot and a recently retired gravel pit, the site of the tallgrass prairie restoration. Much community discussion was undertaken regarding the site's use. Now a ten acre tallgrass prairie restoration has become a demonstration site for the rehabilitation of a retired gravel pit. With other pits in the area, this site demonstrates how natural habitat may be restored to difficult areas. Although summer drought had wilted the prairie plants including Flowering Spurge, Hairy and Smooth Beardtongue, we could see the 1998 plantings had established well on the site. With a little rain, the plants would be refreshed. One tour participant suggested the native shrub American Hazel could be planted on the site. The invasive plant on this site appeared to be Phragmites.

Moore Wildlife Management Area was the afternoon's final site visit, a four hundred and fifty acre property. This property (owned by the local Conservation Authority) is made up of undulating gullies with upland habitat and agricultural fields along creek tributaries surrounded by dense hawthorn growth. Pockets of hawthorn shrub were removed, creating small openings which were drill seeded with prairie plant seeds, similar to planting corn or soybeans with augers pulling the seed down into the soil. Seed planted in 1998 did not germinate immediately, causing concern to staff. Luckily August rains resulted in germination and a "good catch" on the clay soil. The ratio of seeds planted was fifty fifty for grass and flowering prairie species. The problem species on this site is Queen Anne's Lace which is everywhere. Staff and tour participants debated the merits of mowing, grazing (cattle do not graze on this plant but sheep will) and pulling to deal with this invasive species. Moore Wildlife Management Area is a potential quail release site.

Driving south on Highway 40, we stopped to admire a prairie restoration project which has been undertaken by members of the Sydenham Field Naturalists. Prairie plants are doing well on an elongated berm along the road's shoulder. Many thanks to Kim Delaney and RLSN staff who planned this informative excursion to tallgrass prairie restoration sites about Lambton County. We hope that we will have an opportunity to revisit these sites during another prairie summer to follow their progress.



Discoveries Made by the ECFNC Eastern Bluebird Committee

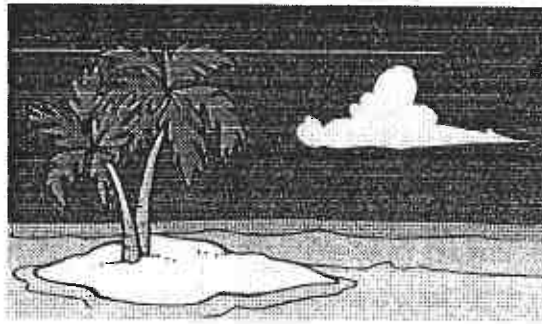
by Don Bissonnette

1. The biggest problem for local Eastern Bluebirds is the English Sparrow and loss of habitat.
2. Eastern Bluebirds begin nesting earlier than most passerines. Our first eggs are laid each year, between April 5th and 10th.
3. Eastern Bluebirds over winter in Essex County. Their numbers depend on the severity of the weather.
4. Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows prefer bird houses made with 1" thick wood, over houses made with 1/2" or 3/4" thick wood.
5. Eastern Bluebirds stay close to pastures in March. Livestock droppings harbour insects, which Eastern Bluebirds feed upon.
6. Eastern Bluebirds love the tree branch design nesting box. Unfortunately, so do the English Sparrows.
7. Habitats with short grass are preferred to habitats with long grass by Eastern Bluebirds. Eastern Bluebirds are hesitant to hunt in tall grass.
8. Hornets are attracted to bird houses with slotted ventilation. Hornets are less attracted to houses with 3/16" ventilation holes.
9. Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds prefer an oval entrance to a round entrance.
10. English Sparrows are attracted to houses close to "hiding places" such as hedges, dense shrubs, or heavy vines. Houses placed 40 feet or more from hiding places are more likely to be taken by Eastern Bluebirds or Tree Swallows than House Sparrows.
11. English Sparrows will kill nestling Eastern Bluebirds at any age.
12. Stained bird houses will attract more birds than unstained houses. They also weather better.
13. Bird houses washed out each fall or early winter are much more desirable to our native birds. Washing also kills mites and prevents the houses from rotting.
14. Eastern Bluebirds have a long nesting season. Each year we have nests that fledge in late August or early September.
15. Unlike other birds, monitoring does not upset Eastern Bluebirds or Tree Swallows if it is done correctly. The birds simply grow accustomed to it.

EcoAction 2000 Projects Need Your Assistance

N.H.R.P. has accepted the challenge of two tree planting projects on private properties for this fall. Funding for the projects is through EcoAction 2000. Coordinators for the tree planting projects are E.C.F.N.C. members Nancy Pancheson and Patricia Rhoads. Plans are to undertake tree plantings on Saturdays starting September 11 with planting to continue into October. School groups will likely assist through the week on these projects.

Highlights Island's Alvar



from Pelee Stone Road Complex

Following are some of this season's highlights from Pelee Island's Stone Road Alvar Complex as reported in the alvar's own nature newsletter, "On the Alvar."

Stone Road Alvar Complex Spring Floral Display

Rich woodlands on the Federation of Ontario Naturalists property have had two spectacular floral displays this spring. On April 8, 1999, the Bloodroot was in full flower, just south of the old schoolhouse on Stone Road. It was an unexpected delight to see dozens of showy white blossoms at such an early date. By April 15, 1999 only a few plants were still in bloom.

Hundreds of Dutchman's-breeches were blooming April 15, 1999 on a slightly elevated portion of the rich woodlands, north of the schoolhouse. Within five days this display will have ended. At Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve, naturalist Ethan Meleg reported the Dutchman's-breeches display to be outstanding. Here the Dutchman's-breeches are blooming in profusion over the lakeside dunes at the north of the Nature Reserve, just at the park road's edge.

Earth Day 1999

Earth Day 1999 at the City of Windsor's Ojibway Nature Centre will be remembered as a contrast to Earth Day 1998, a day of cold temperatures, rain and winds. Despite memorable adverse conditions, one thousand persons turned out to Earth Day 1998. Earth Day, April 25, 1999 weather was perfect! Spectators arrived before the event's official noon hour opening. Attendance at the event was excellent, with displays prepared by a number of environment groups, including Canada Trust's Friends of the Environment Foundation, the Citizens Environment Alliance, the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Ford Motor Company of Canada Ltd., the International Joint Commission, the Friends of Ojibway Prairie, Point Pelee National Park, the Environmental Committee of CAW, Local 444, the ECFNC's Natural Habitat Restoration Program with an attractive display of native plants and shrubs, and others. Entertainment, including the Walpole Island First Nation dancers, was enjoyed by an appreciative audience.

Essex County Field Naturalists' Club (ECFNC) members were anxious for a fine day and lots of visitors as this year's Earthday was to be the official announcement to the community that the ECFNC and The Nature Conservancy of Canada are working together to acquire and protect a sixty acre natural area on Pelee Island's Stone Road Alvar Complex. The ECFNC Heritage Fund Committee members had prepared a large display board, highlighting alvars, the plant communities on the 60 acre natural area, and illustrated with photographs of the wildlife protected by the area's natural habitat. This board was set up on a display table with a bucket raffle arranged on the table. Raffle tickets were sold, with \$86.75 raised from the nature oriented book and video raffle. Many thanks to those who supported our raffle.

Numerous ECFNC members volunteered to bake and look after the bake table sale, which was set up in Ojibway Nature Centre's picnic shelter, along with several other food tables. Many thanks to all those who assisted with the bake sale and those who supported the sale, which was a great success, as not a cookie was left by 4:00 p.m. closing time. The sale raised \$392.70 towards the Pelee Island property purchase price.

Media Coverage

Our local media has been very kind, providing coverage of our project and our fund raising efforts. The Windsor Star provided good coverage along with a listing of Earth Day events on April 16, 1999. Barbara Peacock, hostess of CBC's afternoon program, Across Town, interviewed terrestrial biologist James Kamstra on April 22, 1999, the official Earth Day date. James and his associates undertook a study of the Stone Road Alvar Complex during

summer 1988 which was published in 1995 by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources as part of a natural area study entitled A Life Science Inventory and Evaluation of Six Natural Areas in the Erie Islands (Ontario). James explained that "alvar" is a Swedish term referring to areas where certain plants have adapted to shallow soils over limestone. Unusual plants are found in such areas. In particular, the Stone Road Alvar Complex has plants that would be expected in more southerly locations such as limestone glades in Kentucky and Tennessee. Some fifty plant species have been identified as provincially rare from this area such as the Downy Wood-mint and Wild Hyacinth which are only found here in all of Canada. This habitat also protects a variety of endangered animals including snakes and birds.

Pelee Island Spring Floral Displays

"Spring plant ephemerals" are blooming now in all of Pelee Island's natural areas. The term refers to those plants that bloom in our woodland areas before the woodland trees have produced heavy foliage. Some ephemerals are very well known, such as Dutchman's-breeches, especially that species' population at Pelee Island's Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve. This lovely plant appears to be very much at home there, with thousands of plants covering the sandy forest floor of Fish Point's Carolinian forest. White Trillium bloomed in profusion this year at Fish Point, enjoyed by visitors on April 27, 1999. On the Stone Road Alvar Complex, the spring floral display has been

spectacular in the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (FON) Stone Road Nature Reserve with Bloodroot's huge white blossoms at peak flowering on April 8, followed by a carpet of Dutchman's-breeches at its best on April 15, 1999. Visitors walking the FON's nature trail on April 21, 1999, were delighted to view a well known "sun flower of spring", the Yellow Trout-lily, sometimes known Adder's-tongue. To their great delight, the visitors were treated to a fine display of White Trout-lily, a rare species in Essex County, found at only a few locations within the County.

Floral displays still to be enjoyed on the Stone Road Alvar Complex are Solomon's-seal, False Solomon's-seal, and Starry False Solomon's-seal. Wild Geranium's pink blossoms will brighten forest floor's later in May along with Blue Phlox which is just beginning its bloom along Stone Road's edge. Jack-in-the-pulpit can be found in rich woods such as the wet areas of the Red Cedar Savannah adjacent to East West Road.

Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Working for Wilderness Program

Ten enthusiastic Working for Wilderness volunteers, all from communities within Ontario, accompanied by two leaders and a program supervisor, arrived on Pelee Island, May 6, 1999, to continue trail work on the Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Stone Road Nature Reserve. Trail work began last September 1998 after the trail was initially mapped during a two day planning session in July 1998.

Volunteers registered for the working holiday from May 6 through May 9, 1999. Trail work was to be combined with enjoying various natural areas and attractions on Pelee Island. Prior to beginning work on May 6, the group enjoyed a walk on the alvar.

All trail work was done by hand. Turf from the marked trail sections was lifted piece by piece, then gravel was carefully placed into each excavated section. Work was undertaken for several hours each day, with the group planning other activities such as a visit to the Pelee Island Winery and walks in other nature reserves.

Bucket Raffle Draw

Congratulations to the winners of the Stone Road Alvar Complex bucket draw which took place on June 9, 1999 at the ECFNC June Monthly Members Meeting:

- Lois Menard, LaSalle, ON: Collins Bird Guide: a New Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe (Book)
- Pam McCurdy, Kingston, ON: A Hiking Guide to Newfoundland (Book)
- H. Burt, LaSalle, ON: Birding Nova Scotia (Book)
- Linda Baker, Kingston, ON: Nature in Vancouver (Book)
- Angie Minulty, Hamilton, ON: Advance Birding (Book)
- J. Hazen, Windsor, ON: Plants and Flowers of Newfoundland (Book)
- Ian Fisher, Windsor, ON: Birds of the Backyard (Video)
- Cecile Bleasby, Windsor, ON: Naturescaping : a Landscape Alternative (Video)
- Mary Ramotar, Guelph, ON: How to Start Watching Birds (Video)
- Dan Bissonnette, McGregor, ON: Attracting Birds to Your Backyard (Video)
- Maigda Sirshentrin, Windsor, ON: Spring and Summer Songbirds of the Backyard (Video)
- Craig Potter, Guelph, ON: Owls Up Close (Video)
- Julie Thibert, Windsor, ON: Butterflies Through Binoculars: the East (Book)

Garlic Mustard On the Alvar

Pelee Island's natural areas have been invaded by an exotic plant species, Garlic Mustard, which is presently blooming. This slender plant stands 1 to 3 feet high, with somewhat triangular or heart-shaped, sharply toothed leaves on stalks along the central stem. Its central stem is topped with small white flowers. When the plant is handled during its removal, an odour of garlic is noticeable.

Volunteers from the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club and Working for Wilderness spent several hours on May 6 and 7, 1999, hand pulling Garlic Mustard from areas adjacent to the new Stone Road Nature Reserve trail. During July 1998, the plant had been noted in several areas, with a suggestion made that the local field naturalists could monitor and remove this invasive plant.

The plant is easily removed at this time of year with the root coming away intact from the soil. The plant's blooms are readily spotted, even when a plant is standing alone. It is important to prevent the proliferation of this plant as it produces quantities of seeds which germinate easily, increasing the numbers of plants greatly in any area in a short time span.

Volunteers were able to remove five bags of this invasive species. It is likely that the monitoring and pulling will need to continue on a yearly basis to ensure the plant does not establish itself. Garlic Mustard was found to be growing in thickets of Prickly Ash on exposed areas of soil beneath the leaf litter, and around the base of trees, again on exposed soil.

Spring Migration Bird Sightings, East West and Stone Roads, May 6 - 7, 1999

Birders from Ontario, Michigan and Illinois were noted in all areas of Pelee Island on May 6 and 7, 1999. Birding was reported to be good at Fish Point Provincial Reserve during the evening of May 6 with flocks of warblers observed foraging along McCormick Road, the edges of Peregrine Pond, and the Lake Erie shoreline. Working for Wilderness Volunteers reported good bird activity at Lighthouse Point on the morning of May 7, 1999.

A number of species were noted on the sixty acre property at the corner of East West and Stone Roads over these two days, including:

Great Blue Heron - Several seen flying over area

Turkey Vulture - At least five seen in the area, attracted by road kill

Sharp-shinned Hawk - A single bird observed hunting over abandoned field.

Northern Harrier - A female glided north along Stone Road, continuing over woodlands to the north.

Ring-necked Pheasant - One male was observed along the wooded edge of East West Road.

Downy Woodpecker - Observed within woodland, East West Road.

Eastern Kingbird - Seen perched near a flowering tree, abandoned field.

Empidonax flycatcher - Several observed about abandoned field.

Barn Swallow - Always several above abandoned field.

Purple Martin - Several were seen soaring above the abandoned field.

Gray Catbird - Several were seen in the abandoned field's dogwood thickets.

Brown Thrasher - A pair were observed moving about the edge of the abandoned field.

American Robin - Observed everywhere.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet - Foraging along woodland edge, East West Road.

Swainson's Thrush - Observed along the woodland edge of East West Road.

Black-and-white Warbler - Observed along the woodland edge of East West Road.

Yellow Warbler - Observed along the woodland edge of East West Road.

Magnolia Warbler - Observed along the woodland edge of East West Road.

Yellow-rumped Warbler - Observed within woodland on East West Road, foraging about windfall.

Black-throated Green Warbler - Observed within woodland on East West Road, foraging about windfall.

Blackburnian Warbler - Foraging in trees adjacent to abandoned field.

Wilson's Warbler - Foraging along woodland edge, East West Road, an early date for this species.

Red-winged Blackbird - Observed about abandoned field.

Orchard Oriole - Heard singing, then flew from woodland edge, across abandoned field.

Northern Oriole - Attracted to the flowering trees around abandoned field edges.

Common Grackle - Observed about abandoned field.

Northern Cardinal - Observed about the wooded area.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak - Male observed feeding in tree at abandoned field edge.
 Indigo Bunting - A pair seen along the abandoned field edge.
 American Goldfinch - Observed small flocks above abandoned field and woodland.
 Chipping Sparrow - Observed on lawns of properties opposite woodland edge.
 White-crowned Sparrow - Observed along woodland edge of East West Road.

Generous Donations Directed to the Protection of the Stone Road Alvar Complex

Essex County Field Naturalists have been involved in a variety of activities during May and June 1999 which have resulted in over \$10,000 raised in donations which will be placed towards the Stone Road Alvar property's acquisition and protection, in addition to an already pledged donation of nearly \$40,000. Generous donations have been received from individuals as well as groups and organizations. The Kingsville Horticultural Society; the Essex Master Gardeners; Mr. Fiorino's Grade Five Class at St. John the Baptist School in Belle River; the United Church

Women of Emmanuel United Church, Lincoln Road, Windsor; Pelee Wings Nature Store; the Greater Windsor Horticultural Society, and The McBride Foundation, Hamilton, Ontario have all made generous and much appreciated donations.

Mr. C.D. McCallum, President of The McBride Foundation wrote: I was on the Federation of Ontario Naturalists Board when their Pelee Island property was acquired (1984) and I played a role in assuring its purchase then. I am pleased that you are further protecting the area.

Stone Road Alvar Complex Butterfly Sightings, June 30, 1999

Summer butterflies were observed flying about Stone Road on June 30, 1999, a warm sunny day with little wind. Several Hackberry Butterflies flew above the unpaved road, resting on damp earth at the road's edge, the observer's shoulder, and on tree trunks. Two Great Spangled Fritillaries flew together around a sunny patch of Common Milkweed on the Federation of Ontario Naturalists' property. Both Fritillaries had survived bird attacks, as chunks of their hind wings were missing, while a hole had been punctured in the forewing of one individual. Cabbage Whites were common, nectaring on Common Milkweed, as well as blossoms along Stone Road's edge. One Red Admiral and Question Mark were observed, both appearing in immaculate condition, their colours brilliant.

Perhaps the day's luckiest sighting was a Giant Swallowtail larva. This caterpillar, resembling a mottled bird dropping, was found on the leaf of a small Hop-tree growing in a pathway of the abandoned field. The larva appeared to be a mature individual as described in the Peterson First Guide to Caterpillars in North America, basically brown with creamy markings including a white saddle in the middle. In the southeast Giant Swallowtail larvae feed on citrus plants, sometimes becoming a pest, earning the name Orange Dog. Pelee Island Heritage Centre Curator Ron Tiessen commented leaves of Hop-trees on his property in the past have been totally consumed by Giant Swallowtail larvae.

Restoration Efforts On the Alvar

Pelee Island's South Shore Road is the site of an on-going restoration project at John and Mary Celestino's summer cottage property. Several years ago the Celestino's placed a cedar rail fence beside their residence, with a decision made not to mow the area behind the fence, a part of a large expanse of lawn that consumed hours of time and energy to mow. With assistance from the Celestino's, the area has returned to its natural state, an open alvar community of Gray-headed Coneflowers (*Ratibida pinnata*). The Celestino's will enjoy this floral display for several more weeks. Eastern Prickly Pear Cactus is also thriving on this sandy, dry site. Recently two other Eastern Prickly Pear sites have become established nearby. An exotic, White-sweet Clover, invaded the area but has been completely removed by hand.

Sumac was invading the area behind the Celestino's home but through trial and error plus considerable patience, this invader has been pushed back. The Celestino's welcomed Tall Bellflower (*Campanula americana*) to this natural area this season, its spikes of blue blossoms to be enjoyed through the next few weeks.

Mary has noted that first year Gray-headed Coneflowers plants are perhaps eight to ten inches in height. In their second year, the plants grow to a height of three to five feet with multiple stems, setting their blossoms. This year Gray-headed Coneflower appears to be blooming several weeks earlier than noted other years.

Bald Eagles Over the Alvar

Naturalists John and Mary Celestino report that the two Bald Eagles nesting in a woodlot to the west of their

property are often seen flying back and forth. On July 10, 1999, in the early afternoon, a single adult was seen flying west overhead above the Celestino's property from Pelee Island's east shore towards the woodlot. The rich dark colour, contrasting white head and tail were seen well against a brilliant blue sky.

Marshall Field, St. Thomas, Ontario reports that a single eaglet was banded from this nesting site this spring, but not without considerable difficulty. The banding team was surprised to find the trunk of the white ash tree smothered in poison ivy vines. Climber Doug Baird had a thorough wash after the climb and fortunately was not affected

Snakes on the Alvar

At John and Mary Celestino's cottage, at least three snake species call this area home. If plywood boards (aka snake furniture) are picked up gently near the garden plot, the likelihood of finding a snake or two is high. On July 10, 1999, one board revealed a single Northern Brown Snake coiled underneath, while under the next board, a White-footed Mouse had constructed its nest. When John Celestino readjusted several plywood boards leaning against cider blocks, a medium sized melanistic Common Garter Snake moved quickly off into the Gray-headed Coneflower restoration site..

In a nearby shed, where wood is piled for the fireplace, a single large melanistic Common Garter Snake rested in the sunlight streaming through the woodshed's window. The garter snake lifted its head, "tested" the air with its tongue, its white chin visible. After a few moments it moved under some wood, only a part of its body still visible. Mary mentioned the entire wood pile was adjusted so the snakes could move freely behind the stacked wood.

The Celestino's newest snake occupant is "Waterboy," a four foot Eastern Fox Snake that hides around the property's buildings, including under the water storage tank. This snake has been implanted with a radio transmitter by the Eastern Fox Snake Recovery team. John Celestino reported that when he was working in the shed one day, rustling caused him to look upward. Overhead, in the rafters, "Waterboy" was moving through.

At 5:45 p.m. on July 10, 1999, members of the Eastern Fox Snake Recovery team were on Stone Road, monitoring for Eastern Fox Snakes. Team member Rob Willson reported that 21 Eastern Fox Snakes have been implanted with radio transmitters during the 1999 season. Three of the six artificial nesting sites prepared for the use of gravid Eastern Fox Snakes have been used for egg laying.

One Eastern Fox Snake, "Mary Lou," is presently on the Federation of Ontario Naturalists Nature Reserve alvar. This is the same snake that ranged widely last summer and fall over the ERCA property and onto Cooper's Road, finally choosing a hibernation site on the sixty acre property which is to be purchased through the efforts of The Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club.

Butterflies On the Alvar

Muddy patches near puddles along Stone Road and South Shore Road were attracting good numbers of Summer Azure butterflies and Cabbage Whites on July 10, 1999, the result of a mid week rain storm. Both Summer Azures and Cabbage Whites rose in blue and white clouds as bicyclists and vehicles passed through. When resting on the muddy surfaces, the butterflies resembled flotillas of tiny blue and white sailboats.

Other butterfly species observed were Red Admiral, two Tiger Swallowtails and a single Giant Swallowtail, Skipper species, and a single Monarch.

Conserving Great Lakes Alvars

Conserving Great Lake Alvars, the final technical report from the International Alvar Conservation Initiative is now available. Contact Heather Potter at The Nature Conservancy's Great Lakes Program (hpotter@tnc.org or 312/759-8017) or The Nature Conservancy, 8 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 2301, Chicago, Illinois 60603-3318. There may be a small charge to cover shipping costs, but the report itself is available free of charge. A report will be posted on the Conservancy's web page at <www.tnc.org/greatlakes> A full-colour booklet and poster for a broader public audience is currently under preparation by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, and should be available in a few months.

Middle Island Front Page News

Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) staff were "ecstatic" upon the closing of bidding at a July 28, 1999 auction in a Cleveland, Ohio hotel which saw the ownership of the 18.5 hectare Middle Island pass into Canadian hands after thirty years of American ownership.

Various plant communities are notable upon Middle Island. A mature Hackberry tree dominated forest is considered rare in Canada, as is a rich Black Maple-Hackberry forest which contains the provincially rare Blue Ash

and Kentucky Coffee-tree. Another significant rare vegetative community in Canada is the Hop-tree - Blue Ash - Chinquapin Oak forest. Thirty-four provincially and regionally rare plants have been found in the various plant communities.

Media representatives joined NCC staff and Environment Canada staff for a tour of Middle Island on July 21, 1999. Environment Canada Wildlife Biologist Chip Weseloh has been studying bird populations on the Lake Erie Islands for three decades with a special interest in the contaminants found within the eggs of Herring Gulls. Herring Gull populations have remained at about 1,000 nests over the last three years, with a previous census in 1984 finding just under 1,500 nests. Middle Island contains the majority of Herring Gull nests within Lake Erie. Studies of these nests have shown a gradual decline in the PCBs and DDE's within Herring Gull eggs from 1974 to 1998, approximately 15 ppm of PCB's and 1 ppm. of DDE's. Numbers of Double-crested Cormorant nests on Middle Island have grown to 3,500 nest sites from a very few recorded in 1987.

Project Grizzly

Many thanks to Teresa Austrin and Joe Parent for organizing and promoting the showing of Project Grizzly on Monday, August 2, 1999, at the Windsor Film Theatre. Windsor Film Theatre owners promoted this fund raising event (\$430.00 raised), with the National Film Board providing this award winning Canadian film without charge. The theatre was full with the audience enjoying the zany antics of a North Bay, Ontario resident intend upon a second rendezvous (hopefully risk free) with a Grizzly Bear in the Canadian Rockies.

ECFNC's Pelee Island Getaway

Forty-nine participants are set to enjoy a day on Pelee Island, through the kind sponsorship of Pelee Island Winery. Aboard the M.V. Jiimaan, the day's activities will kick off with an Island Trivia / Raffle prepared by our Pelee Island Getaway Entertainment Co-ordinators Juliet Renaud and Pauline Renaud, commencing at 9:00 a.m. in the ferry's cafeteria. The Friends of Point Pelee have kindly donated prizes for the trivia contest and raffle. Upon docking at 10:15 a.m. at West Dock, the Pelee Island Getaway group will board the Pelee Island Winery tram for a visit at Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve. Dave Kraus will provide an orientation to this special natural area.

At 11:30 a. m., we will depart Fish Point for a buffet lunch at the Pelee Island Winery which will be prepared for us by Manager Michelle Krestel and Pelee Island Winery staff. Our special guests will be Rob Willson, Jeremy Rouse, and Carrie MacKinnon who will discuss Pelee Island's snakes.

Following luncheon at 1:00 p.m., the Pelee Island Winery tram will transport us to the Stone Road Alvar Complex, where we will have an opportunity to view the property which the ECFNC and The Nature Conservancy of Canada are working towards purchasing and protecting. We intend to walk on the Federation of Ontario Naturalists Nature Reserve with Dave Kraus and Mary Celestino where we will have an opportunity to view the savanna through which the new trail passes and to view the "alvar core." At 2:15 p.m. the tram will carry us back to West Dock with departure on the M.V. Jiimaan at 3:30 p.m. Many thanks to the members of the ECFNC Special Events Committee, chaired by Karen Cedar, who planned our Pelee Island Getaway.

Mid Summer Drought On the Alvar

Sparse rain and shallow soils have combined to produce stressful conditions on the Stone Road Alvar Complex, as observed on July 21, 1999. Particularly within the core alvar and savanna scrub areas, Snowberry and Rough-leaved Dogwood shrub leaves were wilted, curled and brown.

On the Federation of Ontario Naturalists Nature Reserve, the Nodding Wild Onion blossoms are greatly reduced in numbers this season, flowering plants restricted to the Blue Racer Lane. Perhaps the best viewing of Nodding Wild Onions is along the East West Road on the Red Cedar Savanna woodlot. Some plants are blooming on Stone Road's Essex Region Conservation Authority's natural area, again at the roadside.

The alvar has a fall look as beige and yellow colours seem more predominate than green. A small Rock Elm's leaves was observed to be turning yellow while a grape vine's leaves were totally brown and curled. Some Virginia Creeper leaves had turned a brilliant scarlet. Poison Ivy vines covering the crown of a Chinquapin Oak were a delicate orange, the same hue as the side and flanks of a male Eastern Towhee, which perched momentarily beside the Poison Ivy.

Tomato / Zucchini Patch Invasion

Fresh tomatoes and zucchini are always appreciated in the summer. To provide these summer vegetables, Mary

and John Celestino have worked for nearly ten years developing a small garden at their cottage located on a property in the southern portion of the Stone Road Alvar Complex. The original depth of soil on the garden patch was only a few inches, but Mary and John have sifted the thin stony soil, slowly accumulating more soil, now approximately four inches in depth. The stones were cast aside in a heap.

This season certain events in the garden patch may mean the abandonment of the Celestino's garden, although garlic may still be planted. This year the Celestino's have watched as their garden has been invaded. Gray-headed Coneflower has moved into the garden proper, while the delightful Miami Mist has adopted the stone pile. The Celestino's recognize the tenacity of alvar plants, acknowledging that tomatoes and zucchini may not grow another year on this alvar!

Exploring On the Alvar, July 30, 1999

Despite a heat wave with temperatures in the mid-thirties, naturalists explored Pelee Island's Stone Road Alvar Complex for several hours on Friday morning, July 30, 1999, enjoying a walk along Stone Road, the fire break on the FON Nature reserve and the newly developed trail on the Nature Reserve. The common butterfly on the alvar was the Giant Swallowtail with 10 sightings, followed by five sightings of Tiger Swallowtails, two each of Red-spotted Purple and Monarch, and one each of Clouded Sulphur, a female Orange Sulphur, Red Admiral, Viceroy, Brushfoot sp., and numerous Blues and Cabbage Whites, especially at the wet edges and puddles along South Shore Road.

Birds observed were Yellow-billed Cuckoo, numerous Purple Martins from the South Shore Road Purple Martin colony, members of a Black-capped Chickadee family, American Robins, Cedar Waxwings, a Yellow Warbler, Northern Cardinals and American Goldfinches. The Yellow-billed Cuckoo's call was heard, then a single bird was spotted off the FON trail, perched in a hawthorn, with good looks at this alvar summer resident.

Time Out for Lake Erie Water Snakes

Naturalists decided to spend a little time on July 30, 1999 watching for Lake Erie Water Snakes. First, the flat limestone lake shore on South Shore Road was visited, but no Lake Erie Water Snakes were seen. Next, the naturalists perched quietly atop the armour stones along South Shore Road. After a few minutes, several drifting twigs were noticed, then identified as Lake Erie Water Snakes slowly moving about their territory.

Later, at Sheridan Point, the search was resumed for Lake Erie Water Snakes, with the naturalists' patience rewarded by a very good sighting of one individual. Located near the water's edge, the snake was partially submerged, with its body mainly under rocks beneath the surface. The support offered by the rocks allowed the snake to lift its head and several inches of its body well above the water's surface. This posture gave the snake good viewing but also allowed the naturalists to observe the snake well, both its under surface and the markings on its back.

Your Donation Is Welcome

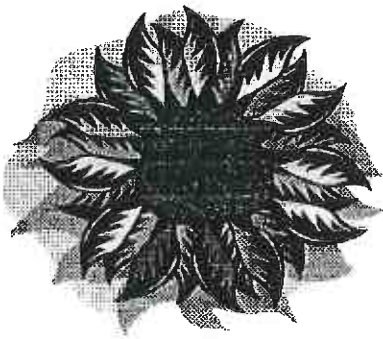
Donations towards the purchase of the 60 acre natural area on Pelee Island are welcome. Your donation may be made to the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, Devonshire Mall P.O., P.O. Box 23011, Windsor, Ontario N8X 5B5

Please indicate your donation to be directed to the Stone Road Alvar. Charitable donation receipts will be issued for sums over \$10.00. Certificates of appreciation (illustrated with a photograph from the Stone Road Alvar Complex property) and a subscription to the nature newsletter *On the Alvar* will be offered to all who contribute.

Festival of Hawks at Holiday Beach Conservation Area

September 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26

Activities from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. include guided hawk watching on the hawk tower, hawk banding demonstrations, a hawk ID workshop, a hands on nature display with activities for children, displays including Pelee Wings Nature Store, Holiday Beach Migration Observatory and ECFNC, see summer excursions for more details. Volunteers are needed to assist with the hands on nature display, displays and food. Please call Betty Learmouth at 944-0825.



Tallgrass Prairie Diary, Summer 1999

by Betty Learmouth

Friends of Ojibway Prairie meet every Tuesday afternoon throughout the year, undertaking a variety of activities to enhance the Ojibway Tallgrass Prairie, gathering at 1:00 p.m. in Ojibway Nature Centre where the afternoon's activities are planned. This summer marked the second season of a celebration of prairie

and savannas in Southwestern Ontario, called Another Prairie Summer '99. Following is an account of volunteer activities over eight weeks on Windsor's tallgrass prairie.

June 8, 1999 - Karen Cedar announced that we would take a hike today through the Ojibway Provincial Prairie Preserve, Ontario's largest protected area of tallgrass prairie. Our group walked down Titcombe Road, admiring the Carrion-flower trailing over the Preserve's fence. Canada Anemone bloomed by the steps that allow access to the tallgrass prairie.

On May 3, 1999, an unplanned fire burned over the tallgrass prairie for four hours. We could see that the Black Locust thickets had been "knocked back" by the burn, dozens of shrubs blackened and lifeless. This exotic and invasive tree species is a challenge to natural area managers as attempts to control this species result in its increasing. Managers of natural areas have learned not to cut or apply herbicides, instead scarring or girdling along with burning appears to be effective. Karen explained that fire is natural on a prairie, reopening areas for prairie plants to flourish. Controlled burns are preferred as the May 3, 1999 burn was later than managers would have preferred.

On this early date, the tallest prairie plants were about knee-high. We could easily view the Yellow Star-grass, a member of the Amaryllis family, its bright yellow blossoms glowing against the still blackened prairie soil. Throughout our walk, we watched for the Purple Milkweed, a rare plant on the tallgrass prairie, with our final count 35 individual plants. We could see hints of magenta-red in the still closed buds, a promise of a spectacular bloom.

Other plants observed were Tall Ironweed, Tall Meadow-rue, Dense Blazing-star, Tall Coreopsis, Tall White Lettuce, Daisy Fleabane, Swamp Milkweed, Virginia Mountain-mint, Cord Grass, Bastard Toadflax, Canada Anemone, Spreading Dogbane, Prairie Dock, Indian Hemp, Black-eyed Susan, Smooth Beardtongue, and Spiderwort.

We followed the trail to a section of the prairie that had been farmed in the 1970's. One portion here has been restored with another section left untouched, the prairie slowly restoring itself. The Ojibway Tallgrass Prairie provides habitat for the endangered Massasauga Rattler and the Eastern Fox Snake. We reluctantly left the prairie to the farewell calls of a Tufted Titmouse.

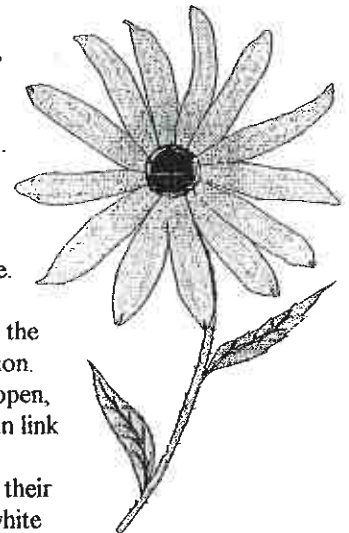
June 15 - Today's activity was to plant several prairie plant species on a former pathway that is under prairie restoration near Ojibway's creek, close to the Ojibway Nature Centre. Last year we scraped the area with rakes, then broadcast a variety of prairie plant seeds. The soil is compacted, an exceedingly difficult area. This year we noticed Tall Coreopsis and Prairie Thistle along the edge of the former pathway. Our introduction of seeds seems to be working, but there are still bare spots.

With trowels, we dug holes where ever there was a bare spot on the hard dry soil, placing either a tiny Wild Bergamot, Switchgrass or Indian Grass seedling in each hole. These plants were germinated at the City of Windsor greenhouses, some sold at plant sales earlier in May, now the last of these plants are to be used in this restoration project. After our planting, we watered these tiny plants, as we know they will struggle to survive here.

June 22 - Our instructions today are to water the newly planted seedlings. Tony Albano, Ojibway Nature Centre's caretaker, hauled two large water containers to the site. We used various containers to water the tiny plants, some of which look extremely dry.

Our other activity today was to check the Wild Lupines in the savanna sandpit at the rear of the park. We walked along the Ojibway Nature Trail, admiring the lush vegetation. We saw seven Purple Milkweed blossoms that were absolutely perfect - every blossom open, each entire head a rich magenta-red. The climber Canada Moonseed festooned the chain link fence that divides the Ojibway woodlands from the next door property.

When we located the Wild Lupines, we found most pods had split open, sending their contents in all directions. We sat on the trail or among the Lupine plants, picking the white



seeds from the soil's surface. Our pickings were carefully placed in paper bags which we carried back to the Nature Centre. Interpreter Hilary Bruner said these seeds (which germinate quite readily in the proper location) will be used for Wild Lupine propagation around the Nature Centre.

We heard that visitors to the savanna sandpit area in mid May commented on the wonderful Wild Lupine blossom display. Next year we resolve to mark our calendars for that floral display.

As we left Ojibway Nature Centre, Interpreter Karen Cedar arrived with a third Massassauga Rattler which had been implanted with a radio transmitter. This gravid female would be released in the evening to the area where she was found several days ago by the team that is studying these snakes this summer in the Ojibway area.

June 29 - The annual Ojibway Nature Centre's butterfly count is this coming Saturday. Karen suggested that a butterfly hike would be a perfect way to prepare for this annual census. Our group walked the nature trail behind the centre, recording the following species: Tiger Swallowtail, Cabbage Butterfly, Hickory Hairstreak, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Great Spangled Fritillary, Little Wood Satyr, Common Wood-Nymph, Silver-spotted Skipper and Northern Broken-Dash. We spoke about two male Harvester Butterflies first discovered on a trail near the Nature Centre by Fred Urie on June 10, 1999. These sightings were the first Ojibway record for this species. The Peterson Field Guide to Eastern Butterflies mentions that this is our only butterfly with carnivorous caterpillars as the young feed upon aphids. The adults do not nectar from flowers, but instead feed upon aphid honeydew secretions.

July 6 - Today we headed out as a work crew, including all available Nature Centre staff, to the ponds in the Tallgrass Heritage Park off Titcombe Road to tackle Purple Loosestrife removal. After working for several hours pulling this invasive species from the pond's edge and a nearby dry but still damp gully, we had over ten bags to haul away, with numbers of plants still remaining. This hands-on activity certainly made us aware of the impact an invading exotic species may have on our natural areas.

July 13 - Today we walked on the prairie with Paul Pratt. We crossed Matchette Road, hiking down Titcombe Road where we admired the prairie plants on our left. Two years ago Ontario Hydro had undertaken excavations in this area. Upon completion of the work, prairie plant seeds were broadcast. Two years later, the results are wonderful - Gray-headed Coneflower, Culver's Root, Big Blue Stem, Prairie Thistle, Prairie Dock, and Wild Bergamot, all thriving on this restored prairie.

Highlights of our afternoon prairie walk were opportunities to view two recently discovered rare prairie plants, Tall Green Milkweed and Eastern Prairie White Fringed Orchid, found on the Ojibway Nature Centre's butterfly census July 3, 1999 by Ojibway naturalist Karen Cedar. After a bit of searching, Paul relocated the single plant of Tall Green Milkweed, a species last seen in 1986 on the Ojibway Prairie, but more commonly associated with western Missouri prairies, particularly wet prairies. Botanist Wild Botham reported locating a clump of this species in 1984. Karen had asked that a list of other prairie plants growing in association with the Tall Green Milkweed be noted. We found the following species nearby: Dense Blazing-star, Canada Goldenrod, Rigid Goldenrod, Prairie Loosestrife, Marsh Fern, Virginia Mountain-mint, Prairie Switchgrass, Prairie Willow, and Cord Grass.

As we viewed the single plant of Eastern Prairie White Fringed Orchid, Paul drew our attention to the plant's blossoms, each with a long spur. Hawk moths are the pollinators of this plant as this insect's proboscis can reach the nectar at the bottom of each spur. This orchid species is rare across its range. Individual plants may grow to a height of four feet, with the plant we viewed about eighteen inches tall. This particular plant was the first seen in seven or eight years on the Ojibway tallgrass prairie.

July 20 - Today's task was to be the collection of the seed pods of Ohio Spiderwort, several clumps of which are found about the Nature Centre's natural garden. Two volunteers gathered those easy to find pods within a few minutes.

Then it was off to the Provincial Nature Reserve. Immediately we knew today's collection would be a challenge as the tallgrass prairie was towering above us, stalks of Big Blue Stem reaching above our heads. The tallgrass prairie was beautiful with individual stalks of Ohio Spiderwort hidden completely in this green sea.

We waded through the grasses and flowering prairie plants, pushing our way along the narrow trail, hoping to spot Ohio Spiderwort, which we finally located after a half hour to forty five minute walk. The few plants were growing in an area where they had not been completely covered by other prairie plants. Within minutes, we had all available seed pods carefully stowed in our collection containers, recycled brown paper bags which had been on many collection trips to the prairie.

Highlights on the mid summer tallgrass prairie were the splendid grasses, and numerous flowering plants including Flowering Spurge, the white candelabra flower stalks of Culver's-root, numerous stalks of Dense Blazing-star that would soon burst into bloom, Tall Ironweed hinting at masses of mauve blossoms, and brilliant orange Butterfly-weed.

August 3 - Five Tallgrass Prairie enthusiasts headed off to the Titcombe Road ponds for another assault on

Purple Loosestrife around the pond's perimeter. We concentrated on the plants adjacent to the pond, with ten bags of the plant collected over the next hour and a half. Prairie plants in bloom were Showy Tick-trefoil, Dense Blazing-star, Prairie Loosestrife, Monkey-flower, and Flowering Spurge.

As we walked back along the trail to Titcombe Road, we startled a large Fox Snake on the edge of the trail. The snake retreated a few feet into the prairie vegetation where it paused, allowing us to admire its attractive markings.

The mauve and pink floral display of Tall Ironweed and Dense Blazing-star against a sea of green tallgrass prairie grasses was especially vibrant on the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Preserve. The best spot to admire these plants is from the platform atop the Nature Preserve fence which gives a fine view of this corner of the tallgrass prairie.

We mentioned our Fox Snake sighting to Naturalist Paul Pratt who commented that this sighting was the first in several weeks as the snakes appeared to have withdrawn to cooler and less visible places during the recent heat wave.

Paul commented that he had been to Holiday Beach Conservation Area to view shorebirds on the mudflats in the big Creek Marsh. He mentioned that he had done a survey of Great Blue Herons around Big Creek marsh spotted from one location. Paul asked us to estimate how many he had seen. We all offered a guess but were astonished to learn the total was 287 individuals.

We are looking forward to the weeks ahead on the tallgrass prairie as the time to collect quantities of prairie plant seeds in earnest approaches. Let's hope that Tuesday afternoons will be clear and dry, perfect weather to be on the Ojibway Prairie. Once the fall seed collection is completed, we'll move indoors to clean and sort seeds.

Conservation Priorities for the Birds of Southern Ontario

by Michael Bradstreet

Bird Studies Canada is pleased to announce that it has just released a report, entitled "Conservation Priorities for the Birds of Southern Ontario," designed to assist municipal planners, land use managers and community conservation groups in conserving the province's biodiversity.

The 1996 Provincial Policy Statement under the Planning Act gives Ontario municipalities the responsibility for protecting natural heritage features and areas within a land use planning context. With the exception of wetlands and Areas of Natural or Scientific Interest (ANSIs), the methods by which municipalities identify natural areas and features are not specified by the Policy Statement. While this approach allows a variety of means to the same end, it also confers upon municipalities the task of determining what criteria should be used for identifying significant natural heritage features. Bird Studies Canada's report identifies bird species of high conservation priority with the aim of assisting municipalities, land management agencies and local community organizations with this task. The report is the result of work over the last three years by Bird Studies Canada, the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and several other partners, including the Federation of Ontario Naturalists.

The report and priority lists for each municipality in that portion of southern Ontario south and east of the Canadian Shield are posted on BSC's web site at: <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/conservation/conservmain.html> Priorities for the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area are also provided. The report and lists can be viewed in (and printed from) Adobe Acrobat Reader 3.0, which can also be downloaded through the BSC web site. Future plans include adapting this approach to produce priority lists for Conservation Authorities in Ontario, and for municipalities in northern Ontario.

BSC is also contracted to produce priority lists for all Canadian bird conservation regions in support of the work of Partners In Flight Canada and the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. Comments on this work and requests for additional information should be addressed to Andrew Couturier, BSC's GIS Analyst at: acouturier@bsc-eoc.org

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A PARADISE OF A DIFFERENT KIND

submitted by Anne Barbour
by *Awake!* correspondent in Canada

Standing on the upper slopes of the coulee and scanning the valley floor below, you are awed by the breathtaking landscape-rolling hills and steep ravines. Before you is what seems to be an unending sea of grass. A gust of wind swirls past, filled with the smell of heavily scented sage, the fragrance of the prairie.

Imagine, only two hundred years ago, you could have traveled for days without losing sight of the vast buffalo herds that darkened the great grasslands of Canada and could have felt the ground beneath you shake with the rumble of millions of hooves. Even the famous animal migrations of Africa could not rival those of the buffalo that roamed this great sea of grass.

Now, some of the only remaining signs that they were ever here are the large buffalo rubbing stones. You can feel the smoothed corners and see the trenches made around the stones by the thousands of buffalo that rubbed their itchy hides against them. It is not just the strong wind blowing out of the west that brings a tear to your eye but an overwhelming sense of awe at the marvels of creation that surround you and fill your senses. Where are you? You are visiting a paradise of a different kind.

A Park With a Difference

Welcome to Grasslands National Park, in southwestern Saskatchewan, Canada-the only park in North America dedicated to preserving undisturbed mixed-grass prairie. The park is actually composed of an east block and a west block, separated by 22.5 kilometres. It will eventually include 900 square kilometres.

The terrain is rugged and filled with many challenging obstacles. Exploration is best done on foot or horseback. Spending several nights camping under the stars is for those with a spirit of adventure, but be prepared to bring sufficient water and other necessary provisions. (See the box "Park Exploration.") During your trek through the park, you will see no modern buildings, no paved or gravelled roads, no power lines, no landfill sites, and no parking lots. You may not even encounter another human. Truly, it is a paradise of a different kind! Once you enter the park, you are entering a world of unique beauty.

The Great Plains of North America make up one of the most drastically altered ecosystems in the world. Less than two hundred years ago, this was 100-percent wild, untouched land. Today, for example, less than 25 percent of the mixed-grass prairie in Canada remains undeveloped. The idea of protecting this prairie grassland by making it a park emerged in the 1830's. Over one hundred years later, in 1957, the Saskatchewan Natural History Society started to work on establishing a national park.

However, it was not until 1988 that a federal-provincial agreement created Grasslands National Park. This park along with others in the Canadian prairies now protects 22 plants, mammals, and birds that are on Canada's official endangered species list. Additionally, many others are preserved, some of which are found nowhere else in the world.

The Grasslands park is a land of climate extremes. Situated in the centre's of the continent, it is unaffected by the moderating effects of any ocean. Thus, temperatures in winter can reach 50 degrees Celsius, and in summer, temperatures over 40 degrees Celsius are not uncommon. With exceedingly little rain and a constant wind, the climate is harsh.

Nevertheless, although not readily apparent at first, there is an abundance of wildlife. With patience and persistence, especially around dawn and dusk, you may be rewarded with the opportunity to photograph deer, coyotes, bobcats, jackrabbits, sage grouse, rattlesnakes, burrowing owls, ferruginous hawks, golden eagles, exotic pronghorn antelope (described as probably the fastest large animals of North American), or the only remaining colony of black-tailed prairie dogs in Canada. You will also see many other birds as well as insects and plants that are indigenous to this locality.

Colourful History of the Region

Should you decide to visit this unique park, we encourage you to do some research about the area. You will find it rich in history. For instance, markers still exist tracing the historic North West Mounted Police Red Coat Trail. In 1874, on hearing rumours of native unrest, the Canadian government sent a detachment of three hundred Mounted Police to the West to establish law and order. This move also calmed the fears of many that Canada's West was about to be swallowed up by the United States. Wearing bright scarlet tunics and riding on finely groomed horses, the detachment created such a strong image that to this day their path is known as the Red Coat Highway.

chair of AGCare (Agricultural Groups Concerned about Resources and the Environment.)

Elbert Van Dondersgoed, executive director of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, said his concerns about genetically modified plants have been elevated because of the Monarch study. "Many farm groups were quick off the mark with a defence for Bt corn and its ability to control the very destructive European corn borer and dramatically reduce the need for spraying pesticides on farm crops," Van Dondersgoed says. "We need to be just as concerned about seeking modifications to this technology so that we know what we are doing so that we tread lightly on the creation." A press release from Pioneer calls for further research. The release also notes that all members of the insect family lepidopteran can be affected by Bt. Farm leaders have not called for Bt corn to be taken off the market. AGCare said that the record shows Bt corn is an effective way to control the European corn borer, improve farmer profitability and possibly reduce pesticide use. Van Donkersgoed said he still remains optimistic about the promise of genetically modified plants. The Pioneer release quotes John E. Losey, one of the researchers involved with the Cornell study.

"We need to look at the big picture here," Losey says. "Pollen from Bt corn could represent a serious risk to monarchs and other butterflies, but we can't predict how serious the risk until we have a lot more data. And we can't forget that Bt corn and other transgenic crops have a huge potential for reducing pesticide use and increasing yields. This study is just the first step. We need to do more research and then objectively weigh the risks versus the benefits of this new technology." Dr. Joe Cummins agrees with Losey's call to look at the "big picture" but the retired University of Western Ontario professor would like to see definite action taken now to remove Bt corn from the market.

"I think that Bt corn is facing some severe problems and probably should be withdrawn from the market until these problems are resolved," Cummins says. "I don't think this (removal) is likely to happen though."

Cummins, a geneticist, fears that the introduction of genetically modified organisms may change the environment in a negative way, especially if those organisms are introduced without proper and thorough evaluation.

He says the loss of a single insect species like the Monarch could have significant repercussions quickly or down the road.

"Biodiversity is so complex that you may not know for 50 years what damage you have done to the web of life," Cummins says. "This (the potential impact on the Monarch) is something we can't take too lightly."

Cummins says farmers may wish to consider two other findings related to Bt. Published in the May issue of Science is a study that shows resistance to Bt is developing within the European corn borer population despite the use of refuge strategies. As well, Swiss studies show that Bt corn residue breaks down and persists in the soil - a potential threat to some forms of soil life.

This week Cummins is in Ireland where he's participating in government hearings concerning biotechnology.

*Annual Conservation Forum of Carolinian Canada
and Callgrass Ontario*

October 1 and 2

Field Trips and Banquet on Friday, Conference on Saturday - Hosted by Ridgetown College.

The advance notice of this two day event appeared in the Carolinian Canada Newsletter, Summer 1999. Call Don Gordon at Carolinian Canada (519-873-4631) or e-mail

info@carolinian.org for more information. Carolinian Canada's website is

www.carolinian.org

Interestingly, in 1878, this area became host to one of the most feared Indian warriors in North America—the great Sioux chief Sitting Bull. After the Sioux victory over Custer's forces at Little Bighorn, thousands of American Sioux fled to this part of Canada to seek refuge from the American cavalry.

There are about 1,800 archaeologically significant sites in the park that go even further back on time. On many ridges, hill-tops, and buttes can be found large rocks arranged in circles known as tepee, or tipi, rings. These rocks once held down the skirts of buffalo-hide tepees (tents) to prevent them from blowing away in the wind. There are also several complexes of ancient buffalo drive lanes used by the Plains Indians. Many centuries ago, the area was a rich hunting ground for the Gros Ventre, Cree, Assiniboin, Blackfoot, and Sioux tribes.

Reaching yet further back in time, in the park's east block, dinosaur remains have been found amid the wildly eroded dome hills of the Killdeer Badlands.

A Panorama of Beauty

If the diversity and abundance of the flora and fauna or the fascinating history of this land are not enough to amaze you, the magnificent and dramatic scope of the land itself will accomplish the task. There are the sounds of a myriad of bird species, the smell of sage, and the feel of the hot sun and the wind on your skin. The taste of food prepared over a portable gas stove is enhanced by the panoramic view, which is a constant feast for your eyes. Above all, you have an unobstructed, 360-degree view of the horizon, especially along the Two Trees Interpretive Trail, located in the park's west block. The vast clear blue sky above is decorated with an occasional fluffy white cloud that hangs over you like a floating mountain. The dramatic landscape gives you an overwhelming sense of freedom and, at the same time, makes you feel very small and awestruck.

When it comes to the prairies, it is not only what you see but also what you feel that is important. It is your feeling for this place that will draw you back to this paradise of a different kind. The experience fills your heart with gratitude. Your thoughts become filled with praise for the Grand Creator, Jehovah, who put it all here. Soon the longed-for day will be here when the entire earth will become a paradise and display its natural beauty to the full.

PARK EXPLORATION

Remember to

1. Register with park staff and obtain an information package before entering the park.
 2. Carry an adequate supply of drinking water with you. Drinking water is available only at the Park Information Centre.
 3. Wear a sun hat and also sturdy, comfortable shoes that cover your ankles for protection from the prickly cactus.
 4. Carry a stick to sweep in front of you when you walk through tall grass and brush.
 5. Take a camera and binoculars along if you have them. The best times to observe animals are at dawn and at dusk.
- Cautions: Avoid putting your hands or feet in places you cannot see. Rattlesnakes may strike when cornered or surprised. It is illegal to harass or hunt wildlife in a national park.

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Monarch study strikes a chord among farmers

by Jeffrey Carter

The following article appeared in *Voice of the Farmer*, Volume 21, Issue 15, Tuesday, June 1, 1999. Sylvia Thys suggested that ECFNC members would find this article worthwhile.

Bt may present a biotech threat in future flights of the Monarch butterfly. Last week Ontario farm leaders expressed concern about the colourful North American insect. They referred to a Cornell University laboratory study that suggests pollen from Bt corn may contaminate milkweed on which Monarch feeds exclusively. The study, published in the scientific journal *Nature*, shows that Monarch caterpillars fed milkweed leaves dusted with pollen from a Bt corn hybrid ate less, grew more slowly and suffered a higher mortality rate.

"We are concerned that Bt corn might be having a damaging effect on the Monarch butterfly," said Jim Fischer,

THE WILD SIDE

by Bob Wickett



Seagulls: A Day in the Life

Last issue we learned how to tell apart the seven locally common species of gulls and terns. To review, these are the Bonaparte's gull, Ring-billed gull, Herring gull, Greater black-backed gull, Common tern, Forster's tern and Caspian tern. Now that we know how to identify them lets take a little closer look. Just what good are seagulls anyway? How do they behave? What do they eat? How do they reproduce? All important questions if we are to appreciate these often misunderstood birds.

Gulls, as a group, are remarkably adaptable and opportunistic. They are so adaptable in fact that they thrive in man made environments and are considered a pest due to their sheer numbers. It is hard to believe that early this century gulls nearly vanished from many parts of the province. Their recent success can be attributed to laws that made egg collecting and feather selling illegal. This is not to mention the proliferation of human refuse which gulls have exploited as a readily available and abundant food source. As annoying as gulls can be, we should be thankful for the recovery of gull populations. Without them and their scavenging habits we would be up to our armpits in dead fish and garbage on our local beaches.

Both Ring-billed and Herring gulls can be found nesting on the shores and islands of western Lake Erie. The two species nest colonially (in groups), building nests on the ground lined with grass and feathers. Nesting colonies can reach incredible proportions. One I've seen at Leslie Street Spit (Tommy Thompson Park) in Toronto contained approximately 47 000 nests! Each nest will have about three mottled brown eggs. The chicks hatch in about 20-30 days with their eyes open, covered with fluffy down and able to walk around. To get food from the parent birds, the chicks peck at the black ring or red spot on the adult birds bill. This stimulates the parent to regurgitate a tasty (by gull standards) meal. It takes several weeks before the young can fly and two to five years before reaching full maturity.

In contrast to their brash and bold cousins, terns are more civilized and graceful. Unlike gulls, terns rarely swim and often plunge headfirst into the water for live fish. Terns aren't nearly the scavenger that gulls are.

As a prime example of their more civilized nature lets examine a tern behaviour called courtship feeding. Courtship feeding is frequently observed in terns. Near the start of the breeding season a male tern will catch a fish and carry it around the breeding colony and show it to prospective mates. A pair bond is formed when a female finally accepts the offering. During what has been referred to as the "honeymoon period" the male tern regularly feeds the female and soon thereafter the couple begins to copulate. Male terns in feed the female more and more until the female is fed almost exclusively by the male. Once eggs are laid this behaviour declines significantly. The number and size of eggs laid is determined in part by how well the male has fed the female. Basically the male has improved his reproductive success by keeping the female fat and healthy.

And finally for all those that have wondered "Did that seagull crap on me on purpose?" It might have. Gulls and terns defend their nests by diving at intruders and instinctively defecating at the bottom of the dive. Quite often the intruder is hit. An effective deterrent I would say!

NEXT MONTH: Finally... Fish!: Smallmouth Bass

Fall Colour Festival and Native Plant Sale

Oct 11 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Join us Thanksgiving Day for nature walks, environmental exhibits, and activities the whole family will enjoy. Special native plant and tree sale. Noon until 4:00 p.m. Free admission.

Treasurer's Report Jan 1 to July 31, 1999
January 1 - Total 143,718.84; July 31 - Total 162,658.50

Date			Credits	Debits	Totals
Jan 1	Bluebird Committee	Fwd.	161.83		
	Supplies, etc.			371.12	
	Donations		210.00		.71
	Current Account	Fwd.	904.86		
	Egret			329.99	
	Memberships		2230.51		
	Supplies			132.25	
	Sales		26.00		
	Services			1006.83	1692.30
	Essex Cty. Stewardship Network	Fwd.	39142.35		
	Bank Charges			69.00	
	Grant		6123.43		
	Expenses			1234.66	
	Interest		587.79		
	Gifts and Donations			9870.61	
	Mileage, etc.			660.20	
	Sales books		184.93		34204.03
	Heinz Bush (Reserve)	Fwd.	45803.32		
	Interest		830.61		46633.93
	Heritage Committee (Reserve)	Fwd.	39386.55		
	Donations		8910.03		
	Interest		368.72		
	Pelee Island Getaway		1400.00		
	Sales and Raffles		1224.97		
	Service			242.17	
	Wings and Wine		1610.00		58658.10
	Marshfield (Reserve)	Don	861.02		
	Advertising			424.57	436.45
	Natural Habitat Restoration	Fwd.	9007.61		
	Expenses			214.38	
	Donations and Grants		2279.43		
	Mileage, etc.			3076.33	
	Sales		1217.82		9214.15
	Reserve - Life Members	Fwd.	3190.01		
	Interest		698.64		
	Memberships		1200.00		5088.65
	Special Events - Funding	Fwd.	4242.31		
	Bank Charges			5.50	
	Bank Interest		.99		
	Sales		617.50		4855.30
	Woodlot Owners	Fwd.	1880.00		
	Bank Charge			5.50	
	Interest		.38		1874.88



Fall & Winter Activities and Excursions

For further information concerning the ECFNC excursions, contact Muriel Kassimatis (252-4801) or Betty Learnmouth (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.

Aug 25 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Weekday Warblers - Eliminate the confusion of fall warblers with these three field trips at the peak of warbler migration. Wednesday 8:30 a.m. \$18/3 weeks

SEPTEMBER

September - Call Donna Sale (733-9972) to participate in the September NHRP fall seed collection

Sept 1 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Weekday Warblers - Eliminate the confusion of fall warblers with these three field trips at the peak of warbler migration. Wednesday 8:30 a.m. \$18/3 weeks

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 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Weekday Warblers - Eliminate the confusion of fall warblers with these three field trips at the peak of warbler migration. Wednesday 8:30 a.m. \$18/3 weeks

Sept 8 - ECFNC monthly members meeting. Speaker and Holiday Beach Banding Station bander Steve Dickson has entitled his talk "Raptor banding at Holiday Beach." Steve will discuss the fall raptor migration and offer tips on identification. Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Ojibway Nature Centre.

Sept 9 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Fall Bird Migration - A series of five field trips to observe the incredible variety of bird life which migrates through Essex County. Introduction at 7:30 p.m. Fee \$45/5 trips or \$9/each

Sept 11 and 12 - Festival of Hawks - Holiday Beach Conservation Area - This weekend will be designated the Sharp-shinned Hawk, Monarchs and Hummingbird Weekend. Activities from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. include guided hawk watching on the hawk tower, hawk banding demonstrations, a hawk ID workshop at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 11, 1999, a hand's on nature display with activities for children, displays including Pelee Wings Nature Store, Holiday Beach Migration Observatory and ECFNC, and a slide presentation at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 12, 1999 entitled Local Hawks and their Habitats. Volunteers are needed to assist with the hand's on nature display, displays and food. Please call Betty Learnmouth at 944-0825.

Sept 11 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Fall Bird Migration field trip

September 16 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Edible and Medicinal Plants - A popular hands-on workshop to discover the wonderful variety of edible, medicinal and poisonous plants in the Windsor area. Evening 7:30 p.m. Fee \$15/2 days

September 18 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Edible and Medicinal Plants - Field trip 10:00 a.m.

Sept 18 and 19 - Festival of Hawks - Holiday Beach Conservation Area - This weekend will be designated the Broad-winged Hawk and Dragonflies Weekend. Activities from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. include guided hawk watching on the hawk tower, hawk banding demonstrations, a hawk ID workshop at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 18, 1999, a hand's on nature display with activities for children, displays including Pelee Wings Nature Store, Holiday Beach Migration Observatory and ECFNC, and a slide presentation at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 19, 1999 entitled Local Hawks and their Habitats. A special Fall Dragonfly workshop will be offered at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 19, 1999 by Paul Pratt. Volunteers are needed to assist with the hand's on nature display, displays and food. Please call Betty Learmouth at 944-0825.

Sept 23 - Point Pelee National Park - Natural Garden Workshop entitled Preparing for Next Year. Call the Visitor Centre for details.

Sept 25 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Fall Bird Migration field trip

Sept 25 and 26 - Festival of Hawks - Holiday Beach Conservation Area - This weekend will be designated the Peregrine Falcon and Fall Songbirds Weekend. Activities from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. include guided hawk watching on the hawk tower, hawk banding demonstrations, a hawk ID workshop at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 25, 1999, a hand's on nature display with activities for children, displays including Pelee Wings Nature Store, Holiday Beach Migration Observatory and ECFNC, and a slide presentation at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 26, 1999 entitled Local Hawks and their Habitats. Volunteers are needed to assist with displays and food. Please call Betty Learmouth at 944-0825.

Sept 29 - ECFNC Executive meeting



October - Call Donna Sale (733-9972) to participate in the October NHRP fall seed collection

October 1 and 2 - Annual Conservation Forum of Carolinian Canada and Tallgrass Ontario - Field Trips and Banquet on Friday, Conference on Saturday - Hosted by Ridgeway College. The advance notice of this two day event appeared in the Carolinian Canada Newsletter, Summer 1999. Call Don Gordon at Carolinian Canada (519-873-4631) or e-mail <info@carolinian.org> for more information. Carolinian Canada's website is <www.carolinian.org>

October 2 and 3 - Ontario Field Ornithologists Annual General Meeting - Point Pelee National Park - Registration for this two day event is \$28.00 which includes dinner. Saturday's schedule includes a field trip at 7:30 a.m. with Alan Wormington to a recently discovered hawk watching hotspot in Seacliffe, another field trip starting at 7:45 a.m. from the Visitors Centre with Paul Pratt, and other leaders; and two other field trips at 1:30 p.m. from the Visitors Centre, one for birds and another for butterflies. A dinner is planned for the evening, with guest speaker Tom Hince speaking on "The Birds of Point Pelee." Field trips will be offered on Sunday similar to the Saturday trips, but no butterfly trip. Registration is due by September 8, 1999. Send cheque payable to the Ontario Field Ornithologists: Jean Iron, 6 Lichen Place, Toronto, Ontario M3A 1X3. Call Jean Iron at 416-445-9297 or e-mail: jeaniron@globedirect.com

Sunday, Oct 3 - ECFNC Fall Excursion - Enjoy an afternoon exploring the Ojibway Prairie in the early fall with its wonderful colours of late blooming prairie plants. Meet at 2:00 p.m. at Ojibway Nature Centre. An Ojibway Nature Centre staff member will lead the walk.

Oct 9 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Fall Bird Migration field trip

Oct 11 - Fall Colour and Festival and Native Plant Sale - Ojibway Nature Centre - Join us Thanksgiving Day for nature walks, environmental exhibits, and activities the whole family will enjoy. Special native plant and tree sale. Noon until 4:00 p.m. Free admission.

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. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in the Ojibway Nature Centre.

Sunday, Oct 17 - ECFNC Fall Excursion - ECFNC members Randy and Lisa Stewart will lead us about the Green Dragon Woods Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) which is adjacent to their home in the former Township of Anderdon (now Amherstburg) along the Canard River. If you are driving from Windsor, drive out into the County along Howard Avenue. Watch for the South Townline, with the next intersection the North Sideroad. Turn right and cross the 6th Concession. The house number is 5711 North Sideroad with the Stewart's home on your left. Pull into their spacious parking near their home.

Oct 23 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Fall Bird Migration field trip

Sunday, Oct 24 - ECFNC Fall Excursion - Join Muriel Kassimatis and Betty Learmouth for an excursion to view the migrating Sandhill Cranes at the Michigan Audubon's Society's Haehline Sanctuary located near Jackson, Michigan, about a one and one half hour drive from Windsor. We will meet in Ojibway Nature Centre's parking lot to car pool at 1:00 p.m. Bring a lunch as it will be early evening by the time we return. There will be an opportunity to walk trails in the Sanctuary area, then view the late afternoon fly-in of the cranes.

Oct 27 - ECFNC Executive Meeting

Sunday, Oct 31 - ECFNC Fall Excursion - Enjoy a walk in an Essex County woodlot with Dan Bissonnette. Meet at 1:30 p.m. at St. Joseph's School at 9381 North Townline Road in River Canard.

NOVEMBER

November - Call Donna Sale (733-9972) to participate in the November NHRP fall seed collection

November 6 - Ojibway Nature Centre - Fall Bird Migration field trip

November 6 - Fifteenth ECFNC annual dinner will be held at the Torino Plaza, 12049 Tecumseh Road East, Tecumseh, Ontario. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. with a cash bar and silent auction. Dinner will commence at 7:00 p.m. The evening's guest speaker will be Jon McCracken who will speak on Prothonotary Warblers. Tickets are \$27.00 per person, available at the ECFNC monthly meetings in September and October and at Ojibway Nature Centre. After October 13, 1999, tickets will be \$32.00 per person. Be sure to purchase your ticket early for this special evening.

Sunday, November 14 - ECFNC Fall Excursion - Join ECFNC member Don Bissonnette for a walk in one of Don's favoured natural areas, the Arner Point Woods. Meet in the Cedar Creek Conservation Area parking lot at 2:00 p.m. We will drive to the entrance of Arner Point trail on County Road 20.

Sunday, Nov 21 - ECFNC Fall Excursion - Join Muriel Kassimatis and Betty Learmouth for a fall hike at Wheatley Provincial Park. Meet at the Park's camp office at 2:00 p.m. Bring your binoculars as we will bird as we walk about the park. The Hike Ontario Guide to Walks in

Carolinian Canada suggests this fall walk in the 240 hectare provincial park which is closed to traffic but a great place for visitors and walkers in the fall.

Nov 24 - ECFNC Executive Meeting



Dec 8 - ECFNC Monthly Members Meeting - Share a selection of your favourite slides with other members or bake Christmas goodies for the coffee and social hour following the meeting. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in the Ojibway Nature Centre.

December 18 - Cedar Creek Christmas Bird Count. Call Ojibway Nature Centre for details on local CBC's.

December 19 - Rondeau Provincial Park Christmas Bird Count

December 20 - Point Pelee National Park Christmas Bird Count

December 27 - Rockwood Christmas Bird Count

January 1, 2000 - Detroit River Christmas Bird Count



Bird Studies Canada

proudly presents

its Fall Bird Fair & Annual Members Meeting

featuring

Bob McDonald

of CBC's

Quirks and Quarks

speaking on

"Science in the 3rd Millennium"

*Please join us at the Royal Botanical Gardens, in Burlington
on Sunday the 24th of October 1999 from 1 pm to 6 pm.*

*Bob McDonald's presentations are enlightening and fun. Don't miss a fascinating show!
Admission \$15.00 in advance — \$20.00 at the door.
Children under 16 yrs are free*

Lots of exhibits, self-guided RBG garden tours, & RBG will have a cash kiosk with light refreshments



Reservations for Bird Fair & Annual Members Meeting.
Family and Friends are Welcome!

Sunday, 24 October 1999 — Doors open at 12.00 pm.

Adults: \$15.00
Children under 16 yrs Free

Tickets for the event will be held **AT THE DOOR**

Please reserve _____ tickets.
I enclose \$ _____.

Deadline for reservations: 15 October 1999
Please make cheques payable to *Bird Studies Canada*

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

VISA/MC No. _____ Expiry Date: _____

*For tickets contact Bird Studies Canada:
☎ toll-free telephone at 1-888-448-2473 (BIRD)
✉ e-mail at <generalinfo@bsc-eoc.org>
website <www.bsc-eoc.org/tickets.html>
☎ fax at 1-519-586-3532*

*Our address is Bird Studies Canada
P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario N0E 1M0*