



The Egret

the Newsletter of the Essex County Field Naturalists

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Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Carolinian West Meeting, March 23, 2002

by Betty Learmouth

Representatives of Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Carolinian West affiliated members met in London on March 23, 2002 as guests of that day's host group, the McIlwraith Field Naturalists. The meeting was held in a beautiful reception facility, a spacious restored residence dating from 1853, known as Grosvenor House which is located on Western Road near the University of Western Ontario.

Carolinian West Chairperson and FON Regional Director Tom Chatterton welcomed everyone, noting that the Carolinian West affiliated club numbers have grown from seven organizations which initially met in 1995 to thirteen in 2002. As a result of twice yearly meetings, a lot of interchange has occurred between the groups with support by all groups for projects within the region such as natural heritage protection projects. Recently a number of member groups have donated funds to support the publication of a regional dragonfly/damselfly guide which should be available in May 2002.

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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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: Margaret Jennings, Muriel Kassimatis, Betty Learmouth
 Annual Dinner Committee: Heritage Committee
 Bluebird: Don Bissonnette, Betty Learmouth, Carl Maiolani
 N.H.R.P.: Dave Kraus, Donna Sale, Gerry Waldron, Linda Kennette, Teresa Austrin, Patricia Rhoads, Peggy Hurst
 Heritage: Mary Celestino, Betty Learmouth, Margaret Jennings, Muriel Kassimatis, Jim McAllister, Patricia Rhoads, Gerry Waldron, Peg Wilkinson, Dave Kraus, JoAnn Grondin

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Artist/ author and ECFNC member Mary Celestino spoke to the group about her recently published book entitled *Wildflowers of the Canadian Lake Erie Islands*. Mary spoke to an appreciative audience who were amused to hear how Mary "quit her day job" to devote time to painting on Pelee Island, meanwhile studying and drawing the plants growing about the Celestino's summer home on their Stone Road alvar property as well as elsewhere in natural areas about Pelee Island. Mary's talk to the Carolinian West meeting was the first talk at which Mary had her copies of her book for sale. Fifteen copies were sold to the twenty-four persons attending the meeting.

Each attending organization was asked to provide highlights of activities since the last Carolinian West meeting held October 27, 2001 at Rondeau Provincial Park. The McIlwraith Field Naturalists have placed a grant application with the Ontario Trillium Foundation for study and preservation of the Spiny Soft-shelled Turtle in the Thames River.

The Ingersoll Nature Club attempted without success to purchase a woodlot adjacent to the Lawson Tract, a Federation of Ontario Naturalists Nature Reserve. Due to the attention this attempted purchase generated and the impending logging that had been proposed for the woodlot, the fine for logging without a permit in Oxford County has increased from \$5,000 to \$20,000.

St. Thomas Field Naturalists are involved in a restoration project in St. Thomas around a creek which involves planting a butterfly garden, a tallgrass prairie unit and trees. It is hoped that this project will be a showcase for the St. Thomas Field Naturalists.

The Essex County Field Naturalists' Club reported that a donation was made to the Town of Leamington for the purchase of the Heinz Bush. Monies will provide for a management plan, fencing and trail development on the property. The ECFNC is looking forward to an upcoming Restoration Conference on March 30, 2002.

Brad Reive of the West Elgin Nature Club reported that nest box building has been a successful winter project. The sale of sunflowers continues to be a good fund raiser. All affiliates will receive a plant list of Dutton Prairie flowering plants. A burn will be undertaken on the Dutton Prairie this spring with a concern for phragmites invasion noted.

Sydenham Field Naturalists have been involved in fund raising for Bickford Oak Woods with an extension granted to continue fund raising. The club is expanding its Eastern Bluebird trail to a floodway channel which is nearly four miles long as other suitable habitat has been lost.

Lambton Wildlife Inc. has identified 30 acres of lands adjacent to the Karner Blue property which will be purchased with the assistance of The Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Ausable Conservation Authority. Native plant sales raised \$1,500.00 for Lambton Wildlife Inc.

The Little River Enhancement Group Essex-Windsor reports plans for a cleanup along the trail beside Little River at the Canadian Tire in East Windsor. A native tree planting project in the cloverleaf of the E.C. Row Expressway and Lauzon Parkway is planned for this spring.

The Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee, a committee in Council for the City of Sarnia, reports that the city is still trying to purchase an important natural area within Sarnia, a project that is now seven years along. The propagation of Sand Cherries has gone well, with these shrubs for sale and planting in sandy areas along the lake shore.

Friends of Rbndeau Park report work on the viewing platform is going ahead with plans to extend the Spicebush Trail and link the Marsh Trail with a boardwalk. These projects are proving to be costly but worthwhile. A trail guide for South Point is to be developed. Naturalist Sandy Dobbyn will undertake research on the turtle population this year.

Friends of Pinery Park report that their organization is in its twelfth year and that they are in a process of renewal. A variety of projects are underway including Black Oak restoration, updating trail guide, implementing a young persons program, and transferring slides into a digital format with a grant to the Park of \$30,000 from the Friends of Pinery Park. The Lake Smith restoration project, a 1,700 acre parcel of land offered for sale by a European company which is near the Pinery Provincial Park, could be an important acquisition.

Representatives from the Hawk Cliff Foundation and the Backyard Habitat Program were not present to provide updates on their respective organization's activities. Following a delicious sandwich and dessert luncheon in an elegant reception room of Grosvenor House, two members of the Rural Lambton Stewardship Network provided slide presentations which highlighted this organization's restoration projects and tallgrass prairie plantings. The focus is on larger projects, about 33 projects in 2002 with funding of \$300,000 and an additional \$125,000 from Ontario Power Generation. One proposed project is the Highway 40 Prairie Passage, a planting of 23,000 wildlife shrubs and 30 acres of tallgrass prairie.

Updates on FON activities were received from Helena Rusak, staff member of the FON's Conservation and Science Department, who reported the Southern Ontario Woodlands Project will continue to be a priority over the next few years. The FON is working towards the establishment of the former St. Williams Forestry Station as a provincial park. The results of the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas are now posted on the Atlas website with good maps. The Petrel Point Nature Reserve is to be expanded by 5 acres.

Jennifer Baker, FON Clubs and Regions Coordinator, reported the upcoming FON Conference is anticipating good attendance. Jennifer is creating a database for each club.

Mark Dorfman, FON President, commented that the regional structure has

worked well and the Regional Directors involvement has been a good arrangement. The FON now has 25,000 members. A Foundation for Ontario Nature is being established for the FON Board which will enable the FON to have permanent budgets in various areas to undertake longer conservation programs. Other initiatives include working to put environmental education back into the curriculum and a Smart Growth initiative for the Oak Ridges Moraine. The FON's budgeting process had been perfected. *Seasons* magazine hopes to have a professional publisher with the magazine to be placed for sale in bookstores. On the FON website, a poll about urban forests and urban woodlands shows that urban persons want urban forests and that urban forests are important to urban dwellers.

The fall meeting of Carolinian West member organizations will be held November 9, 2002 in Ingersoll while the Spring 2003 meeting will be held March 29, 2003 in St. Thomas.

A Trip to the Detroit Zoological Park

by Betty Learmouth

Seven ECFNC members headed over to the Detroit Zoological Park in Royal Oak on February 24, 2002 for our annual ECFNC visit. In the past, the weather during our zoo visit has usually been cold or very wet, keeping general zoo attendance low and allowing the ECFNC members "to have the run of the place." By contrast, February 24, 2002 (the day the Olympic American and Canadian hockey teams battled for gold) was mild and sunny, attracting hundreds of visitors to the zoo.

Upon arriving, we parked in the three story car park (usually we would park in the parking lot) and walked to the Arctic Ring of Life, a four acre exhibit opened in Fall 2001, which is immensely popular with zoo visitors. We had quick glimpses of four pure white Arctic Foxes, tiny animals that weigh between seven and fifteen pounds. Across the way, we were able to observe a male Snowy Owl, hiding under a spruce tree. We rounded a corner and there were the Polar Bears.

One bear was asleep, sprawled across beach cobblestones. We felt very fortunate that the second Polar Bear, a large male, was enjoying himself in the pool beyond the cobblestones. At first all we could see were enormous paws waving. Luckily, the bear emerged from the pool, played with a chunk of tree trunk, then reentered the water to wrestle with a spruce tree which the bear rolled over and over. We watched as the bear blew bubbles, dove, then swam about the pool. We reluctantly left the bears to enter Polar Passage, a 70 foot long acrylic underwater tunnel surrounded by salt water. Everyone hopes to see a Polar Bear swimming here, but the Ringed Seals are the animals that are most commonly seen as these animals cavort through the water, to the delight of visitors.

Leaving the seal exhibit, we stopped in at the Nunavut Gallery, where a docent or zoo interpreter told us that there are seven Polar Bears in the Arctic Ring of Life exhibit, six born in the United States and one born in Germany. The four-acre exhibit is divided into two sections, the first two bears we saw separated by a moat from the portion of the exhibit we could see through the nearby windows. The exhibit attempts to provide vistas and items of interest such as different smells which the bears can explore. As we left the exhibit, we watched two Polar Bears walking over a landscape that appeared frozen with looming pillars of ice behind, giving the bears another choice of living space.

Upon leaving the Arctic Ring of Fire, we passed by the Giant Anteater exhibit where three handsome individuals were on display. This species is four feet long, with a huge bushy tail that adds another three feet to the animal's overall length. The head is shaped like a long funnel with eyes and ears placed well back from its small mouth from which can protrude its 20-inch tongue. The animal's blackish coat is decorated with a white strip on its side and its forelegs. This animal is rare in its range from Amazonia to southern Central America but is still common on the llanos of Venezuela.

Around the corner we found two Tree Kangaroos from New Guinea on display. The coats of these two animals were a rich brown with their facial fur a light cream colour. Even their ears and long tails were covered in a short dense coat of fur. At one point the two animals were sitting quite closely, and for a moment threatened each other with a boxing stance, then moved apart.

Eventually, we reached Amphibiville, The National Amphibian Conservation Center which was opened in June 2000 and is dedicated to the conservation and exhibition of amphibians. Here endangered species are on display in attractive mini habitats which include waterfalls, pools of water with tropical vegetation including ferns, mosses and various tropical plants. A chorus of amphibian calls greet visitors as they enter Amphiville. Videos of lively amphibians line-dancing enliven the displays in the centre of Amphibiville. If you were luke-warm about amphibians before you entered the exhibit, the displays, sounds and videos will surely change your mind!

The exhibits allow a glimpse into the lives of such amphibians as Emperor Newts, Aquatic Caecilians, Golden Mantella, Surinam Toad, South American Lungfish and our own Bullfrog. Colourful information boards explain how habitat destruction and collection for the pet trade has endangered many amphibian species around the world.

Treefrogs in several exhibits were highlights of the visit to Amphibiville. In the Pine Barrens Treefrog exhibit, bright green Pine Barren Treefrogs were perched on mist shrouded pine branches. Marbled Treefrogs clung to the plexiglass display windows, showing off their pale turquoise undersides and bright turquoise toe discs. The Marbled Treefrog (a native of Central and South America) has a buffy back, quite understated compared to its vibrant belly, chin and toe discs. In a damp bromeliad within the Marbled Treefrog exhibit, two Green and Black Dart-Poison Frogs from Central America peeked

out at Amphibiville visitors.

Other wonderful amphibians on display included the Golden Dart-Poison Frog, the Kokoe Dart-Poison Frog, the Mountain Chicken from Montserrat (endangered by food gatherers), Hellbenders, Japanese Giant Salamander, Axolotl, Rococo Frogs from South America, Painted Mantella from Madagascar and the Northern Tomato Frog. The Northern Tomato Frog from Madagascar resembles a plump ripe tomato. This delightful creature with its golden eye is listed as vulnerable, its numbers reduced by habitat destruction.

By this time we were fifteen minutes from closing time, allowing a few moments to walk through the Penguinarium to admire the various penguin species, including King and Macaroni penguins. As always, we enjoyed our visit to the Detroit Zoological Zoo, with plans to return.

Big Creek Marsh, April 20, 2002

by Betty Learmouth

Nine ECFNC members and a dog joined Lake Erie Country Club residents Betty and Joe Williamson on April 20, 2002 for a visit to the far eastern portion of Big Creek Marsh adjacent to the Lake Erie Country Club portion of Big Creek Marsh. The sun was shining although the air was cool. Over the marsh Caspian Terns and Forster's Terns whirled and fished. In the marsh American Coot, American Widgeon, Canada Geese, Mallards, Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons could be seen, while a single Pied-billed Grebe called throughout the afternoon.

At least five large Blanding's Turtles were observed basking on fallen trees to the east of the Williams' cottage, as well as a number of Midland Painted Turtles. As the group made its way to the East Beach which is land that is part of the Holiday Beach Conservation Area, a Carolina Wren sang in full view for everyone to enjoy. From the "hunt road" which provides access to the East Beach, we were able to see a Mute Swan and a single Scaup species in the ERCA wetland to the east of the hunt road. A female Belted Kingfisher whirled by. Above us Tree Swallows and Purple Martins hunted with a resident Red-tailed Hawk and Cooper's Hawk floating into view every so often.

As we walked back along the beach, Joe remarked that the shoreline water was relatively clear as winds had been light throughout the week, providing an opportunity for particles in the water to settle. We enjoyed tea and cookies on the front lawn of the Williams' cottage while compiling our birding list of 25 species, adding ladybird beetles and a single dragonfly to the our list of insects observed.

Thank you to Betty and Joe for leading us on a walk around their Lake Erie lake shore home. We were delighted to share the spring time activity on the Big Creek Marsh

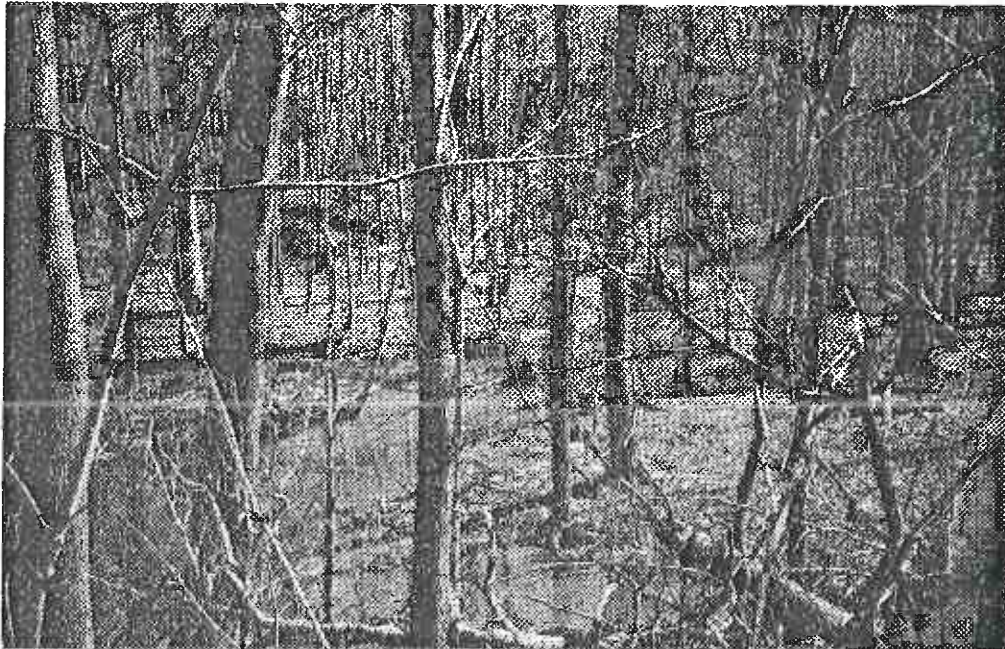
with Betty and Joe.

Clear Creek: Forest Ecology and Restoration

by Betty Learmouth

Mathis Natvik greeted 16 enthusiastic ECFNC members, friends and a dog on April 6, 2002 for an early spring walk at the 800 acre Clear Creek natural area in the municipality of Chatham-Kent. Clear Creek is under Parks Ontario administration following its recent acquisition through the efforts of The Nature Conservancy of Canada. The public may now visit the site which is accessible by a trail that meanders above the flood plain. Discussions are presently taking place regarding trail development in this protected natural area.

Mathis has had a life long association with Clear Creek as he played here as a youngster but he did not realize until secondary school that the 1,200 acres of natural habitat surrounding Clear Creek were special. Clear Creek is representative of natural habitat that would have been found on the sand and clay plains of southwestern Ontario. This particular natural habitat has virtually disappeared from southwestern Ontario due to human activity and was not represented in the protected lands held by Parks Ontario



Photograph by Margaret Jennings

or Parks Canada in southern Ontario until the recent acquisition of Clear Creek.

2 Mathis told us how he became involved with Clear Creek several years ago. Mathis
3 learned that loggers were to log a ten acre property north of Clear Creek. Not
4 surprisingly, not a lot of that small woodlot was left after the loggers had finished. As the
5 loggers proceeded towards Clear Creek, Mathis stopped the truck, and told the confused
6 loggers that the owner had changed his mind. Afterwards, Mathis called the owner,
7 explained the situation and involved The Nature Conservancy of Canada in the site's
8 preservation and acquisition. Two and a half million dollars were raised, one half for
9 acquisition and one half for the stewardship fund which will assist with restoration efforts.

10 Mathis calls Clear Creek a living museum with trees that are 350 years old, trees
11 that were living before European settlement in Chatham-Kent. Clear Creek is a ravine
12 site, not feasible for agricultural development. This old growth tract is part of a miniscule
13 .018% original natural habitat that exists today in Southwestern Ontario. Through
14 agricultural activities, old growth forests have virtually disappeared from our landscape.

15 Mathis discussed old growth forest characteristics at Clear Creek. In old growth
16 forests, a diverse range of tree sizes exist. In this forest, some Beech trees are 375
17 years old which are large impressive specimens. There are numerous dead trees or
18 snags or chicos which have died of old age. There is lots of debris in an old growth
19 forest which provides homes for a variety of creatures. For instance, snags or chicos in
20 this forest are like apartments, providing nesting sites for six pairs of Pileated
21 Woodpeckers. Clear Creek is quiet compared to that of Rondeau Provincial Park, home
22 to one pair of Pileated Woodpeckers. Southern Flying Squirrels are common residents
23 of Clear Creek, using the cavities in the old growth forest as nest sites.

24 Clear Creek's hydrology has been found by investigators to be the most intact
25 creek system now existing along the Lake Erie shoreline from the City of Windsor to
26 Niagara Region. The best ox-bow channels are found here as well as the finest cool
27 water minnow habitat. In the past, beaver created flood plains with extremely diverse
28 flood plain meadows which even now support impressive floral displays of Cardinal
29 Flower and other plant species. Discussions are underway within Parks Ontario
30 regarding the reintroduction of beaver to this site.

31 Kathy Lesperance inquired about the presence of pike in the Clear Creek. Mathis
32 explained that this creek is not pike habitat as this is a cool water creek compared to the
33 Essex warm water creeks. Offshore Lake Erie at Clear Creek is cooler and deeper Lake
34 Erie's Western Basin.

35 Mathis commented that we think of absolutely flat land when we think of the
36 Southwestern Ontario landscape. In contrast to today's landscape, the original
37 woodland landscape was one of "pits and mounds," i.e. a landscape of "mounds" which
38 would be decaying tree roots and trunks and the accompanying "pits" created after the
39 roots had pulled clear of the surrounding soil. Near where we stood, this landscape was
40 created by natural events when a storm in 1976 felled great trees such as Tulip Trees

which created a "pits and mounds" landscape.

2 A seed bank created over the years has resulted in a carpet of young trees growing
3 on the "pits and mounds", which looks very much liked a bombed area. The area is
4 fragile and trampling by our large group would change the character of the site, flattening
5 and leveling the area, as has occurred over the years as cattle have been driven through
6 large woodlots such as Clear Creek in transit to market in Glencoe and by allowing cattle
7 to graze in woodlots. We are not perpetuating the "pits and mounds" landscape of our
8 woodlands, thus our oak species are disappearing, and our woodlots are turning into
9 green ash forests. As well, tiling has affected our landscape, reducing vernal pools in
10 spring and reducing the amphibian population.

11 As we walked along the trail above the flood plain, Mathis showed us a large Sugar
12 Maple which he estimated to be 350 years old. This tree appeared to be going "bald," as
13 it loses its bark indicating that it is now in the last fifty years of its life. Mathis commented
14 that there are a number of Sugar Maples in Clear Creek which are also losing their bark,
15 all approaching their lifespan of 400 years. Another old growth species in Clear Creek
16 are American Beech which are approaching 400 years.

17 Mathis brought us to a ten acre site adjacent to the Clear Creek forest which Mathis
18 referred to as a post agricultural field which is presently undergoing restoration. A total of
19 190 acres has been designated for restoration. Mathis reminded us that the site is on
20 the Bothwell Sand Plain. The first undertaking was removal of the drainage system (the
21 tiling) and the second was to create a microtopography by bringing in a backhoe
22 operator who created the "pits and mounds" landscape that we had previously
23 discussed. Mathis said he felt like a symphony conductor as he directed the backhoe
24 driver who remarked that his work up to this project had always been in the other
25 direction. For each acre, a "downburst swamp" was created which is a cross-shaped pit.
26 In a forest, a "downburst swamp" would be formed when trees collapse during or
27 following a storm.

28 A portion of the agricultural land was left flat as a comparison to the newly created
29 microtopography. Creating the microtopography actually puts the creation of a forest
30 ahead hundreds of years.

31 Mathis showed us how the "pits" had filled with surface water and leaf litter. Each
32 mound has been stuffed with acorns both by human effort and the work of the Clear
33 Creek squirrels who couldn't resist the disturbed soil adjacent to the woodlot. The
34 nearby flat agricultural land would be as hard as cement in the summer drought following
35 flooding in the spring, while the "mounds" in mid summer would still be damp, the
36 "mounds" acting like wicks, drawing moisture from the "pits."

37 Tree species surviving in the flat and cement-like soil of the agricultural land are
38 Green Ash, Eastern Cottonwood and Red Cedar. Tree species in the "pits and mounds"
39 landscape include Tulip Tree and a variety of oaks, species associated with the Clear
40 Creek old growth forest. Native herbaceous plants have been planted around the "pits."

The cost to create the "pits and mounds" landscape is estimate to be \$112/acre.

Mathis told us the site has become "frog city." In early May of 2001, at night fall, the calls of American Toads and various frog species were deafening. Salamanders have been attracted to the site. The restoration has added a huge new dynamic to the site.

Leaving the restoration site, we returned to the trail above the flood plain. Marg Calder inquired as to the quietness of the forest and the absence of squirrels in the woodlot. Mathis explained that large roaming predators at Clear Creek, the Broad-winged Hawks in summer, Cooper's Hawks and Red-shouldered Hawks, all search for Eastern Gray Squirrels which are now mostly crepuscular as a means of survival. The nocturnal Southern Flying Squirrel and Eastern Chipmunk are more numerous than the Gray Squirrel at Clear Creek.

Mathis indicated that a young Black Walnut forest had been the site of three archeological digs during the 1980s. During the 1650s native peoples belonging to the Attawandas were killed here by Iroquois leaving this site part of the "empty land" of Southwestern Ontario. A more recent discovery of bones in the 1990s analyzed by carbon dating found this person to be a 17 year old girl who died of a blow to the head in 1652. Now the area is carpeted by spring ephemerals and is home to such breeding bird species as Indigo Bunting, Golden-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat.

Our walk along the trail brought us to an area where enormous old growth American Beech trees grow along the flood plain slope. Here Scarlet Tanagers and 4-5 pairs of Acadian Flycatchers breed in the super canopy of these old growth trees. Mathis suggested this would be a good spot for a small group of two or three persons to view the shy Pileated Woodpeckers.

Bird species seen during the walk included Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Yellow-bellied Woodpecker, and Eastern Phoebe. Calls of the Pileated Woodpecker were heard several times.

We wish to convey our appreciation to Mathis for leading our group on an educational and informative tour of the Clear Creek forest and adjacent restoration site. As Ron Muir commented, we are all thankful to Mathis for stopping the logging truck and changing the course of events at Clear Creek.

June 19 - ECFNC Spring Excursion

This Wednesday night excursion with Lynda Corkum, ECFNC member and University of Windsor researcher, is planned for the height of the mayfly flight at Colchester Harbour on the shores of Lake Erie.

Earth Day Celebrations, April 21, 2002

by Betty Learmouth

Windsor and Essex County's thirteen annual Earth Day took place at Ojibway Nature Centre from twelve noon until 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 21, 2002. Although the weather was cold, damp and overcast, bus loads of visitors enjoyed both the indoor and outdoor displays, entertainment and food.

ECFNC members brought several displays to Earth Day. Patricia Rhoads displayed native plants for sale along with a new Woodland Farm display. The Natural Habitat Restoration Program's new display board featured photographs of native plants by Ann Barbour with accompanying notes. Donna Sale shared the NHRP table space with Mary Celestino who spoke to visitors concerning her new publication *Wildflowers of the Canadian Erie Islands*. Mary was assisted by Irene Girard and Pauline Renaud. The Heritage Fund Committee's bucket raffle display occupied another table along with the quilt raffle which was a popular item as fifty tickets were sold. Margaret Jennings looked after the Heritage Fund display.

Many ECFNC members and friends donated baking to the Heritage Fund Committee's bake sale which raised \$450.00 towards the Heritage Fund. Volunteers who assisted with baking and/or selling baked goods included Marg Calder, Karen



Photograph: Author Mary Celestino (middle) assisted by Pauline Renaud (at right) during book signing at Earth Day. Photograph by Margaret Jennings

Cedar, Donna Cowie, Shirley Grondin, JoAnn Grondin, Denise Hartley, Maxine Hartley, Margaret Jennings, Kathy Lesperance, Margaret MacDonald, Pauline Renaud, Donna Roemmele, Bonnie Ross, Mary Jane Winterton, and Sandra Wilson.

Thank you to everyone for your efforts!

Eastern Bluebird Committee News, Spring 2002

by Don Bissonnette

The past winter was mild and southern Essex County had a good number of wintering Eastern Bluebirds (EABL). There was a lot of bad weather in late March and early April. This cold weather slowed the EABL down.

At the Harrow Research Station the first EABL egg was laid about April 25, 2002. Most years the first egg appears between April 5th and 10th.

Early Birds

Graham Brown reports that one pair of EABL was not discouraged by the early April snows. At the Gorski property, one pair of EABL had a completed nest on April 4, 2002. On April 14th this nest held five EABL eggs. These eggs hatched on the 28th of April.

Bruce MacDonald and Stan Rhoades both reported Tree Swallows on Easter Sunday, April 28. Within days, there were other reports. Unfortunately there were a few reports of Tree Swallows found dead during the snowy first week of April.

A few trails received late winter/early spring renovations. I wish I had more time for this. The J.D.S. Nursery Trail, the Arner Point Trail and the Ferguson Trail were renovated. The Pollard Trail (formerly the Higgins Trail) was also renovated. Thanks to Donna Roemmele and Stan Rhoades for their help.

Mrs. Maxine Hartley and Mrs. Sharon Mederos are new members of the Eastern Bluebird Committee. Welcome aboard, ladies! Together, they are monitoring EWSWA Transfer Station #2 EABL Trail. This property is the closed landfill site on the Albuna Townline.

In mid March, Maxine and myself checked out this trail. We washed out all seven houses and relocated a few. We planted a few hunting perches near bird houses in stark areas. We were encouraged to see a pair of EABL at one bird house.

White Eggs

Every year we have a few EABL eggs that are not your regular blue colour. Sometimes the eggs are powder blue or even pure white. These eggs are white like a hen's egg, not pearly white like a Tree Swallow egg.

This year so far we have two reports of white EABL eggs. At Arner Point there is a

nest of five. And, about one kilometre away, is another nest of five at the Hunter's Sugar Bush. Perhaps these pairs of EABL are related.

We Need Another Monitor

The beautiful Twin Creeks Conservation Area has seven EABL boxes, but, alas, no monitor. This conservation area is on County Road #1, just north of the big town of Wheatley.

Grease

I'm not talking about that 1978 John Travolta- Olivia Newton-John movie. I'm talking about coating the EABL house posts with some sort of grease. Most of us use Vaseline mixed with cayenne pepper. We love all the wild animals but we do not want them eating our young nestlings or eggs. Please grease all of your bird house posts, if you have not already.

Also, keep stamping down any tall vegetation growing around your bird house posts. Mice will climb goldenrod and other sturdy wild plants and jump several inches onto the bird house.

Best wishes for the 2002 nesting season!

For the Birds

by Betty Learmouth

Eight ECFNC members enjoyed an early spring walk at ECFNC member's Forrest Elmslie's woodlot, *For the Birds* on April 28, 2002. Two other ECFNC members enjoyed the view of the feeders, reporting White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, American Goldfinch and House Finch. Just an hour before the visitors arrived, Forrest reported the first Rose-breasted Grosbeak sighting of the season, a species that breeds in the woodlot. Northern Oriole and Orchard Oriole are both summer residents in the woodlot. The week prior to the ECFNC visit, Red Crossbills were seen at the feeders. Last year Pileated Woodpeckers were observed in this large mature woodlot which totals 98 acres, of which Forrest owns 52 acres.

Prior to the ECFNC walk, Donna Sale presented a certificate to Forrest in appreciation for allowing NHRP members to enter Forrest's woodlot to collect seed material for the NHRP. Forrest was pleased to receive the certificate, assuring Donna

that the certificate would be placed on display.

As we began our walk, we noted the woodlot's floor was covered in a carpet of fresh green vegetation. Everyone contributed to the identification of the plant species seen. Mayapple, Wild Geranium, Yellow Violet, False Mermaid, and False Solomon's Seal grew at the trail's edge. Large spreading carpets of showy White Trillium were seen throughout the woodlot in the drier portions.

Spring Beauty were still blooming, although Trout Lily seemed past blooming until we found a few individuals blooming in the middle of the trail. The moist rich soils nurture Jack-in-the-pulpit which grow throughout the woodlot, singly and in clusters. Cutleaf Toothwort was observed fairly often, a few flowers still in bloom. Wayne Wannick pointed out the leaves of Wild Phlox, then a Columbine not quite ready to bloom, and Stinging Nettle along the trail.

Fleabane grew on the trail, as did the delicate Wood Anemone. Bev Wannick showed us the leaves of White Baneberry or Doll's Eyes. Then Donna Sale came back along the trail to alert us to an extraordinarily tall Smooth Serviceberry which Donna noticed only because some of its blossoms were on the trail, causing Donna to look upwards.

Virginia Waterleaf, Purple Violet, Kidneyleaf Buttercup with its tiny yellow blossoms were all noted along the trail. Near the far point of the trail, we spotted several boulders, then observed a slight rise beyond the boulders. We were looking at an esker, a glacial landform that is found frequently around the Harrow region.

Wayne Wannick commented that he had conducted a plant survey in Forrest's woodlot in the 1970s. The biologists called this woodlot and another nearby the Spicebush Woods as this small tree species was found throughout each rich, wet woodland.

We wish to thank Forrest Elmslie for his hospitality and for providing an opportunity for Essex County naturalists to enjoy this fine woodlot.

For the Birds is open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays from April 14 – June 10 and September 16 – November 10 at a charge of \$5 person. Please call Forrest at 735-4997 for further information.

More Garlic Mustard Adventures

by Betty Learmouth

Ojibway Nature Centre has had a program aimed at Garlic Mustard control in the Ojibway Park oak woodlands for at least the last eight years. Staff regularly patrol for Garlic Mustard each May. Areas where this invasive exotic plant grows are noted with

the plants then pulled by both staff and volunteer. The collected plants are removed from the site, then sent to the regular landfill. In this way the mature plants are eliminated and the seed bank does not increase. Garlic Mustard is under control at Ojibway Park through these yearly efforts.

This year Bonnie Ross, a volunteer with the Friends of Ojibway Prairie and an ECFNC member, invited other Friends to participate in a Garlic Mustard pull on Pelee Island. Three Friends of Ojibway Prairie, Shirley Grondin, Margaret Jennings and Betty Learmouth, all accepted Bonnie's invitation for this working holiday on Pelee Island. We sailed on the M.V. *Jiimaan* Thursday evening, May 23, 2002, stayed overnight at Pelee Island's Stone Hill Bed and Breakfast, arriving at The Nature Conservancy of Canada's Shaughnessy Cohen Memorial Savanna at 9:00 a.m. on May 24, 2002 with a good supply of green garbage bags. As the ECFNC is steward of this property, this was a fine opportunity to fulfill our obligations.

The day's weather was cool and overcast, the vegetation fresh and lush on Stone Road after May's record low temperatures and frequent rains. Shirley worked southward along Stone Road on the Shaughnessy Cohen property, noting "lots of Garlic Mustard," but finding that the plant was not always easy to pull, especially if the entire root was to be removed. The main stem often angled into the soil and the underlying limestone, causing the stem to snap, leaving the root behind. Other flowering plants in the woodlands observed by Shirley were anemone, Wild Phlox, Sweet-cicely, Wild Strawberry, Solomon Seal and False Solomon Seal. Black-capped Chickadees were heard calling.

Bonnie and Margaret also worked along the Stone Road in a southerly direction, but on the Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Nature Reserve. In addition to the flowering plants reported by Shirley, Bonnie and Margaret stated that Wild Phlox was abundant, appearing with both pale blue and white blossoms. Narrow-leaved Spring Beauty was in bloom. A Northern Cardinal was heard.

Betty worked east along the northern boundary of the property, finding Garlic Mustard in pockets rather than distributed throughout this moist part of the property. Flowering plants observed were Herb Robert, False Mermaid, Wild Strawberry on the well drained ditch banks, Sweet-cicely, Narrow-leaved Spring Beauty, Horseradish growing in the ditch, and Common Periwinkle along the East West Road edge. Large-seed Forget-me-not was just beginning to show its tiny white flowers within the moist woodland.

Birds seen in the moist woodland were a pair of Black-throated Blue Warblers, a Chestnut-sided Warbler and several Black-capped Chickadees. While checking the ditch for debris at the overgrown retired agricultural land, a coiled melanistic Garter Snake was found on leaf litter which was viewed by everyone before we headed for a late lunch break. We stored 16 bags of Garlic Mustard and garbage, to be picked up at a later date for disposal.

Pelee Island Heritage Centre's Curator Ron Tiessen suggested we go to Lighthouse Point Provincial Nature Reserve for warbler activity. Upon departing the Heritage Centre, we paused to watch at least four Ruby-throated Hummingbirds zipping about in the flowering fruit tree on the Centre's lawn. At the Lighthouse Point trail head we were pleased to spot Redstarts (2), Canada Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and a dejected looking Eastern Kingbird slumped on the roadway near the nature reserve. Other wildlife sightings while on the island included Eastern Cottontails and two Fox Squirrels, each crossing the road ahead of our vehicle.

Our group stopped at Alles Gute Bakery which we all agreed was well worth the time as we sampled delicious cookies at our coffee break aboard the M.V. Jiimaan on our return to the mainland.

Pelee Island Reverse Migration

by Betty Learmouth

A note from ECFNC member Jim McAllister on May 11 on the *Ontbirds Listserv* re the Pelee Island reverse migration : Just a few comments to enlarge on Rob Tymstra's report from Pelee Island. The weather on Friday and Saturday (May 3 and 4) was rather cool and windy and the birding activity was quite slow. As the weather improved on Sunday (May 5), the birding activity increased appreciably. The weather forecast for Monday was for overcast skies, winds out of the southwest and cool temperatures. There seemed to be no reason to get to Fish Point at the crack of dawn as previously so it was just after 8 a.m. when we arrived.

As we proceeded down the west road , the number of birds in the trees was incredible. It was like an enormous fallout had occurred only these birds were flying south back toward Fish Point. While walking toward the Point, our group met Rob Tymstra's group returning from the tip. Rob told us to proceed directly to the tip because the whole area was filled with birds.

Never in my thirty years of birding have I ever seen anything like what I saw this day. There were birds in every tree and bush, literally and many others on the ground. Overhead, there was a steady stream of birds flying nonstop past the tip heading toward Middle Island. While some birds stopped briefly, the vast majority just streamed by. This flight of thousands (tens of thousands?) of migrants continued for the next five hours without let up. Only after 1:00 p.m. did the numbers tail off but the reverse migration continued all day.

The migrants included mockingbird, 50+ Red-headed Woodpeckers, hundreds of orioles both Orchard and Baltimore, at least 28 species of warbler including 6 Hooded,

Prothonotary, Golden-winged and Blue-winged, Mourning and Orange-crowned, six species of vireo including Philadelphia and 5 White-eyed in addition to countless Blue Jays, blackbirds and grackles among others. Other birds noted later that day at the Lighthouse were Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, hundreds of Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Black-billed Cuckoo, another Hooded Warbler and many other warblers as well as Tufted Titmouse and good numbers of thrushes.

The good shorebird habitat of last year has largely disappeared because of higher water. The leaf development is not nearly as far along as in past years so viewing birds is greatly enhanced this spring.

Two theories to account for reverse migration I've heard are 1) birds migrating great distances become disorientated when they arrive in areas new to them and return hence they came and 2) when the birds arrive and the weather is cold, the lack of insects forces the birds to return to warmer climes until they have fed. Any other theories would be welcome.

Pelee Island Weekend

by Rob Dunlop

As eighteen members of our club gathered at the Leamington dock, Saturday morning, May 4th, fair weather and promising skies set the tone for a beautiful weekend of birding and exploration of Pelee Island. Dave Kraus was our leader and his knowledge, attention to our needs and well-rounded itinerary were much appreciated.

After getting unpacked at the Westview Motel, we boarded a comfortable bus and Ken Buck, our driver, took us to Sheridan Point. Dave warned the group of poison ivy along the trail; we then began our search for interesting sightings. As usual there were some keen observers. Margaret Jennings, for example, spotted fifty-two species of birds in two days. Large painted turtles, morel mushrooms, the rare Blue Ash, the Herb Robert flower, and the lovely Sugar Maple flowers vied for our attention as we scanned for warblers, thrashers, kinglets and sparrows.

After lunch at our hotel, we drove to Dave's property to see his restoration efforts. Everyone was impressed with the beauty of both the farm and the wild area. Many birds were seen in the sheltering trees.

Next we explored Lighthouse Point Provincial Nature Reserve. The wind was churning the lake as we walked the beach to the historic lighthouse. Occasional pieces of coal lying on the sand were reminders that many ships had sunk in these treacherous waters. To the west of the lighthouse many gulls, terns, egrets and herons were available for viewing. Also prehistoric carp rolled the shallows in their search for food. Dave got a Black-bellied Plover in his scope. Opportunistic phragmites were reclaiming

the barren shoreline.

Dinner was at the *Anchor and Wheel*. Nautical artifacts created a charming ambiance as we ate a delicious buffet and traded stories of past outings. A bonus of these trips is learning where the great nature vacations can be found. Costa Rica, Arizona, Cuba and Mexico came up. But a gentleman sitting next to our group reminded us to cherish our own "backyard." For the past five years he had driven from Halifax (1,300 kilometres) to visit Pelee Island!

Juliet Renaud came down from Toronto to be on our outing. It's not Halifax but it took some effort and everyone was glad to see her again!

Sunday dawned cool and bright but soon warmed up – or was it the steaming coffee, hot breakfast and animated conversation that had us raring to go?

A highlight of the trip was a visit to Ben Porchuk at *The Wilds of Pelee Outdoor Centre for Conservation*. Here Ben studies the island snakes (he displayed the Eastern Fox Snake and the Blue Racer for us), develops sustainable habitats for both people and animals, and has a teaching centre where high school students can have a hands-on learning experience with nature and the environment. We were fascinated by Ben's creative work – a functioning windmill, a compost toilet, a water conserving shower, a hibernaculum for snakes, restoration work and much more! His able assistant, his six year old daughter Sienna, rounded up some snakes for our perusal and aided her dad on the tour. The lucky students who interact with Ben and his learning centre are sure to have a positive life long connection with nature. If you get to the island give Ben a visit as he is very generous of his time with interested people.

The last and longest tour of the weekend was to Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve. Here are available one sixth of Ontario's plant species! White Trilliums, Mayapples, and many other species were in evidence. Birds were plentiful and Margaret was ecstatic because she sighted a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher!

At Peregrine's Pond where the water is higher than last year, Blanding's Turtles were observed. Waterfowl was everywhere as well as warblers and numerous sparrows. The beach area was restful and set the mood for our trip home.

The group agreed that this had been a great two days in terms of weather and sightings! Also new friendships were made and old ones strengthened. Once again sincere thanks to Dave Kraus and his wife, Michelle, for all their efforts which made the trip go smoothly and productively!

June 23 - ECFNC Summer Excursion

Take this opportunity to familiarize yourself with our early summer butterflies during a morning hike at Point Pelee National Park with lepidopterist Alan Wormington.

Probable Barn Owl Sighting at Little River

by Betty Learmouth

The following is an e-mail from ECFNC member Randy Horvath on the *Ontbirds listserv* dated May 8, 2002: Early yesterday evening (May 7) as I was leaving the Little River area, I encountered three young girls on the path. Just as I passed them, I overheard one say, "Last night there was an owl with a head like a monkey in the tree in my front yard. It freaked me out!"

I was incredulous, and immediately engaged her in conversation. I asked her to describe exactly what she saw, without asking any leading questions, and sure enough, she described a Barn Owl very accurately. We talked at length about it and discussed the other owls typically seen here (Screech- and Long-eareds); she was familiar with them both, but knew nothing of Barn Owls. In fact, she was frightened by the owl she saw, wondering "if it was diseased or something" because of the weird white face. I am inclined to think that she did in fact see a Barn Owl, as unlikely as it seems.

And given that one was confirmed by Phil Roberts the first week of March just 9-10 kilometres from here, it does make you wonder. If the bird is hanging around, it has excellent habitat suitable for its patrolling-open-fields style of hunting, and I know just where to look for it. The weather forecast for this evening is not promising, but I will search for it the first opportunity I have--heck, I have an umbrella!--and will of course apprise everyone if I have any luck. Anyone else wishing to try their luck should concentrate their efforts along the Ganatchio Trail between Riverside Drive East and the VIA Rail tracks just north of Tecumseh Road East. This can be accessed by taking Little River Road from Lauzon or Riverdale; drive in over the bridge at Little River and park in the lot near the toboggan hill.

The Ivory-billed
Woodpecker



HAVE YOU SEEN
THIS BIRD?

Quest for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker is known by anyone who is a birder in North America. Tantalizing reports of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker's continued existence have circulated throughout the last few decades with a photograph taken in May 1971 as the latest documented evidence of its existence since the 1950s. Then a credible sighting by a forestry student, David Kulivan, out for a day of Wild Turkey shooting on April 1, 1999 in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area of Southeast Louisiana caused another upsurge

of interest and speculation.

Readers of the December 2001 issue of *Birding* were treated to an Ivory-billed Woodpecker cover story by *Birding's* Associate editor James J. Williams. Prior to writing his article, Williams had spent two weeks searching for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker during two visits to the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, first in January 2000 and again in February 2001. For someone looking quickly through Williams' article, an oversized *Wanted* ad for two experienced birders prominently alerts the reader to an organized search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

One of the birders accepted to participate in the search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker was Alan Wormington, ECFNC member and well known Essex County naturalist with a particular interest in Point Pelee bird and butterfly species. Luckily Alan had previously worked for Dr. J. Van Remsen, a professor of biological sciences at Louisiana State University and curator of its Museum of Natural Science, who was organizing the search.

Alan departed Essex County in mid January for Louisiana, a member of a search team that included six persons. Sponsors of the search were *Carl Zeiss Sports Optics*, with assistance from Louisiana State University, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Two days of planning meetings were held on January 14 and 15, 2002 in Baton Rouge, LA, followed on January 16, 2002 by flights over the intended search areas, the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area (PRWMA) and the Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge (BCNWR) located near Slidell, LA. Both areas are huge tracts of forest lands, the PRWMA is nearly 35,000 acres and the BCNWR is approximately 36,000 acres. The PRWMA is described as bottomland hardwood forest while the BCNWR north of the PRWMA is slightly higher and drier.

The official search was underway on January 16, 2002 with the team to work in pairs for safety and for confirmation of sightings. The days were long, the searches beginning at dawn and ending at dusk. The terrain was challenging as the team members had to walk extensive woodlands, struggle through mud swamp, wade across streams and wet areas, and canoe along larger waterways. Several overnight and extended camping trips were undertaken by the team.

Press interest was high with interviews requested from search team members by media organizations including *The Windsor Star*, CBC Radio, the *Canadian Discovery Channel's* Tom Hince, *Detroit Free Press*, the *New York Times*, *The Ottawa Citizen*, the *National Geographic Society*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *CBS Sunday Morning News*, *USA Today*, and the *Washington Post*. Press interviews and requests to accompany search team members eventually ceased mid way through the thirty day search as the interviews were deemed time consuming and interfering with the search efforts for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Events that occurred on the 11th day of the search focussed the search efforts.

On January 27, 2002, four search members (Alan and another search member were elsewhere) at 3:30 p.m. were in a PRWMA bottomland forest area with large excavated cavities in some trees, having arrived earlier to explore and then to await for returning roosting birds at sunset. The four heard a series of very loud raps. Team member Martjan Lammertink hurriedly unwrapped a parabolic microphone from its water proof bags, successfully recording a fourth double rap, a single rap and four subsequent raps. No further raps were heard, while the watch at the large cavities revealed Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker and Wood Duck were using the cavities as night time roosts. That evening the searchers determined with the use of GPS coordinates that the sounds recorded were 340 metres from the recorder although Lammertink felt the sounds were closer, perhaps 150 to 200 metres.

Searchers looked and listened again in the same area on January 28 with no further sounds or sightings. January 29 two searchers heard raps over a half hour close to the site where sounds were heard on January 27 while one other searcher in another team heard one rap, then both observers heard raps coming from two locations at least 200 metres apart.

Later searchers learned that the recording team from Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology had heard a double rap at 10:30 a.m. on January 27, about 1.3 kilometres from the search team's site. The Cornell group reported spotting a Pileated Woodpecker and an unidentified large woodpecker flying off. Pileated Woodpeckers were heard calling in the vicinity in the general vicinity of the area where the raps were heard.

Luckily for today's Ivory-billed Woodpecker searchers, studies were carried out in the 1930s by ornithologists providing details of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker's natural history. Ornithologist James T. Tanner searched and documented historical records of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker throughout the known and former territories of this species in southeastern United States. Tanner studied a nesting pair of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in the Singer Tract of northeastern Louisiana, documenting the habitat, feeding habits and habits of this uncommon species.

Tanner determined that Ivory-billed Woodpeckers prefer southeastern U.S. bottomland forests of large tree species particularly sweet gum and oak association forests. Newly dead trees attract Ivory-billed Woodpeckers as the large grubs underneath the still closely attached bark is the preferred food of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers. Ivory-billed Woodpeckers "scale" the bark from the newly dead trees, ripping the bark from the limbs and trunks with their large, powerful bills, exposing the cream-coloured sapwood, leaving bark flakes attached and other pieces tossed aside. Pileated Woodpeckers do not "scale" in this manner as their food source is not the particular grub that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker prefers.

Tanner also documented that areas which Ivory-billed Woodpeckers preferred were also favoured habitat for high numbers of other woodpecker species. In Tanner's study, he counted 36 Pileated Woodpeckers and 126 Red-bellied Woodpeckers within a large

Ivory-billed Woodpecker territory. Alan Wormington indicated that the area where the raps were heard was habitat to a large and diversified woodpecker population.

Recordings of the distinctive raps of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker were recorded after Tanner's searches in the late 1930s by ornithologists Allen and Kellogg. These sounds are now available on CD discs from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Library of Natural Sounds. Searchers were well acquainted with these distinctive sounds.

Twelve recording units or Acoustic Recording Units (ARUs) were put in place by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in the area of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker search, with recordings to extend beyond the Zeiss search into to mid March. These recordings will be analyzed by computer with the hope that more sounds will have been recorded during 6,000 hours of recording. Results will be released in April 2002.

The 2002 Ivory-billed Woodpecker search is over, the searchers at home and resting after a demanding search. But the question continues to be asked. Does the Ivory-billed Woodpecker still exist?

The answer appears to be that there is evidence that indeed the species does exist. David Kulivan's 1999 sighting, the raps, the scaling, the large excavated cavities, the suitable habitat, and a large and diversified woodpecker species population present in the suitable habitat, all point to Ivory-billed Woodpecker presence.

Meanwhile interest in the Ivory-billed Woodpecker search continues. Alan provided updated interviews with CBC radio and *The Windsor Star* upon his return to Essex County. A writer representing the Federation of Ontario Naturalists *Seasons: Ontario's Nature & Environment Magazine* arranged an interview with Alan on March 22, 2002.

A word of appreciation to Alan who kindly provided background materials, personal anecdotal information, and proof reading of the article before its publication.

Selecting Eastern Bluebird Habitat

by Don Bissonnette

Historically, Eastern Bluebirds (EABL) in the Great Lakes area have nested on or near grass lands. The grass lands were in the form of prairies, savannahs, alvars and woodland meadows. These areas produce grasshoppers, the main food of Eastern Bluebirds.

Today EABL can be attracted to most grassy areas such as pastureland and fallow fields. However, EABL are considered fussy nesters. The following points should be kept in mind when deciding where to put up your bird house.

Peace and quiet: All-terrain vehicles and radios will keep EABL and many other birds away.

Domestic cats: If domestic cats (whether they be feral, barn or house cats) frequent a grass land, EABL are not likely to nest there.

Direction: The bird house should face East or Southeast.

Hunting Perches: EABL hunt by sitting three feet to five feet off the ground. They watch the ground below for insects. Good EABL habitat will have at least several good hunting perches. These hunting perches could be solitary trees, dead trees, stumps, fences, or low utility wires. The EABL favour bird houses that have a few hunting perches twenty to one hundred feet in front of the entrance hole.

If your area lacks hunting perches, you can add some. Gather a few fallen limbs, and plant them in front of the bird house. The fallen limbs should be several feet tall, and multi-branched. Re-enforce them by wiring them to T-bar posts.

Mowing: Frequently mowed areas, such as lawns and cemeteries do not support large populations of grasshoppers. As a result, these areas have limited success in attracting EABL.

EABL prefer areas where the grass is rough cut. This is where the grass is cut only a few times a year and never short. These areas support grasshoppers.

EABL also prefer pastureland. As long as the pasture is not over grazed there will be a good population of grasshoppers. Pastures tend to be quiet locations which also encourage EABL nesting.

Elevation: If your land is rolling or hilly, place your bird house on a high elevation. The EABL prefer houses in highlands, over bird houses placed in lowlands.

Winter feed: In winter, EABL feed on fruit, such as sumac, winterberry, wild grapes, juniper berry and Black Gum. EABL start house hunting in March and early April. During this time, insects are scarce. The EABL are still likely feeding mainly on fruit. Bird houses placed in fruit-bearing habitats are likely to attract EABL.

Water: Everything needs to drink. EABL houses should be placed within one half mile of water. The water can be in a ditch, a creek, a marsh, a woodland pond or a bird bath.

If a bird house is more than one half mile from any water source, it will be less likely to attract EABL.

Bird House Density: If you place two or more bird houses on the same habitat, place them a good distance apart. Place them so that each bird house is barely visible or not visible at all, from the next one. EABL rarely ever nest in "bird house cities," areas that are crowded with bird houses.

More experienced Bluebirders agree that two bird houses per acre is enough. EABL are territorial, each pair claiming a territory of one to four acres.

Let's suppose you have three bird houses on two acres of ideal EABL habitat. In March, you should have three pairs of EABL, one pair in each house. However, in late March, each pair becomes very aggressive towards the other pairs. They sing loudly, chase each other, even fight.

By early April, only one pair is left on this habitat. The most aggressive pair begins to nest. By late April, the two remaining houses will be home to Tree Swallows.

A Big Tree: EABL will favour an area if the bird house is within 700 feet of a large tree. The EABL will use a large tree as a fledgling tree. When EABL fledge, the parents lead them into the tall tree's canopy. Here the fledglings stay for a week. They fly around the canopy, strengthening their muscles.

The adult EABL will stay in the tree's canopy during the hottest days of the summer enjoying the breeze and the shade.

In March a male EABL will sit in the large tree. He will sing loudly to attract a mate and to keep other male EABL off his habitat.

Hiding Places: Your bird house should be placed at least fifty feet from any hiding place. A hiding place could be a woodland edge, a dense shrub, a dense tree, or a tangle of vines. All these hiding places make a bird house very attractive to House Wrens or House Sparrows. These birds will destroy EABL eggs and EABL young. Then they will take the nest over. House Sparrows are notorious for killing adult EABL.

Speaking of House Sparrows: Keep your bird house far away from places where House Sparrows congregate. Some examples are bird feeding stations, old farm buildings, and out door poultry feeding areas.

Encourage your neighbors to quit feeding millet type bird seed. Instead feed only sunflower seed, niger seed and suet. Also plant native fruit-producing trees and shrubs.

Signs of Spring at Ojibway, March 24, 2002

by Margaret Jennings

On a chilly Sunday afternoon, ten Field Naturalists and one dog met Kristen Sawery and Lisa Tocco of Ojibway. While walking through the Ojibway Provincial Prairie Nature Preserve we heard Chorus Frogs singing. Northern Cardinals and Red-winged Blackbirds were also calling loudly. We had good long looks at a pair of Eastern Blackbirds and a Red-headed Woodpecker. Other sightings included a Red-bellied Woodpecker and Downy Woodpecker, Tree and Fox Sparrow, Blue Jays, a Dark-eyed Junco and a Red-tailed Hawk being chased by American Crows.

The pussy willows were in full bud and the Prairie Willows were just beginning to open. It was a good time to enjoy the beginning of spring on the Ojibway Prairie.

Thank you to Kristen and Lisa for leading our group.

Habitat Restoration Conference 2002 for Essex and Kent Counties, March 30th, 2002.

Shortly after 7:00 am volunteers and group representatives with displays started to trickle through the doors of the Ciacciario Club. By 8:45 there was a flood of conference attendees at the registration tables.

The introductory session was led by Don Gordon of Carolinian Canada. Restoration enthusiasts, including; farmers, urban gardeners, hunters and naturalists proceeded to attend the days 26 concurrent sessions. These sessions included How to Create Frog-Friendly Backyard Ponds, to Financial Benefits in Conserving and Restoring Natural Environments. The conference was completed with our dinner speaker Ben Porchuk - Having Faith: Lost Snake-Lady Found.

This full day event would not have been possible without the significant contributions of many. Speakers contributed their time and many drove great distances to share their passion and knowledge of habitat restoration. Volunteers manned the

registration table, introduced speakers and monitored sessions. Club volunteers included, Betty Learmouth, Donna Sale, Joanne Grondin, Shirley Grondin, Peggy Hurst, Ralph Benoit, Teresa Austring, Margaret Jennings and Mary Celestino.



Known as the "Swarm" for their ability to move in and complete assigned tasks with speed and efficiency, Linda Corkum's studentvolunteers from the University of Windsor pose for a picture in the foyer of the Ciociaro Club.

The diversity and quality of our speakers was wonderful. Many thanks goes out to: Mary Gartshore, Mathis Natvik, Michelle Kanter, Dan Bissonnette, Dave Kraus, Lorraine Johnson, Paul Morris, Kim Delaney, David West, Elaine and Jim Bosveld, Phil Roberts, Paul Pratt, Pat Schincariol, Andy Pedden, Patricia Rhoads, Gerry Waldron, Ben Porchuk, Kathryn Arthur, Jim Ludwig, Dan Lebedyk, Casey Colthurst, Don Gordon and Peter Mitchell.

Many informative displays were on hand for the participants to visit. Displays were set up by; Citizens' Environment Alliance of Southwestern Ontario, The Wetland Habitat Fund, Natural Gardens, The Essex Region Conservation Authority, Lorraine Johnson, The Natural Habitat Restoration Program, The Essex-Kent Organic Growers, The Backyard Habitat Program of Essex County & Windsor, Great Lakes Sustainability Fund, The Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, The Ecological Gifts Program, Christian Farmers' Federation of Ontario, Sydenham Field Naturalists, Woodland Farm, The

Rondeau Watershed Coalition, the Environmental Commissioners' Office of Ontario, The Kingsville Horticultural Society, Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority, Parks Canada, Ojibway Nature Centre, and the Essex County Woodlot Owners' Association.

Funding for this conference was provided by the Essex County Stewardship Network, Parks Canada - Point Pelee National Park, Ontario Stewardship Opportunities Fund, Ducks Unlimited, Sydenham Field Naturalists' and the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund. Door prizes were donated by the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority and Pteraphylla Native Plant Nursery. TD Canada Trust - Friends of the Environment Fund committed \$1500.00 to the Canada South Land Trust.

Planning Committee members who worked to make this event happen were; Terry Anderson (Essex County Woodlot Owners' Association), Dan Bissonnette (Backyard Habitat Program for Essex County and Windsor), Dan Dufour (Point Pelee National Park), Karen Cedar (City of Windsor, Parks and Recreation), Mark Emery (Essex County Stewardship Network/Stewardship Kent), Tom Hurst (Essex County Field Naturalists' Club), Kevin Money (Essex Region Conservation Authority), Ian Naisbitt (Little River Enhancement Group), Mathis Natvik (Stewardship Kent), Brent Reaume (Stewardship Kent/Essex County Stewardship Network), Patricia Rhoads (Committee Chair), Pat Schincariol (Windsor Pesticide Task Force).

Thanks to all who contributed and attended this first Habitat Restoration Conference for Essex and Kent Counties! - Patricia Rhoads

Natural Habitat Restoration Planting Report - Spring 2002

by: *Patricia Rhoads*

Back to Nature Project

Funding has been committed by Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program for \$40,000.00 to restore 21 acres of land in Essex County to natural habitat. This most recent club initiative to restore prairie, meadow, forest and wetland has already begun on the properties of Helen & Murray Myles of Comber, and Nelson & Carol Pencarinha of Wheatley.

We are again blessed with landowners who are willing to commit their land to habitat restoration as well as committing financially and to maintain these restored lands for optimum success of the plantings.

Approximately 3,000 trees and shrubs have been planted this spring. Our

community volunteers included; Wheatley Area Public School, East Mersea School, Belle River Public School, Centennial Central School, Essex District High School (Dave's classes), 2nd Leamington, Scouting Organization and the 1st Comber Scouts.

It is with great sadness that I report that Marsha Law, a teacher at Belle River Public School has passed away. Ms. Law had participated for the second time with her students in our restoration projects. She was visibly in pain when she arrived with her students on May 21 to help restore our shared environment. Yet with our offers to call the bus back so that she could go home, she was committed to stay for the students. It is with great appreciation that I write this, as the irony of just having my grade 2 teacher participate in a planting the week previous. I became acutely aware that there are many people who influence who we become.

Please take time to say a prayer for Marsha's family and thank someone who has made a positive difference in your life.

Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority - Site #2

It is wonderful to report a 99% success rate for last year's plantings. When our restoration crew arrived to move a few trees into more appropriate locations, we had difficulty deciding where we should squeeze the trees being transferred.

Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority - Site #3

The 2nd Woodslee Scouts and Cubs and 1st Emeryville Cubs came out with our to the closed Puce Road site this spring to help us plant the remaining trees to complete our Habitat Connection 2001! project. Thanks to the funding from Shell Canada and The Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority and the many community volunteers who have helped to increase natural linkages and habitat.

Habitat Connection 2001!

The final touches have been completed at Richard and Cathies Smith's. It is wonderful to see the great diversity of oaks, hickories and many other species greening with renewed life. Students from Kingsville Public School and Harrow Sr. Elementary School came out this spring to plant the final trees for this project.

Many thanks to Richard and Cathie, EcoAction Community Funding Program and our many community volunteers! With Richard's tireless energy and proven commitment to maintain the restored site, this will be a show-case restoration site. Thank You!

Planting the Seed - A Look at the Planting and Distribution of Native Plants in Essex County

by Dan Bissonnette

In the recent edition of the Egret, a listing of local growers of native plants was presented. This featured six local growers from Essex County and one from Kent County. It represented the growth of the native plant industry within the last ten years. Its entries represented individual stories of work, dedication, experimentation and innovation. However, this one page list ultimately begged the question, "Where do we go from here?". While this article makes no claim to completely address this complex question, it is intended to stimulate discussion on this issue.

Since the advent of the Natural Habitat Restoration Program (NHRP) in 1991, significant strides has been made in developing a native plant industry in Essex County. Through the dedication of individual growers, much progress has been made. Of course, this county has one less grower, with the recent loss of this industry's pioneer, John Moore. However, those that remain present a varied mix of size, specialization and scope, which may help provide some insights as to where this industry is headed in the future.

The rate of supply and demand of native plants over the past ten years has had its share of growing pains. It's also important to note that demand for native plants is driven by two distinct, but related movements. The first is ecological restoration, which usually involves large scale plantings that seek to establish native plant communities. The second is naturalization, which usually involve small scale, residential plantings that seek to represent native plant communities.

From my perspective as the Coordinator of the Backyard Habitat Program of Essex County & Windsor, I've had the privilege to speak with a wide variety of growers, retailers and consumers. While some local growers have expressed worry about selling their plants, the greatest limitation within the naturalized gardening movement remains reliable sources of native plant stock. The recent Ojibway Plant Sale last May 18 confirmed this. At the same time, there are more retail outlets offering native stock, with several individual garden centers expanding their selection of native trees, shrubs and even wildflowers. Although the overall local landscape industry has been slow to respond to naturalized gardening, more retailers will eventually come onboard, once the economic opportunities are realized.

The Natural Habitat Restoration Program has always safeguarded local biodiversity by using regionally native grown from local seed sources in its projects. The Backyard Habitat Program has also upheld these standards among its members. But what will happen as other growers and retailers begin offering native plants? What assurances will local consumers have their plants are from local seed sources? Will they be provided

with staff that will help them make informed decisions? Will those plants marked "Native" actually be native at all?

At present, I also see a need for continued specialization. I feel that individuals who try to do it all, as wholesalers, retailers, seed collectors and specialty growers will inevitably be unable to meet the growing demand for native species. Perhaps some growers could specialize in certain plants, then wholesale to general suppliers who can devote more energy to retail sales. There are benefits to specialization, both in terms of types of plant material and type of sales format.

In talking with a number of gardeners, many have expressed a desire to raise their own native plants. At present, the Backyard Habitat Program is considering putting together a training seminar on native plant propagation, probably in September. Despite possible misgivings from present growers, it is widely felt that if more growers are inevitable, it's best they be provided with competent, effective instruction.

As well, some consideration should be given to working with garden centers, as opposed to trying to compete with them. Some have already expressed a desire to carry locally-sourced plant materials, if they were made available. By establishing cooperation between various stakeholders, mutual standards and working agreements could be established. This could involve the selling of indigenous plant materials in conjunction with signs, labeling, as well as orientation for staff. If this were coupled with public education, then informed consumers could match the increased supply with corresponding demand. Certification for prospective stakeholders might be as simple as a one day orientation session in mid-winter.

Perhaps the key to long term stability within the local native plant industry is not a responsibility to be shouldered alone by NHRP, nor the seven local growers. Instead, it could be a network of growers and retailers, both large and small, working in a coordinated effort to maintain industry quality in hand with environmental integrity. The growing demand for native plant materials in the home landscape is not merely an opportunity for local growers, but a necessary step in moving this industry forward. This is not intended to introduce a specific strategy, but merely begin a dialogue. Your input into this discussion is welcome, by phoning 322 - 5700, ext. 17, or E-mailing me at byhew@wincom.net. Beginning a discussion on the future of our native plant industry is not only essential for our local stakeholders, but in sustaining the well being of our native plant communities as well.

ECFNC Activities and Excursions

June – September 2002

For further information concerning the ECFNC excursions, contact Margaret Jennings (250-0705), Muriel Kassimatis (252-4801) or Betty Learmouth (944-0825). "Thank you" 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. Consider volunteering as an excursion leader.

June 12 – ECFNC Members Monthly

Meeting – This regular meeting will be held in Room C at the Essex Civic Centre Building, the Town of Essex at 7:30 p.m. Paul Pratt, Chief Naturalist at Ojibway Nature Centre will provide an update on the Massasauga Rattle Snake and research related to this endangered species.

June 13 - Ojibway Nature Centre Program – Nature Hotspot – Discover the breeding birds and other special features of the Maidstone Conservation Area. Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Fee: \$6/trip

June 16 - ECFNC Spring Excursion –

Join ECFNC member Paul DesJardins to learn about the fascinating dragonfly species that call Essex County home. Meet at 10:00 a.m. in the Ojibway Nature Centre's parking lot.

June 19 - Ojibway Nature Centre Program – Nature Hotspot – Discover the breeding birds and other special features of Arner Point and Cedar Creek. Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Fee: \$6/trip

June 19 – ECFNC Spring Excursion -

This Wednesday night excursion with Lynda Corkum, ECFNC member and University of Windsor researcher, is planned for the height

of the mayfly flight at Colchester Harbour on the shores of Lake Erie. Lynda will be at Colchester Harbour for setup at 9:30 p.m. with the mayflies at their peak numbers between 9:50 p.m. and 10:20 p.m. with the evening ending at 11:00 p.m. Linda will instruct us on sampling the mayflies in hoola hoops. We will also be able to assist with collecting adult mayflies and eggs. This should be a spectacular event as Linda is forecasting 2002 to be a record year for mayflies.

Please wear dark clothing, including long pants and a long sleeved shirt, which will reduce the attraction of mayflies, as well as a hat for head protection. To reach Colchester Harbour, at Malden Centre, in the Town of Amherstburg, take Highway 50 east, turn right at the Chinese restaurant in Colchester and proceed to the harbour. Parking is available at the top of the hill behind the restaurant. Park where there are no lights which will reduce the numbers of mayflies around your vehicle. Washrooms are available. If June 19 is rainy, Linda will be on site June 20.

June 21 - Ojibway Nature Centre Program – Bugs, Bats and Beyond (Family Programme) – Come out after dark (Friday evening) and be a part of Ojibway's fascinating night life. See bats, owls, moths and fireflies. A family discount is available. Date: June 21 Time:

Friday: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Fee: \$6 for adults, \$5 for youths

June 23 - ECFNC Summer Excursion -

Take this opportunity to familiarize yourself with our early summer butterflies during a morning hike at Point Pelee National Park with lepidopterist Alan Wormington. Alan's popular annual butterfly excursion begins with a slide presentation and useful butterfly watching tips at the Visitor Centre auditorium, followed by a walk down the West Beach to the Tip area; afterwards we will gather for lunch at Paula's Fish Place north of the park. Meet at the Point Pelee Visitor Centre at 9:30 a.m. Bring your binoculars, wear a hat and a long-sleeved shirt, use sun block, and carry water. There will be good opportunities for closeup photography. Don't miss this opportunity to "brush-up" on our Essex County butterflies for the upcoming butterfly counts.

June 26 - ECFNC Executive Meeting

Nature Summer Programs for Pre-school/Youth with the City of Windsor Parks and Recreation Department

Ojibway Nature Centre - Captivating Critters (Ages 3-4) - Wildlife exploration and nature fun for the younger set. Dates: July 8 - July 29 and August 12 - September 9 (no class Sept. 2) Time: Monday 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon or 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Fee; \$20/4 weeks plus \$1 material fee.

Ojibway Nature Centre - Kids "N Critters (Ages 5-6) - Wildlife viewing and nature-oriented activities for children. Dates: July 11 - August 19 Times: Thursday 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon or 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Fee:

\$7/2hours

Ojibway Nature Centre - Young Naturalist Day Camp (Ages 7-9) - Swamp walks, nature games and crafts for children ages 7-9. Early drop-off starting at 8:00 a.m. and late pick-up until 5:00 p.m. Date July 10 - July 31 and August 7 - August 28 Times: Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Fee: \$78/4 days plus \$2 material fee.

Ojibway Nature Centre - Windsor Wildlife Watchers (Ages 7 - 11) - Discover Windsor's wildlife through activities, hikes and field studies of our natural surroundings. We will be exploring Ojibway Park, Malden Park, Spring Garden area, Black Oak Heritage Park, Tallgrass Prairie Heritage Park and Ojibway Provincial Prairie Nature Preserve. Early drop-off starting at 8:00 a.m. and late pick-up until 5:00 p.m. Dates: July 15 - 19 or August 12 - 16 Time: Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Fee: \$98/week plus \$4 material fee

Ojibway Nature Centre - Creative Nature (Ages 10 - 15) - Develop your artistic skills and have fun creating something different and unique every class. Expand your appreciation of your natural surroundings through crafts and writing. Early drop-off starting at 8:00 a.m. and late pick-up until 5:00 p.m. Dates: July 9 - 30 Times: Tuesdays 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Fee \$78/4 days plus \$4 material fee

Ojibway Nature Centre - Outdoor Adventures (Ages 10 - 15) - Learn a variety of techniques for outdoor exploration, from map reading to first aid and from tying knots to wilderness camping. Early drop-off starting at 8:00 a.m. and late pick-up until 5:00 p.m. Dates: August 6 - 27 Time: Tuesday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Fee: \$78/4 days plus \$4 material fee

Summer Opportunities to Enjoy Nature in Essex County

July 1 – Point Pelee National Park Program – Tip your hat to the Tip of Canada at 10:00 a.m. on this special day! Other festivities include theatre programs and cake! Free entry!

July 6 – Ojibway Nature Centre Program - Windsor Butterfly Count – Attention butterfly watchers! Join us for Windsor's eighth annual butterfly tally. Help us with this exciting and valuable field inventory of Windsor's butterflies. Time: Saturday from sunup to sundown. Fee: \$5 participation fee to North American Butterfly Association. Call to register and for more information.

July 6 – October 20 - Point Pelee National Park Program – Friends of Point Pelee Nature Hikes – Saturday (9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.) and Sunday (1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.) Fee \$5/ person

July 10 – ECFNC Monthly Members Meeting – Join Faye Langmaid for a evening walk through the Spring Garden Prairie ANSI (Area of Scientific and Scientific Interest). Meet at the parking lot by the playground and ball park at the corner of Titcombe Road and Malden Road at 7:30 p.m. Titcombe Road is the road across from the Ojibway Nature Centre parking lot which is blocked to through traffic. You will need to either go along Armada or Sprucewood to Malden, then proceed to Titcombe and the parking lot.

July 20 - Point Pelee National Park Program – Night hike from 8:30 to 10:00 p.m. Free entry! Come and celebrate Parks Day with a wildlife night hike. Learn the secrets of the park's world after sunset!

July 31 – ECFNC Executive Meeting

July 31 – Ojibway Nature Centre Program – A unique opportunity to explore the relationship between prairie plants and insects – Wednesday 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Fee: \$6/trip New!

August 7 - Ojibway Nature Centre Program - A unique opportunity to explore the relationship between prairie plants and insects – Wednesday 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Fee: \$6/trip New!

August 10 - Point Pelee National Park Program – Annual butterfly count – An all day event to count butterflies for the North American Butterfly Association. Pre-registration is required. Fee: \$5 – includes dinner

August 14 - ECFNC Monthly Members Meeting – Enjoy an evening walk at Hillman Marsh Conservation Area with ERCA Biologist Dan Lebedyk as our guide. Meet at the Nature Centre at Hillman C.A. at 7:15 p.m. with hike departure at 7:30 p.m. sharp. Hillman March C.A. is reached by driving east along Oak Street out of the Town of Leamington.

August 21 - Ojibway Nature Centre Program – Weekday Warblers - Eliminate the confusion of fall warblers with these three field trips at the peak of warbler migration. Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Fee: \$18/3 days

August 28 - ECFNC Executive Meeting

August 28 - Ojibway Nature Centre Program - Weekday Warblers - Eliminate the confusion of fall warblers with these three field trips at the peak of warbler migration. Wednesday at

8:30 p.m. Fee: \$18/3 days

September - Point Pelee National Park Program - Monarchs and more hikes scheduled Wednesday through Sunday - Witness the migration of butterflies, birds and other animals. Meet at the Visitors Centre for 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. hike. Fee: \$10/person

September 4 - Ojibway Nature Centre Program - Weekday Warblers - Eliminate the confusion of fall warblers with these three field trips at the peak of warbler migration. Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Fee: \$18/3 days

September 7 - Point Pelee National Park Program - W. E. Saunders Birding Odyssey - Enjoy a day of birding and friendly competition! Meet at the Visitor Centre, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Cost is \$10 per participant which includes a BBQ lunch.

September 11 - ECFNC Monthly Members Meeting - Meeting to be held in Room C at the Essex Civic Centre at 7:30 p.m. Dan Bissonnette, Coordinator of the Backyard Habitat Program of Essex County and Windsor will be our speaker

September 7 and 8 - Festival of Hawks at Holiday Beach Conservation Area - Sharp-shinned Hawk Weekend, Monarchs and Hummingbirds, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - Enjoy a weekend of activities including guided hawk watching from the hawk tower, banding demonstrations and talks about both raptors and passerines, and live raptor displays. There will be hands-on children's activities, slide presentations including hawk identification, an art display and environmental displays. Pelee Wings Nature Store's display will feature sales of binoculars, guide books, clothing and nature photography. Light

refreshments will be served at the Blue Kestrel Café. ECFNC members are invited to volunteer to assist at the hands-on children's display, the display area including the ECFNC display, and the Blue Kestrel Cafe.

September 11 - Point Pelee National Park Program - Butterfly Gardening Workshop - Pre-registration is required. Contact the Visitor Centre.

September 14 and 15 - Festival of Hawks at Holiday Beach Conservation Area - Broad-winged Hawk Weekend and Dragonflies, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Enjoy a weekend of activities including guided hawk watching from the hawk tower, banding demonstrations and talks about both raptors and passerines, and live raptor display. Hands-on children's activities, slide presentations including hawk identification, an art display and environmental displays will be featured. Pelee Wings Nature Store will provide a display and sale of binoculars, guide books, clothing and nature photography. Light refreshments will be available at the Blue Kestrel Café. Paul Pratt will lead a dragonfly walk at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 16, 2000. ECFNC members are invited to volunteer to assist at the hands on children's display, the display area including the ECFNC display and the Blue Kestrel Cafe.

September 21 and 22 - Festival of Hawks at Holiday Beach Conservation Area - Peregrine Falcon Weekend and Fall Songbirds, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - Enjoy a weekend of activities including guided hawk watching from the hawk tower, banding demonstrations and talks about both raptors and passerines, and live raptor displays. Hands-on children's activities, slide presentations including hawk identification, an art display and environmental

displays will be featured. Pelee Wings Nature Store's display will include sales of binoculars, guide books, clothing and nature photography. Light refreshments at the Blue Kestrel Café. ECFNC members are invited to volunteer to assist at the hands-on children's display, the display area including the ECFNC display and the Blue Kestrel Cafe.

November 9 – Mark this date for our 18th

annual ECFNC dinner with a guest speaker from Pinery Provincial Park who will discuss restoration efforts at the Pinery Provincial Park and the future reintroduction of the Karner Blue butterfly. Look for more details in the next newsletter.