



The Egret

the Newsletter of the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club

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SONG SPARROW

Earth Day, 2006

Betty Learmouth

This year's Earth Day celebrations, held on the lawn of Ojibway Natue Centre on April 23, 2006, featured the background trill of American Toads from nearby Ojibway Creek. Last year the American Toads were silent, when four inches of snow blanketed the Park. Several species of swallows were noted flying for insects above the Creek.

A variety of environmental groups were on hand with displays including Citizens Protecting Ojibway Wilderness, Detroit River Cleanup Committee, Point Pelee National Park, Girl Guides of Canada, Jazzpurr Society, Solid Waste Authority of Windsor and Essex County, Friends of Ojibway Prairie, Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, Canada South Land Trust, Master Gardeners and many others. Good crowds made their way past the exhibitors until about 3:00 p.m at which time a cold rain discouraged the crowds.

In the picnic shelter, food vendors were on hand including *Bistro in a Box* with tasty sandwiches and wraps, Friends of Ojibway Prairie with their hotdog sale and the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club with its annual bake sale which covered three long tables this year.

ECFNC members who baked for the sale included Marg Calder, Donna Cowie, Shirley Dunlop, JoAnn Grondin, Shirley Grondin, Peggy Hurst, Margaret Jennings, Cathy Lapain, Betty Learmouth, Jim McAllister, Betty Moore, Helene Parks, Pauline Renaud, Bonnie Ross and Caroline Williams. A special mention for her kind assistance is Mary Schultz, Shirley Dunlop's 87 year old mother, who baked 10 fabulous large apple pies for the second year. Mary's pies were snapped up, as usual, by astute shoppers.

Those who volunteered to assist at the sale from noon to 4:00 p.m. were Donnie Cowie, Shirley Dunlop, Rob Dunlop, JoAnn Grondin, Denise Hartley, Margaret Jennings, and Pauline Renaud. Thank you to everyone for preparing your delicious baked goods and managing the sale. This successful fund raising effort raised \$450.00 for the ECFNC Heritage Fund.

About the Club . . .

The Essex County Field Naturalists' Club was incorporated December 9, 1984. 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 Ontario Nature/Federation of Ontario Naturalists.

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 National Park

322-5700

ERCA

776-5209

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Ontario Nature Liaison:	JoAnn Grondin
E.R.C.A. Liaison:	Bruno Sfalcin
Carolina Woods Liaison:	Ruth Junge
Point Pelee Liaison:	TBA
Bluebird Committee Chairman:	Don Bissonnette
Special Events Coordinator:	Karen Cedar
E.C.S.N.:	Tom Hurst
Ojibway Liaison:	Karen Cedar
Citizens' Environment Alliance:	Mark Buckner
Planning Advisory Committee:	Mark Buckner
Canada South Land Trust Liaison:	Betty Learmouth

Committees

Egret Editorial Committee: David D'hondt, Karen Cedar, Betty Learmouth, Nicole D'hondt, Shirley Grondin
Speaker: E.C.F.N.C. Directors
Field Trip: JoAnn Grondin, Margaret Jennings, Betty Learmouth
Annual Dinner: Heritage & Special Events Committees
Heritage Committee: JoAnn Grondin, Margaret Jennings, Muriel Kassimatis, Dave Kraus, Betty Learmouth, Jim McAllister, Bruno Sfalcin, Gerry Waldron, Pcg Wilkinson

Thank you to Nancy Murray for this newsletter design.

Detroit River Waterfowl

Betty Learmouth

Four naturalists joined Paul DesJardins on Sunday, February 26, 2006 for an opportunity to view wintering waterfowl on the Detroit River. Paul took us to the La Salle marina from which we had a good view of Fighting Island's shoreline. On the ride from Ojibway Nature Centre's parking lot to La Salle we spotted a single American Kestrel. We also saw three Red-tailed Hawks, two of which were circling over the Ojibway Parkway, just a short distance from a nest site near the Ambassador Golf Course restaurant.

Along Fighting Island's shoreline, we found Canada Geese, Tundra Swans, and Canvasbacks. To our north, in an ice free bay, we noted good numbers of Canvasbacks and grazing Canada Geese on nearby manicured lawns.

We mentioned to Paul that we were interested to see the Fighting Island Bald Eagles. Just at that moment, movement directly across from us caught Paul's eye as a Bald Eagle flew into a large nest in the Fighting Island woodland. Another adult Bald Eagle was perched to its left on a limb. Within moments both birds flew so we felt very fortunate to have seen them. Paul thought the perched bird had actually been chewing the limb on which it was perched, as these adults could be engaged in nest restoration before the nesting season.

The area off Peche Island near Lake St. Clair is often productive for waterfowl so we left La Salle and drove to the marina at Little River where we again had good views of the opposite shoreline. Scanning with the scope, Paul was able to show us Mallard, Greater Scaup, Redhead, Common Merganser, Canvasback, Bufflehead, four male Hooded Mergansers and three Great Blue Herons. Several individual Common Mergansers flew past us as well as a flock of Redheads which landed nearby on the river.

At 3:30 p.m. a Red-tailed Hawk flew south over Peche Island but there were no signs of the Island's Bald Eagles. Thank you to Paul for an enjoyable afternoon.

NEXT MEETINGS OF CAROLINIAN WEST

Fall 2006 – October 28 at Ojibway Nature Centre

Hosted By: Little River Enhancement Group & Essex County Field Naturalists' Club

Spring 2007 – March 31

Hosted By: St. Thomas Field Naturalists

CAROLINIAN WEST REGIONAL MEETING – March 26, 2006

AGENDA

- 10:00 am to 11:00 am Update on group activities: Reps/Presidents (a written summary of the 3–4 key points would be appreciated for the meeting notes)
- 11:00 am to 12:00 pm Update on Ontario Nature Activities: Jennifer Baker (Nature Network Manager)
Update on Nature Network Activities: Jennifer Baker (Nature Network Manager)
Update on Ontario Nature Board Activities: Brenda Lorenz (Regional Director) and Steve Hounsell (President).
- 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm Lunch – Friends of Pinery Park have graciously offered to provide lunch.
- 1:00 pm to 1:30 pm General Regional Discussion
This will be your opportunity to comment on the work the Ontario Nature regional coordinators have been doing. We'd also like to hear your suggestions for actions all of us can do to increase the strength of the Nature Network.
- 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm Members of the Friends of Pinery Park will tell us about some of their great projects and will then take us on a tour to see some of the sites the Park has to offer.

PRESENT

- Lambton Wildlife Inc. - Larry Cornelis, Gord Catterson, Janet Bremner,
Nelson Laporte, Gloria Laporte
- Sydenham Field Naturalists – Tom Chatterton, Blake Mann
- Essex County Field Naturalists' Club – JoAnn Grondin
- Little River Enhancement Group – Betty Learmouth
- McIlwraith Field Naturalists – Patricia Cole
- St. Thomas Field Naturalists – Pat McLean
- Friends of Rondeau – Anne McArthur
- Ingersoll District Nature Club – Sheila Fleming, Lana Graham
- Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee – Brenda Lorenz, Bruce Strangway
- Friends of Pinery Park – Alf Rider

STAFF and BOARD

- President Steve Hounsell
- Nature Network Manager Jennifer Baker

GROUP UPDATES

Group Representatives presented group updates. Outlined are special projects or upcoming dates which are described below:

- Lambton Wildlife Inc. co-hosted a special presentation with the Lambton County Woodlot Owners which was successful in attracting 80 people, 30 of whom were non-members. Terry Schwann, forester from University of Guelph, spoke about woodlands management from the perspective of educating/informing landowners about the benefits of properly managing their woods. LWI is also working with Imperial Oil limited to preserve and steward about 300 acres. LWI will be helping with some restoration of old agricultural fields. The Neighbourwoods project will wrap up with a special presentation in September where Dr. Andy Kenney will present the results to the community.
- The Sydenham Field Naturalists have almost completed the acquisition of the 11 acre Wallaceburg Sycamore Woods. The club will be planting a prairie grass buffer on either side of the property. They will be working with the SCRCA to steward Reid's Bush which the club played a role in helping to protect. The club donated \$1,000 to NCC for the stewardship of Turin Paw Paw Woods and are active with fundraising through bingoes once again. The club submitted detailed comments on the Bickford Oak Woods EBR posting. Their annual banquet is April 5 and Linda Pim from Ontario Nature will be speaking as part of *Doors Open to Ontario Nature*.
- The Friends of Pinery Park have hired a consultant to look at updating the exhibits in the Visitors Centre and continue to try and raise funds for special events and for activities within the park. Alf Rider also discussed some issues with the protection of a nature reserve area within the Park and Ontario Nature will be writing a letter to try and get the beach area protected.
- The Little River Enhancement Group continues to be busy with tree and shrub plantings. The group has also been busy writing letters and attending open houses related to the proposed expressway and border issues around Ojibway prairie. The group will be looking for a new president as well.
- The Essex County Field Naturalists' Club is co-hosting a greenway presentation with Ontario Nature, Little River Enhancement Group, DRCC and Friends of Ojibway. They continue to oppose the Schwartz plan to place an expressway through Ojibway prairie.
- The Friends of Rondeau's big raffle prize for 2006 is a kayak. The group is also looking into purchasing a mobile home to serve as staff quarters for researchers at the park. They will be hiring a bird guide for a few weeks in May to lead birding hikes.
- The McIlwraith Field Naturalists are working with the Thames Talbot Land Trust to acquire a property using funds from a large bequest the club received. The club also commented on the Bickford Oak Woods EBR posting and worked with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and the Thames Talbot Land Trust on tree planting projects. The club's special project has been a series of public presentations held on six consecutive weeks, in partnership with the London Public Library, which attracted members of the community. Winter strolls around the City also complimented the indoor presentations.

- The St. Thomas Field Naturalists have been busy with the ongoing publishing & distribution of the photo field guides - mussels & wildflowers guides are now available.
- The Ingersoll District Nature Club is monitoring the potential to purchase the woodland adjacent to the Lawson Nature Reserve. They are also working on getting kids involved in environmental monitoring at the reserve and will be advertising to youth for the *Doors Open to Ontario Nature* trillium walk at the Lawson Nature Reserve. The club recently adopted a section of Hwy 19 for clean up.
- The Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee is working on stewarding Logan's Pond, and educating homeowners about caring for the shoreline. They named a wildlife refuge after Art Teasel and did some planting around the entranceway.
- The West Elgin Nature Club held their 60th anniversary dinner.
- The Naturalized Habitat Network is holding its annual conference on April 1 and it is a *Doors Open to Ontario Nature* event.

ONTARIO NATURE CONSERVATION UPDATE – Jennifer Baker

Please let me know if you would like a copy of the presentation.

NATURE NETWORK UPDATE - Jennifer Baker

Please let me know if you need more information or if you'd like a copy of the presentation.

ONTARIO NATURE BOARD UPDATE – Brenda Lorenz and Steve Hounsell

Steve announced that Ontario Nature's new Executive Director, Caroline Schultz, has recently started. She has a strong background in conservation and fundraising which will benefit the organization. Wendy Francis is the new Conservation and Science Director and also comes with skills that are very helpful to the organization.

Steve mentioned that the board is working on making the organization more focused with 3 key goals:

1. Protect and restore nature
 - greenway
 - advancing the Endangered Species Act
 - completing the Breeding Bird Atlas
2. Building the Nature Network
3. Connect people to nature

Steve also discussed the importance of having groups or regions bring motions forward to the Ontario Nature AGMs. These motions would be about big conservation issues and would be taken to the respective Minister for action as it would have the support of all of Ontario Nature. The region decided that the need to protect Ojibway would be a good motion from Carolinian West and the Little River Enhancement Group and Essex County Field Naturalists' Club will be submitting information to Ontario Nature. All of the Carolinian West groups will be listed as supporting the resolution.

Motion: That the Carolinian West region support the resolution at Ontario Nature's AGM by the Little River Enhancement Group and the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club to support the protection of Ojibway. Moved by Brenda Lorenz and seconded by Lana Graham.

SUGGESTED SPEAKERS

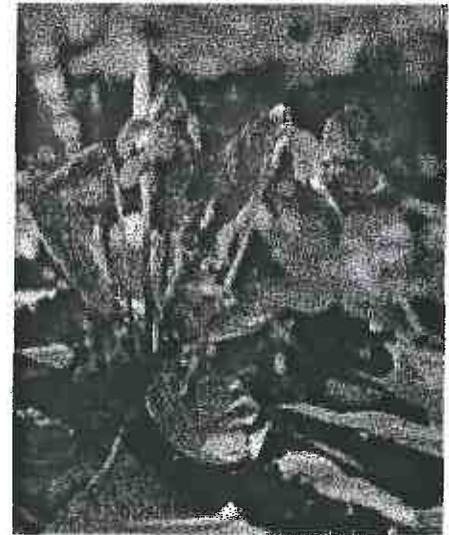
Name	Topic	Home Location	Contact Information
Pete & Sue Read	Shrieking Shrikes, Antarctic Adventures	London	519-472-2887, read4@execulink.com
Hugh MacIsaac	Aquatic Invasive Species in Ontario's Lakes	Windsor – Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research, University of Windsor	519-253-3000, 3754
Dr. Brock Fenton	Exploring the Lives of Bats	Chair – Biology Department, University of Western	519-661-2111, 86464, bfenton@uwo.ca
Brenda Gallagher	Invasive Species	London, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority	519-451-2800, 260, gallagherb@thamesriver.on.ca
Allen Woodcliffe	History of Prairies & Savannahs in Southwest Ontario		Lambton Wildlife has contact info
Melody Cairns	Freshwater coastal dune protection	Pinery Provincial Park	melody.cairns@mnr.gov.on.ca
Caroline Schultz (Ontario Nature's executive director)	Ontario Nature	Toronto	Carolines@ontarionature.org , 1-800-440-2366, 237
Ross Snider	Raptors & Rehabilitation work with shrikes		519-485-3885

Special Aspects of Ojibway

Betty Learmouth

Upon completion of the business portion of the Friends of Ojibway Prairie Annual General Meeting on April 9, 2006 at the Ojibway Nature Centre, City of Windsor's Chief Naturalist Paul Pratt was introduced as guest speaker. Paul chose a series of colourful slides to illustrate the "special aspects of the Ojibway."

Paul began his presentation with a slide of the Ojibway forest in fall, stating that the general public understands the concept of forest but they do not understand prairie all that well which is understandable as the big stands of prairie grasses are virtually gone from North America. Our original prairie has been replaced by fields of corn and wheat, each of which are other species of grasses. Paul estimated that 99 percent of prairies in North America have disappeared. As an example of the disappearance of prairies from the mid West, Paul told us that a drive across Illinois will not yield the sight of any prairie, even though the state of Illinois calls itself the Tallgrass Prairie State.



Arrow-leaved Violet, Spring 2006

Prairies are more than just grass, Paul told us, prairies may look like a sea of flowers. People are not familiar with flowering prairie plants, of which 120 rare flowering species are found here in Ontario. Paul showed us stunning close-up photographs of Milkwort, White Fringed Orchid (soon to be declared an Endangered Species in Ontario) and Great Plains Ladies Tresses.

Within the open Black Oak/Pin Oak savanna found in the Ojibway prairie, a whole array of flowering prairie plants may be found. We were startled to learn from Paul that Black Oak savannah is more endangered than the prairie, as an estimated one tenth of one percent is remaining of this plant community in North America. Paul showed us several slides illustrating the "special" flowering plants associated with the Black Oak savanna including Two-flowered Cynthia and the Wild Lupine.

Taking care of prairies requires specialized techniques, including prescribed burns, one of which will take place on the Ojibway prairie April 11, 2006. Paul showed us a series of slides which illustrated well the rapid recovery of the prairie following a burn.

Prairie wildlife is "special" and varied including Chorus Frogs, Leopard Frogs, Massasauga rattlesnakes, Coyotes, Opossums and even the Gray Fox.

Certainly the estimated 3,000 species of insects found on the Ojibway prairie are "special." Paul showed us a slide of a pink katydid, an insect restricted in Canada to Essex County. University of Guelph entomologist Steve Marshall recently identified the Two-spotted Tree Cricket as a new insect species for Canada when it was discovered on the Ojibway prairie. This species is in addition to many other new-to-Canada prairie species found on the Ojibway Prairie by entomologists.

Tiny leafhoppers are “special” and colourful residents of the prairie along with the many butterfly species on the prairie. Moths have ten times the diversity of butterflies, including spectacular species as the Pandora Sphinx Moth, the underwing moths and the rare Ironweed Borer Moth.

A number of beautifully marked flies may be found on the prairie including Soldier Flies and Flower Flies. The biggest mosquito in Canada is known from the Ojibway prairie.

A large group of beetles call the prairie home including the Stag Beetle.

A number of predator insects live in the prairie which are estimated to consume over 1,000,000,000 insects during the course of the summer. Dragonflies are members of this group including the largest dragonfly known in Canada, the Swamp Darner. Recently a special sighting was that of the Royal River Cruiser, a southern dragonfly species with huge green eyes, which has been seen on the Ojibway prairie. A species of Robber Fly recently seen on the Ojibway Prairie has been declared a new species to science and will be called *Loxocera ojibwayensis*.

In closing, Paul told us that entomologist Steve Marshall, who organizes summer insect camps in several locations, finds a dramatic difference between new discoveries on the Bruce Peninsula and the Ojibway prairie. The possibility of new discoveries at Ojibway are always there, but on the Bruce Peninsula a whole season may pass without a new discovery.

Paul remarked that the prairie can be appreciated on several different levels. Lately there has been considerable interest in the prairie as a place in which to pursue photography.

Thank you to Paul for sharing his breathtaking slides with us, in particular, those of the spectacular Ojibway prairie insects.

Eastern Bluebird Update: March 2006 Notes

Don Bissomette

I always thought the droppings in a bird house were from English Sparrows. A few days ago (mid March), I went to bird house # 5 at the Harrow Research Station where a pair of Eastern Bluebirds wintered. Sure enough, there were bird droppings. (See article in this issue of *The Egret* “Getting to the Bottom of Winter Bluebird Diets”).

I broke the droppings up with a putty knife and found two seed types and Staghorn Sumac seed head fibre coating.

I’ve been going out every few days working on the Bluebird trails. Through February and March, Eastern Bluebirds were spotted at the Harrow Research Station, Pollards, Balkwill North, Balkwill South, Sugar Bush, Doyle-Goddard and Paul Murray’s.

I have built and put up 14 bird houses. Bob Tanner and I put up the last five yesterday (March 18, 2006). I don’t know if I’ll have time to build anymore.

All these new bird houses open like cupboard doors, or like oven doors. These are easier to wash out. Other houses with mailbox styling doors are difficult to wash out.

Getting to the Bottom of Winter Bluebird Diets: Nest Droppings Tell the Story

Kevin L. Berner In Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society 2006 Spring Newsletter

Most bluebird enthusiasts concentrate their efforts towards providing and monitoring nest boxes during the spring and summer each year. These efforts have helped reverse the long term bluebird declines throughout much of the U.S. and Canada. Much less attention has been paid to bluebirds outside of the nesting season.

Winter foods are very important for bluebirds if they are to go into the nesting season at optimum levels of health. I have attempted to identify key winter foods used by bluebirds in upstate New York.

While there are published plans for bluebird roosting boxes, I have not been able to find evidence that these large boxes with internal perches are readily used by bluebirds. Discussions with many individuals at North American Bluebird Society and state bluebird conferences have led me to believe that roosting boxes as described in bluebird books are rarely used.

However, bluebirds frequently do roost in nest boxes in the winter. It is well documented that individuals or groups of bluebirds will crowd into nest boxes on winter nights. Nest boxes are far smaller than roosting boxes, so the body heat of the birds would be able to keep the area warmer than in a larger box. In addition, many bluebirders plug all ventilation holes in their nest boxes during the winter to minimize heat loss of birds using the boxes.

At the end of the winter, if bluebirds did use a nest box for roosting there is usually a large accumulation of droppings on the floor. For the last several years, I have collected these droppings on my first spring visit to nest boxes to clean them out for the nesting season. I have taken these droppings to be placed in containers commonly used for rearing garden plants from seeds to transplanting.

The plants that germinate are plants that the bluebirds have chosen for winter foods. I have wanted to identify these winter foods so that I could plant or encourage those same plants on my own property to support over-wintering bluebirds.

What I have found is that the vast majority (probably 95 percent) of the germinating plants from the bluebird droppings are staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*). These seeds can often be identified by the remaining red fuzzy material on them from the sumac seed heads.

A second plant that has germinated in the much smaller quantity has been poison ivy (*Rhus radicans*). I have not identified any other germinating plant but have often noted among the droppings the seeds of nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*). These seeds are easy to identify due to their large size and distinctive round and flat shape.

Having eaten many nannyberries in the field, I am familiar with these seeds, similar to watermelon seeds but round. During my attempts to germinate seeds from bluebird droppings, I never observed any nannyberry seeds germinating in my seed pots. I have since learned that nannyberries need a period of cold (which they get in the nest box), then a period when some roots start to develop, followed by another cold period before they start above-ground growth. Some other seed types may undergo a similar process and thus would not have germinated in my tests.

Once the sumac seedlings have developed in my seed pots, I have transplanted them to my yard to establish this food source for bluebirds. Sumac is viewed as a weed and cut down. I view this plant as a valuable native shrub with spectacular red fall foliage and striking red seed heads that stand out vividly against the cover of the winter snows.

Many species such as American Robins, Gray Catbirds, Ruffed Grouse, and Wild Turkeys will consume its fruit. Sumac is a good winter food because the seeds are very persistent and are available even late in the winter unless other birds have already eaten them.

I have learned that I need to put cages around the developing sumac shrubs because the very succulent and soft new growth of young sumac is heavily used by deer. The protected plants have been very successful at establishing themselves.

I also attempted a more natural establishment procedure for growing sumac. I tilled a long strip in my yard and directly seeded the droppings into the ground. When I did this, the grasses and wildflowers quickly reinvaded and I never detected a single fruited plant developing from these sites.

I would encourage others to collect, not discard, droppings found in your nest boxes after the winter.

Once you determine the plants that bluebirds are surviving on during the winter, you too can encourage those plants within your own yard. This will help you to support bluebirds winter survival and increase spring vigor while attracting bluebirds to your neighborhood for observation.

(Kevin Berner is Associate Professor in the Fisheries and Wildlife Department of the State University of New York, Cobleskill, and former chair of the North American Bluebird Society Research Committee. He can be reached by e-mail at bernerkl@Cobleskill.edu or by postal mail at Fisheries and Wildlife Department, SUNY, Cobleskill, NY 12043)

Young Tree Maintenance at the Essex Landfill Restoration Site

Betty Learmouth

Six persons turned out for an afternoon of young tree maintenance on March 26, 2006 at the Essex Landfill Restoration site. We took a supply of tree guards and headed out to the area where we had left off our work on October 16, 2005. In contrast to the work in October, we were faced with much nipping of young trees by the local cottontail population. In fact, it appeared that the pesky cottontails had reached into many guards to nibble on tender stems. Perhaps if we had had more snow cover, the damage would have been less. We worked steadily, trimming and applying tree guards until after three o'clock.

At about two o'clock the sun emerged, causing the local Chorus Frog population in the six small ponds to trill for a few moments. Some gnats were seen whirling about in the warm air which reached 20 degrees Celsius for a brief time. Cloud cover formed, the temperature dipped and we reluctantly put on our jackets and hats.

Raptors in the area were active as we noted two perched Red-tailed Hawks along the front of the landfill site as well as a Kestrel on the wire near the entrance. As we worked, a Red-tailed was seen soaring over the landfill while an immature/female Northern Harrier flew swiftly south along the nearby hedge row. A Song Sparrow sang as we arrived and several Blue Jays moved about in the tops of nearby trees.

Gerry Waldron commented that he and Peggy had learned a number of interesting things as they worked among the young trees. Tree guards (white spiral plastic trunk protectors) were successful in reducing Meadow Vole damage, even in sizes only 6 cm tall. Rabbits, however, seem to have learned that a tree guard is an invitation to dinner. In some cases they manage somehow to eat several centimeters into the narrow tree guard tube. To avoid the frustrating experience of finding the seedling tree tops lopped off year after year it is necessary to plant larger seedlings that will accommodate a 45 cm (18") tall tree guard. Also species vary in their palatability to rabbits. Apparently they turn their noses up at elms, ashes, Sycamore, Red Cedar and Silver Maple; alternatively, all the oaks are rabbit candy.

The hawk and owl perches have not enhanced predation to a felicitous degree; maybe a height greater than the two metre tall perches at this site is needed. Gerry thought it unfortunate that the landfill management doesn't permit rabbit hunting; a few gunners with dogs would be a help. Another lesson concerns hydrology - where pits and ponds are constructed, the underground drainage tiles must be broken downslope of the restoration site, otherwise, the little waterbodies intended for amphibians and waterfowl seep away to the tiles.

With the seedling root systems strengthening from year to year in spite of annual top pruning and, hopefully, with the addition of a cyclical low in rabbit numbers, some shoots will get beyond rabbit reach. About then, of course, the deer will arrive. If Gerry and Peggy were to do this restoration again, they might create groves of larger saplings on pit and mound topography within a matrix of meadows and shallow ponds. After of course, using some heavy equipment to smash up the drainage tiles previously installed so expensively and laboriously.

We intend to return in the Fall, possibly on two occasions as there are still many young trees that could use our help with guards and trimming.

Thank you to Peggy Hurst and Gerry Waldron for organizing this work session.

Ontario's Newest Nature Reserve

Betty Learmouth

On April 30, 2006, eight ECFNC friends and members met for a spring walk on the Cedar Creek Ontario Nature Reserve. This is a property which the Nature Conservancy of Canada purchased from the Ed Hunter estate and is now managed by Parks Ontario. Our ECFNC Heritage Fund made a donation towards the purchase of the 170 acre property which includes woodlands around three branches of Cedar Creek and a portion of agricultural lands.

Our group entered the property along a farm lane off Concession 3 in the Town of Essex. Our arrival in five vehicles alarmed three young deer which bounded off to the south, disappearing into the woodlands. In a nearby tree we spotted a Red-tailed Hawk's nest, quite visible as no leaves had yet obscured the nest. We made our way through the woodland which showed evidence of tree cutting over the years as old decaying stumps were scattered throughout the area along with fallen tree debris.

The forest floor was a bright green with its carpet of bedstraw. Other plant species noted included Spring Beauty (some of which had gone to seed), Garlic Mustard, Mayapple, Wild Geranium, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Wood Violet, Wild Strawberry, Purple Cress, Downy Yellow Violet, Swamp Buttercup, the canes of Climbing Prairie Rose, Spring Avens, Running Strawberry Bush, Kidney-leaf Buttercup, White Trout-lily and Wild Onion.

The terrain began to slope gently downward, leading us a small pond where we noted a few plants of Skunk Cabbage. We were all quite pleased to be walking in this rolling terrain which is uncommon in Essex County. Continuing on we found a larger pond from which three Blue-winged Teal flushed. Some Trout-lily in bloom were found and Bladdernut flower buds were noted. The shadow of a bird flying over the pond caused us to look upwards at a Great Blue Heron.

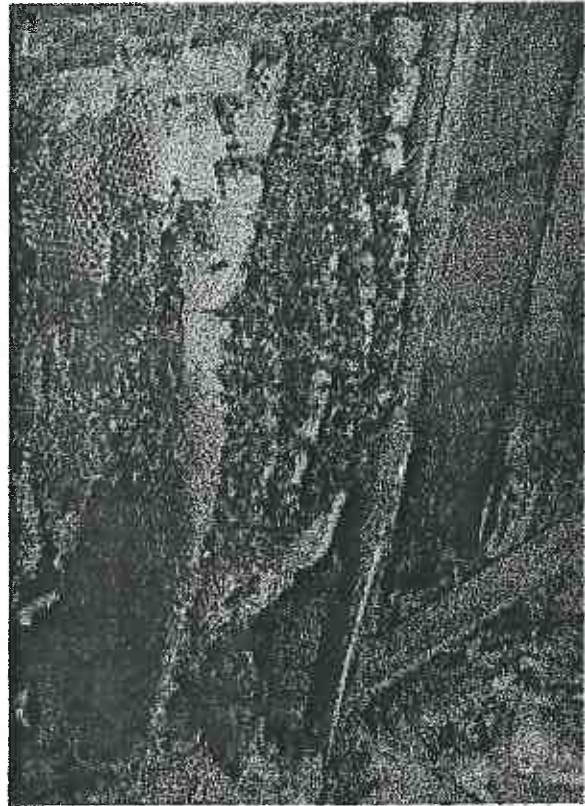
We made our way over some fallen trunks and found ourselves on a dry flood plain (the northwest tributary of Cedar Creek was off to one side) where numerous Skunk Cabbage and Marsh Marigolds intermingled in riot of green and yellow. Plants of both species were large and showy, providing wonderful photographic opportunities for the photographers in the group. Northern White Violets with their blue and white faces were seen in this moist area.

We climbed up from the flood plane, admiring some White Trillium mixed with Mayapple, while remarking on the view of the golden Marsh Marigolds below. Early Meadow Rue was noted on the slope. In an old collapsing building, curious naturalists had found a honeybee hive. Honey combs were attached to the building's wooden wall below an open window.

As we arrived back at our vehicles a circling Red-tailed Hawk expressed its displeasure at our presence.

Other birds seen during the walk included a pair of Brown-headed Cowbirds, Red-winged Blackbirds, a Red-bellied Woodpecker and a Turkey Vulture. Cabbage White butterflies were seen several times as well as a Red Admiral.

Thank you to everyone for identifying species on this walk. We will plan a future excursion to see more of this new provincial nature reserve.



*Wild honeybee hive
Photograph by Wayne Wannick*

Pelee Island Trip, May 6 -7, 2006

Shirley Grondin

With the sun shining on Lake Erie, twenty-one of us including our leader Dave Kraus departed from Leamington aboard the Jiimaan. On arrival at the island, John and Mary Celestino as well as our temporary driver and the bus met us. One of our trip members Sharon was able to shuttle us around after that, which was really appreciated by all of us — great job Sharon!!

After a brief stop at the Anchor and Wheel Inn to get our rooms and unload luggage, we walked to Sheridan Point. It has been two years since I have done this trip and I noticed some changes on the island. The old Vin Villa property looked really different. Its new owner has erected a wrought iron fence around the property and access will be through two large estate size gates. Some work has also been done to the building -- the walls have been stabilized and work has been done to the cellar to make it habitable. The owner hopes to be able to host families who have suffered the loss of a child. They would have access to a group of support people and experience nature in this idyllic setting while they work through their grief.

After lunch we went to Dave's property. It too has changed in two years - the shrubs have really grown up and the trees are noticeably larger as well. Because of a dry spring, we were able to walk the field on the other side. Dave and Michelle still plan to develop a wetland on this site which is farmed in the interim.

Our next stop was Lighthouse Point. As usual, this was a lovely walk but we did not see many birds. I think we could count the number on our fingers. This was very disappointing for those doing bird counts for the weekend. We couldn't even help Margaret find a House Sparrow for her count. Even though bird numbers were down, the presence of "garlic mustard" was not!!! It was everywhere in great profusion. It was hard to believe it had spread that much in two year's time.

Our evening dinner at the Anchor and Wheel Inn was a buffet with lots of choices even for the fussiest of diners. Add to that a little vino or spirits, and good conversation, and what more could you ask for in this relaxed atmosphere!!

After a big buffet breakfast the next morning, we headed out to Fish Point and visited the banding station. There was no activity at the nets while we were there, but we did see a few warblers in the area. It was interesting to see the station, which is outdoors with only tarps giving them some protection from the elements. These banders are so dedicated to the study of migratory birds. Next, we walked the trails of Fish Point and enjoyed the spring flowers in bloom.

From here, we went the Celestino's. They had nesting Bluebirds and Carolina Wrens so those who were doing bird counts could add two more species. Mary did a short tour for those who had not been to the property before — thanks Mary and John for the invite. From here we drove by the Stone Road Alvar property for which our club has stewardship. We have some garlic mustard to pull next week on our return trip.

Some very good news with regard to the preservation of the alvar as the Nature Conservancy of Canada has secured several parcels which include a variety of plant communities.

Thanks Dave for organizing the tour one more time - it is always a pleasant relaxed weekend.

P.S. Thanks for the sunshine, Carl.

Hillman Spring Shore & Songbird Celebration, 2006

Betty Learmouth

Photograph: Bander Steve Greidanus with banded warbler species

The annual Hillman Spring Shore & Songbird Celebration held this year on May 13 and 14, 2006 offered another opportunity for Holiday Beach Migration Observatory members to provide birders with more close looks at our spring migrants and summer residents. The weather was cold and rainy for several days before the event, but this did not dampen anyone's enthusiasm as the banders were finding birds in the mist nets in the nearby remnant woodland on virtually every net run.

The event was held inside the Hillman Nature Centre this year with Fuzzy Winks, the Great Horned Owl, on display under the big white tent. On Saturday, May 13, 2006, the first visitors were the Bryant family from Malden Centre, regulars at the Holiday Beach Festival of Hawks. A Quest shorebird tour dropped in for a few minutes about 9:00 a.m. before heading over to the nearby shorebird cell. A steady flow of visitors watched the banding demonstrations throughout the morning. Sunday was a quieter day during which visitors who enjoyed a fine selection of migrants.

A children's activity area was set up in the gift shop area where young visitors could prepare and colour a Mother's Day book mark. Over the two days of the Celebration, Erica Junge, Ruth Junge, and Pat and Jim Watson looked after this activity.

This year Turek's Camera, which is located in downtown Windsor, set up a display on Saturday with ECFNC member Jim Inkster in charge. On Sunday, Keith Brown discussed a selection of binoculars, telescopes and tripods.

ECFNC members were on hand as usual with morning coffee and a selection of tempting home made muffins. At noon barbequed hot dogs were available with homemade cookies for dessert. Saturday's volunteers included Shirley Grondin, Betty Learmouth, Cathy Lapain, and Janet Tuite. JoAnn Grondin looked after sales on Sunday while Shirley Grondin grilled the hotdogs.

HBMO members volunteering on Saturday were Cindy Cartwright, Steve Greidanus, Bob Hall-Brooks, Carl Pascoe, Steve Kapusta (a new ECFNC member), and Rachel Powless. Rachel offered an Adopt a Songbird certificate as each bird was banded which proved to be a popular item.

Cindy Cartwright promoted the Ontario Hummingbird Project which will provide more information gathered by volunteers on this species within the Province of Ontario. Go to www.ontariohummingbirds.ca to visit the Ontario Hummingbird Project web site.

ERCA staff person Bev Wannick was on hand both days, speaking with visitors and discussing Fuzzywinks the Great Horned Owl. Dorothy McLeer assisted on Sunday engaging in conversation with visitors who wished to know more about the owl.

Star reporter Dale Molnar reported on the Celebration in the Monday, May 15, 2006 edition of *The Windsor Star*. A Swainson's Thrush graced the front page mast head with the headline "Feather Festival: Birders Bask in Spring Bonanza."



HBMO hummingbird and passerine bander Carl Pascoe provided the following comments and summaries of the weekend banding. "Bird banding helps us track migration and also provides information on birds that return to the area. These are called recaptures and we had some interesting returnees. Some birds we recaptured have band numbers that are not in our data and were banded by another bander that had banded at this site."

Yellow Warbler after second year Male originally banded May 11, 2003 as a second year Male, so it was born in 2002 and recaptured on May 9, 2004 (364 day interval), again on May 11, 2005 (731 day interval) and May 14, 2006 (1099 day interval). So this same bird is coming back year after year to the same location for 3 years and this remarkable bird is at least 4 years old.

Yellow Warbler after hatch year Male originally banded May 11, 2002 as an after hatch year Male, so it was born in 2001 or perhaps before and recaptured on May 13 (1463 day interval) making it at least 4 years old.

Yellow Warbler after hatch year Male originally banded May 12, 2002 as an after hatch year Male, so it was born in 2001 or perhaps before and recaptured on May 14 (1463 day interval) making it also at least 4 years old.

Yellow Warbler after hatch year Male originally banded May 12, 2001 as an after hatch year Male, so it was born in 2000 or perhaps before, and recaptured on May 14 (**1828 day interval**) making it also at least 5 years old.

Gray Catbird after hatch year Male originally banded May 11, 2005 and recaptured May 13, 2006 (367 day interval). This bird was recaptured again on May 14, 2006 so it probably will stay at Hillman Marsh to establish his breeding territory. This bird would be at least 3 years old.

Gray Catbird after hatch year Male originally banded May 8, 2005 and recaptured May 8, 2006 (365 day interval). This bird was recaptured again on May 14, 2006 so it probably going to stay at Hillman Marsh to establish his breeding territory. This bird would also be at least 3 years old.

There were some birds that are not considered "recaptures" as they were banded this year (short duration). We had 2 Common Yellow-Throat Warblers and one Magnolia Warbler that were caught on 2 successive days. A White-Throated Sparrow and 2 Red-Winged Blackbirds were found in the nets 6 days and 7 days after originally banded. This reinforces the importance of Hillman Marsh as both a breeding area and refueling stop for migrants.

Daily Breakdown

May 13, 2006

Species	Number	Comment
Hairy Woodpecker	1	First of this species banded by HBMO at Hillman Marsh
Least Flycatcher	5	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	
Veery	1	
American Robin	1	
Nashville Warbler	7	
Yellow Warbler	4	
Wilson's Warbler	1	
Magnolia Warbler	3	
Ovenbird	1	
Common Yellowthroat	4	
Swamp Sparrow	1	
White-throated Sparrow	2	
Red-winged Blackbird	4	
Brown-headed Cowbird	4	
<i>Total</i>	<i>45 birds of 15 species</i>	
Recaptures	5	



May 14, 2006

Species	Number
Least Flycatcher	2
Swainson's Thrush	1
Gray Catbird	4
Nashville Warbler	3
Yellow Warbler	2
Magnolia Warbler	5
Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler	10
Black-throated Green Warbler	2
Blackpoll Warbler	1
Black and white Warbler	1
Common Yellowthroat	2
Wilson's Warbler	2
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1
Indigo Bunting	1
Swamp Sparrow	1
Red-winged Blackbird	1
Common Grackle	1
Baltimore Oriole	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>51 birds of 19 species</i>
Recaptures	8



Balkwill Woods, Doors Open to Ontario Nature Event

Betty Learmouth

A woodland walk organized by the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club and the Canada South Land Trust was held on May 14, 2006 in the Town of Kingsville, Essex County. The walk was arranged as part of celebrations for Ontario Nature's 75th anniversary. In 2005, field naturalist and nature clubs around the province were asked to be a part of Ontario Nature anniversary celebrations.

Landowner Bill Balkwill kindly agreed to be tour leader for a walk through the 45.6 acre Balkwill woodland. Twenty ECFNC and Land Trust members and friends arrived in the early afternoon for a two hour guided walk.

Natural heritage on the 150 acre Balkwill farm is comprised of a 45.6 acre Carolinian woodland, a 0.95 acre Old Logging Road lined with mature Sugar Maples and a 2.1 acre Prairie and Pond restoration site. The woodland has a series of twelve lanes which allow easy walking and viewing of plants and trees. The natural heritage on the Balkwill farm will be protected in perpetuity by a Conservation Easement Agreement between brothers John Balkwill and Bill Balkwill and the Canada South Land Trust.

Our walk took us along the edge of the woodland, then along lane 1 toward the northern part of the woodland, east along lane 9 and south along lane 8. This route provided an opportunity to view both dry and wet portions of the woodland as well as a chance to observe the movement of running water over the woodland floor where the old creek bed of Cedar Creek may still be seen in the northwest corner of the woodland.

Along the Old Logging Road edge we enjoyed Crabapple in bloom as well as various species of hawthorn which Bill identified for us. Bladdernut blooms along the Old Logging Road edge were spectacular. Mayapple, White Trillium, and Wild Phlox were in bloom along the woodland edge. A Black-billed Cuckoo perched for several minutes at the woodland edge providing good views of this elegant bird species.

In the dry southern portion of lane 1 Bill identified Alum Root which grows in this particular woodland section. We navigated a wet area on the trail, noting the sedges. Wild Geranium bloomed in profusion around us, providing a pink haze throughout the woodland. Bill identified Shumard Oaks which may be found in these wet conditions, mentioning the buttress roots which develop as this oak species has a shallow root system.

A number of vascular plants were identified in this rich woodland including Canada Moonseed, Christmas and Sensitive Fern, Carrionflower, and Herb Robert. The Balkwill brothers have been diligent with regard to the invasive plant Garlic Mustard which has not been allowed to establish in the woodland. Along lane 9 a mature Burr Oak was admired with several of the younger members giving this giant a big hug.

The afternoon concluded with a tour of the Balkwill arboretum with its mix of native and exotic trees growing within the property's residential area.

Thank you to Bill Balkwill for sharing his knowledge concerning the plants and trees of the Balkwill woodland.

2006 Ontario Volunteer Service Awards

Congratulations to our ECFNC executive members who were recognized for ten years of service on April 12, 2006: Karen Cedar, Denise Hartley, Dave Kraus, Mike Malone, Phil Roberts, and Gerry Waldron.

Point Pelee National Park Birding, Victoria Day 2006

Betty Learmouth

Fifteen friends and ECFNC members met at 8:00 p.m. on May 22, 2006 to enjoy a morning of birding at the Point. The weather was perfect, clear with a slight chill in the air. What a pleasure to walk in sunlight as our weather since May 10, 2006, had been mostly damp and dark.

Birding on May 20 and 21, 2006 was reported to be very good by staff at the Visitors Centre. Marg Calder informed our group that a Kirtland's Warbler had been seen at The Tip the previous day so we quickly decided that we should take the transportation to check out the East Beach.

This decision turned out to be a good choice as we saw a number of species well on the narrow East Beach seasonal trail including Double-crested Cormorants, Turkey Vultures, Barn Swallows, Tree Swallows and Chimney Swifts overhead. Baltimore Orioles, Cedar Waxwings, Blue Jays, and Common Grackle were noted in the surrounding woodland. Among the warblers viewed well were Yellow Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, a male Cape May Warbler, a female Black-throated Blue Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Redstart and Chestnut-sided Warbler. A splendid male Scarlet Tanager sat at eye level for all to see. Brief glimpses of Orchard Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and a Gray Catbird were reported.

At one point we were on the East Beach itself with numerous other birders along with a flock of fifteen Dunlin which were foraging along the shore line. We glanced at the Dunlins which ignored us as they fed and moved northwards along the beach.

We too moved northwards on the seasonal birding trail which brought us to the cedar savannah, then the hardwood woodland. A female Red-winged Blackbird caught our eye as she pulled strands of nesting material from an oriole's nest that appeared to be under construction. We stood quietly as the blackbird left and a female Baltimore Oriole appeared, entered the nest and continued with her nest construction. One tree away another female oriole was also busily preparing her nest.

Several persons reported Ruby-throated Hummingbirds flying rapidly through the woodland. Warbling Vireo was found by some birders. A late Yellow-rumped Warbler was seen. Everyone remarked on the truly lovely Cedar Waxwings that we saw all through the morning. A large flock was reported in the hackberry woodland and several were noted in courtship behaviour as berries were shared.

Woodland plants in flower were Wild Columbine, Sweet Cicely, Wild Geranium and Virginia Waterleaf. Unfortunately Garlic Mustard appeared to be throughout.

The outing concluded with some persons enjoying lunch at the picnic tables near the Visitors Centre while others enjoyed a meal at a nearby restaurant.

Garlic Mustard Update

Betty Learmouth

Garlic Mustard, an invasive plant in our Southern Ontario woodlands, was reported on several occasions by the media during May 2006. Pelee Island Garlic Mustard Pull coordinator Bonnie Ross was contacted by CBC television as Bonnie's name and contact number was found by CBC reporter Priya Sankaran on the Ojibway web site. This contact resulted in a television media visit to Ojibway Nature Centre on May 2, 2006 for a report to be aired on that evening's 6:00 p.m. news.

A light rain was falling about 1:00 p.m. as the reporter, CBC television camera man, Ojibway staff member Karen Cedar and Friends of Ojibway Prairie volunteers Shirley Grondin, Betty Learmouth, Claire McAllister, and Bonnie Ross headed out to a patch of Wood Anemone by the park's entrance gate where Garlic Mustard had been noted in flower. Karen Cedar provided commentary about the invasive Garlic Mustard, the camera man shot a sequence of the garlic mustard pull by the volunteers with a final shot that revealed a wide patch of Wood Anemone, now Garlic Mustard free.

CBC reporter Sankaran shared an article posted on the Internet dated April 25, 2006 entitled "Invasive species harms native hardwoods by killing soil fungus." (The entire 1 1/2 page article may be found by entering this title into your web browser). The article states that researchers "found that garlic mustard targets arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi (AMF), which form mutually beneficial relationships with many forest trees. These fungi have long filaments that penetrate the roots of plants, forming an intricate interwoven network that effectively extends the plant's root system. AMF depend on plants for energy and plants depend on the fungi for nutrients. When tree seedlings, which depend strongly on AMF, began to decline in the presence of garlic mustard, the researchers suspected that the invasive plant might thwart this symbiotic relationship.

To test this possibility, they collected soil from five forests in Ontario dominated by four species of native hardwoods. First, the researchers tested seedlings' ability to form mycorrhizal relationships in soil with a history of garlic mustard invasion. Three species – sugar maple, red maple, and white ash – had significantly less AMF root colonization and grew only about one-tenth as fast as in the infested soil. Seedlings grown in sterilized, AMF free soil taken from invaded and pest-free locations showed similar reductions, suggested that diminished microbial activity has suppressed tree growth. Other experiments showed that adding garlic mustard extracts to soil impaired AMF colonization and seedling growth, implying that the weed uses phytochemical poisons to disrupt native plants' mycorrhizal associations and stunt their growth.

When the study was subsequently replicated with seedlings of 16 other native plants, only the hardwoods and other woody plants were harmed by the presence of garlic mustard."

This suggests garlic mustard invaded the understory of mature forests by poisoning the allies of its main competitors," researcher Kristina A. Stinson says. "By killing off native soil fungi, the appearance of this weed in an intact forest could stifle the next generation of dominant canopy trees. It could also invite other native and non native weedy plants that currently grow in low-AMF habitats, such as those disturbed by logging or development.

The researchers plan to study which phytochemicals in garlic mustard may kill AMF, how these chemical interact with other beneficial soil microbes, and how plants and fungi in garlic mustard's native European habitat coexist with the noxious species."

Researcher John N. Klironomos at the University of Guelph was interviewed twice by CBC radio reporters on May 15, 2006 regarding the noxious species. Dr. Klironomos remarked that most invasive species invade open areas but this species invades mature forests as has occurred in Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes, and Northeast United States, which is most unusual. During one two year experiment, Garlic Mustard was pulled but researchers still could not establish small trees. It appears that chemicals were left in the soil and the removal of these chemicals is a problem.

Dr. Klironomos reminded CBC listeners that research takes time but that the research team is close to isolating a chemical. Experiments are also to be conducted in the plant's European habitat where it is actually quite rare. When asked what the ordinary person might do, Dr. Klironomos suggested that removal of garlic mustard plants to prevent spreading further would be helpful. The second interview concluded with the statement that reclaiming infested areas will be a problem.

May 19, 2006 was the date of the yearly ECFNC garlic mustard pull on Pelee Island. This year the plant was visible as the garlic mustard pulling team of Shirley Grondin, Margaret Jennings, Betty Learmouth, and organizer Bonnie Ross rounded the corner from East West Road to Stone Road. The team decided to begin right at the corner as we had worked further along Stone Road in previous years. With a light rain falling, quantities of garlic mustard were pulled from the mixed species forest of the Ontario Nature Reserve and the adjacent Nature Conservancy of Canada's Shaughnessy Cohen Memorial Savannah.

Throughout May 2006, pulling of Garlic Mustard continued in various locations throughout the Ojibway woodland. On May 23, 2006, a crew of three went off trail, pulling in a dogwood thicket close to the fence between the race track and the Ojibway woodland. Numerous first year plants were found and the soil stirred to break the roots. Four bags of the noxious weed were pulled over a two hour period.

In Essex County, individual landowners such as ECFNC member Bill Balkwill have been watching and pulling the noxious plant for a number of years. Properties adjacent to the Balkwill property support the weed which will mean that the Balkwill property must be watched continuously.

Karen and Alan Batke are organizing Garlic Mustard pulls in the Kingsville area especially along the Greenway.

Ruth Junge reports that Garlic Mustard pulling was carried out at Carolina Woods in Leamington through the month of May with the woodland reported to be clear of this invasive species.

ECFNC and Ojibway Nature Centre Spring/Summer Activities and Excursions

For further information concerning ECFNC excursions, please contact JoAnn Grondin (734-0056), Margaret Jennings (250-0705) or Betty Learmouth (944-0825). Thank you to all who have volunteered to lead an excursion. Let us know about your ideas for future excursions. Considering volunteering as an excursion leader.

June 10 – Ojibway Nature Centre - *“Greenways in your community – A Vision for Connecting People and Nature in southern Ontario”* presented from 8:30 a.m. until noon.

June 11 – ECFNC Excursion - Grosse Isle Nature Conservancy and Humbug Marsh, Michigan – Bruce Johns of the Grosse Isle Nature Conservancy has kindly offered to lead ECFNC members on a walk to view the Conservancy’s property on the southern part of Grosse Isle in Michigan. After lunch, we will proceed to the nearby Humbug Marsh for a tour. Meet in the parking lot of the Ojibway Nature Centre at 8:30 a.m. We will carpool, drive across the Ambassador Bridge, proceed south on the I-75, watch for the exit to Grosse Isle, cross over the bridge to Grosse Isle, then proceed south to the Conservancy property which is adjacent to the airport. Our tour will begin at 10:00 a.m., ending in mid afternoon after the Humbug Marsh tour. Bring a lunch.

June 14 – ECFNC Monthly Members Meeting – ECFNC President Phil Roberts will share his slides of Great Bear Lake. Meet in Room C of the Essex Civic Centre at 7:30 p.m.

June 17 – The Canada South Land Trust is planning a fund raising event at the Ojibway Nature Centre beginning at 4:00 p.m. with a guided walk on the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve lead by Chief Naturalist Paul Pratt. A delicious salad supper will be served at 6:15 p.m. in the picnic shelter. The cost for this event is \$30.00 which includes a charitable receipt of \$20.00. Please call Betty Learmouth at 944-0825 to reserve your spot

June 18 – ECFNC Activity – Many ECFNC members have been naturalizing their backyards including Shirley Grondin and Marg and Clary Calder. Shirley Grondin has a large backyard which has been naturalized over a number of years while Marg and Clary Calder’s backyard habitat was created by Don Bissonnette this spring. Our tour will start in Shirley’s backyard in South Windsor at 2:00 pm. To find Shirley’s home, if you are heading south on Windsor’s Dougall Avenue, turn right onto Norfolk, then left on Church and look for 3290 Church on your left. From Shirley’s backyard we will travel to Marg and Clary’s backyard at 856 Watson Avenue in East Windsor. Proceed south along Lauzon Road to the intersection of Wyandotte Street East. Turn right and watch for Watson on your right. Refreshments will be served by Marg.

June 22 – 25 – Volunteer for Nature – Set Sail to Stone Road Alvar: Vegetation Inventory – A truly outstanding array of rare habitats and species is packed into Stone Road Alvar, a 42 hectare property of oak-hickory woodland, oak savannah, red cedar savannah, old field thicket, prairie, and open alvar communities. It can be safely said that this mix of communities occurs nowhere else in Canada or in any of the adjacent U.S. states. Help Ontario Nature staff set up a series of monitoring plots and

identify plants in various habitats at Stone Road to contribute to the long term management of the alvar. Enjoy tours of local attractions such as Pelee Island Winery. Host organization is Ontario Nature. Meeting time is 12:30 p.m. on Friday. Accommodations are simple. Cost is \$340. On-line registration at: http://www.ontarionature.org/action/expeditions_reg.php (Event has been cancelled)

June 22 – 25 – Volunteer for Nature - Pelee Island Bioblitz – Birding and Botanizing – Help Nature Conservancy of Canada stewardship staff tally the diversity of bird and plant life on recently acquired Pelee Island alvar and savannah properties. Work along side local naturalists such as John Ambrose and Graeme Gibson (the younger), as you volunteer your skills on a wonderful weekend designed for intermediate and expert birders and botanists. Sites to be inventoried include rare communities such as red cedar savannah, hackberry, chinquapin oak and blue ash woodlands, and open alvar. Your observations will help NCC with restoration and stewardship planning for the properties. Learn about Pelee Island's unique natural and social history at the Pelee Island Heritage Museum. Note: For expert and intermediate birders and botanists. Host organization is the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Donation suggested. Contact person is Heather Arnold – Science and Stewardship Coordinator, London Office -The Nature Conservancy of Canada, 1017 Western Road, London, ON N6G 1G5 -Tel: 519 640 6816 or 1 866 281 5331 - Cell: 519 859 9686 - Fax: 519 645 0981. On-line registration at: http://www.ontarionature.org/action/expeditions_reg.php

June 24 – Ojibway Nature Centre – You will be amazed at the variety and wonder of the 58 species of **dragonflies** found at Ojibway. Bring your own net or use one of ours. Course includes a copy of Stokes *Beginner's Guide to Dragonflies* and *Checklist of the Dragonflies of Ojibway Prairie*. Time: Saturday 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. fee \$11 plus \$15 material fee.

June 24 – September 4 – Point Pelee National Park – Join a park interpreter for an in depth 30 minute presentation about this special part of Canada. Time: 3:00 p.m. Topics vary daily.

June 24 - September 4 – Point Pelee National Park – Creature Feature – Meet one of the many unique creatures that make Point Pelee its home and learn about how you can help protect them in this 15 minute presentation. Daily at 2:30 p.m.

June 24 – September 4 – Point Pelee National Park - Marshville – Visit Marshville at the base of our famous marsh boardwalk tower. See what animals are in the aquarium and learn more about the importance of wetlands through our interactive displays.

June 25 – ECFNC Summer Excursion – Visit Holiday Beach Conservation Area to search for nesting Prothonotary Warblers and other summer nesting birds. Bring your guides and we will all contribute to the sightings. Meet at 6:00 p.m. at the entrance parking lot. To find the Holiday Beach Conservation Area, if you are coming from Windsor, drive out to the County along Howard Avenue to the Maldon Community Centre. At this intersection, turn right onto County Road 20 and proceed to Malden Centre. At Malden Centre, turn left and watch for the entrance to the Conservation Area on your right.

June 28 – ECFNC Executive Meeting

July 1 – Point Pelee National Park – Celebrate Canada's birthday with your friends at PPNP. You can join in the activities and "tip your hat to the Tip." Have cake at the Visitor Centre and participate in other fun programs. Free entry all day long!

July 3 - August 28 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Captivating Critters (Ages 3-4) – Wildlife exploration and nature fun for the younger set. The first day of class (July 3) is a one hour introductory class for parents and children (no class August 7). Time: Monday 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon or 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Fee: \$52/8 weeks plus \$8 material fee

July 5 – 26 – Ojibway Nature Centre – 'Possum Pals (Ages 2-4) – Children not yet ready to leave the pouch? Join us for this exciting and fun parent/tot adventure in nature. Times: Wednesday 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon or 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Fee: \$26/4 days plus \$4 material fee

July 6 – August 24 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Kids 'N Critters (Ages 5-6) – Wildlife viewing and nature-oriented activities for children. Times: Thursday 10:00 a.m.- 12:00 noon or 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Fee: \$52/8 weeks plus \$8 material fee

July 8 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Windsor Butterfly Count – Attention butterfly watchers! Join us for Windsor's eleventh annual butterfly tally. Help us with this exciting and valuable field inventory of Windsor's butterflies. Time: Saturday (sunup to sundown) Fee: \$5 participant fee to North American Butterfly Association.

July 12 – ECFNC Summer Activity and Outdoor Meeting – ECFNC Treasurer Teresa Austrin and ECFNC Vice President Joe Parent invite ECFNC members to join them at their home at 675 Mersea Road 12 to enjoy an evening with their bats. Phil Roberts will bring a mist net, light tag and bat detector as part of the equipment to enjoy this evening activity. Meet at 8:00 p.m. Directions: If you are coming from Windsor proceed along Highway 3 East. At Highway 77, north of Leamington, turn left on Highway 77 and proceed North. Proceed for about 4 miles to Mersea Road 7, turning right at this intersection, and proceed East for about two kilometres to the first stop sign which will be the intersection with Mersea Road 12. At this intersection, turn right and watch for the first farm on the right and the house sign which is 675 Mersea Road 12. Please park at the barns.

July 15 – Point Pelee National Park - Parks Day – Celebrate Canada's National Parks. Call the Park for more details.

July 22 – Detroit River Cleanup Committee – Peche Island Day – Events will include free boat transportation to the Island, environmental information and talks, crafts and games for the kids, opportunities to view satellite tracking of our Bald Eagles, door prizes, a Bar-b-que lunch and much more. The DRCC website will be updated as details of the event become available. You can also sign up to receive the DRCC's free E-Newsletter that outlines environmental event and activities like this one taking place in the community. Please e-mail postmaster @detroitriver.ca if you would like to volunteer for this event, or receive e-mail updates about this and other events. Supporting organizations for this event include the City of Windsor, ECFNC, Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research, Bird Studies Canada and Little River Enhancement Group.

July 26 – ECFNC Executive Meeting

July 27 – Ojibway Nature Centre – **Prairie Days** - A unique opportunity to explore the relationship between prairie plants and animals. Time: Thursday 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Fee \$7/trip

July 31 – August 4 – Ojibway Nature Centre - **Windsor Wildlife Watchers (Ages 7 – 11)** – Discover Windsor's wildlife through activities, hikes and field studies of our natural surroundings. Early drop off starting at 8:00 a.m. and late pick up until 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Fee: \$130/week plus \$8 material fee.

August 1 – Point Pelee National Park – **Butterfly Count** upcoming on August 12 – You must preregister by August 1, 2006.

August 1 – 22 – Ojibway Nature Centre – **CSI: Wetlands (Ages 9-13)** – How healthy are our local ponds and streams? Join us for an investigative marathon as we delve into the depth of this aquatic world. Early drop off starting at 8:00 a.m. and late pick up until 5:00 p.m. Time: Tuesday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Fee: \$104/4 weeks plus \$15 material fee

August 2 – August 23 – Ojibway Nature Centre - **Young Naturalists (Ages 7-11)** – Explore the secret world of wildlife up close. Early drop off from 8:00 a.m. and late pick-up until 5:00 p.m. Times: Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Fee: \$104/4 days plus \$6 material fee

August 9 – ECFNC Summer Activity - Meet with Ojibway staff member Karen Cedar at 7:30 p.m. in the Ojibway Nature Centre for an update on Ojibway's Massasauga Rattlesnake population. A walk on the Ojibway prairie will take place following Karen's presentation.

August 12 – Point Pelee National Park – **Butterfly Count** – You must preregister by August 1, 2006. All day count with a butterfly workshop. Call for details and to register.

August 16 – Ojibway Nature Centre – **Weekday Warblers** – Eliminate the confusion of fall warblers with these three field trips at the peak of the warbler migration. Time: Wednesday 8:30 a.m. Fee \$11/ trip

August 18 – Ojibway Nature Centre – **Bugs, Bats and Beyond** – Come out after dark and be a part of Ojibway's fascinating night life. See bats, owls, moths and fireflies. A family discount is available. Time: Friday 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Fee: \$7 for adults, \$6 for youths

August 23 – Ojibway Nature Centre – **Weekday Warblers** – Eliminate the confusion of fall warblers with these three field trips at the peak of the warbler migration. Time: Wednesday 8:30 a.m. Fee \$11/ trip

August 30 - Ojibway Nature Centre – **Weekday Warblers** – Eliminate the confusion of fall warblers with these three field trips at the peak of the warbler migration. Time: Wednesday 8:30 a.m. Fee \$11/ trip

September 8 – October 1 – Point Pelee National Park – Friday to Sunday Monarch and More Hikes – Join a park interpreter for a tour of the world famous Tip in search of migrating birds, dragonflies and, of course, monarchs. Call for details.

September 9/10 – Festival of Hawks at Holiday Beach Conservation Area – Sharp-shinned Weekend, Monarchs & Hummingbirds – Activities include children's activities, displays, Pelee Wings Nature Store sales, hawk banding demonstrations, Monarch tagging and talks, Hawk identification slide talk, guided hawk watching on the hawk tower, and song bird banding. Light refreshments offered at the Blue Kestrel Café. ECFNC members are invited to volunteer for the Blue Kestrel Café from 11:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

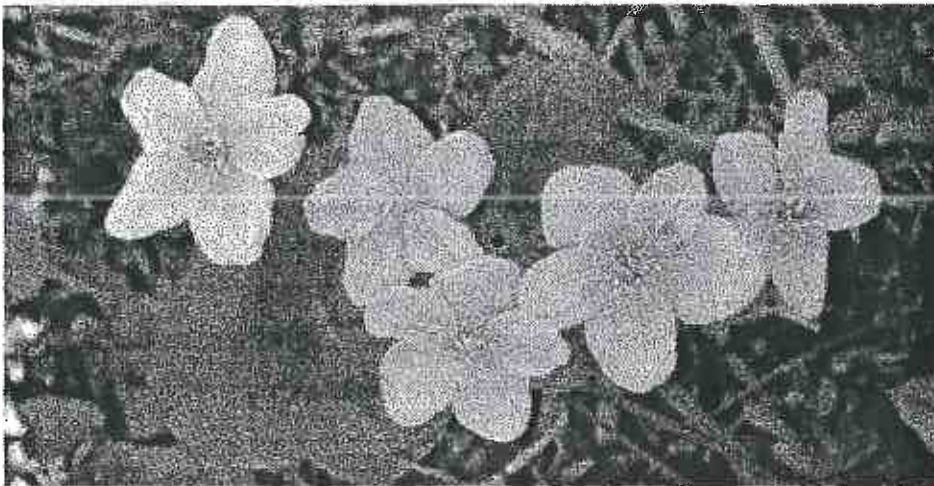
September 13 – ECFNC Monthly Members Meeting - Guest speaker Dan Dufour will discuss restoration of Point Pelee National Park. Meet in Room C of the Essex Civic Centre at 7:30 p.m.

September 16/17 – Festival of Hawks at Holiday Beach Conservation Area – Broad-winged Weekend, Dragons & Butterflies – Activities as described above. Dragonfly walk (Sept. 17)

September 23 - Festival of Hawks at Holiday Beach Conservation Area – Peregrine Falcon Day, Fall Warblers & Songbirds - Activities as described above.

November 11- ECFNC Annual Dinner and Silent Auction – Guest speaker at our 22d annual dinner will be Dr. Brock Fenton, Chair of the University of Western Ontario' Biology Department. Dr. Fenton has entitled his talk "Listening In On the Lives of Bats" Dr. Fenton writes: I will reflect on some of the basics about bat biology, from how they are built to how they operate. I will also speak about what they say and what it might mean. The issues around bats and people, from public health to myths about vampires also will be discussed." This year's dinner will be held in the Udine Hall, Fogolar Furlan Club.

November 12 – Art Gallery of Windsor – An exhibition of landscape paintings by Mary Celestino will be held at the Art Gallery of Windsor. The work will consist of Mary's personal encounters with nature in some of Essex County's most remote areas.



*Marsh Marigolds at Cedar Creek
Photo by Wayne Wannick*