



The Egret

the Newsletter of the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club

Inside this issue ...

ECFNC 22nd Annual Dinner.....	1
About the Club	2
ECFNC. Contacts.....	2
Kayaking Wheatley Provincial Park.....	4
Simple Delights	5
Festival of Hawks, Fall 2006.....	6
Woodpecker not so extinct	11
A Visit to the Humbug Complex.....	12
A Fall Walk on Ojibway Tallgrass Prairie.....	14
Balkwill Woods Fall Walk.....	16
Donations to the ECFNC Silent Auction	17
Fall Sightings.....	20
Baillie Bird-a-thon.....	20
Mary Celestino Where Lands Divide and Waters Flow..	21
Nature Conservancy of Canada Update.....	21
Club's Events.....	22
Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas Presale.....	24



*Festival of Hawks
Summary 2006...page 6*

*Thank you to
Nancy Murray for
sharing her computer
expertise to produce
this issue of The Egret.*

ECFNC 22nd Annual Dinner

Betty Learmouth

Eighty-five ECFNC friends and members gathered on November 11, 2006 for the Club's 22nd annual dinner. This year's event was again held in the spacious Udine Room at the Fogolar Furlan Club. Shirley Grondin looked after the reception desk before the dinner and Margaret Jennings was on hand to welcome members with donations to the silent auction tables.

Our MC for the event was ECFNC Vice President Joe Parent who welcomed everyone. Due to a delay in the food service, Joe asked everyone to assemble for the Life Time Achievement Award before our buffet dinner.

ECFNC President Phil Roberts spoke about the many achievements of long time ECFNC member Peggy Hurst who has assisted and contributed to both the Field Naturalists' Club and the Holiday Beach Migraton Observatory. Peggy recently supplied HBMO with curtains decorated with a feather motif and an air conditioner which benefits the birds being banded, along with the banders. Peggy has volunteered as a banding assistant at the passerine banding station for many years. For a number of years, Peggy has organized the ECFNC monthly meeting refreshments and the monthly raffle, both of which require time and attention. Peggy is also a member of a consulting ecology team and has volunteered her expertise on several occasions to the Canada South Land Trust. Peggy was especially well attired for the evening as Peggy was wearing a black T-shirt illustrated with a bat in flight and black bat socks purchased in Kentucky.

Following dinner which included penne in tomato sauce, roast chicken and roast beef, browned potatoes, mixed vegetables, green salad, and a variety of sweets and fruit provided by ECFNC members, MC Joe Parent announced the conclusion of the silent auction and called everyone to assemble for a presentation by our guest speaker.

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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Membership fees:

Individual \$20 per year
Family \$25 per year
Sustaining \$30 per year
Life: \$500

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Guest speaker Dr. Brock Fenton was introduced by Betty Learmouth. Dr. Fenton is the Chair of the Biological Sciences Department at the University of Western Ontario. His research is devoted to the study of bats across Canada and around the world in the tropics and subtropics.

Dr. Fenton's Power Point talk was well paced with fascinating information about bats and humorous comments that kept the audience attentive and chuckling. Right off the bat, Dr. Fenton told us that bats fly like birds, but bats do not lay eggs, bats have teeth, bats give birth to live young and bats do not have feathers.

In human art, the fascination with bats may be found in the depiction of bats such as on Chinese porcelain, a Chinese snuff bottle, the hilt of a sword and a bat shown with a red swastika which conveyed the message of 10,000 blessings.

Dr. Fenton provided his audience with some intriguing facts about bats. Bats invest hugely in their young, feeding the young their weight in milk every day. Many bat species give birth to a single young per year as does the Little Brown Bat. Bats range in size from the tiny Pipistrel which weighs three grams or the weight of two dimes (there is a bat species that is even smaller) to large bats that weight 1,500 grams (the equivalent of three pounds of butter), such as the fruit eating Flying Fox.

Dr. Fenton continued his talk with the comment that bats have wonderful faces and illustrated his comment with a photograph of a Wrinkled-faced Bat.

A forty-two year old bat is known from Europe. Greater Horseshoe Bats have been studied in England and Wales for fifty years with thirty-five year old individuals fairly common. Dr. Fenton told us about his young grad students who have found bats at the Renfrew site which were older than themselves.

Austin, Texas is famous for several caves in which millions of bats roost. Dr. Fenton showed a photograph of a stream of bats in Austin at dusk with spectators silhouetted on a bridge against a red sky. One cave in Austin has been found to contain 10,000,000 bats which represents one third of Canada's population.

Dr. Fenton showed his audience photographs of buildings where he has encountered bats such as an old farmhouse north of Kingston. Piles of bat guano are in the farmhouse attic which Dr. Fenton first visited in 1966. Other notable bat roost sites include a fishing club in British Columbia which Queen Elizabeth II has visited, a church in South Africa, and bat caves built in Texas. Even sun umbrellas provide bats with a roost.

As early as 1794, biosonor or echolocation was investigated by Lazzaro Spellianzani who stated that "bats can see with their ears." Researcher Donald Griffin repeated Spellianzani's experiments, coining the term echolocation in 1940. It is interesting to note that certain bird species such as Oilbirds and Cave Swifts echolocate. A bat species, *Stellaluna*, found in South Africa does not echolocate, instead this species clicks its tongue to produce sounds.



ECFNC President Phil Roberts and Life Time Achievement Award winner Peggy Hurst.

Dr. Fenton turned his attention to a discussion of bat conservation. In Africa the Big-eared Bat is rarely seen but yet it has the same endangered status as the rhinoceros. The natural habitat of this bat species has disappeared to be replaced by sugar cane. Closer to home, the wind farms near Port Burwell may have an impact on our bat population but there is a lot of ignorance in this area.

A mine retired at Renfrew, Ontario in 1915, is now a magnificent place, providing habitat for wintering Ontario bats. Bats arrive in August at which time they mate, with the females storing sperm and eventually becoming pregnant in spring. Bats at Renfrew have been observed coming into the site at 100 metres above the trees, then diving into the retired mine at a speed of five metres per second. Bats entering hibernation dramatically increase their weight to survive the long months of hibernation. Disturbance during hibernation consumes valuable energy.

Silvered-haired Bats have been identified as carriers of a particularly lethal strain of rabies. Fortunately this species is not a house bat. Worldwide 40,000 to 50,000 persons die yearly from rabies.

Little Brown Bats feed over water for prey such as midges. Big Brown Bats feed over land, consuming half their weight in insects, including caddis flies, every night.

In Ontario, eight species of bats are found, three of which migrate from the province. Big Brown Bats are common in cities, hibernating in buildings. Little Brown Bats migrate to moist underground sites.

Five bat species are known from the Renfrew swarming site. Bats, both large and small species, cluster together in hibernation to reduce water loss.

Dr. Fenton's students have been studying bat migration at Long Point but migration routes in Ontario remain unknown.

Female bats become pregnant in April with the young born in the second half of June. Bat babies are big compared to the females. For instance, a three week old Little Brown Bat is the size of its mother but not as heavy as its mother. Most bat species give birth to a single young although Red Bats are known to produce five young in a year. Big Brown Bats give birth to twins in Ontario with studies indicating a different father for each twin.

ECFNC executive member Karen Cedar thanked Dr. Fenton for his fine presentation.

The evening concluded with words of appreciation from MC Joe Parent to Margaret Jennings and Karen Cedar who set up the silent auction and to Shirley Grondin and JoAnn Grondin who looked after the reception table before and after the dinner. Joe thanked all those who attended the dinner as well as all those friends and members who donated items to the silent auction and those who supported the auction which raised \$1,709.00 for natural heritage protection. The evening concluded with a draw for the door prizes. A special mention to the Fogolar Furlan staff who set up the hall and prepared the delicious dinner. Thank you to MC Joe Parent for once again looking after the pace of the evening so well.

Kayaking in the Wilds of Wheatley Provincial Park

Chris Bowyer

On a warm summer July weekend I took a three day camping trip to Wheatley Provincial Park, on the shore of Lake Erie. I brought along my kayak to explore the streams and wetlands. I camped on the edge of Sugar Creek to have easy access to the marsh for kayaking. For those who do not know Wheatley, I think it is a jewel tucked away in the southeastern corner of Essex County. This nice sized park is full of interesting sights and sounds. It is an excellent expanse of Carolinian forest with towering ash, maple, oak, sassafras and other Carolinian tree species. The forest surrounds the marsh where Bossy and Sugar Creeks join up before flowing into Lake Erie. The park is criss-crossed by many foot trails that lead you to different habitats.

One morning I decided to explore a section of the park that is only easily accessed by water. I left early in the morning and slowly, silently paddled across the water. To my surprise in less than an hour, I saw four great blue herons, six green herons and over a dozen dragonflies. Many Wood Ducks would fly up as I approached them. I eventually left the campgrounds behind me to explore the more isolated part of the park. The creek I traveled went through a long section of marsh before it entered a patch of forest. I have never experienced paddling through a forest like this before. At the north end of that park I took some time to stretch my legs and was surprised by five adults and eight baby wild turkeys.

Pop cans, bottles and other waste floated along the shore, so I decided to try to clean up as much as possible. I pulled garbage that was intertwined in the cattails into arm's reach with my paddle and put it into bags. At the end of the trip I did a survey of the garbage collected which included 50 bottles, 25 cans and other miscellaneous waste. I felt good knowing that I had helped to keep the park clean. I enjoy doing things like this to make a positive impact on the natural community that surrounds us.

For those who are interested in trying boating at the park, there is easy access to the marsh. After entering the park on the main road, proceed to the administration office. Travel along the road which follows the lake, at no more than a stone's throw at all times. Proceed west on the road until you reach the last picnic area. From this point you can reach the marsh in a few minutes walk. It is a nice area to explore as there is always lots of interesting wildlife and plant life to see from spring to fall.

Simple Delights

Chris Bowyer

Working together to bring in the fall harvest
Forking potatoes in soft, malleable and damp soil
While someone else digs bright, crisp, orange carrots
And someone picks green tomatoes
To ripen in the sun's warmth on a window ledge.

Picking apples from wild apple trees
Scattered over the landscape
Pressing them into golden, sweet and pulpy cider
Picking up nuts beneath towering walnut trees
On a warm autumn day.

Walking down a country road
On a crisp, sunny day in autumn
Watching as the tree's leaves float, twirl, and glide through the air
Try to catch one and
Learn how they dance with the wind.

Getting up before the crack of dawn
To canoe out into a river or lake as the mist floats over the water
To catch some fish or just to enjoy the stillness
Canoe drifts across the lake
As graceful as a butterfly's flight.

Lying on my back in a forest clearing or some snow-drifted field
As large snow flakes tumble and spin to the ground
Feeling the flakes hit my warm skin
Looking up skyward at countless snow flakes
Essence of being part of the snow falling.

Potlucks

Enjoying many kinds of food

Each a surprise to behold

Sharing conversation with those who gather

Appreciating the time with each other.

Fall harvest reward

Autumn leaves falling

Snow filled skies

Potlucks and fellowship

Simple Delights

*This poem was inspired by many memories of
growing up, living out in the country in the past
and present. September 2005*

Festival of Hawks, Fall 2006

Betty Learmouth

Day 1, September 9, 2006

Volunteers were on hand September 9, 2006 at an early hour to put the finishing touches on preparations for the first day of the annual Holiday Beach Festival of Hawks. The set up this year moved to the west of the Education Building with the ERCA trailer display along with the Festival tent sheltering the Blue Kestrel Café and the Pelee Wings Nature Display. Beyond the big white tent was the Festival stage with an administration table beside the stage. Opposite the Festival stage was the childrens' hands-on craft centre and the live raptor display. A trail had been opened up to the nearby parking area which made a convenient access to those persons moving back and forth between the Festival site and the hawk tower.

Among the persons setting up were Bev Wannick who was representing the Essex Region Conservation Authority, volunteers Cathy Evans and Cindy Paslewski who set up the administration table, Rachel Powless who put the finishing touches to the colourful raptor, passerine and Monarch displays in the classroom, Shirley Grondin and Betty Learmouth who set up the Blue Kestrel Café, Dorothy McLeer who looked after settling "Fuzzy Winks," the Great Horned Owl, into the live raptor display and Mike Malone of Pelee Wings Nature Store who set up a display of books, clothing and optics. Meg and Tess Roberts assisted Bev Wannick with obtaining aquatic organisms for the children's aquatic display.

Due to poor winds, the raptor migration was light with no activity in the raptor banding station. Luckily the passerine station was able to provide a number of passerines for several talks and release at the Festival stage. Passerine bander Carl Pascoe was joined by an enthusiastic group of youngsters, members of the Southwest Outdoors Club and Wheatley Scouts, who enjoyed the talk and releases. Cathy Evans and Cindy Paslewski assisted with the adopt a song bird program, providing colourful certificates. Rachel Powless brought the Monarch "condo," a table top tent, to the Festival stage where the Monarchs in the "condo" were tagged and released before an attentive audience.

ECFNC members Donna Cowie and Ruth Hart looked after food requests at the Blue Kestrel Café as Shirley Grondin barbecued the hot dogs.

At 1:30 p.m. hawk watcher Bob Pettit showed his raptor identification program in the Education Building.

Raptor coordinator Bob Hall-Brooks reported a light migration of raptors past the hawk tower but good numbers of Monarchs, Green Darners and warblers were observed.

Species	Nos.
Turkey Vulture	13
Osprey	5
Northern Harrier	19
Sharp-shinned Hawk	14
Cooper's Hawk	3
Broad-winged Hawk	4
Red-tailed Hawk	10
American Kestrel	48
Merlin	2
Total	118

Day 2, September 10, 2006

Cloud covered the Festival of Hawks site throughout the day. Volunteers were on hand early to be ready for visitors who arrived soon after 9:00 a.m., including families who had camped overnight in the Conservation Area's camp site.

At 10:00 a.m. Carl Pascoe with the assistance of Phil Roberts presented a passerine talk which included the display of a Bay-breasted Warbler, a male Redstart and a hatch year Redstart, unknown sex. Three thrush species were shown together, a Veery, a Gray-cheeked Thrush and a Swainson's Thrush.

Phil Roberts then presented a raptor talk and demonstration which featured the season's first capture of a raptor in the hawk blind and which was lured by Meg Roberts, Phil's older daughter. Spectators were informed that birds of prey are environmental indicators and that at Holiday Beach, banders are involved in a random sampling of the migrant raptor population. The first step in this process is to place a band on the leg of the raptor using pliers which reform the band into a perfectly round circle. Now the raptor has a one of a kind band number giving it an identity.

Phil discussed some of the information that this female hatch year American Kestrel presented to the bander. American Kestrels are cavity nesters and it appeared that the nest in which this falcon was raised suffered from hunger for a short time as this particular bird showed imperfection in the ends of its tail feathers or a "fault." Kestrel nesting cavities are noted for lack of hygiene thus this young bird's dirty feet were to be expected. When weighed, this young female bird was found to weigh 120 grams.

Phil noted that kestrels and falcons are notorious biters. The bill of this young bird featured two hooks which are used to deliver a "coup de grace" to prey by biting the back of the neck, whether the prey be a grasshopper or small mammal. As well, this young bird had the typical baffles in its nostrils which are necessary as this falcon can fly at a speed of 120 kilometres per hour and must be able to deflect air from its air passages.

The wings of this kestrel were wedged shaped which is typical of falcons. As well, the head of this bird features a pattern of eyes and dark spots.

At 10:50 a.m., Carl Pascoe brought a hatch year female Ruby-throated Hummingbird to the Festival stage for a short talk and release, commenting this tiny bird was on its way to Costa Rica. This bird weighed 5.2 grams which is interpreted as a lot of fat for its journey. This hummer was the thirtieth banded this year by Holiday Beach banders. Last year, 137 hummers were banded. Carl suggested to everyone that they maintain their backyard hummingbird feeders into October for the benefit of migrating hummers.

At 11:50 a.m. Phil Roberts returned with several more raptors from the banding station for a hawk talk with approximately thirty persons at the Festival stage. The audience was asked if anyone could identify the bird in the can which had long legs, a long narrow tail which was as long as its body and broad V-shaped wings. The bird of prey was identified as a Sharp-shinned Hawk, with its name likely derived from its sharp shins which are noted if a finger is passed along the edge of a leg.

A young lady from the audience assisted Phil in the banding of this raptor. Then Phil discussed some of the characteristics of this bird. A female Sharp-shinned Hawk will come to the Festival stage in a Pringles can, but a male will come in a Heinz tomato juice can as the males are 50% smaller than the females. Plumage and eye colour will change over time for this young bird. The dark mottling or spots on the breast of this young hatch year female will turn to cinnamon barring in another year, while the eye will become orange and finally burgundy in its third year.

Sharp-shinned hawks are visual hunters, flying through dense bush, keeping an eye on prey the entire time regardless of the plane of its body. Accipiters are aggressive hunters which can mean that birds may impale themselves on sticks as they crash into vegetation.

Raptors have hollow tongues which are connected to the windpipe. This is more easily seen in the larger raptors such as Red-tailed Hawks.

Shortly after 1:00 p.m., Carl Pascoe gave another short passerine talk after which the crowd moved off to the Education Building for a Power Point Monarch presentation by Rachel Powless. Monarchs had been noted fluttering in the trees about the site but none were netted for tagging. Later Rachel remarked that thousands of Monarchs were likely in the area due to adverse weather conditions for their migration.

About the site assisting with activities were other persons including Bev Wannick who was in the children's activity area looking after crafts and the scavenger hunt. Dorothy McLeer discussed "Fuzzy Winks," the Great Horned Owl, in the live raptor display. Mike Malone had set up a display from Pelee Wings Nature Store. Kathy Evans and Cindy Paslewski looked after passerine and raptor adoptions. Meg Roberts recorded data from raptor banding at the Festival stage. At the Blue Kestrel Café, ECFNC members Pauline Renaud and Denise Hartley looked after customers while Shirley Grondin barbecued the hot dogs.

Raptor coordinator Bob Hall-Brooks reported overcast and breezy conditions for the day with winds from the northeast which brought over one hundred Ruby-throated Hummingbirds past the tower along with good numbers of warblers and vireos to the passerine station. A summary of the day's migration is as follows:

Species	
Turkey Vulture	0
Osprey	8
Bald Eagle	1
Northern Harrier	68

The Great

Winter 2006

Peregrine Falcon	1
Total	

Day 3, September 16, 2006

Volunteers were on hand early at the Festival tent site to set up in anticipation of a busy day ahead. Twenty-three visitors enjoyed a passerine talk at 10:05 a.m. with bander Carl Pascoe at the Festival stage. A mewling Grey Catbird was among the birds that Carl discussed.

Kathy Evans looked after the administration desk for the adoption programs and sale of raffle tickets. A new bucket raffle featured three coffee table books plus a framed hawk portrait by Martha Derbowka. Bev Wannick was on hand at the popular children's display. Dorothy McLeer was in the live raptor display area with 'Fuzzy Winks,' the Great Horned Owl.

Bev Wannick brought newly designed Festival of Hawks brochures which used the information provided in the pamphlet that Bev has produced the last few years. The professional designer had reformatted the front of the pamphlet into an eye catching horizontal design which included photographs of both hawkwatchers and birds of prey. The pamphlet opened to a full 8 1/2 by 11 inch spread with Festival program and migration found in a glance.

Overcast conditions began to clear shortly after 10:00 a.m. bringing raptors past the banding stations. At 11:00 a.m. Phil Roberts began a hawk talk with a crowd of over thirty persons which swelled to seventy persons by its conclusion.

Phil remarked that the raptor banders are plucking individual birds of prey from the general raptor population, giving these banded birds an identity. Various methods are employed to trap raptors. For instance, passerines (song birds) are caught in mist nets set up in a certain configuration. Owls are trapped in mist nets and are attracted by playing tapes of owl calls which the owls investigate. Some raptors can be enticed by imaginative lures. Osprey, which are fish eaters, are not caught by raptor banders.

Phil spoke about the nets used by banders, one of which was on display. Then Phil continued, displaying a Heinz tomato juice container with its protruding tail. The container protects both the raptor and the bander as the raptor is processed at the banding station.

Phil asked if anyone could identify the raptor in the juice can. A member of the audience said that the raptor was a Sharp-shinned Hawk which Phil confirmed was the correct answer. Phil pointed out its long legs, its tail as long as its body and its broad short wings. A female Sharp-shinned Hawk would have arrived at the Festival site in a Pringle's can as female Sharp-shinned Hawks are larger than the males. In fact, this applies to all raptor species as the female is larger.

This particular male Sharp-shinned Hawk had been hatched this year based on its plumage. The distinctive noddling on its breast will be replaced in a year by cinnamon barring. The bird's eye colour will become orange next year, then burgundy in its third year.

The band size for this male Sharp-shinned Hawk would be a size 12, the same size as that placed on a Blue Jay. A young assistant from the audience gave Phil a hand applying the band with the banding pliers.

Then Phil turned his attention to several Red-tailed Hawks which had been trapped at the Windsor Airport and which would be released at Holiday Beach to ensure these birds did not return to the airport. These large raptors were adopted by Mitchell Zeidler and Nathaniel Meloche (see page 1), who both had adopted raptors in the past. The camera person/reporter from the A Channel was on hand to capture the excitement of the release of these impressive raptors.

At 11:45 a.m. Carl Pascoe arrived with passerines including a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Magnolia Warblers and a Swainson's Thrush. Carl returned at 12:50 p.m. with a Ruby-throated Hummingbird for a short talk and release.

In the audience was Casey Lloyd, a Grade 10 student at St. Anne's High School who is fond of drawing birds and illustrating her drawings with colourful feathers including a wonderful rusty-red tail feather of an adult Red-tailed Hawk.

Windsor Star reporter Dale Molnar was also seen about the Festival site over the noon hour.

Several short passerine and hawk talks were presented just before Bob Pettit's scheduled hawk talk held at 1:30 p.m. in the Education Building. A highlight of the passerine talk for Stacy O'Hair was an Ovenbird which Stacy adopted.

Under the Festival tent, Joan Walker was on hand with a display of books, clothing and optics from Pelee Wings Nature Store. At the Blue Kestrel Café, Marg Calder and Bonnie Ross looked after the sales of coffee, muffins and hot dogs which Shirley Grondin grilled the hot dogs. Sales were excellent at the Café, with muffins and hotdogs sold out.

Raptor coordinator Bob Hall-Brooks reported cloudy overcast conditions with variable light winds in the morning becoming sunny with southerly winds at noon. A summary of the day's migration past the hawk tower is as follows:

Species	Nos.
Turkey Vulture	5
Osprey	5
Bald Eagle	1
Northern Harrier	21
Sharp-shinned Hawk	69
Cooper's Hawk	11
Broad-winged Hawk	184
Red-tailed Hawk	8
American Kestrel	39
Merlin	2
Total	545

Day 4, September 17, 2006

Volunteers at the Festival of Hawks site were greeted by a colourful sunrise as they set up displays for the day ahead, the first sunny morning of the Festival. At 8:15 a.m. Carl Pascoe brought several banding passerines to the site which were shown to the volunteers as no visitors had yet arrived. Volunteers had close looks at a hatch year female Ruby-throated Hummingbird and a Winter Wren (page 23), which slipped away from Kathy Evans. Carl pointed out this bird's tiny wings, the size of a hummingbird's wing. Its plumage was glossy and slick, which allows the bird to slip easily through tiny openings.

At 9:25 a.m., Carl returned with a Swainson's Thrush and an Ovenbird which he showed to visitors on site.

At 10:00 a.m. twenty-five dragonfly walk participants gathered at the Festival tent. Paul Pratt spoke about the research that is being conducted to understand dragonfly migration. For instance, one research group placed tiny radio transmitters on a group of Green Darners which they followed for two days. Paul told the group that dragonflies migrate under similar conditions as hawks. Among the hawks, American Kestrels time their migration to that of the dragonflies, thus migrating with their food supply. American Kestrels are often seen with captured dragonflies which provide hawk support.

Paul told the group that little is known about dragonfly migration. For instance, one spring at Point Pelee National Park, on April 10th at the Tip, a number of mature Green Darners showed up. These insects were fully mature adults but it is not known where they had come from. It takes approximately a week for an adult dragonfly to develop its full colour from the time it emerges from its nymph form. The adults seen at the Tip were mature individuals that had not hatched from the Pelee marsh.

At 10:40 a.m. passerine bander Carl Pascoe brought a Carolina Wren to the Festival stage.

Phil Roberts and his assistants brought a Northern Harrier and a number of Sharp-shinned Hawks to the Festival stage for a hawk talk and demonstration, remarking that numbers of hawks were passing through the site. Phil mentioned that hawk banding demands that banders move quickly when a raptor bounces into a net. The banders literally burst from the blinds to retrieve the birds. In order to provide a quiet safe place, raptors are placed in cans and the birds quickly processed in order, the process completed within minutes.

The Northern Harrier proved to be a real crowd pleaser. Phil told the group that Harriers will check out the setup, flying over the setup, listening intently and dismissing the setup in many cases. Sometimes young Northern Harriers are trapped such as the hatch year female which Phil displayed. Phil noted its long legs, talons, and facial disc as well as its ears which are large openings on its head. The wing cord of a female Northern Harrier is 363 mm or more while that of a male Northern Harrier is 355 mm or less. Eye colour in adult Northern Harriers differs from one sex to another. The young female Northern Harrier had been banded with a size 5 band. Volunteer Kathy Evans adopted this bird to celebrate her birthday.

At 1:00 p.m. Rachel Pascoe gave a monarch talk in the classroom, followed by a monarch tagging demonstration.

Under the Festival tent, Joan Walker had again arranged the Pelee Wings Nature Store display. Volunteers at the Blue Kestrel Café included JoAnn Grondin and Kathy Lesperance while Shirley Grondin grilled the hotdogs. Again, sales were brisk and all food was sold.

The hands-on children display remained busy in the last hour of the Festival with Bev Wannick nearby and Dorothy McLeer at the live raptor display with "Fuzzy Winks."

Raptor coordinator Bob Hall-Brooks reported the day's weather conditions as sunny and hazy with light southerly winds. Everyone was disappointed by the low numbers of Broad-winged Hawks. The summary of the day's migration is as follows:

Species	Nos.
Osprey	4
Northern Harrier	8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	301
Cooper's Hawk	7
Broad-winged Hawk	3
Red-tailed Hawk	1
American Kestrel	70
Merlin	3
Peregrine Falcon	1
Total	398

Day 5, September 23, 2006

Listeners to CBC 1550 on the AM dial at 7:15 a.m. were treated to an interview conducted by Toronto broadcaster Jeff Goods of CBC's *Fresh Air* who spoke with local CBC nature columnist Phil Roberts. Phil covered a lot of topics in the short interview, wrapping it all up by declaring he loved hawks and monitoring their migration.

At 7:30 a.m. volunteers were busy preparing the Festival site around the big white tent. Despite a forecast of morning showers, the site stayed dry, much to everyone's delight. Volunteers on hand were Janet Tuite, Kathy Evans, Dorothy McLeer, Cindy Cartwright, Carlie Trombley and Nancy Cristofolia who were volunteering at the hands-on children's display. Bev Wannick coordinated the children's activity area.

Activities were underway shortly after 9:00 a.m. as Carl Pascoe displayed a Ruby-throated Hummingbird and a Northern Waterthrush at the hawk tower where two University of Windsor Ornithology students were among the observers.

At 9:30 a.m., the Great Horned Owl arrived with caretaker Phil Roberts.

Hummingbird bander Cindy Cartwright provided details of the first hummingbird festival held at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington on August 27, 2006. Nine displays were part of the activities including the Friends of Bronte Creek, Master Gardeners, and Hamilton Field Naturalists. HBMO bander Bob Hall-Brooks gave a talk during the day.

Cindy expected fifty persons might attend but was simply overwhelmed at an attendance of two hundred persons who came from various parts of the province for the event. One hundred evaluation forms were distributed with forty-three returned containing positive comments. Cindy had prepared sixteen ant moats for sale which were snapped up. Seventeen new memberships were sold. Next year's festival will be held on August 16, 2007.

Carl Pascoe gave a Ruby-throated Hummingbird talk at mid morning including comments on a Hatch Year male Ruby-throated Hummingbird with a "five o'clock shadow."

Hummingbird bander Cindy Cartwright spoke about the Ontario Hummingbird Project during which participants are asked to submit sightings. One person in the audience reported an Anna's Hummingbird seen at Moon River near Parry Sound, ON.

Cindy spoke about some of the information we know about Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Male hummingbirds do not assist the female with nest preparation or with looking after the nestlings. Male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are known for their aggression, and have been known to chase dogs and other bird species. Males set up their own territories, and due to male aggression, females set up their territories outside that of the males.

Following two weeks incubation, two babies hatch in the Ruby-throated Hummingbird nest. In two weeks, the young are ready to leave the nest. The young have a short stubby bill which with the use of a magnifying lens, an observer may be able to see the grooved bill of the young Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Banders have wondered if the grooves disappeared through growth or if the grooves are rubbed away. It is thought that rubbing causes the disappearance of the grooves.

A member of the audience inquired regarding predators of the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Cindy felt that the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds evaded raptors successfully. Observations have shown that Praying Mantis, frogs and fish have eaten Ruby-throated Hummingbirds as this small species has flown over ponds. In South America, hummingbirds have been caught in the webs of spiders.

At 11:00 a.m. Phil Roberts, assisted by daughters Meg and Tess, gave a hawk talk and demonstration with the Sharp-shinned Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk adopted by members of an audience that numbered over thirty persons.

At 1:00 p.m. Rachel Powless gave a Monarch talk at the Festival stage, followed at 1:30 p.m. by Bob Pettit's raptor ID workshop in the Education Building.

Volunteers at the Blue Kestrel Café included Janet Tuite, Rob and Shirley Dunlop, Margaret Jennings, and Cathy Lapain who barbecued the hotdogs.

Fifty cars entered the park today for the last day of the Festival of Hawks.

On the final day of the Festival, the weather was reported to be overcast, hazy, foggy with rain in the afternoon. Visitors were pleased to see all falcon three species today. "Oscar," the Osprey, who had called Holiday Beach home for the last few weeks, escorted the migrant Ospreys through today. The "Cappucino Warbler," a partially albino Yellow-rumped Warbler, put in an appearance. Bob Hall-Brooks reported the following raptors:

Species	Nos.
Osprey	6
Northern Harrier	7
Sharp-shinned Hawk	113
Cooper's Hawk	7
American Kestrel	12
Merlin	4
Peregrine Falcon	7
Total	156

Chief bander, Phil Roberts & daughters: Tess and Meg (in back) and nieces & nephews: Jane, Michael and Gretta.



Woodpecker not so extinct after all, U of W prof finds Ornithologist on team in Florida swamps

Monica Wolfson Star Education Reporter

In *The Windsor Star*, September 26, 2006

A University of Windsor professor and a team of Canadian and U.S. scientists have collected strong evidence that the Ivory-billed woodpecker, once thought extinct, is flying and pecking in the Florida panhandle.

In an article published today in the journal "*Avian Conservation and Ecology*," a Canadian scientific publication, Windsor ornithologist Daniel Mennill and Geoff Hill, an Auburn University biologist, detail evidence collected discretely over the past year that seems to prove the elusive, secretive woodpecker lives in the thick canopy forest along the Choc-tawhatchee River.

Between January and April, five Canadian and U.S. researchers camped out in the isolated Florida swamp and saw the bird 14 times as well as collected 11,419 hours of forest sounds.

“We were in a canoe and it (flew by us) on an upward angle over the trees,” said Kyle Swiston, a Windsor biological sciences graduate student. “It wasn’t a good sighting, but it’s got a distinctive shape and wing pattern. I’m very confident it wasn’t a pileated woodpecker.”

The common pileated woodpecker which lives throughout North America, is often mistaken for the ivory-billed woodpecker because the two have similar colouring.

Mennill speculated the bird survived in obscurity because it lives in an inhospitable swamp with few human visitors.

The discovery could show that woodpeckers are able to survive in much smaller colonies than previously thought.

While researchers heard the unique songs and pecking rhythm associated with the woodpecker 44 times, it wasn’t until a team of Windsor students listened to thousands of hours of digitally recorded swamp music that evidence of the bird’s existence poured in.

Researchers documented the ivory-billed woodpecker’s distinctive double-knock pounding sound on 99 occasions and its trilling trumpet call 210 times from Mennill’s seven recording stations.

While no nest was found, researchers measured 131 cavities in old forest trees and 20 are too large to be explained by any other swamp creature.

Researchers say they spotted three ivory-billed woodpeckers, while only one was reported in Arkansas in 2004. This is the second sighting of the ivory-billed woodpecker in 62 years – it hasn’t officially been seen since 1944 - which led many ornithologists to believe the bird was extinct. The bird lived in old forest cypress trees, which were heavily logged. And as the birds began to disappear, hunters began collecting the increasingly rare woodpecker as trophies.

The Arkansas discovery also included audio recordings, but it became controversial after field guide book authors cast doubt on the finding because the only visual evidence was a grainy video.

“The (Windsor) acoustic evidence is very interesting,” said Ken Rosenberg, director of conservation science at Cornell University lab of ornithology, which explored the Arkansas finding. “They have more variations of the sounds that they are excited about. But what it points to is we are interpreting what we hear. It can’t be definitive evidence.”

Getting a photograph of the mysterious ivory-billed woodpecker is a top priority, Mennill said. In January he plans to return to Florida with another team of researchers, but this time audio data will be analysed by Windsor undergraduate students within 12 hours of being recorded. That way researchers will be able to pinpoint the bird’s location and stake out the site if it returns for a picture.

Want to listen? Audio tapes of the sounds of the ivory-billed woodpecker will be at www.uwindsor.ca/dmennill

A Visit to the Humbug Complex

Betty Learmouth

Four ECFNC friends and members joined Bruce Jones, a member of the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy and the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance, on October 1, 2006 for a walk on the Humbug Complex. Special guest was Kathleen Law, a Michigan State Representative who was invited to join us as Kathleen was anxious to enjoy a guided walk through the Complex as well. Kathleen represents Michigan’s 23rd District which includes Flat Rock, Gibraltar, Grosse Ile and Trenton, all downriver communities on the Michigan side of the Detroit River.

Bruce opened the gates to an area that appeared to be a large meadow off Jefferson Avenue, south of the Grosse Ile Parkway which leads to the Township of Grosse Ile. We parked our vehicles on a cement roadway. This riverside neighborhood has been devoted to industrial plants for many decades as an Edison plant was constructed in the vicinity in the 1920s, followed by a Monsanto plant. The nearby natural shoreline of the Detroit River was filled with the original Chrysler chemical plant built on the site in the 1940s. The cement roadway on which we stood was a reminder of that plant which was eventually demolished. This site was turned over to Wayne County in 2004 and is now leased to the Detroit River

International Refuge with future plans for the construction of an environmental education centre and offices for the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge on the land.

We noted plant species in the meadow which included Canada Goldenrod, New England Aster and Tall Thoroughwort that had attracted numbers of butterflies, especially Monarchs, earlier in the fall. In the centre of the meadow, a patch of phragmites indicated the site of a natural drain that had been covered when the Chrysler plant was built. The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge would like to see the drain 'daylighted' with a wetland restoration occurring on the site.

Our walk across the meadow brought us to another cement roadway beside a chain link fence. We noted Seaside Goldenrod, Buckthorn, Sandbar Willow, Poison Ivy, and Phragmites. Bruce commented that the Buckthorn is a major problem as this invasive shrub changes the chemical composition of soil. As we ducked into an opening in the fence and made our way through the stand of Phragmites, Bruce said, "Welcome to Humbug Complex."

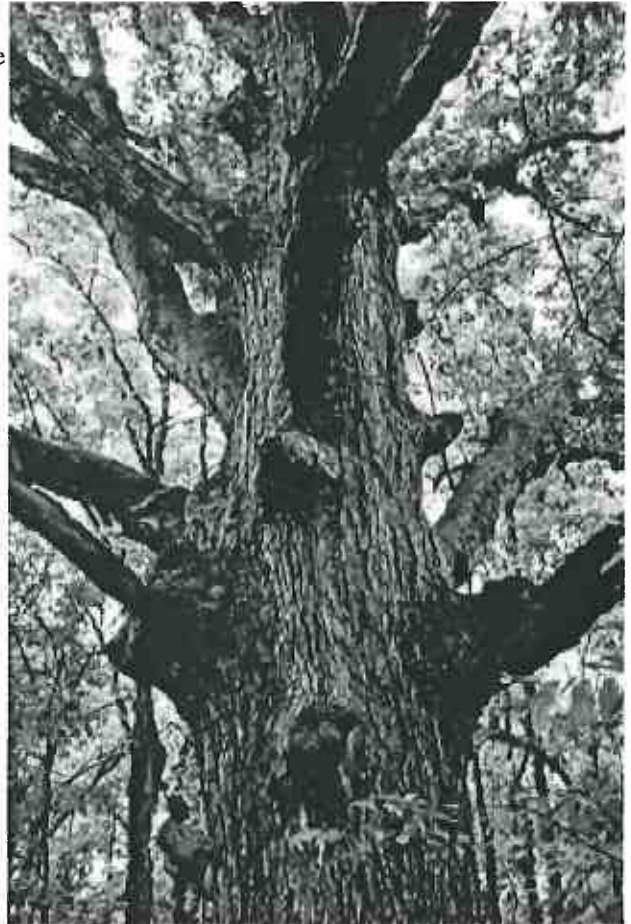
Bruce told us a story related to how the area came to be called "Humbug." The Slocum family, who live in Trenton and had a home located in Elizabeth Park, owned this piece of land. Visitors proceeding up river often made the mistake of misidentifying the location of the Slocum home and its location on the Detroit River. When they realized their mistake, they would exclaim "Humbug." "Humbug" was German for false or misleading. Today the Humbug Complex consists of the mainland site with its cattail marsh, regenerating shrubland, an old growth woodland as well as a shallow Detroit River marsh and Humbug Island, about 420 acres in total.

Through the 1990s many groups including the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy and the Friends of the Detroit River fought hard to prevent the development of the Humbug Complex. Luckily, the developer was inexperienced and eventually declared bankruptcy. The public supported the idea of a natural area preserved on the shores of the Detroit River. The Trust for Public Land stepped in and the lands were eventually turned over to the Department of Fish and Wildlife in 2004, and those lands are now part of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

We hiked along a trail perched on a berm, noting fingers of wetland to our right and the occasional glimpse of a drain to our left. Our hike took us to an area south of where the environmental education centre would be located. Future plans include a trail that would lead into the Complex to an observation area.

Bruce pointed out glacial erratics scattered throughout the woodland. We noted a variety of bird species including Black-capped Chickadees, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Great Blue Heron and ducks overhead. A lookoff with a bench provided good views of the shallow Humbug marsh and Humbug Island beyond where Caspian Terns foraged along the Humbug Island shoreline. Bruce pointed out the unaltered post glacial shoreline before us and reminded us of the importance of this area as a migratory route for raptors and waterfowl.

We retraced our steps on this trail and took another meandering trail that Bruce informed us had been a former deer trail. Along this trail we observed various plant species



including Tall Ironweed, Small-flowered Agrimony, Wild Bergamot and Orange-fruited Horse Gentian, with its orange fruit resembling clustered tiny tomatoes in the plant's leaf axils. Much of the trail was through a regenerated area which had been cleared of all vegetation prior to the summer of 1999 in an effort to show the site could be developed.

The trail lead us to a woodland close to the Detroit River at which point Bruce said, "Welcome to the Pre-settlement Woods." Luckily when vegetation was cleared prior to the summer of 1999, this site was untouched. We were able to view a mixed grove of trees including Shagbark Hickory, Wild Cherry and White Oak. A number of Swamp White Oaks were very large, and displayed old growth characteristics. University of Michigan Botanist Tony Reznicek called one of the White Oaks a "wolf tree" meaning the tree (page 13) had sprouted in an open field and had dominated the region around it.

Bruce showed us a depression or shallow ravine in the Woodland which has been identified as a post-glacial drainage area. During spring runoff, the depression is full of water but was dry on this visit. Just a few feet away we looked at the natural shoreline which had been impacted by winter ice. The shoreline had been scraped by ice and an "ice ridge" of soil had been formed. The Complex boasts two and half miles of post-glacial shoreline.

From this vantage point, we could enjoy the well vegetated natural shoreline before us and a lovely view across to Humbug Island with a fringe of cattails around its southern shoreline. To the south we could view Celeron Island which is also a part of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge which now includes 2,000 acres and will add another 2,000 acres later in October.

Following our walk, we enjoyed an out-on-the-terrace lunch at Sharkey's, a restaurant open to the public at the Grosse Ile Golf Club.

Many thanks to Bruce for showing us the Humbug Complex which are truly remarkable lands that allow us a glimpse into the past along our Detroit River.

A Walk on the Ojibway Tallgrass Prairie

Betty Learmouth

Twenty-one persons joined Ojibway Park's Chief Naturalist Paul Pratt for a walk in the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve on October 8, 2006. The walk was one of the activities during this year's Fall Colour Festival which included children's crafts, a scavenger hunt, a snake location demonstration, food, displays and more.

At the walkover to the Provincial Prairie, the group paused to learn more about the history of this prairie. Paul told us his first visit to the prairie was in 1970 when about 125 acres were protected in contrast to the present when nearly 1,000 acres of high quality natural heritage are protected.

Paul said that over the years a number of botanists have visited the prairie. Dominion Botanist John Macoun visited on August 4, 1892 and was impressed by the prairie vegetation but Macoun did not speak for the preservation of the prairie. In the early 1960s an American botanist visited, and published his findings, but still that did not stimulate any action regarding preservation of the prairie.

In the past a large L-shaped section of the Ojibway Prairie was owned by the local salt company. Plans were provided by the salt company for a pine tree planting project on the prairie. At this time a botanist, Paul Maycock, visited the Ojibway Prairie with staff from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and recognized the prairie from his graduate work in Wisconsin. Maycock then approached the City of Windsor Parks and Recreation Department, the salt company and the Ministry of Natural Resources regarding his findings. Local naturalists Wilf Botham and Jim Wilson developed a list of plants found on the prairie.

Luckily the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources purchased the L-shaped property from the salt company. The race track sold the section along the Ojibway Parkway to the City of Windsor. Black Oak Heritage Park was acquired. Over the last few years, through the efforts of the City of Windsor, sections of the Spring Garden Area of Natural and Scientific Interest have been purchased.

The Ojibway Prairie Complex is large enough that it protects thousands of plants which in turn protect over 3,000 species of insects. Species new to science have been discovered on the prairie, including a recent discovery of a new fly species.

Ojibway Prairie is the largest protected prairie west of Manitoba. Walpole Island's prairie is larger but it is not protected. At one time there was more protected prairie in Ontario than in Manitoba.

Paul paused at a sign announcing the repatriation of the Massasauga Rattlesnake into the Ojibway Prairie and discussed this recent event. Paul told us there are three species of endangered snakes on the Ojibway Prairie including the shy Butler's Garter Snake, the Eastern Fox Snake and the Massasauga Rattlesnake. The Eastern Fox Snake may reach six feet in length, while the Massasauga Rattlesnake may grow to two and one half feet in length.

The Massasauga Rattlesnake has been persecuted with bounties on this species in the United States up until the early 1970s. In the state of Illinois, which calls itself the prairie state, the state's prairies have been converted to corn and soya bean production with the result that the Massasauga Rattlesnake population has been reduced to just three locations in the state. Now they are legislated as a protected species in seven states.

The Ojibway Prairie supports the only population of Massasaugas left in the southwestern corner of Ontario. Although critically endangered, it is hoped that the prairie complex will offer a refuge for their continued existence.

Paul led us along the left hand trail, pointing out various plant species such as a bluish-white aster, *Aster praealtus*, which is found in Canada only on the Ojibway Prairie. We noted American Hazelnut was setting next year's flowers. A stalk of the lovely Bottled Gentian was seen just off the trail (see photograph).

The trail undulates through the prairie with Black Oaks growing on the dry ridges which may be only a few feet higher than the surrounding prairie. In spring there are wet spots where Marsh Fern may be found as well as singing Chorus Frogs that retreat underground as the moisture in the wet prairie disappears.

Paul commented that plants have ways to prevent their foliage from being consumed from the many insects on the prairie. Prairie Cord Grass blade edges are unusually sharp, and especially so, if a finger is run downward on the blade edge. Most caterpillars sit upright and rarely is Cord Grass seen missing bits and pieces, so this defense appears to work. Various mint species have essential oils that make the plant unpalatable such as the Virginia Mountain Mint.

As we walked along the trail, Paul pointed to other plant species such as the Prairie Willow which remains small throughout its life. A prairie aster species, Smooth Aster, with its blue blossoms, has leathery, smooth leaves. The Prairie Thistle may be identified by the underside of its leaves which are white. The Round-headed Bush-clover had three leaves similar to the regular clover.



Our walk brought us to an area which has been invaded by Phragmites. Paul told us that the area was once full of gentians and orchids but the Phragmites have taken over. We did find Common Sneezeweed which blooms in the same time period as Ragweed. We observed Lousewort, Fringed Gentian and Smooth False Foxglove, a host plant for a certain moth species larvae that feeds on the developing seeds of this species.

We lingered on a sandy ridge to enjoy the colourful autumn leaf display. Paul told us the best leaf colour is on warm sunny days. Cool nights also contribute to the leaf colour. Leaf colour is dependant on fall weather and the particular tree species. Each tree species has a different chemical process within its leaves. For instance, the brilliant yellow-orange of the Pignut Hickory on the prairie is distinctive, as is the bright red of the Smooth Sumac. Bright colours advertise that the tree is in good condition.

A Woolly Bear caterpillar was found which Paul discussed. Some persons say that the more black on this species, the colder the approaching winter. Paul felt that the younger the caterpillar, the more black on its body. These caterpillars stop eating in the autumn and begin to look for a place to hibernate over the winter. In the spring, the caterpillars emerge to spin a cocoon from which an adult moth will emerge.

Paul pointed out the Turkey Foot or Big Blue Stem, the prairie grass that typifies the tallgrass prairie. Little Blue Stem, another prairie grass, is also found on the Ojibway prairie. Paul showed us Indian Grass with its single long head and lovely chestnut colour. Nearby Rigid Goldenrod with its distinctive hairy fuzzy leaves was growing.

During our walk we saw Ruby-crowned Kinglets and American Goldfinch which were in their dull winter plumage. American Goldfinch love the seed of Prairie Thistle, Tall Sunflower and Tall Coreopsis. The last bird of the day was a Red-tailed Hawk over the oaks. Paul shared with us that television advertising featuring the Bald Eagle often does not include the correct call of the Bald Eagle. Rather the call of the Red-tailed Hawk is substituted as the Red-tailed Hawk's call is more robust than that of the Bald Eagle.

Paul told us that this fall is the thirtieth year that he has lead walks on the prairie. Thank you to Paul for sharing

Balkwill Woods Fall Walk

Betty Learmouth

Twenty-five friends and members of both the Canada South Land Trust and Essex County Field Naturalists' Club gathered on October 15, 2006, a fine fall afternoon, to enjoy a walk with Bill and Jack Balkwill through their woodland. Turkey Vultures streamed over the area as the group gathered, hinting at a good migration day for raptors. Other birds seen included Cedar Waxwings in nearby trees and Chipping Sparrows on the lawn.

Bill led us along the Grassy Lane beside the Old Logging Road to the woodland edge, avoiding the Old Logging Road with its fragile moss covered surface. At the woodland's edge we had an opportunity to see an unusual fall event as a hawthorn, *Crataegus mollis*, was in bloom. Several persons took an opportunity to admire the fruit capsules in the Bladder-nut thicket which grows at the northwest portion of the Old Logging Road.

The Balkwill Woodland has twelve lanes which allow access to the 47 acre Woodland. Bill suggested we walk along the lane immediately north of the Old Logging Road which is Lane 5 and is an extension of the Old Logging Road, but, unlike the Old Logging Road, has twists and turns as would be expected of an old woodland trail. The Old Logging Road with its mature Sugar Maples and the Extension Lane are remnants of a logging road that was used in the past to carry logs to two neighbourhood mills.

The woodland was lovely with sunlight providing the light that is needed to produce the bright gold colour of hickories and maples. At the northern entrance to Lane 5, or the Extension Lane of the Old Logging Road, we turned west, walking parallel to the drain which was to our north. This drain is thought to have been excavated by hand in the 1800s. Recent rains had allowed water to accumulate in the drain.

Reaching the end of the drain we turned north, noting a few blossoms of Cardinal Flower in bloom in the slough at the drain's western end. Several stalks with seed heads indicated that other Cardinal Flower plants had bloomed here earlier in the season. Cardinal Flowers were more common at this site in the past.

We continued our walk to the second lane north of the drain, Lane 11, enjoying the colourful trees surrounding us, especially the brilliant Shumard Oaks. Various fungi species were noted on the woodland floor including a pink capped mushroom. Near the east end of Lane 11, Bill showed us the nest of a Wood Thrush, high in a fork of a young American Beech.

We continued around the loop of Lane 12 located in the "wing" of the woodland, then hiked back along Lane 10 where Bill was able to show us a Cut-leaved Grape Fern, with a single leaf and fertile leaf. We found more fungi including Dead Man's Fingers, bracken fungi, coral fungi and tiny yellow mushrooms. We noted the blooms of two aster species, Big-leaf Aster and Heart-leaved Aster.

Passing through the slough for the second time, Bill identified several stalks of Turtlehead which had bloomed this past season. Our walk concluded as we walked south along Lane 1 or Black Oak Lane as this is the location of the only Black Oak in the woodland. As we emerged at the lane's southern entrance, we were delighted to see the Witchhazel (see photograph) on the left in bloom, its leaves bright orange-yellow and its flowers a sunny yellow. As we stood in the late afternoon sunshine, several male Ruby Meadowhawks amused us by landing on Eleanor Sfalcin's shoulder, one even seen munching on a small fly.

Several persons were a bit slow packing their vehicles and heading home, but that meant they had an opportunity to watch about thirty Turkey Vultures soar across the brilliant blue late afternoon sky in a southwest direction. Tom Hurst reported several Eastern Bluebirds, Dark-eyed Junco and an Eastern Phoebe among the birds foraging on the Balkwill's lawn.

Thank you to Bill and Jack for leading us on a well planned walk through their beautiful Carolinian woodland. Our walk was the perfect way to enjoy a fall afternoon.



Donations to the ECFNC Silent Auction November 11, 2006

Thank you to our friends and members who contributed a variety of items to the silent auction.

- Wildflowers of the Canadian Erie Islands (Book) and a box of Coloured Wildflower Cards. Donated by Mary Celestino.
- Glass drink dispenser. Donated by Karen Cedar.
- Hasty Notes. Donated by Betty Learmouth.
- Feeder suet. Donated by Betty Learmouth.
- The Birder's Field Handbook (Book). Donated by Linda Dawson.
- Birders; Tales of a Tribe (Book). Donated by Linda Dawson.
- Hand-crocheted Afgan. Donated by Margaret Waldron.
- Memory Stone: Create a Keepsake that Will Last Forever. Donated by Vicky Trivett.
- Packages of native nuts. Donated by Betty Moore.
- Firefly Encyclopedia of Birds (Book). Donated by Tom Hurst.
- Angel Fountain. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- National Audubon Society Field Guide to Seashore Creatures (Book). Donated by JoAnn-Grondin.
- No Great Mischief, a novel (book). Donated by JoAnn Grondin.

The Snow Goose: A Story of Home (Book). Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
The Botanical Garden I: Trees and Shrubs (Book). Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
The Pattern Companion: Scroll Saw (Book). Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
Explore Our Natural World: A Biodiversity Atlas of Lake Huron to Lake Erie Corridor (Book).
Donated by Caroline Biribauer.
A Basket of Homemade Jams and Jellies. Donated by Betty Moore.
Dinosaur Park, produced by Moose Mountain Toymakers. Donated by Juliet Renaud.
Spiral bound notebook. Donated by Pauline Renaud.
Floral Photography, 30 card gift set. Donated by Pauline Renaud.
Playing cards. Donated by Les Dickerson.
Tote bag. Donated by Cathy LaPain.
Paper tole plaque of owls. Donated by Cathy LaPain.
Selection of jams. Donated by Cathy LaPain.
Elderberry in a pot. Donated by Don Bissonnette.
Return of the Osprey: a Season in Flight and Wonder. (Book) Donated by Margaret Jennings.
Living Things We Love to Hate: Facts, Fantasies & Fallacies. (Book) Donated by Margaret Jennings.
Audubon Hummingbird notepaper. Donated by Margaret Jennings.
Pad and Pencil. Donated by Margaret Jennings.
Bird Bath Heater. Donated by Frances Langlois.
Bird Songs of the Great Lakes by John Neville (Compact disk). Donated by Frances Langlois.
Candle Holders. Donated by Frances Langlois.
Bino/Cam Harness, donated by Mike Malone and Joan Fraser, Pelee Wings Nature Store.
Busnell Fogproof Waterproof 8 x 24 Binoculars, donated by Mike Malone and Joan Walker, Pelee Wings Nature Store
Framed print of birds, donated by Christine Gross.
Framed Inuit print, donated by Christine Gross.
Your Guide to Essex County maps, donated by Mike Malone and Joan Fraser, Pelee Wings Nature Store.
Ecuador Including the Galapagos Islands (book). Donated by Rob Dunlop.
Firefly Guide to Fossils. (Book). Donated by Shirley Grondin.
Exploring the Night Sky. (Book). Donated by Shirley Grondin.
Mars Observer's Guide. (Book). Donated by Shirley Grondin.
My Mother's Garden: A Collection About Love, Flowers, and Family (Book). Donated by Shirley Grondin.
The Snow Geese; A Story of Home. (Book). Donated by Shirley Grondin.
Riding with the Dolphins. (Book). Donated by Shirley Grondin.
Exploring the Night Sky. (Book). Donated by Shirley Grondin.
Hummingbird mug, donated by Wendy Fraser.
Hummingbird brooch, donated by Wendy Fraser.
Pelee Seasons: the Four Seasons of Point Pelee National Park (DVD). Donated by Christine Gross.
Decorative wooden goose, donated by Wendy Fraser.
Three Decorative Quilted Pieces. Donated by Sue Aylesworth.
Sparrow & Finches of the Great Lakes Region & Eastern North America. Donated by Linda Menard-Watt.
Murder a la carte: Host Your Own Murder Mystery Party: Chinese Takeout (Game). Donated by Linda Menard-Watt.
McBloom Garden Therapy (Lotions and soaps). Donated by Linda Menard-Watt.
Fandex Family Field Guides Wildflowers. Donated by Linda Menard-Watt.
Crystal Vase (7 inches). Donated by Linda Menard-Watt.

Thank you to the American and Canadian publishers who donated their wonderful new publications to the silent auction.

- The Art of Robert Bateman – 25th Anniversary Edition. Toronto: Madison Press Books, 2006.
- Bang, Preben. Animal Tracks and Signs. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Biel, Alice Wondrak. Do (Not) Feed the Bears: the Fitful History of Wildlife and Tourists in Yellowstone. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006.
- Burger, William C. Flowers: How They Have Changed the World. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2006.
- Burse, Brian. Western Newfoundland and Gros Morne National Park. Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2006.
- Cone, Marla. Silent Snow: The Slow Poisoning of the Arctic. New York: Grove Press, 2005.
- Donated by Publishers Group Canada.
- Cooksey, Mel and Ron Weeks. A Birder's Guide to the Texas Coast. Colorado Springs, CO: American Birding Association, 2005.
- Couturier, Lisa. The Hopes of Snakes & Other Tales from the Urban Landscape. Boston: Beacon Press, 2005.
- Dyer, Betsey Dexter. A Field Guide to Bacteria. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Earley, Chris G. Sparrow & Finches of the Great Lakes Region & Eastern North America. Toronto: Firefly Books, 2003.
- Grunwald, M. The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006.
- Hickman, Pamela. Animals Hibernating: How Animals Survive Extreme Conditions. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2005.
- Huxley, Anthony. Green Inheritance: Saving Plants of the World. Rev. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Kress, Stephen W. The Audubon Society Guide to Attracting Birds. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- LeBox, Annette. Miracle at Willowcreek. Toronto: Sumach Press, 1998.
- Leslie, Scott. Wetland Birds of North America: A Guide to Observation, Understanding and Conservation Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2006.
- Lowman, Margaret D. It's a Jungle Up There: More Tales from the Treetops. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Markle, Sandra. Little Lost Bat. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing, 2006.
- Markle, Sandra. A Mother's Journey. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing, 2006.
- Marshall, Stephen A. Insects: Their Natural History and Diversity. Toronto: Firefly Books, 2006.
- The Monarch Butterfly: Biology & Conservation. Edited by Karen S. Oberhauser & Michelle J. Solensky. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.
- Norton, Trevor. Underwater to Get Out of the Rain: A Love Affair with the Sea. Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2004.
- Phillips, David. The Canadian Weather Trivia Calendar 2007. Calgary: Fifth House, 2006.
- Rhenisch, Harold. Winging Home: A Palette of Birds. Edmonton: Brindle & Glass Publishing, 2006.
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Thank you to the Organizations and Individuals Who Contributed Miscellaneous Donations

American Birding Association. Complimentary one year membership (includes ball cap and notepad).
The Crown of the Continent: Glacier National Park. Donated by Ambassador Video Productions, Panama City Beach, FL
Frisky, Furry and Fearsome: Wildlife in America's National Parks. Donated by Ambassador Productions, Panama City, FL
Held Within a Circle of Grace (Scenic abstract of Great Blue Heron) by Jody Bergsma.
Donated by Barbara Bray-Cotton, Cambridge, ON
Olympic & Mt. Rainier: National Parks of the Northwest. Donated by Ambassador Video Productions, Panama City Beach, FL
Ontario Nature. Complementary one year membership.
Owls calendar 2007, White-tailed Deer calendar 2007, Wolves 2007-2008 two year planner, and wrapping paper.
Donated by Browntrout Publishers Limited, Cambridge, ON
Places Found: Cathedral Caverns State Park. Donated by Ambassador Video Productions, Panama City Beach, FL
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T-shirt "Mothers are the Heart of it All." Donated by Barbara Bray-Cotton, Cambridge, ON
T-shirt "The Meadows are Singing." Donated by Barbara Bray-Cotton, Cambridge, ON
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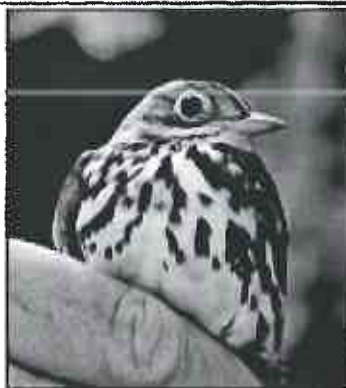
Fall Sightings

ECFNC member Don Bissonnette reports that on November 29, 2006, he observed frogs hopping down his concession road in Harrow as well as frogs calling at a work site. ECFNC member Ian Woodfield also reports that frogs, including Leopard Frogs, were active around the trout pond at Holiday Beach Conservation Area on the same date.

Don Bissonnette also reports an exciting "lifer" sighting of a Long-eared Owl on November 24, 2006 in Woodlee. As Don was clearing an eavestrough at a home close to St. John's Catholic Church, Don spotted the owl in a coniferous fence row, approximately 20 feet from where Don was working. When Don relocated his ladder, the owl flushed.

Baillie Birdathon 2006 Participants

Participants in Bird Studies Canada's Baillie Birdathon for 2006 were JoAnn Grondin, "Club Birder" Tom Hurst, Margaret Jennings, Dave Kraus, Cathy LaPain and Pauline Renaud who together raised \$1,544.00 of which \$386.23 returned to the ECFNC.



Thank you to everyone
for your fine efforts.

Mary Celestino Where Lands Divide and Waters Flow *Betty Learmouth*

On Sunday, November 12, 2006, an Art Gallery of Windsor exhibition room overflowed with visitors eager to hear artist/naturalist Mary Celestino discuss her current work displayed on surrounding walls. Mary told her audience that each painting had significant meaning to her, with a story attached to every one. Creating the paintings was a confrontation with nature for Mary as each canvas was stretched, the gesto applied, followed by the ensuing struggle with the pressing of paint and creation of a composition for each painting.

Mary has painted the Erie Islands, landforms which are found in Lake Erie's Western Basin but are well hidden within Essex County. Mary reminded us of landscapes that have been Mary's artistic life: the Detroit River, Point Pelee, and the islands of the Western Basin which are not always recognized by those viewing Mary's paintings. Mary's painting of creeks flowing into Hillman Marsh are recognizable but the Lake Erie Islands are unknown.

Mary took us on a tour of the islands in the Western Basin through her paintings. Light streaming through the west windows made the room the perfect venue for Mary's large paintings with their expanses of Lake Erie, blue sky, white clouds and fractured limestone shorelines. East Sister Island has a spectacular shoreline of fractured limestone and a glacial groove produced by an ice lobe 1,000 metres thick. Middle Island is noted for its limestone formations which have resisted the effects of glacial action. Crevasses on this island are three metres deep with the roots of the island's trees embedded deep in the fissures. The folklore of rum running is linked to Middle Island which is 100 metres from the international border.

Tiny North Harbour Island is privately owned and best viewed from East Sister Island as Mary has depicted the island (see above). Serene Mosquito Bay is offshore from Pelee Island. Middle Sister Island is located off Colchester and is the most pristine of the islands in the Western Basin. Mary felt compelled to paint the formidable landscape of this island.

From the Lake Erie Islands, Mary took her audience to the flood plains of Essex County and the creeks that lead into Hillman Marsh. The lands surrounding the creeks are undulating and unique with pure Carolinian woodlands along the watercourses. Mary said it is a lovely feeling to know that every spring these floodplains still exist as they did thousands of years ago. As the weather warms, these flood plains are at their peak. Mary's paintings show creeks and flood plains emerging from winter, dark tree trunks reflected in the steel-gray waters of the creeks.

Mary stated we have these small enclaves of our natural heritage remaining in the floodplains. Viewing and painting this landscape made Mary feel like a "river rat." Mary felt she was getting into the heart of Essex County as she painted the floodplains.

A reception followed Mary's talk allowing visitors to view and enjoy Mary's paintings with an opportunity to speak with the artist and each other, surrounded by the unique land formations of the Lake Erie Islands and creek floodplains associated with Hillman Marsh.



Nature Conservancy of Canada Update

At the Carolinian Canada Forum held on October 21, 2006 at the Elm Hurst Inn in Ingersoll, one hundred attendees were treated to a day long session of updates related to Carolinian Canada which includes Essex County. This area of Ontario, its northern boundary extending from Grand Bend to Toronto, has a great diversity of flora and fauna with many species endangered and threatened.

Of particular interest was a talk by James Duncan of the Nature Conservancy of Canada. The Nature Conservancy of Canada is focusing its efforts on protecting natural heritage in Southwestern Ontario and especially in the Municipality of Chatham/Kent and Essex County. Through NCC's Natural Area Conservation Plan, the NCC has identified actual properties that need to be protected. The NCC started this work in 1999 in the Western Lake Erie Islands with the purchase of Middle Island and also the 60 acre Shaughnessy Cohen Memorial Savanna on Pelee Island's Stone Road Alvar.

On Pelee Island, the NCC has identified three areas for protection including Middle Point, the Red Cedar Savannah and the Stone Road Alvar. Since January 2006, the NCC has purchased 160 acres on the Stone Road Alvar, protecting lands south of the Ontario Nature Stone Road Nature Reserve. As well, the NCC has protected woodland within the Red Cedar Savannah along the East West Road. NCC conservation targets include snakes and the Red Mulberry. NCC plans include establishing an endowment fund that will provide for a full time staff person for Pelee Island.

Essex County Field Naturalists' Club's Events, Meetings and Other Activities December 2006 through March 2007

For further information concerning the ECFNC excursions, contact JoAnn Grondin (519-734-0056), Margaret Jennings (519-250-0705), or Betty Learmouth (519-944-0825). Thank you to those who have volunteered to lead an excursion. Let us know about your ideas for upcoming excursions. Consider volunteering as an excursion leader.

December 14 – ECFNC Members Night – Share favourite slides or a plate of goodies or an album of pictures of a special event. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room C of the Essex Civic Centre.

December 16 – Cedar Creek Christmas Bird Count – Call Ojibway Nature Centre for details and to be assigned to a group in one of the areas within the count (in a radius of 15 miles from Cedar Creek). Everyone is welcome.

December 17 – Rondeau Park Christmas Bird Count – Call Ojibway Nature Centre for more details.

December 18 – Point Pelee National Park Christmas Bird Count – Call PPNP for more details.

December 23 – Rockwood Christmas Bird Count – Call Ojibway Nature Centre for more details.

December 28 – 2d Annual Holiday Beach Christmas Bird Count – Call Betty Learmouth to join in this new CBC.

December 28 – Ojibway Nature Centre - Wee Winter Wildlife (Ages 3-6) – Explore our winter wonderland through games, crafts and outdoor fun. 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. \$10/2 hours

December 29 – Lakeshore Christmas Bird Count – Call June Hurley at 519-979-8126 for more details on this CBC.

January 1, 2007 – Detroit River Christmas Bird Count. Call Ojibway Nature Centre for more details.

January 8 – Ojibway Nature Centre – ‘Possum Pals (Ages 2-4) – Children not yet ready to leave the pouch? Join us for an exciting and fun parent/tot adventure in nature. No class Easter Monday, April 9. January 8 – May 14. Mondays. 1-3 p.m. \$120/16 weeks

January 8 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Captivating Critters (Ages 3-5) – Wildlife exploration and nature fun for the younger set. No class Easter Monday, April 9. January 8 – May 14. Mondays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. \$120/16 weeks

January 10 – ECFNC Monthly Members Meeting – Enjoy a 50 minute presentation with Tom Hince and Paul Pratt entitled *Venezuela Revisited*. The program retraces a birding itinerary Paul and Tom did several times in the late eighties and early nineties then repeated in Winter 2006. Meet in Room C of the Essex Civic Centre at 7:30 p.m.

January 13 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Winter Birding Field Trip – Discover the variety of winter bird life in Essex County. Saturday 8:30 a.m. \$13/trip

January 14 - ECFNC Winter Excursion – Join ECFNC member **Tom Hurst** for our **annual owl prowl**. This year we will meet at the entrance to Holiday Beach Conservation Area at 2:00 p.m. We may drive to another location for the owl prowl. This excursion lead by Tom is an excellent introduction to the techniques to observe owls, including Long-eared Owls which often roost in the Holiday Beach Conservation Area.

January 27 - Ojibway Nature Centre – Winter Birding Field Trip – Discover the variety of winter bird life in Essex County. Saturday 8:30 a.m. \$13/trip

January 28 – ECFNC Winter Excursion – Join ECFNC executive member **Gerry Waldron** for another of Gerry's popular winter rambles. Gerry has chosen to call this walk **A Visit to Lakeshore's Green Belt**. We will explore private woodlands in the Town of Lakeshore which most naturalists would not have the opportunity to visit. A highlight of this walk will be Canada's largest Shumard Oak. The meeting place with plenty of parking will be at the Petro Canada and the Tim Horton's located at the corner of Manning Road and County Road 42. Meet at 2:00 p.m.

January 31 – ECFNC Executive Meeting

February 4 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Winter Festival at Ojibway – Enjoy cross-country skiing, free family activities, and a winter scavenger hunt through the park. A 10% discount on bird seed and feeders. There will be a Cabin Fever hike at 1:00 p.m. 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

February 10 - Ojibway Nature Centre – Winter Birding Field Trip – Discover the variety of winter bird life in Essex County. Saturday 8:30 a.m. \$13/trip

February 11 - ECFNC Winter Excursion – Join Shirley Grondin and Betty Learmouth for a discovery walk to little known corners of the Ojibway Prairie Complex including the Spring Garden Area of Natural and Scientific Interest dry prairie, the Lansing Street fern gullies and pocket tallgrass prairie. Meet in the parking lot of the Ojibway Nature Centre at 2:00 p.m.

February 14 – ECFNC Monthly Members Meeting – Join author and naturalist **Henrietta O’Neill** for a presentation by Henrietta highlighting the history of birding at Point Pelee National Park. Henrietta’s new book is entitled “Birding at Point Pelee” and is about the birding history of the Point Pelee as

well as stories surrounding birding at Point Pelee. It includes the story of the Great Lakes Ornithology Club, a chapter on bird banding at Point Pelee, and the development of organizations such as the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and Ontario Field Ornithologists. It also covers issues regarding specimen collecting, birding in the 40s and 50s and Park use. Henrietta will have her book available for sale and will sign copies. Meet in Room C of the Essex Civic Centre at 7:30 p.m.

February 24 - Ojibway Nature Centre – Winter Birding Field Trip – Discover the variety of winter bird life in Essex County. Saturday 8:30 a.m. \$13/trip

February 25 – ECFNC Winter Excursion – Join ECFNC member **Paul DesJardins** for our **annual winter waterfowl excursion** along the shores of the Detroit River. Paul always checks out the location of the ducks and swans prior to the excursion to ensure we go directly to the very locations for viewing. This is the beginning of spring migration in which good numbers of a variety of waterfowl rest on the Detroit River. Meet in parking lot Ojibway Nature Centre at 2:00 p.m.

March 1 – Annual General Meeting of the Canada South Land Trust. Call Betty Learmouth for more details.

March 12 or 14 or 16 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Frogs, Snakes and You (Ages 4-6) – Enjoy a morning or afternoon filled with activities about slimy, scaly critters. Limited enrolment. Monday or Wednesday or Friday. 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. \$11/2hours

March 13 or 15 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Wildlife Discovery (Ages 7-11) – How do animals and plants survive in the wild? Discover the secrets at this hands-on camp. Call about a 1/2 day program. Early drop-off at 8:00 a.m. and a late pick-up until 5:00 p.m. Tuesday or Thursday. 9:00 a.m – 4:00 p.m. \$30/day

March 14 – ECFNC Annual General Meeting – Enjoy both an update on ECFNC committee activities and an entertaining and skill testing nature quiz with prizes. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room C of the Essex Civic Centre. Refreshments.

March 25 – ECFNC Spring Activity – Meet ECFNC member **Gerry Waldron** at the active landfill restoration site in the Town of Essex for tree maintenance including pruning and placement of tree guards on young trees. Please bring your own shears. Meet at 1:00 p.m. for full instructions from Gerry and/or Peggy Hurst. Directions: Proceed south from the Essex by-pass on County Road 23 (Arner Town Line) watching for County Road 18 on your right with the sign for the landfill. Turn right at this intersection and meet at the entrance to the landfill. We will then drive to the restoration site.

March 28 - ECFNC Monthly Executive Meeting

March 31 – Carolinian West Meeting of the Ontario Nature Network – Host club for this spring meeting is the St. Thomas Field Naturalists’ Club.



Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas Notice of Presale

The Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005 is now available to order at a special pre-sale price!

The Atlas will be 9 X 12 inches and contain over 700 full colour pages of photographs, maps and charts for the 300 species breeding in the province. It will be printed and distributed in the fall of 2007. By ordering your copy now, you can purchase the book at a special pre-sale price.

During the presale, atlas participants can purchase the book for \$67.00 and non-atlas participants for \$79.00 (prices include GST, distribution, and handling). The retail price of the book is expected to be about \$96.00. These special pre-sale prices are only available until February 28, 2007, so don't delay!

To order your copy (or copies) today,

Visit the atlas web page: <http://www.birdsontario.org/atlas/atlasmain.html>

Call the atlas office toll-free (1-866-900-7100) or

Print an order form from the web page and mail or fax to the atlas office