



The Egret

the Newsletter of the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club

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23rd Annual Dinner

Peg Hurst, Karen Cedar, Betty Learmouth

November 10th dawned to a lovely fall day. Auction items were gathered up and transported, and laid out for silent bids. Lovely centrepieces of the new ECFNC brochure were arranged on tables, desserts were created, hair was coiffed, shoes were polished, the 23rd annual ECFNC dinner was set to begin. Eighty-eight members and friends travelled from the city and county, Florida and Calgary, to meet at the Udine Hall of the Fogular Furlan Club.

Joe Parent was again the MC for the evening, he does such a good job, he has it for life. He welcomed the guests and acknowledged those who had travelled great distances to join us, such as Juliet Renaud from Florida, and those who were attending as guests and friends. The dinner was served promptly, a lovely feast of penne and salad, roast chicken, and yams, green beans with carrots and corn. A few souls had to wait while the trays were refilled, but soon there was ample food for second helpings. Dessert was again provided by our talented members, and proved to be a popular addition to the meal.

Dr. Stéphanie Doucet gave an enlightening and at times hilarious presentation on how birds communicate with colour. She has travelled far and wide under various research projects to amass her data, and we hope we can prevail upon her in the future for a talk at one of our regular meetings.



About the Club ...

The Essex County Field Naturalists' Club was incorporated in March 1985. We are a registered charitable organization which promotes the appreciation and conservation of our natural heritage. ECFNC provides the community opportunities to become acquainted with and understand our natural world through identification, maintenance and preservation of the natural areas within 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:

Essex County Field Naturalists' Club

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ERCA Liaison: Bruno Sfalcin
Carolina Woods Liaison: Ruth Junge
Point Pelee Liaison: Phil Roberts
Bluebird Committee Chairman: Don Bissonette
NHRP Seed Collection: Bruno Sfalcin
Special Events Coordinator: Karen Cedar
Essex County Stewardship Network Liaison: Tom Hurst
Ojibway Liaison: Karen Cedar
Citizens Environment Alliance Liaison: Phil Roberts
Windsor Planning Advisory Comm. Liaison: Phil Roberts
Canada South Land Trust Liaison: Betty Learmouth
Detroit River Canadian Cleanup Liaison: Phil Roberts

Committees:

Egret Editorial: Betty Learmouth, Karen Cedar, Shirley Grondin
Speaker: ECFNC directors
Field Trip: JoAnn Grondin, Margaret Jennings, Betty Learmouth
Heritage: JoAnn Grondin, Margaret Jennings, Dave Kraus, Betty Learmouth, Muriel Kassimatis, Jim McAllister, Bruno Sfalcin, Gerry Waldron, Peg Wilkinson
Annual Dinner: Heritage & Special Events Committees

This year's Outstanding Achievement Award was given to Mary Celestino in recognition of her tireless efforts to bring awareness to Pelee Island's unique features. Her much heralded publication "Wildflowers of the Canadian Erie Islands" has definitely been an outstanding achievement. Congratulations Mary!



The silent auction raised \$2120.00 which will be donated towards the Nature Conservancy's Pelee Island campaign. Thank you to all who bid so generously for this important fundraising effort.

We would like to acknowledge the dedication of our volunteers who made this event run so smoothly and provided the delicious dessert table: Betty Learmouth, Karen Cedar, Don Bissonette, Joann Grondin, Margaret Jennings, Linda Menard-Watt, Eleanor Sfalcin, Teresa Austrin, Cathy LaPain and Peg Hurst. And a big thank you to our generous silent auction and door prize donors!

Silent Auction – November 10, 2007

Thank you to all who contributed to this year's silent auction, ensuring it was one of our most successful. All monies from this auction are to be donated to the Nature Conservancy of Canada's purchase of Pelee Island's Browns Road Alvar .

Books

- Béland, Pierre. Beluga. Donated by Don Bissonnette
- Burger, Joanna. Birds: a Visual Guide. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Celestino, Mary. Wildflowers of the Canadian Erie Islands. 2002. Donated by Mary Celestino.
- Cleave, Andrew. Hummingbirds. Donated by Cheryl Baker.
- Combs, David. Sir Winston Churchill: His Life and His Paintings. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Dickinson, Terence and Alan Dyer. The Backyard Astronomer's Guide. Rev. ed. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Dupas, Alain. Destination Mars. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Ford, Harry. The Young Astronomer: a Young Enthusiast's Guide to Astronomy. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Heinrich, Bernd. The Geese of Beaver Bog. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Hyde-Chambers, and Audrey Hyde-Chambers. Tibetan Folk Tales. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Johnston, Andrew K. Earth From Space. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Matthiessen, Peter. Sand Rivers. Donated by Don Bissonnette.
- Milne, Courtney. Emily Carr County. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Mohan, Palani. Hidden Faces of India. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Obee, Bruce. Canadian birds. Donated by Cheryl Baker.
- Philips, Roger. Mushrooms and Other Fungi of North America. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Robert Bateman Birds. Donated by Margaret Jennings.
- Rosing, Norbert. The World of the Polar Bear. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Schappert, Phil. The Last Monarch Butterfly: Conserving the Monarch Butterfly in a Brave New World. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.

Miscellaneous

- Animal Songs (CD). Donated by Teresa Austrin and Joe Parent.
- Bird Tote bag with notepaper. Donated by Cathy LaPain.
- Note and label Birding Trivial Pursuit game. Donated by Suzanne Selby.
- Binoculars: Celestron Noble 10 x 42. Donated by Celestron courtesy of Mike Malone and Joan Walker, Pelee Wings Nature Store.
- Binoculars: Vortex Broadwing 8 x 42. Donated by Vortex courtesy of Mike Malone and Joan Walker, Pelee Wings Nature Store.
- Binoculars: Vortex Hurricane 8 x 28. Donated by Vortex courtesy of Mike Malone and Joan Walker, Pelee Wings Nature Store.
- Blue Jay Print. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Computer Powered Techvac Mini-aspirateur. Donated by Teresa Austrin and Joe Parent.
- Bracelet. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Campfire Print. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Christmas 2003 Royal Mail Mint Stamps. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Cuisinart coffee maker. Donated by Janet Tuite.
- Dragonfly brooch. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Elderberry in a Pot. Donated by Don Bissonnette/Don's Landscaping.
- Purple Flowering Raspberry in a pot. Donated by Don Bissonnette/Don's Landscaping.
- Wild Bergamot and Bee-balm in pots. Donated by Don Bissonnette/Don's Landscaping.
- Framed Portrait of a Wolf. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Framed First Nations Art. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Framed bird portraits. Donated by Linda Dawson.
- Hair ornament. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Jams and jellies in two baskets. Donated by Shirley Grondin.
- Jams and jellies in a basket. Donated by Betty Moore.
- Jams and Jellies in a basket. Donated by Cathy LaPain.
- Naturalist's Delight. Donated by Bob Hall-Brooks.
- Necklace and ear rings. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Path of the paddle (Video). Donated by Suzanne Selby.
- The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's Observer's Handbook 2008. Donated by Teresa Austrin and Joe Parent.
- Pate and cheese dishes. Donated by Janet Tuite.
- Playing cards (3 packages). Donated by Les Dickirson
- Print: Camille Pissarro's Plum Trees in Bloom in Eragny, 1894. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Print: Pierre-Auguste Renoir's Madam Georges Charpentier and Her Children, 1878. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Print: Karoly Ferenczy's Summertime. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Print: Vincent Van Gogh's Les Alyscamps, Falling Autumn Leaves, 1888. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Print: Claude Monet's Le Grenouillere, 1869. Donated by JoAnn Grondin.
- Pure Greek-oil soap. Donated by Linda Menard-Watt.
- Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Evening. Donated by Phil Roberts.
- Red-winged Blackbird toy. Donated by Janet Tuite,
- Scarab brooch. Donated by Christine Gross.
- Stationary Gift Set. Donated by Juliet Renaud and Pauline Renaud.

The Sea (DVD). Donated by Christine Gross.
 Tree samples. Donated by Christine Gross.
 Wine collection. Donated by Janet Tuite
 Wooden brooch. Donated by Christine Gross.

Publishers Donations - Thank you to the following publishers who kindly donated newly published natural history books.

Acorn, John. Deep Alberta: Fossil Facts and Dinosaur Digs. 2007. Donated by University of Alberta Press, Edmonton, Alberta.
 Anderson, Ora E. Out of the Woods: A Bird Watcher's Year. 2007. Donated by Ohio University Press, Athens, GA
 Berger, Cynthia. Owls. 2005. Donated by Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA
 Beletsky, Les. Birds of the World. 2006. Donated by UBC Press, Vancouver.
 Beletsky, Les. Bird Songs: 250 North American Birds in Song. 2006. Donated by Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA
 Birding North Carolina. 2005. Donated by The Globe Pequot Press, Guilford, CT
 Burt, William. Marshes: The Disappearing Edens. 2007. Donated by Yale University Press, New Haven, CT
 Burton, Robert. The World of the Hummingbird. 2001. Donated by Firefly Books, Toronto.
 Cannings, Richard. An Enchantment of Birds: Memories from A Birder's Life. 2007. Donated by Douglas & McIntyre Publishing Group and published by Greystone Books, Vancouver.
 Cerulean, Susan. Tracking Desire: A Journey After Swallow-tailed Kites. 2005. Donated by University of Georgia, Athens, GA
 Clements, James F. The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World. 6th ed. Donated by Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY
 Clover, Charles. The End of the Line: How Overfishing is Changing the World and What We Eat. 2006. Donated by The New Press, New York .
 Cushman, Robert. Fifty Seasons in Stratford. 2002. Donated by Madison Press, Toronto.
 Davies, Nicola. White Owl, Barn Owl. 2007. Donated by Candlewick Press, Cambridge, MA
 Earley, Chris G. Sparrows & Finches of the Great Lakes Region & Eastern North America. 2003. Donated by Firefly Books, Toronto.
 Garrit, Vyn. Voices of North American Owls (2 CD set). 2007. Donated by Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY
 Herriot, Trevor. Jacob's Wound: A Search for the Spirit of Wilderness. Donated by McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, ON
 Hill, Geoffrey E. Ivory-billed Hunters: the Search for Proof in a Flooded Wilderness. 2007. Donated by Oxford University Press, Toronto, ON
 Hirschi, Ron. Lions, Tigers and Bears: Why Are Big Predators So Rare? 2007. Donated by Boyds Mills Press, Inc., Honesdale, PA
 Juniper, Tony and Mike Parr. Parrots; a Guide to Parrots of the World. 1998. Donated by Yale University Press, New Haven, CT
 Kalman, Bobbie and Kylie Burns. Endangered Bears. 2007. Donated by Crabtree Publishing Company, St. Catharines, ON
 Kelsey, Elin. Strange New Species: Astonishing Discoveries of Life on Earth. 2005. Donated by Maple Tree Press, Toronto, ON
 Lederer, Roger. Amazing Birds: A Treasury of Facts and Trivia About the Avian World. 2007.

Donated by Educational Series, Georgetown, ON

Leland, John. *Aliens in the Backyard: Plant and Animal Imports into America*. 2005. Donated by University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, SC

Léveillé, Jean. *Birds in Love*. 2007. Donated by Voyageur Press, St. Paul, MN

O'Neill, Henrietta. *Birding at Point Pelee: a Birder's History of One of Canada's Most Famous Birding Spots*. 2006. Donated by James Lorimer & Company Ltd., Publishers, Toronto.

Rouse, Andy. *Penguin Life: Surviving with Style in the South Atlantic*. 2007. Donated by F+W Publications, Inc., Cincinnati, OH

Sargent, William. *Writing Naturally*. 2006. Donated by University Press of New England, Lebanon, NH

Sitarski, Anita. *Cold Light: Creatures, Discoveries, and Inventions That Grow*. 2007. Donated by Boyds Mills Press, Inc., Honesdale, PA

Snyder, Noel and Snyder, Helen. *Raptors of North America*. 2006. Donated by Voyageur Press, Osceola, WI

A Leaky Tent is a Piece of Paradise. 2007. Donated Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, CA

Vanishing World: the Endangered Arctic. 2007. Donated by Canadian Manda Group, Toronto, ON

Wechsler, Doug. *Frog Heaven: Ecology of a Vernal Pool*. 2006. Donated by Boyds Mills Press, Inc., Honesdale, PA

Yolen, Jane. *Shape Me A Rhyme: Nature's Forms in Poetry*. 2007. Donated by Boyds Mills Press, Inc., Honesdale, PA

News Release – Pelee Island Land Acquisition

ESSEX COUNTY, Ontario, November 25, 2007 - Canada's Environment Minister John Baird, and Jeff Watson, Member of Parliament for Essex, today joined representatives from the Nature Conservancy of Canada, including President and CEO John Lounds and residents of Pelee Island, including Mayor Rick Masse in announcing one of the first achievements under the Government of Canada's \$225 million Natural Areas Conservation Program - the future conservation of globally significant habitat on the renowned Pelee Island in southwestern Ontario.



"The Government of Canada is taking real action to protect Canada's natural treasures," said Minister Baird. "Earlier this year, Prime Minister Harper committed \$225 million to support the work of the Nature Conservancy of Canada and other conservation organizations in preserving priceless parts of our great country. Today's announcement to set aside precious lands of Pelee Island is just one more example that this government is taking aggressive action to preserve our natural heritage.

"Gifts such as this land on Pelee Island are priceless in terms of the benefits they provide to our endangered species and their habitat," said Mr. Watson. "Through our Natural Areas Conservation Program, the federal government is playing a lead role in conserving and protecting our environment for the benefit of all Canadians."

The announcement was well-attended with concerned citizens, donors, local media and Ojibway Nature Centre's resident foxsnake as a concerned species at risk.

The lands, totaling 524 acres and worth more than \$7 million include the Erie Sand & Gravel property and private land donations.



The Erie Sand & Gravel property (ESG) is located in the northeast portion of Pelee Island, near Lighthouse Point Provincial Nature Reserve. The ESG property is part of a globally significant site, known as Brown's Road Alvar, that contains one of only two known occurrences of Chinquapin Oak Nodding Wild Onion Alvar Savanna in the world, both occurring on Pelee Island, and one of Canada's last populations of the endangered Blue Racer snake.

Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has negotiated an Agreement of Purchase and Sale for the ESG property and is actively raising funds to acquire 417 acres (168 hectares), including a key linkage from the Brown's Road Alvar site to Lighthouse Point Provincial Nature Reserve, a key priority area identified in the Western Lake Erie Islands Natural Area Conservation Plan. NCC has secured provincial and federal government funding for this project. However, to access these government funds, NCC must have in place the required private sector match. Thanks to the ability to combine provincial and federal government funds, each dollar raised from private sector sources could generate an additional seven dollars from the provincial and federal government for this project.



Great Backyard Bird Count – February 15-18, 2008

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. It's free and anyone can participate. Participants count birds anywhere for as little or as long as they wish during the four-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time. To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the Great Backyard Bird Count web site (<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>).

As the count progresses, anyone with Internet access can explore what is being reported from their own towns or anywhere in the United States and Canada. They can also see how this year's numbers compare with those from previous years. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see. In 2007, participants reported a record-breaking 11 million birds, 616 species. They submitted more than 80,000 checklists, an all-time record for the ten years of the count.

Rufous Hummingbird in Kingsville

Paul Pratt

On November 18 Chris and Pam Heil noticed a hummingbird coming to their feeder. Pam hadn't seen a Ruby-throat at the feeder in over a month but had neglected to take down the feeder attached to the kitchen window. She casually mentioned this to Janet Tuite who relayed the fact to me a couple of days later.

I was curious as a late fall hummingbird has a much higher chance to be something other than a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. On November 22 I visited the home at 95 Queen Street in Kingsville and waited for the bird to show up at the feeder. I soon heard it calling from a large spruce near the house and it did not sound like a Ruby-throat. When it finally appeared it was quickly identified as something different. The bird was roughly the size of a Ruby-throat but had rich cinnamon-rufous colour on the flanks and base of the tail, a small patch of glittering orangish-red feathers in the center of the throat and a bronzy green back. These marks eliminated all North American hummingbirds except Rufous and Allen's Hummingbird, two related species in the genus *Selasphorus*. The small central throat patch and small amount of rufous on the rump indicated it was an adult female (females have many iridescent feathers in the throat, unlike female Ruby-throated which are 'plain-throated'). Rufous is the expected species but in order to eliminate Allen's we would have to have a much closer look.



Carl Pascoe and Rachel Powless are the two hummingbird banders with the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory. They quickly agreed to come to Kingsville and attempt to band the bird. On the morning of November 24 Carl and Rachel set up the caged feeder and waited for the bird to appear. It only took about 10 minutes before she entered the cage and was captured. After the bird was banded it was determined this was an After Hatch Year (AHY) female Rufous Hummingbird. Measurements and data were taken to positively separate Rufous from Allen's Hummingbird. She was quickly released and returned to visit the feeder in about 15 minutes. This is only the second Rufous Hummingbird banded in Ontario. Allen Chartier banded the first in Niagara Falls on December 2, 2004.

Rufous Hummingbirds were once considered extremely rare in Eastern North America but their numbers have risen dramatically. Up to 1979 there were only 68 records east of the Mississippi but by the 1990s over 1600 were recorded in just six winters in the five southeastern states. Last winter there were 265 banded in Louisiana. Allen's Hummingbird remains much rarer, only seven were banded in Louisiana last winter.

I'd like to thank Pam, Chris and family for their hospitality to all the visiting birders. As of December 1 the bird is still frequenting their feeder. If you are a hummingbird enthusiast remember to keep those feeders up late into the fall when Rufous Hummingbird is more likely to appear.

OJIBWAY PARK: Celebrating 50 Years

The city has saved a special place for nature to thrive and this fall it marks 50 years of preservation.

Fifty years ago, Windsor City Council had the foresight to acquire 100 acres of land originally outside city limits to maintain it as a natural park even before the realization of the significance of the habitat.

"Once we started doing investigations we found an incredible diversity of plants and animals, more than any other place in Ontario," says Ojibway Park Naturalist Paul Pratt.

Over time, with financial assistance from several partners including senior levels of government and national non-profit groups, the protected area has been expanded to 350 hectares.

Protecting this natural area provides numerous health benefits to its urban neighbours. The Friends of Ojibway volunteer association estimates the Ojibway Prairie Complex removes 67,000 pounds of pollution, filters 15 million gallons of water and has a cooling effect equivalent to 180,000 air conditioners working 20 hours a day.

Opened in 1976, the Ojibway Nature Centre offers visitors customized programs year-round. Today, Ojibway Park runs 90 different programs for school children and adults.

"We have a lot to celebrate but we don't want to lose sight that there's still a lot more to do," says Karen Cedar, assistant naturalist. "Natural areas require more than just buying them and fencing, they need to be maintained and cared for."



New Publications!

The Natural Treasures of Carolinian Canada Discovering the rich natural diversity of Ontario's Southwestern heartland



Sweeping from Toronto through Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo, Hamilton, London and Windsor to Lake Huron and Lake Erie lies a unique ecological region populated with dozens of rare species of plants, wildflowers, animals, birds, amphibians, and butterflies not found anywhere else in Canada.

A group of dedicated science writers and scientists who have spent decades documenting this region have now put together a book for area residents to see what is special about this region - and to understand the threats it faces.

Many of these unusual native species - Wild Hyacinth, Wood Poppy, Cucumber Tree, Prairie Rose, Bald Eagle, and Spotted Turtle - that depend on the region's distinctive habitats are threatened due to development pressures.

One third of Canada's rare and endangered plants and animals live in this Carolinian region ecosystem. It is also home to more than one quarter of Canada's population.

The authors are hoping that raising awareness amongst Ontarians of the unique native species in their backyard will contribute to responsible development in the Carolinian region and ensure that its unique species are protected and will continue to exist in this precious southwestern Ontario landscape. In spite of its large population, most people are not aware of the ecological riches of Carolinian Ontario.

The contributors work for leading environmental organizations, universities, and museums including:

- World Wildlife Fund-Canada
- Bird Studies Canada
- Royal Ontario Museum
- Federation of Ontario Naturalists
- North American Native Plant Society

The book is the result of more than 20 years of research by the authors and many other scientists and organizations who are part of the Carolinian Canada coalition based in London, Ontario. Titled *The Natural Treasures of Carolinian Canada*, it is a large format full-colour paperback with more than 200 colour images of Carolinian birds, plants, animals, trees and other species. It explains what is special about the region, and discusses the threats arising from expanding human settlement as well as climate change.

About the contributors:

- **Wasył Bakowsky**, a vegetation ecologist with the Natural Heritage Information Centre, resides in Peterborough.
- **Gregor Beck** is a wildlife biologist who resides in the heart of Carolinian Canada, St. Williams.
- **Tom Beechey**, from Cambridge, is the associate director of the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas.
- **Alan Dextrase** is the senior biologist with the OMNR in Peterborough.
- **William DeYoung** is a landscape ecologist who lives in London.
- **Sandy Dobbyn** is the Zone Ecologist for the southwest zone of Ontario Park in London.
- **Lorraine Johnson** is the author of many native plant gardening books. She lives in Toronto.
- **Michelle Kanter**, a wildlife biologist, lives in London. She is the Executive Director of Carolinian Canada.
- An avid bird-watcher, **Kevin Kavanagh** spent fifteen years with World Wildlife Fund-Canada. He resides in St. Williams.
- **Jon McCracken** is the senior Program Manager with Bird Studies Canada. He lives in Port Rowan.
- **Deborah Metsger** is the Assistant Curator of Botany at the Royal Ontario Museum. She lives in Toronto.
- **Gordon Nelson** is currently the Chair of Carolinian Canada and the Parks Forum of Ontario. He lives in London.
- **Michael J. Oldham** is botanist/herpetologist with Ontario's Natural Heritage Information Centre in Peterborough.
- **Paul Pratt**, world-renowned birder, is also co-editor of *Ontario Odonata* and is the naturalist for the City of Windsor where he manages one of Carolinian Canada's signature sites: Ojibway Prairie Complex.
- **Steven Price** is Senior Conservation Director for World Wildlife Fund-Canada. He lives in Toronto.

· **Shawn Staton** holds an Honours B.Sc. in Biology from the University of Guelph. He currently lives in Burlington where he works as an aquatic biologist.

· **Ric Symmes** is the former Executive Director of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. He lives in Orillia.

· **Michael Troughton** helped compile the Background Study of the Thames River Watershed and Nomination Proposal, which led to the designation of the Thames as a Canadian Heritage River.

· **Allen Woodliffe** grew up in the heart of the Carolinian zone, Chatham. He is the District Ecologist for the Aylmer District, which occupies at least 80 percent of the Carolinian zone.

The Natural Treasures of Carolinian Canada

Discovering the rich natural diversity of Ontario's Southwestern heartland

Edited by Lorraine Johnson

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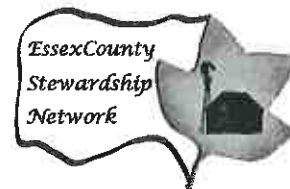
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Carolinian Canada Coalition

Collaborating for a Healthy Ecoregion

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News Release

Essex Landowners Lead in Nature Conservation

On December 6, 2007 Carolinian Canada Coalition and the Essex County Stewardship Network launched the Essex Region Habitat Factsheet to profile local landowners with good ideas.

"*Caring for Nature in Essex*" is a colourful and informative guide for landowners and communities. The publication features local landowners who are leaders in managing the valuable and unique natural heritage of Essex Region. It also explains how land managers, including farmers, are protecting the health of local communities by conserving habitat. To be distributed throughout rural Essex by post, the factsheet is the fourth in a series published by the Carolinian Canada Coalition in counties across southwestern Ontario.

"Landowners who take care of habitat in Essex and the rest of Carolinian Canada are protecting air, water and soil quality for everyone," stated Michelle Kanter, Executive Director of

the Coalition. "They are leading the way in conserving resources for human and wildlife communities."

Essex Region, located deep in the heart of the Carolinian Life Zone, is a place of vibrant natural diversity. You may not know that besides being home to thousands of productive farms and several busy urban communities, it has many natural gems waiting to be explored from Ojibway Prairie where Blazing Star and the Eastern Fox Snake can be found, to Pelee Island where rare alvar habitat shares the small area with organic farms and the eco-friendly Pelee Island Winery, to Point Pelee National Park where Canada's only cactus – the Eastern Prickly Pear Cactus can be found.

But the real secret about Essex Region is that most of the thriving natural places are privately owned by landowners who care intensely for the local region. The factsheet tells the story of the Ainslies who, with the help of Essex Region Conservation Authority and the Essex County Stewardship Network, have put in windbreaks, woodlots, ponds and marsh sedimentation basins – all to reduce soil erosion and incidentally provide habitat for a wide diversity of species. Bill and Jack Balkwill have managed their woodlot sustainably for many years, and now have entered into a Conservation Agreement with the Canada South Land Trust to protect this habitat on Cedar Creek into the future. Denotter Farms has worked hard to sustain healthy soils on their land, converting to conservation tillage and grassing over the main ditch to reduce run-off. Then there is Gary Aalbers who worked with the Essex Region Conservation Authority to form 28 hectares of 'pit and mound' topography on former marginal farmland so that forest and meadow habitat development would be accelerated. Finally, Mark Bovenkamp worked with Essex Region Conservation Authority to convert his 13 hectare farm into a woodland so that now he enjoys the multitude of wildlife that have come to share his home.

There has been lots of 'buzz' about protected Species at Risk and this factsheet takes some of the mystery out of them. "It all comes down to managing your piece of habitat for your enjoyment and a sustainable income, if you choose." According to the factsheet, a healthy landscape provides many benefits for people and helps to prevent species from becoming at risk.

"The publication of this factsheet is only one step in a Big Picture Outreach project," adds Nikki May, project coordinator for the Coalition. The Carolinian Canada Big Picture is a vision for a healthy, balanced and sustainable landscape in harmony with current land uses. May worked with dozens of stakeholder groups to develop the factsheet.

"The factsheet will be most useful for landowners who have been thinking about a habitat project but could use some good ideas about how to start." The factsheet brings together information from many sources, so it can save time for landowners.

Carolinian Canada is a coalition of public and community groups aimed at conserving the wildlife and habitats of southwest Ontario's Carolinian life zone — a unique ecological region lying south of a line from Toronto and Grand Bend. Home to Tulip Tree, Hooded Warbler, Eastern Hognose Snake and other wildlife found nowhere else in Canada, the zone has the richest biological diversity in Canada—and the greatest number of rare and endangered species. The Coalition Board includes representatives from conservation, stewardship, education, farming, forestry and planning groups.

The Essex Region project is part of a pilot for a Carolinian Canada-wide program. Generous funding for the pilot project in this and other municipalities came from Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program, TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation, the Ontario Trillium foundation, the Essex County Stewardship Network and the Ontario Species at Risk Stewardship Fund with in-kind support from many groups across Essex Region including the Essex Federation of Agriculture and the Essex Soil and Crop Improvement Association.

For more information contact:

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Brett Groves, Coordinator, Essex County Stewardship Network
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Balkwill Woods Walk, October 14, 2007

Betty Learmouth

Twenty-four persons joined Bill Balkwill on October 14, 2007 for a fall colour walk in the Balkwill Woodland. Bill pointed out the Ohio Buckeye in the arboretum which was just beginning to show red tips on its leaves. Along the Old Logging Road, the Sassafras thicket was beginning to display a little colour.

After leaving the Old Logging Road, the group made its way east along the front of the Woodland where Arrowwood was turning purple. Of interest was a *Crataegus mollis*, a hawthorn species, which was in bloom again this fall as had been noted on last year's fall walk. This year a Bald-faced Hornet's nest had been constructed in the *Crataegus mollis*. Several twigs intertwined with the hornet's nest were in bloom. Bill felt there were more blossoms this year on the *Crataegus mollis*.

The big Burr Oak on Lane 8 was admired along with Red and Shumard Oaks. Two species of sumac were identified, the Smooth and the Staghorn Sumac. The group walked along the centre lane to Lane 9 to the Gold Seal which has recently been planted in the Woodland. Crossing the drain, Bill showed the thinning that has taken place here and how the woods have come along nicely. There was some yellow on the maple leaves but we were just a week too early for a lot of colour.

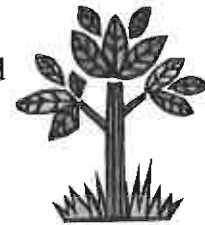
Bill led us south along Lane 1 noting the Grape Ferns and Alumroot. We stopped to admire the pond area. Bill pointed out the Black Knot disease on the plums. We continued our walk across the front of the woodland and south along the Old Logging Road.

Upon the conclusion of the walk, Bill distributed some squash. Thank you to Bill for leading us on another walk in his beautiful Woodland.

Trees, Trees, Trees

Peggy Hurst

October 28, 2007 dawned with a frost on the lawns, but the weather soon warmed up to 50°F (10°C) or more. The sun came out, the breeze died down and the four hardy souls who attended the fall pruning/tree guarding session at the Essex Windsor Landfill soon shed their extra jackets and hats.



Gerry, our loyal and salubrious leader, decreed that the taller tasty trees deserved taller tree guards, so we started at the beginning where the older trees had been planted, and pruned away the extra branches while installing tree guards up to 2 feet (50cm.) tall. The oaks were lovely shades of gold and burgundy and red, easy to pick out. It warms the heart to look out over a field of asters and goldenrod and see the tree stems poking up.

The silver maples, cottonwoods and sycamores (my personal favourite), seem to be less attractive to those pesky rabbits than the mighty oaks. The shorter tree guards we removed had prevented the voles from girdling and killing the saplings, but the rabbits have been pruning the oaks into multi-stemmed shrubberies. Tree perches were installed last winter to attract vole eating predators. We scared up at least three rabbits. Perhaps we need to build coyote dens? A high light of the afternoon were the mixed flocks of swallows diving around our heads, eating the insects we were flushing up. We walked back to the first set of ponds to see what aquatic plants had migrated in and to admire the Eastern Red Cedars planted on the hummocks around the ponds. We used up most of the taller tree guards we had brought out, so next spring there should be a sea of white stems in the new weed growth. The trees are thriving, even despite the summer drought.

This summer, we ordered signs to acknowledge the funding partners and participants in the planting, and to explain our planting methods. They should arrive soon and will be installed on the 8th concession and on the Coulter Sideroad. If you're in the neighbourhood next spring, check them out. There might even be shade.

Holiday Beach Conservation Area Migration Notes

Betty Learmouth

Five ECFNC members gathered shortly after 9:00 a.m. on September 30, 2007 at the Holiday Beach Conservation Area hawk tower to sample the migration of hawks and passerines which pass the tower in the early fall. On this particular day, the winds were from the south with an accompanying roar from Lake Erie. Conditions were clear with warm temperatures.

Despite the southerly wind, Sharp-shinned Hawks were steadily making their way past the tower at fairly low heights. Northern Harriers are not put off by southerly winds so the hawk watchers were treated to good views as an immature/female harriers floated over the woodland, then descended to the marsh to course over the marsh vegetation. An Osprey flew over the marsh which reportedly had been hanging around the marsh for a few days.

Bob Pettit, a long time hawk watcher, was the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory's hawk watcher on duty. With lots of assistance from the tower hawk watchers, Bob was kept busy with his paper work. During a lull in the migration, Bob distributed the hawk ID sheets which Bob has especially prepared for distribution to tower hawk watchers.

At 10:37 a.m. there was a flurry of excitement as a female Cooper's Hawk forced a Blue Jay down into Big Creek Marsh. The Blue Jay appeared to escape the Cooper's Hawk which flew in a few circles, then disappeared into nearby trees. Blue Jays were migrating past the hawk tower at tree top level throughout the morning in great flocks, moving from east to west. The Cooper's Hawk incident threw the birds into disarray for a few minutes.

An exciting sighting was that of a male Northern Harrier as it floated over the wetland. Bob Pettit spotted the bird, calling out the bird's identity to all hawk watchers and especially noting the black wing tips. Male Northern Harriers are not in great number in the population so it was a treat to see this handsome bird early in the season.

At 11:00 a.m., the group descended the tower and headed over to the passerine banding area where Carl Pascoe, Rachel Powless and Kathy Evans were awaiting our arrival. Rachel Powless gave us an update on the lovely butterfly garden which has been planted next to the banding facility. An area was cleared in early spring, then an April weekend was set aside to place plants and mulch the area. Three volunteers, Peggy Hurst, Caroline Staddon and Martha Derbowka, carried water throughout the summer to ensure the plants survived the drought.

Rachel drew our attention to the butterflies nectaring at the butterfly bush and perennials. The butterfly tally for the morning was Cabbage White, Comma Monarch, Fiery Skipper and Mourning Clock. As we were admiring the garden, a large raptor flew through the nearby woodland, striking a passerine net, causing the support poles to furiously swing back and forth. All three banders sprinted to the net, but as Kathy Evans recounted, she was within three feet of the net when the female Cooper's Hawk fell from the net and flew off.

Bander Carl Pascoe has kindly provided a summary list of the 60 passerines representing 19 species banded on September 30, 2007 at Holiday Beach Conservation Area.

Species	Number/Comments	Species	Number/Comments
Whip-poor-will	(1st of season and one of only 5 banded at station)	Orange-crowned Warbler	1st of season
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	6	Nashville Warbler	7
Northern Flicker	1	Magnolia Warbler	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1st of season	Black-throated Blue Warbler	9
Gray-cheeked Thrush	9	Blackpoll Warbler	1
Swainson's Thrush	6	American Redstart	2
Hermit Thrush	5	Ovenbird	2
Blue-headed Vireo	1	Connecticut Warbler	(1st of season and one of only 3 ever captured at station)
Tennessee Warbler	2	Wilson's Warbler	2
		White-throated Warbler	2

Thank you HBMO hawk watchers and banders for being such fine hosts to ECFNC members.

Festival of Hawks, 2007

Betty Learmouth

This year's Festival of Hawks was scheduled for two days, Saturday, September 22, 2007 and Sunday, September 23, 2007 to be held in its usual locations at the Holiday Beach Conservation Area in the Town of Amherstburg. Essex Region Conservation Authority took on the organizational aspects of the Festival, widely advertising the event. Volunteers at the event were pleased to see vehicles coming into the parking areas prior to 8:00 a.m. on opening day. Early set up took place at the Festival Tent site with tables in place as volunteers arrived to set up the Blue Kestrel Café and the children's hands on display.

Morning passerine talks were provided by song bird bander Carl Pascoe with all sessions well attended. Some of the passerines discussed were American Redstart, Blackpoll, Swainson's Thrush, Gray-cheeked Thrush, and the 79th Ruby-throated Hummingbird for the season. Kathy Evans and other volunteers were on hand to assist with the adopt a passerine program.

Each morning at 11:00 a.m. a hawk banding demonstration and talk was held by bander Phil Roberts. This is a popular event with crowds swelling to seventy persons. Assistants to Phil included banders Jason Sodergren and Dorothy Balkwill. Various hawk species were discussed, adopted under the adopt a banded bird of prey program, then released.

Fuzzy Winks, the Great Horned Owl, was on display with Dorothy McLeer discussing this beautiful owl which attracted a lot of attention. As well, in the same area, Mel Dennis brought his nineteen year old Harris's Hawk, Harry, to the display and the discussion. Good crowds gathered for these talks.

The children's hands on activity area was busy throughout both days with painting and pipe cleaning activities. Pipe cleaners now come in many colours for assembly of flying insects such as dragonflies and Monarchs. Dip-netting sessions were available and well attended. ECFNC member Ruth Junge was one of the volunteers at the children's display.

ECFNC volunteer Paul DesJardins lead a dragonfly walk on Sunday morning, reporting eight species of dragonflies/damselflies including Common Green Darner, Familiar Bluet, Eastern Fork-tail, Common Pondhawk, Twelve-spot Skimmer, Autumn Meadowhawk, Ruby Meadowhawk, and Black Saddlebags. A Northern Walking Stick was also discovered, a small individual just one inch long.

The Blue Kestrel Café was open both days, with ECFNC volunteers serving home made muffins, coffee, grilled hotdogs/sausages and homemade cookies. Volunteers included Linda Brightmore, Margaret Calder, Donna Cowie, Shirley Grondin, Cathy La Pain, Cathy Lesperance, Helene Parks, Pauline Renaud, and Bonnie Ross. Special thanks to Pauline Renaud who stayed on for an extra forty-five minutes to help with the rush over the noon hour on Sunday. Both days the Blue Kestrel Café sold out of its muffins and hot dogs/sausages.



Mike Malone and Joan Walker were on hand both days at the Pelee Wings Nature Store display which featured binoculars, books, photography and clothing. Talks held in the Education Building

on both days included Hummingbirds by Carl Pascoe, Monarch migration by Rachel Powless and raptor identification talks by Bob Pettit. Sarah Rupert, Point Pelee National Park's chief staff interpreter was on hand with a PPNP display, offering a new Birding Odyssey event for person who wished to bird in the Conservation Area and beyond. Staff from CKLW were present with opportunities to win prizes.

Comments from those attending the Festival of Hawks was favourable. The park gate staff reported 200 vehicles entering the Conservation Area on both days of the Festival so the attendance was good over two days rather than five. It was a whirlwind weekend for volunteers but an enjoyable one.

Holiday Beach Migration Observatory Season Totals		
Species	2007	2006
Turkey Vulture	31327	35665
Osprey	186 (record high)	111
Bald Eagle	174 (record high)	124
Northern Harrier	1266	1195
Sharp-shinned Hawk	12378	9814
Cooper's Hawk	729	760
Northern Goshawk	16	28
Red-shouldered Hawk	505	492
Broad-winged Hawk	18400	7730
Red-tailed Hawk	6370	4248
Swainson's Hawk	0	3
Rough-legged Hawk	20	30
Golden Eagle	79	63
American Kestrel	1611 (record low)	2113
Merlin	107	122
Peregrine Falcon	94	114
Unknown Raptors	52	40



Saw-whet Owl Banding Breaks Records!

This fall has been a record one for saw-whet owl banding at Holiday Beach Conservation Area.

As of December 5 a whopping 495 owls have been banded! Incredible as compared to last year's total of 126.

Congratulations banders!



The Ivory-billed Woodpecker: the Search for Evidence in a Flooded Wilderness

Betty Learmouth

Dr. Daniel J. Mennill spoke to friends and members of the ECFNC at the members monthly meeting on October 10, 2007 concerning the on going search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Florida's Chattahoochee River corridor.

Dan had previously spoken on December 5, 2006 on the topic of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker at the Canada South Science and Exploration Centre, providing information on the historic range of this species, factors affecting its population decline, and the search for this species in Florida. Dan summarized the four lines of evidence indicating the existence of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in the Chattahoochee River corridor. This talk was summarized in an article prepared by Don Bissonnette which appeared in the Spring 2007 issue of The Egret.

This article summarizes Dan Mennill's presentation for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker search period from December 2006 to June 2007.

For the 2007 search extending from December 2006 to June 2007, nineteen full time paid researchers were engaged. A camera team, and a bio-acoustic team were assembled, housed within two camps. Energetic volunteers contributed including Canadians Rob Tymstra and Darryl Parsons of Sarnia, photographer Steve Pike of Windsor, University of Windsor student Dan Wylie and others.

In addition, seventeen researchers were located in the Mennill Laboratory at the University of Windsor. These researchers were trained in a bio-acoustical search to "get on top of the birds." They were all outstanding young ornithologists from the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Windsor.

With so many researchers at the two camp sites in Florida, the search was organized along transect lines. The search effort was outstanding with many hours spent in the search from December 2006 to June 2007. Sixteen listening stations were set up which collected 33,000 hours of recordings, the most ever for such a project.

Dan played for us a series of sound tracks which allowed us to hear the knock sounds and the Kent calls. Dan asked the question, "Why is it so difficult to get a photograph of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker?" Dan suggested that the Ivory-billed Woodpeckers are mostly silent, stay in thick forest and flee from people. Even with a large team, the teams are covering a small area. Dan asked, "Where do we go from here?" Dan told us that at this point, the search team had hoped to have a photograph.

The dilemma is how to go back to the Chattahoochee River Corridor in Florida for a continued search and yet keep up the morale of the searchers. Dan suggested that the site needs to be looked at from an ecosystem perspective. One researcher, Karan Odom, will be undertaking a study of the Barred Owl population. This will mean that researchers will be occupied scientifically yet will be still be in search of the long desired photograph.

Dan told us the Pileated Woodpecker is more of a generalist than the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. The Pileated Woodpecker is associated with long dead trees compared to the Ivory-billed Woodpecker which prefers freshly dead trees with the bark intact. The Pileated Woodpecker moves one to two miles per day. This species uses much smaller areas than that of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers with the Pileated Woodpecker a more common species than the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

Dan showed us a video of a related species, the Pale-billed Woodpecker, a female in Costa Rica. This video showed the female emerging from her nest site at dawn while elevating her crest.

One audience member asked a question concerning the Cuban Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Dan replied that the Cuban population is now extinct and was significantly different from the North American population, including its habitat preference.

Dan told us that sound like Kent calls may occur if such species as Great Blue Herons, squirrels or jays are in the vicinity of the listening stations. Nuthatches are not within the Chattahoochee River corridor, so the researchers did not have to deal with their calls as did the searchers in Arkansas.

Dan especially mentioned Walter Schmoranz and the Pelee Island Winery for providing financial support so that a twenty-four hour turn around occurred from recording in Florida to listening to the recorded sounds in the sound lab at the University of Windsor. Thank you to Dan for an informative update on the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

Christmas Bird Counts



Everyone is welcome, no experience required. A fee of \$5 is due to Bird Studies Canada unless you are a member of Bird Studies Canada.

Keep your eyes open for **Trumpeter Swan** as well as an influx of northern finches!

December 15 - Cedar Creek Christmas Bird Count - Contact either Paul Pratt or Karen Cedar at Ojibway Nature Centre (519-966-5852) or contact an area organizer.

December 16 - Rondeau Park Christmas Bird Count - Call Ojibway Nature Centre (519-966-5852) for more details.

December 17 - Point Pelee National Park Christmas Bird Count - Register by December 10 with Sarah Rupert at Point Pelee (519-322-5700 ext. 13).

December 22 - Rockwood Christmas Bird Count - Contact Ojibway Nature Centre (519-966-5852) for more details regarding this half day count in the Town of Amherstburg.

December 27 - Lakeshore Christmas Bird Count - Contact coordinator June Hurley at 519-979-8126.

December 28 - Holiday Beach Christmas Bird Count - Contact coordinator Paul Desjardins at 519-971-9562

January 1, 2008 - Detroit River Christmas Bird Count - Contact coordinator Paul Pratt or Karen Cedar at Ojibway Nature Centre (519-966-5852).

“Clean Water ~ Green Spaces”

Essex Region Conservation Authority’s Habitat Restoration Grant Program

Kathryn Arthur

The United Nations has stated that at a minimum, 12% of any region must remain in its natural state in order for it to be healthy and sustainable. In the Essex Region, currently only 7.5% of our land base consists of natural areas. In striving to achieve a state of sustainability for our region, ERCA partners with public and private landowners to implement naturalization projects ranging from 2 acres to more than 100 acres. These can be implemented on private lands owned by individuals or businesses, or on public lands owned by municipalities. The majority of these projects are undertaken in partnership with rural private landowners who wish to convert marginal farmland to a naturalized area or retire and reforest parcels of land.

You can contribute to achieving this target of 12% natural areas cover in Essex County by restoring natural habitat on your property. ERCA can provide both technical and financial assistance, and help you to implement your habitat restoration project. Grants covering up to 90% of project costs are available (depending on the type and size of your project). Currently, the types of projects covered under our current Clean Water ~ Green Spaces grant program include habitat restoration and naturalization projects such as native tree planting, pit and mound projects (vernal pool/swamp forest restoration), and riparian buffer strips. Agricultural improvement projects include windbreaks and soil erosion structures such as rock chutes. There are also grants for water quality improvement projects which include well capping and septic system upgrades.

Just some of the benefits are improved aesthetics, enhanced wildlife habitats and increased property values. The broader health benefits are cleaner water, healthier air, and increased natural areas coverage. Together we can make a difference in the environmental health and sustainability of our entire region! Please contact Kathryn Arthur, ERCA’s Restoration Biologist (519-776-5209 ext. 303 or karthur@erca.org), for more information. CW~GS grant applications are also available online at www.erca.org.

**Essex County Field Naturalists’ Club
Membership Renewal**

Annual dues are due as of January 1, 2008.

Individual membership \$20.00 / year _____ Family membership \$25.00 / year _____
Sustaining membership \$30.00 / year _____ Life membership \$500.00 / year _____
(tax receipt eligible)

Name _____

Street _____ City _____

Province _____ Postal Code _____ Phone Number _____

E-mail _____ I wish to receive the Egret by email.

*Make cheques payable to: Essex County Field Naturalists’ Club
Devonshire Mall P.O., P. O. Box 23011, Windsor, Ontario N8X 5B5*

Thank you!

ECFNC Winter / Spring Activities and Excursions, December '07- March '08

For further information concerning the ECFNC excursions, contact JoAnn Grondin (519-734-0056), or Margaret Jennings (519-250-0705). Let us know about your ideas for upcoming excursions. Consider volunteering as an excursion leader.



“Thank you” to those who have volunteered to lead an excursion.
We appreciate leaders sharing their time and expertise with others.

December 28 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Wee Winter Wildlife - Ages 3-6 explore Ojibway’s winter wonderland through games, crafts and outdoor fun. Friday 10am-noon, Fee = \$10/2 hours.

January 6 – **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 pm. We may drive to another location for the owl prowl. This excursion led by Tom is an excellent introduction to the techniques for observing owls, including long-eared owls which often roost in the Holiday Beach area.

January 9 – **ECFNC Members Monthly Meeting** – Guest speaker - Brian Sweet from Leamington and the new Point Pelee National Park Endangered Species Film. Meet in the Essex.Civic Centre at 7:30 pm in Room C.

January 12 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Winter Birding Field Trip. Saturday 8:30am, Fee = \$15. Call Ojibway Nature Centre for location or check www.ojibway.ca.

January 26 ^{cancelled} – Ojibway Nature Centre – Winter Birding Field Trip. Saturday 8:30am, Fee = \$15. Call Ojibway Nature Centre for location or check www.ojibway.ca.

January 27 – **ECFNC Winter Excursion** – Join ECFNC member **Ian Naisbitt** for a tour of **Little River Corridor Park**. We will view the new arena site and the new McHugh St. bridge. Meet at the end of Little River Road off Riverdale at 2:00 pm.

January 30 - ECFNC Executive Meeting

February 3 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Come out for cross-country skiing, free family activities and a winter scavenger hunt through the park. Cabin Fever Hike at 1pm. Bird seed and feeders 10% off! Sunday noon-4pm. FREE!

February 9 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Winter Birding Field Trip. Saturday 8:30am, Fee = \$15. Call Ojibway Nature Centre for location or check www.ojibway.ca.

February 13 – **ECFNC Members Monthly Meeting** – Guest speaker – Todd Pepper, “Central Peru - Landscapes and Wildlife”. Meet in the Essex.Civic Centre at 7:30 pm, Room C.

February 11 – May 12 – Ojibway Nature Centre – ‘Possum Pals – With their caregiver(s) children aged 2-4 join in on an exciting and fun adventure in nature. No class March 10 or March 24. Mondays 10am-noon, Fee = \$90/12 weeks.

February 11 – May 12 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Captivating Critters – Children aged 3-5 enjoy wildlife exploration and nature fun. No class March 10 or March 24. Mondays 1-3pm, Fee = \$90/12 weeks.

February 23 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Winter Birding Field Trip. Saturday 8:30am, Fee = \$15. Call Ojibway Nature Centre for location or check www.ojibway.ca.

February 24 – **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 allow us to go directly to the best viewing places. This is the beginning of spring migration when good numbers of a variety of waterfowl rest on the Detroit River. Meet in Ojibway Nature Centre parking lot at 2:00 pm.

February 27 - **ECFNC Executive Meeting**

March 9 - **ECFNC Spring Excursion** – Meet at **Devonwood Conservation Area** off Division Road at 2:00 pm. There is a trail that goes through Walker Homesite Park and connects to Hall Farms Park. We could also do a shorter walk through the conservation area.

March 12 – **ECFNC Annual Members Meeting** – Enjoy an evening of reports from the various ECFNC committees. The evening always features entertainment arranged by the ECFNC executive. Meet in the Essex Civic Centre at 7:30 p.m. in Room C.

March 10 or 12 or 14 - Ojibway Nature Centre – Frogs, Snakes and You – Children aged 3-6 enjoy activities about slimy and scaly critters. (Limited enrolment). Monday or Wednesday or Friday 10am-noon or 1-3pm, Fee = \$10/2 hours

March 10 or 12 or 14 - Ojibway Nature Centre – Wildlife Discovery – Youth aged 7-11 discover the secret of how plants and animals survive in the wild. Call about a ½ day camp. (Limited enrolment). Tuesday or Thursday 9am-4pm, Fee = \$30/day.

March 26 - **ECFNC Executive Meeting**

April 12 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Spring Birding Field Trip. Saturday 8:30am, Fee = \$15. Call Ojibway Nature Centre for location or check www.ojibway.ca.

April 22 – Friends of Ojibway Earth Day Cleanup – Join this hardworking group as they help beautify our local natural areas. Lunch provided. Tuesday 10am-3pm.

April 26 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Spring Birding Field Trip. Saturday 8:30am, Fee = \$15. Call Ojibway Nature Centre for location or check www.ojibway.ca.

April 27 – **Earth Day at Mic Mac Park** – Fun for the entire family with environmental exhibits, entertainment, food and much more! Don't forget to check out the ECFNC display. Volunteers are always needed, call Karen Cedar at 519-966-5852. Sunday 10am-4pm. FREE!

April 30 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Weekday Birding Field Trip. Wednesday 8:30am, Fee = \$15. Call Ojibway Nature Centre for location or check www.ojibway.ca.

May – June – **Native Plant and Tree Sales** – Contact Ojibway Nature Centre (519-966-5852) for dates and times.

May 7 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Big Day Birding. Wednesday 6am, Fee = \$25. Call Ojibway Nature Centre for location or check www.ojibway.ca.

May 10 – Ojibway Nature Centre – Spring Birding Field Trip. Saturday 8:30am, Fee = \$15. Call Ojibway Nature Centre for location or check www.ojibway.ca.