



# The Egret

*the Newsletter of the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club*

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### **ECFNC Monthly Meetings**

Except for our outdoor meetings in July and August, monthly members' meeting are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm at Windsor Airport's new community room at the west end of the airport terminal building. From Division Road (County Road 42) turn north on Duncan McColl Road (1<sup>st</sup> street west of airport terminal entrance) then turn right (east) on Hayes Road (1<sup>st</sup> right) and drive to the end. Park on south side of long white garage. Community room is adjacent and east of this parking area.



(details on Activities & Excursions page)

June 12 –Peregrine Falcon Watching

July 1 –Butterfly Walk

July 13 –Members Outdoor Meeting at Ojibway Nature Centre

July 20 –Kayaking

Aug. 10 –Members Outdoor Meeting at Colchester's Chimney Swift roost

Sept. 10 – Peche Island Day

Sept. 14 –Members Meeting at Windsor Airport

Sept. 17 and 18 - Blue Kestrel Cafe at the Holiday Beach Hawk Festival

Oct. 12 –Members Meeting at Windsor Airport – Guest speaker: Dan Mennill.

**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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Windsor, Ontario N8X 5B5

**Information**

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**Ojibway Nature Centre**  
519-966-5852

**Point Pelee National Park**  
519-322-5700

**Essex Region Conservation Auth.**  
519-776-5209

**ECFNC Contacts**

President: Phil Roberts (519-776-8315)  
Vice-President: Dave Kraus (519-825-7491)  
Secretary: Margaret Jennings (519-250-0705)  
Treasurer: Teresa Austrin (519-322-0004)

Directors: Don Bissonnette, Karen Cedar (519-966-5852), Jesse Gardner Costa, Denise Hartley (519-735-1926), Ron Muir (519-736-6507, Gerry Waldron (519-736-1276)

**Chairpersons/Liaisons:**

Membership Secretary: Denise Hartley  
Ontario Nature Liaison: JoAnn Grondin  
ERCA Liaison: Phil Roberts/Tom Hurst  
Carolina Woods Liaison: Ruth Junge  
Point Pelee Liaison: Phil Roberts/Mike Malone  
Bluebird Committee Chairman: Don Bissonnette  
NHRP Seed Collection: Bruno Sfalcin  
Special Events Coordinator: Karen Cedar  
Essex County Stewardship Network Liaison: Linda Menard-Watt  
Ojibway Liaison: Karen Cedar  
Citizens Environment Alliance Liaison: Phil Roberts  
Windsor Planning Advisory Comm. Liaison: Phil Roberts  
Canada South Land Trust Liaison: Tom Hurst  
Detroit River Canadian Cleanup Liaison: Phil Roberts/Ian Naisbitt

**Committees:**

Egret Editorial: Betty Learmouth, Karen Cedar  
Speaker: ECFNC directors  
Field Trip: JoAnn Grondin, Margaret Jennings  
Heritage: JoAnn Grondin (coordinator), Margaret Jennings, Dave Kraus, Betty Learmouth, Muriel Kassimatis, Jim McAllister, Bruno Sfalcin, Gerry Waldron, Peg Wilkinson, Shirley Grondin, Cathy Lapain  
Annual Dinner: Heritage & Special Events Committees  
Little River Enhancement Group: Ian Naisbitt, Tom Henderson

## **Shaughnessy Cohen Memorial Savannah Annual Garlic Mustard Pull and Cleanup**

By Shirley Grondin  
Photo by Shirley Grondin

Three members of the ECFNC (Bonnie Ross, Margaret Jennings and Shirley Grondin) pulled Garlic Mustard and picked up garbage on the Shaughnessey Cohen property, on Wednesday, May 11, 2011. They were thankful for the good weather and were able to work for four hours. By then the "aging backs" and "creaky knees" were begging for mercy!! Since our club are stewards for this property, this is an important annual event.



Shirley Grondin, Margaret Jennings and Bonnie Ross holding garlic mustard

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### **A Visit to Dr. David Suzuki Public School, April 3, 2011**

By Betty Learmouth  
Photos by Betty Learmouth

Nineteen ECFNC members joined Dr. David Suzuki Public School principal Judy Wherry on April 3, 2011, for a tour of this newly constructed school in East Windsor. Principal Wherry provided information about a most attractive school which amazed and delighted the visitors.

Principal Wherry stated she has been involved with the school's entire project from 2004 to the present, from planning to construction to welcoming students to the new facility. This new school has been constructed on the site of the former Princess Anne Public School. Pupils

attending the school are from both Princess Anne Public School and Concord Public School. During the building process, pupils occupied the former Lowe Secondary School, along with students from Campbell School as that school was being renovated.

Many aspects of the Dr. David Suzuki Public School are new and part of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) which is a system that allows buildings to be certified “green” by the accumulation a specific number of credits. This school has earned a platinum level award for its many innovative features.

During the tour of the new public school, Principal Wherry drew our attention to the many special features.

Looking out from the front door area, Principal Wherry discussed the bio-swales that are in front and beside the building that are designed to capture rain water. Later on our tour we saw the library room where rain water trickled down a transparent pipe from the roof. Some 120 days of rain is collected in cisterns to be used for the flushing of toilets and urinals and outside watering before the school has to go to the city’s water system.

Bio-swale at west side of school

Also at the front of the school are two visible wind turbines, a conventional turbine with blades and a uniquely designed turbine on the school’s roof, provided by a manufacturer in Western Canada.



Thirty-eight solar panels are visible across the front of the school. These panels generate \$25,000.00 worth of energy which is sold back to the Ontario power grid. This school also has solar water heating.

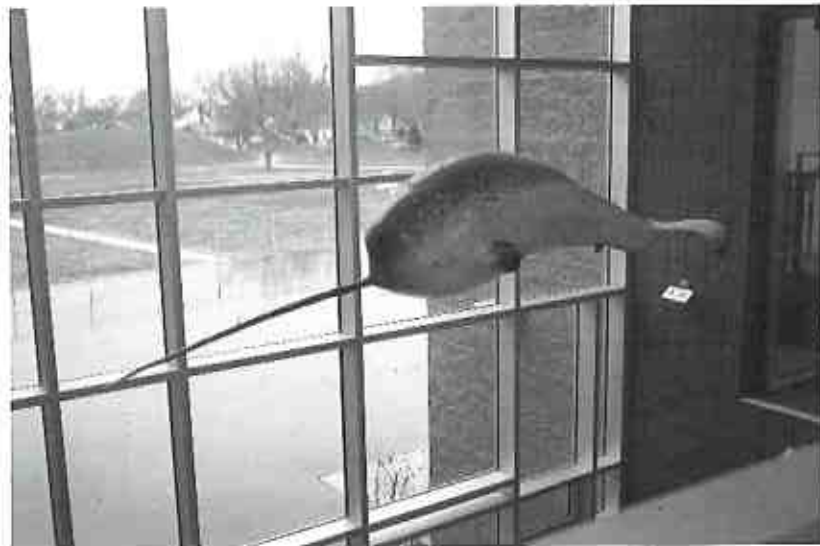
The floors of the school are polished cement. Principal Wherry commented that a great deal of cement is visible at the front of the school, an expensive effort to avoid a heat island effect.

Principal Wherry said she is constantly amazed at the amount of natural light within the school. The school's lighting system is light and motion sensitive, which causes the lights to go on and off depending on the amount of natural light in the halls and classrooms.

All the electrical, water and mechanical rooms are glassed in so the technology is visible to the children. The geo-thermal heating and cooling units in the floor can be viewed through transparent panels or truth windows. One of the goals of the school is to make the technology visible and to be a building that teaches.

Besides the polished cement floors, attractive cork floors have been provided in the main office along with unique bamboo cupboards which are renewable resources.

Dr. David Suzuki Public School is located upon twelve acres of land. Rolling areas have been created as well as a limestone trail. Everyone is anxious to begin planting. The goal is to create a very naturalized area, not your typical school playground.



Narwhal display in front entrance of school



Replicas of two small whale species have been placed in vertical open spaces, which may be viewed from either the ground floor or the second floor. An adult Beluga whale with its young is in one space while a single Narwhal is in another. Large murals featuring scenes of the biomes of Canada are shown on several walls which have been donated by National Geographic.

Several teaching areas were visited and admired. In the same manner as to the main office, the library features cork flooring with a Carolinian Forest of artificial plants and trees spilling out into the corridor, which gives an airy atmosphere to the library. A few steps away a living wall flourishes with a variety of colourful plants on view.

Beluga whales display in front entrance of school

The kindergarten room was a riot of colour with its furnishings and displays. All the printing on signs within the classroom had been done by the kindergarten pupils.

Ascending to the school's second floor, we viewed the composting efforts within the roof top garden. Composting is also carried out at ground level. Worm composting is underway and is intended to be undertaken throughout the entire school "Worm tea" is used to fertilize plants.

Rotating globes in two stair wells show our Earth as it appears at night, a dark round object with points of light. In daylight, our Earth is a blue and white globe with swirling white masses and expansive blue oceans.

Within the science room, we observed solera windows which bounce light into the room, which is more effective than ordinary glass.

The group entered a classroom where we looked at eight shelves which bounce light into the room. Fresh air is brought into the room through units under the windows, then the air is pulled across the room. At all times, one hundred per cent fresh air is drawn into the building with no recycling of air.



Kindergarten classroom display

In the gymnasium, Mrs. Wherry pointed out the sun tunnels in the ceiling as well as the larger than normal windows, a unique feature of this gymnasium. A wonderful rubber flooring makes for a comfortable playing experience. Next to the gymnasium is an exercise room with stationary bicycles of various sizes which create human energy to run two TV screens. A staff change room with a shower is provided for staff who bike to school.

Nearby is a recycling room. The entire school is working on recycling with just two Herby Curbys at the curb. The previous week, before the group's visit, the children at the school had reduced the garbage at the curb from six Herby Curbys to two.

Thank you to Principal Wherry for a hosting our visit to an extraordinary school and for checking this article for its accuracy.

## 17<sup>th</sup> Annual ECFNC Trip to Pelee Island

By Dave Kraus

Photos by Jeff Lambe

Fifteen people set off Saturday April 30 aboard the MV Jiimaan for a weekend of exploring on Pelee Island. Despite the prolonged cold and wet spring weather we have had this year, we lucked out as usual in avoiding rain cancelling our nature walks on Pelee Island.



Trip participants and Dutchman's Breeches

Many in the group were long time ECFNC members (Denise and Maxine Hartley, Shirley Grondin, Bonnie Ross, Marg Calder, Sharon Medieros), who have been going on the trip almost as many years as I have, but we also had a few new participants, including; a couple from the Guelph Field Naturalists Club, and a budding new nature photographer (Jeff Lambe) who has offered our club free use of his beautiful photos.

Birding was quite good, with participants seeing a great diversity of species over the weekend. Many warbler species that were seen were in small numbers (eg. palm, chestnut sided, Canada, blackburnian, black throated blue, black throated green, black and white, yellow), but Yellow rumped warblers were in very great abundance !

The group first toured Sheridan Point and the old abandoned quarry area, viewing many waterbirds (bufflehead, red breasted mergansers, etc) and also the native Kentucky Coffee Tree grove and the abundant Blue Ash trees. After a delicious lunch and checking into our rooms at the Anchor and Wheel Inn, we travelled to Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve where the trilliums and Dutchman's Breeches were spectacular!!! During our walk back along the west side of Fish Point, we saw many barn and tree swallows swooping back and forth very close to us. We also got numerous close up looks of Chipping and Field Sparrows, Goldfinch, Chickadees, and Yellow Rumped Warblers.

Saturday's travels included other shorter stops at the Red Cedar Savannah ESA, my naturalizing farmland, as well as a walk on the Scudder Dock. The Anchor and Wheel Inn served up their famous "Big Island Buffet" for dinner on Saturday which included: prime rib, local perch, chicken, steamed mussels, veggie lasagna, pesto pasta, salads, rolls, seafood chowder, etc, etc... it was all very delicious and abundant as usual.

A warm humid front from the south brought in thunderstorms early Sunday morning while we slept. The rain ceased as we finished our cheese omelettes, bacon, homefries, coffee, and other tasty breakfast items. We quickly became aware that the warm front also brought in many new migrant birds as well. The group loaded themselves onto the bus and Sharon Medieros drove us to Lighthouse Point Provincial Nature Reserve. Members of our group spotted many interesting species, including: Bald Eagle, beaver, painted turtles, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Northern Oriole, Snapping Turtle, and numerous species of passerine and water birds.

On Sunday, we also toured Sheridan Point again, the recently acquired Middle Point Nature Conservancy property, and a stop at the Stone Road Alvar ANSI. We enjoyed another great meal at the Anchor and Wheel Inn for lunch Sunday before checking out of our rooms and eventually returning to the West Dock for our leisurely trip home aboard the Jiimaan.

It was a wonderful weekend spent appreciating wildlife and good food with a wonderful group of people as usual. Next year's trip has already been scheduled and set up for May 5 and 6, 2012 - book this time off on your calendars now !!!

### **Bird List from Pelee Island Trip**

April 30 to May 1, 2011

Compiled by Linda Menard-Watt

The birds are more or less in the order they were spotted not the more formal bird order listing. A bird is listed only once, usually the first time seen, even though it may have been seen both days.

#### **Saturday**

Mute Swan  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Blue-grey Gnatcatcher  
American Crow  
Mourning Dove  
Grey Catbird  
Ring-Billed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Double-crested Cormorant  
Red-breasted Nuthatch  
European Starling  
Red-breasted Merganser  
Red-winged Blackbird

Downy Woodpecker  
Palm Warbler  
Ring-Necked Pheasant  
Wild Turkey  
House Sparrow  
Northern Cardinal  
Forster's Tern  
American Coot  
Common Crackle  
Sharp-Shinned Hawk  
Cooper's Hawk  
Hooded Merganser  
Common Merganser

#### **Fish Point:**

Greater Scaup  
Canada Goose  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Black-capped Chickadee  
Chipping Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Barn Swallow  
Tree Swallow  
Bufflehead  
Caspian Tern  
American Goldfinch  
Killdeer



**After:**

- Great Blue Heron
- Great Egret
- Common Tern
- Northern Flicker
- Purple Martin

**Sunday**

- House Finch
- Blackburnian Warbler
- Black-throated Green Warbler
- American Robin
- Chimney Swift
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Yellow Warbler
- Ruby-Crowned Kinglet



Black-throated Green Warbler

**Lighthouse Point:**

- Baltimore Oriole
- Black-and-White Warbler
- Canada Warbler
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- White-throated Sparrow
- White-Eyed Vireo
- Veery Thrush
- Swamp Sparrow
- Bald Eagle
- Louisiana Waterthrush
- Solitary Vireo
- Hermit Thrush
- Belted Kingfisher
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Blue Jay
- American Tree Sparrow
- Black Throated Blue Warbler
- Vesper Sparrow



Trip participants birding

**Brown's Point & Stone Road:**

- American Woodcock
- Eastern Kingbird
- Solitary Sandpiper
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Turkey Vulture
- Yellow-throated Warbler
- Least Flycatcher
- Nashville Warbler
- Yellow-throated Vireo

**TOTAL BIRD SPECIES - 77**

**Non-bird:**

- Painted Turtle
- Snapping turtle
- Fox Squirrel
- Beaver
- Raccoon

**Science Rendezvous 2011**

By Teresa Austrin

ECFNC was invited by the University of Windsor to participate in their annual science fair which is a nationally held event. <http://www.sciencerendezvous.ca/2011/windsor/>

Our own Dr. Lynda Corkum gladly volunteered to do a presentation regarding her new field guide *Fishes of Essex County and Surrounding Waters*. The Windsor Public Library kindly offered to host this presentation and was very helpful in providing and setting up equipment at their main branch downtown.

It was a gloriously sunny spring day which I think beckoned folks to the out door events, so initially I was Lynda's sole audience.

However, she is such a pro and carried forth quite enthusiastically with her power point presentation as if I was a bulging crowd of eager anglers!! Soon several curious visitors heard the speaker system and one by one came to sit with us, the first brave bystander was a keen ten year old feller who'd never been fishing before. He had a field day flipping through all the great photos in Lynda's book - he might just be our next Bob Izumi!!! His father sat in soon after, so hopefully the jaunt home sparked some conversation about a visit to water's edge with a pole!

The librarian mentioned that the lunch counter patrons in the vicinity listened along with interest as well. Our crowd that afternoon unfortunately was small, but I'm certain that the impression Lynda made on everyone was quite the opposite! THANK YOU LYNDA for sharing your great spirit and awesome presentation on behalf of ECFNC!!

**ATTENTION ALL ECFNC MEMBERS**

It is necessary that a committee be formed regarding the sale and promotion of Dr. Lynda Corkum's field guide, *Fishes of Essex County and Surrounding Waters*.

Dr. Corkum has very generously donated ALL SALE PROCEEDS to ECFNC.

If you can be of assistance or would like more information, please contact Teresa at 519-322-0004 or [teresaandjoe@hotmail.com](mailto:teresaandjoe@hotmail.com)

## Essex County Field Naturalists' Club Birder, 2011

By Betty Learmouth

Cathy Lapain accepted the challenge of being the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club's birder for 2011. The start for the 2011 Baillie Birdathon was 3:02 p.m. on Tuesday, May 10, 2011, ending 3:02 p.m. on Wednesday, May 11, 2011.

Cathy's route took her to Little River (45 species), Malden Park (4 species), Ojibway Park (10 species), travel to Amherstburg (4 species), Mann's Marsh in Amherstburg (6 species), and Big Creek (no new species). At 9:00 p.m. on May 10, 2011, Cathy's tally was 69 species. The next morning Cathy began at 6:30 a.m. at Point Pelee (20 species), then to Hillman's Marsh (7 species) for a total of 96 species.

Cathy's notes for notable sightings included a Scarlet Tanager which was an "Orange Variant" and quite a sighting which had also been seen on the previous Saturday with Paul Pratt's group. A very quick look at a Hooded Warbler was another notable sighting along with an Orange-crowned Warbler. A group of Wild Turkeys was observed with the males "strutting their stuff" while slowly crossing the road.

Cathy writes: "*Thanks to all the Essex County Field Naturalists Club members that supported this year's Baillie Birdathon. I raised \$536.00 from club members along with \$825.00 from my regular supporters for a total of \$1,361.00. I saw a total of 96 species which is my all time high; always aiming to reach 100 species. Maybe next year!*"

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## Hillman Shorebird and Song Festival

By Shirley Grondin  
Photo by Shirley Grondin

This year's festival was held on May 7 and 8, 2011. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped to sell the muffins, coffee, sausages and hotdogs - you are the heart of our club!!

On board for Saturday were Margaret Jennings and Bonnie Ross and for Sunday, JoAnn Grondin, Cathy Lapain and Pauline Renaud.

Mom Nature was kind to us this year - we were blessed with two beautiful days. Lots of birds got banded including this beauty that you see here.

Thanks again to the volunteers - you are awesome!!



Yellow-breasted Chat

**Earth Day, May 1, 2011**

By Betty Learmouth

Photos by Betty Learmouth

This year's annual Earth Day celebration was held on May 1, 2011 at MicMac Park in west Windsor with a set up on an asphalt parking lot which ensured a clean and dry environment for visitors, vendors and exhibitors. Luckily the day was without heavy rain, a light drizzle falling later in the afternoon.



Pauline Renaud, Kathy Lesperance and Cathy Lapain

ECFNC bake sale coordinator Cathy Lapain was on hand early with volunteer JoAnn Grondin to place the baked goods. A fine array of pies along with other baked goods were on display. Volunteers throughout the day included Margaret Jennings, Kathy Lesperance, and Pauline Renaud.

The ECFNC display was set up near the ECFNC bake sale. The display featured a birding quiz with wonderful images of local bird species provided by Windsor photographer Jason Telasco. Volunteers Caroline Williams, Margaret Jennings and Betty Learmouth were on hand to give assistance to those who decided to take the quiz. ID tips were on the display board with bird identification guides available.

Tom Preney (Ojibway Nature Centre) and David Ainslie (Canada South Land Trust)



Copies of Linda Corkum's book *Fishes of Essex County and Surrounding Waters* were available for sale with three sold. A draw was held for two natural history books.

Other exhibitors around the ECFNC display included the Citizens Environment Alliance, Friends of the Ojibway Prairie (with volunteers and ECFNC members Russ Munro and Claire McAllister), Ojibway Nature Centre, Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (ECFNC member Paul Pratt wore both his naturalist and astronomer hats), Therapy Dogs of Windsor (ECFNC member Sandra Hall attended with her serene Grey Hound "Bella" along with a number of other amazing owners and fabulous pet dogs) and the

University of Windsor environmental science information table. ECFNC member Bert Harris had a display featuring the home environment.

There was entertainment at the big stage for the younger set and a variety of healthy food choices available including vegetarian lunches.

Thank you to the organizers, especially to ECFNC member Karen Cedar, who planned the event, and were on hand throughout the day to ensure all ran smoothly.

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### **Friends of Ojibway Annual General Meeting, April 10, 2011**

By Betty Learmouth

Photographs by Betty Learmouth

Twenty-seven friends and members of the Friends of Ojibway Prairie (FoOP) met on April 10, 2011 in the new Ojibway Nature Centre. The group gathered in the classroom area for its meeting.

FoOP President Bonnie Ross welcomed the group. Treasurer Shirley Grondin provided an update with regard to FoOP finances. Executive member Andy Simko invited those present to consider becoming a member of the FoOP executive. Secretary Larry Onysko recorded the minutes of the AGM. Following the business building, the Landscape Architect for Parks and Recreation, Heidi Baillargeon, gave a presentation on the landscape plans for the area around the new centre.

After snacks and refreshments, Ojibway Nature Centre's Chief Naturalist Paul Pratt provided a guided tour of this exciting newly constructed facility.

Paul began the tour by partially pulling out the sliding dividing wall which creates two classrooms. There is a small kitchen in each room that is available for food preparation. The view from the classrooms over looks the newly constructed snake hibernaculum with prairie and woodland beyond. Beneath the windows, the floors are heated for the comfort of observers who choose the floor rather than a chair.

The snake hibernaculum was constructed by excavating a pit, then placing a pile of rocks some nine feet high into the pit. PVC piping was inserted into the pit, allowing access into the pit. There are lots of cavities in the site. Tree roots and logs are also included within the pit.

A large pile of wood chips has been dumped next to the hibernaculum creating an environment in which snake species such as Eastern Fox Snake may lay their eggs. Ojibway Naturalist Tom Preney assured the group that snakes will find the hibernaculum.

On the wall just outside the classrooms is a magnetic white board displaying a large 2008 air photo of the Ojibway Complex. Sightings reported can now be accurately located on the map. For instance, a symbol of a bird or insect may be placed on the board.

Opposite the magnetic board is a high efficiency wood burning fireplace with comfortable chairs and sofas arranged in an inviting manner.

Paul drew the group's attention to the attractive pale gray granite rock on the walls in this area. This same granite is also used on portions of the Nature Centre's exterior walls. The granite had formed the original road bed of the Ambassador Bridge when that structure was built during the 1920s. The granite was later removed and stored, then retrieved for its inclusion within the Nature Centre's construction.

Near the magnetic board is a display of various tree trunks cut longitudinally to display the grain and colour of each species. Paul showed the group the American Chestnut which is now a part of the display. At the mill where the trunk was cut, an American Chestnut had never before been cut there.

A few steps away from the native tree display, the entrance door opens with a view of the circular information desk, constructed of beautiful pale White Cedar, a tree species native to Ontario. The texture of this wood is quite remarkable, inviting visitors to touch and enjoy.

Work was still in progress at the visitors desk where a Sycamore tree sculpture was being assembled, limb by limb, spreading over the information desk and the entrance nearby.

On the information desk, a tray of colourful sedum species was on display for the tour. This tray is one of many on the Nature Centre's "green roof."

To the left of the entrance is the sales display area with shelving to accommodate a variety of merchandise.

Stepping from the sales area, the wide sweeping wall of the Nature Centre invites the visitor to explore the various displays. Opposite this wall is the animal display, featuring fish, snakes and turtles, with a step up for better viewing, especially for younger set.

Animal displays

The washrooms are located beyond the display area, featuring rapid hand dryers, motion activated water flow the sinks and a separate family washroom.

Beyond the washrooms are the "behind the scenes rooms" including the chief naturalist's office, a utilities room with an on demand



heating system, a large storage area, the animals room behind the displays, and a kitchen space for the staff.

Paul mentioned that the Ojibway Nature Centre is a candidate for a green building rating or LEED rating. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a system that allows buildings to be certified as green, by accumulating a specific number of credits. The Ojibway Nature Centre was designed to acquire a Silver rating, but now is one step into Gold. For instance, the reusing of the large volume of granite generates several credits within the LEED system.

An official opening of the new Ojibway Nature Centre will be held this summer but a celebration will be held on June 12, 2011 as this date marks the 50th anniversary of the official opening of Ojibway Park.

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### **Middle Island: A Disquieted Spirit**

By Betty Learmouth

Photos of Mary Celestino's artwork by Betty Learmouth

On March 26, 2011, Mary Celestino was joined by a group of ECFNC members to learn about Mary's newest exhibit at the Art Gallery of Windsor entitled Middle Island: A Disquieted Spirit. Everyone gathered in a gallery on the third floor where Mary's marvelous paintings hung. In the background, sounds of nesting birds helped to set the mood of Lake Erie's Middle Island during nesting season. Mary captured our attention with the challenges she faced on Middle Island in the process of obtaining sketches and images of that wild place, now surrounding us on the gallery walls.

Mary's art project began in June 2010 when Mary joined a group of Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources botanical staff on an excursion to Middle Island. A rented motor boat was used to transport everyone to Middle Island. This occurred shortly after a tornado had passed through the area, creating choppy water conditions.

Middle Island is located in the middle of Lake Erie, some one hundred metres from the U.S. border, four kilometres from Pelee Island and twenty-nine kilometres from Point Pelee.

Upon arrival on Middle Island, Mary decided that her plan would be to walk Middle Island's entire shoreline. This proved to be a hazardous trek as there are crevasses in the limestone shelf, some obscured by Virginia Creeper, as well as huge chunks of limestone.

Mary brought along a pair of trekking poles, which were useful as she navigated the cobblestones of the landing site which resembles a tadpole's tail. The limestone shelf rises behind the cobblestone site to a high point of seven metres above Lake Erie's surface.

Mary wondered how long it would take to travel completely around the island. She was equipped with her sketch book and camera. Mary's plan was to sit down and sketch as she traveled along Middle Island's shoreline. The shoreline appeared dangerous with its slippery

exposed rock. Mary had to remove her pack while moving across the rocky areas, throwing her back pack and poles ahead. Mary's greatest fear was that a helicopter would have to come to the rescue.

Middle Island shoreline

Mary's trek began on the eastern shoreline with conditions becoming worse and worse. Mary would sit down to sketch and to rest, enjoying a peanut butter sandwich and a sip water. The trek had begun at 10:00 a.m. with a rendezvous time of 2:00 p.m. Mary was fearful she would not make the rendezvous. The cliffs were difficult as Mary had to go downward, entering the water.



Mary guided her viewers from one painting to another. A painting of trees shows the cormorants are overtaking the island, destroying the trees as the guano is so toxic. The more nesting by the cormorants, the more that is destroyed. Mary had to wear a mask due to the toxic guano.

Mary did not see any herons during her trek. She did see two Lake Erie Water Snakes.

Finally Mary rounded the northeast corner of the island: there was the tadpole spit off in the distance. She had made it around the entire island.

Indications were all about of the island take over by the Double-crested Cormorants. All Mary could hear were the sounds of birds. Islands were in the distance. No one else was there.

Mary has captured the beauty of the Middle Island in a series of paintings which show the Double-crested Cormorants nesting

Middle Island shoreline

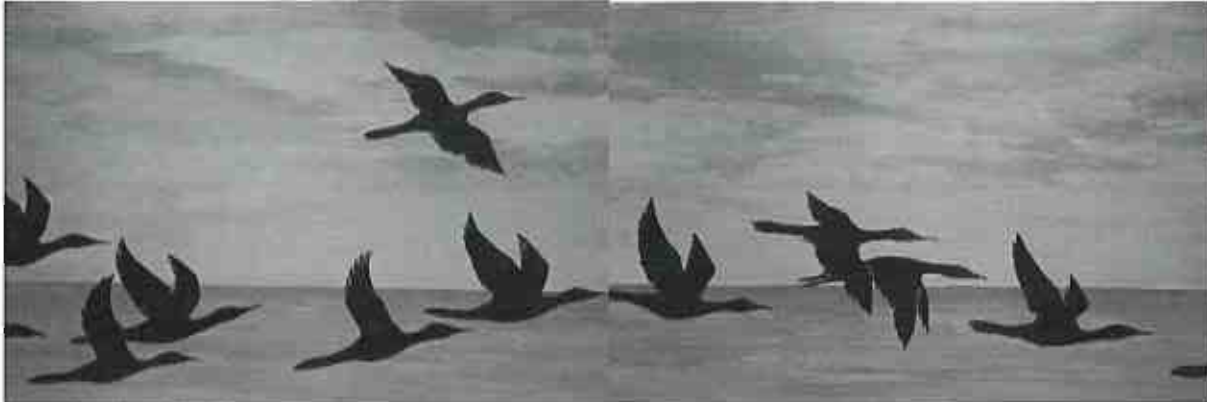




and in flight. Other dramatic paintings depict a rugged shoreline. Background sounds of birds such as Herring Gulls add to the experience of viewing the Middle Island paintings.

Middle Island; A Disquieted Spirit continues through July 6, 2011 at the Art Gallery of Windsor.

Cormorants in flight



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### Searching for Eastern Screech-Owls, March 17, 2011

By Betty Learmouth  
Photo by Jason Telasco

Ojibway Nature Centre's Naturalist Tom Preney was joined on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2011, by fifty-five persons, including children of all ages, for an owl prowl in Ojibway Park

Tom introduced the evening's activity by explaining that he would be playing a tape of the Eastern Screech-Owl's calls. This owl species is curious, flying towards the source of the calls.

The previous night, March 16, 2011, Tom heard an owl at 8:00 p.m. During our walk, Tom hoped that a flashlight beam or a pointer might aid in locating an Eastern Screech-Owl.

Our walk in the Ojibway Park took us along the Ojibway Creek. Tom explained that Eastern Screech-Owls are cavity nesters. The Wood Duck nesting boxes located within the Ojibway Creek are most attractive to these small owls, as are cavities in trees. Tom pointed out that the wood around the entrance hole of the Wood Duck nesting box was well worn, an indication that the nesting box was used in the past.

Tom commented that where there are trees, there are likely Eastern Screech-Owls. Tom said that he had owls in his neighborhood last year.

Plans for nesting boxes are available from Ojibway Nature Centre.

At the Ojibway Pond, signs of spring were all around. Tom called our attention to a singing Red-winged Blackbird in the background, staking out its territory. Earlier in the day Chorus Frogs were calling. The first butterfly of the season, a Mourning Cloak, was observed.

As the group walked through the Black Oak Savanna, three White-tailed Deer were spotted. These animals appeared quite relaxed, enjoying their browsing as sun reflected off their coats. A little further along the path, Tom pointed out the Little-leaf Linden trees which have had their bark removed by deer rubbing their antlers.

Tom asked the group to suggest some of the ways that a bird might be looked at, especially with regard to its identification. Some suggestions from the younger participants include the bird's colour, the size and shape of the beak, the size and shape of the wings, the sound the bird makes and its type of habitat, for instance, a marsh.

During the walk in Ojibway Park, a Hairy Woodpecker was noted creeping along a tree limb. At the last bridge over Ojibway Creek, Tom pointed out a Skunk Cabbage growing by the Creek.



Several extremely relaxed White-tailed Deer walk through the area as the group congregated on the bridge to view the Skunk Cabbage.

In the gathering darkness, Tom played the ibirdexplorer which is an application that provides the songs of North American bird species. Male Eastern Screech-Owls produce a trill or the “b” song. The female Eastern Screech-Owl produces the “a” song which resembles a horse whinny.

At dusk, Tom moved around Ojibway Park, playing the tape. At 8:10 p.m., a flying Eastern Screech-Owl was seen by some participants at the “front of the line.” Others, “near the back of the line” saw another flying Eastern Screech-Owl. One lucky participant obtained an image of an owl in flight on her digital camera.

Thank you to Tom for an enjoyable evening spent learning about Ojibway's Eastern Screech-Owls.

Eastern Screech-Owl

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### Ojibway Nature Centre Hiking Group

By Betty Learmouth  
Photos by Jason Telasco

#### Devonwood Conservation Area, May 10, 2011

Five hikers joined Ojibway Nature Centre Naturalist Tom Preney for a morning visit to Devonwood Conservation Area in East Windsor on May 10, 2011. The morning was cool and damp after an early morning thunderstorm had passed through the area.

The invasive plant Garlic Mustard was noted growing about the grassy area adjacent to the parking area. Tom commented that a group was pulling Garlic Mustard at Ojibway Park later this day.



Red-bellied Woodpecker

Tom provided news from the newly opened Ojibway Nature Centre which enjoyed considerable activity on Mother's Day, May 8, 2011 with 500 visitors.

Upon entering the woods it was apparent that the rain storm had caused a fall out of a number of bird species, especially warblers. We had good looks at nineteen bird species. Towards the end of the hike the birds had dropped quite low. We viewed a handsome male Blackburnian Warbler on the path while Palm Warblers foraged on the woodland floor.

Bird species observed or heard included Downy Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Tufted Titmouse, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Nashville Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Scarlet tanager (male), Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Common Grackle and Baltimore Oriole.

### **Black Oak Heritage Park, May 17, 2011**

Seven hikers joined Ojibway Naturalist Tom Preney on a morning hike at Black Oak Heritage Park in West Windsor on May 17, 2011.

Tom provided the morning news from Ojibway Nature Centre. Four bird photographers were enjoying the activities with Indigo Buntings, Blue Jays and Northern Orioles flying to the feeders. A Redbud was in full flower behind the feeders.

Tom told the group about a bird watcher that reported an agitated American Robin last week in a tree. Looking more closely, the bird watcher spotted an Eastern Fox Snake at the American Robin's nest. Tom remarked that the Eastern Fox prey on the eggs and young of nesting birds.

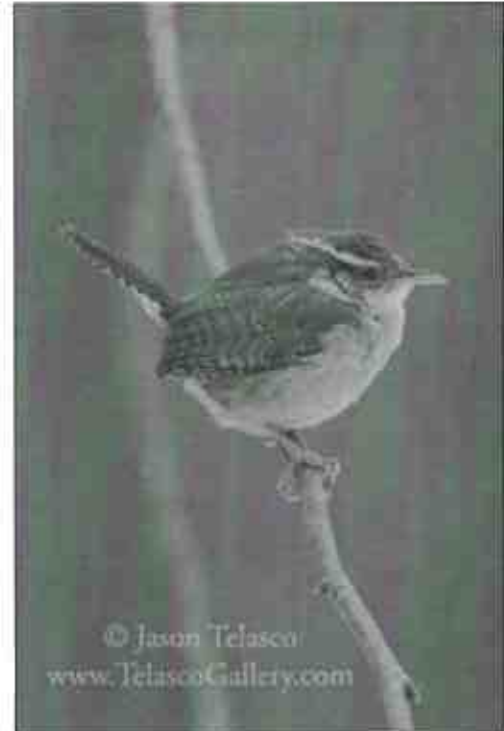
The new directional signs were in place at Black Oak Heritage Park which will guide visitors on a circular route through woodland and savannah. Spring plants noted along the trail were Wild Geranium, Solomon's-seal, Starry False Solomon's-seal, False Solomon's-seal, Sweet Cicely, Tall Meadow Rue, Kidney-leaved Buttercup, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Spring Beauties, Garlic Mustard (a special effort needs to be made to remove this plant species from Black Oak

Heritage Park), Mayapple, and Cow-Parsnip (a plant to be avoided due to illness which can result from close contact). Bracken Fern and Interrupted Fern were noted.

Bird species observed or heard were Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Blackburnian Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Wood-Pee-wee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Gray Catbird, Yellow Warbler, Redstart, Canada Warbler, Indigo Bunting, and Song Sparrow. As the group was leaving Black Oak, everyone was treated to the sighting of a stunning pair of Wood Ducks perched on the limbs of a nearby tree.

Thank you to Tom for an enjoyable hike through Black Oak Heritage Park.

Carolina Wren




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### **Big Day of Birding, May 18, 2011**

Submitted by Betty Learmouth

Paul Pratt reported the Big Day of Birding with the following report:

“We had a great day of birding at Point Pelee on May 18, 2011. It was chilly and overcast but we saw at least 135 species on our Big Day of Birding.

Some of the highlights included:

- A male Summer Tanager perched on a picnic table
- Northern Mockingbird and Eastern Bluebird on the West Beach
- Possible Yellow-legged Gull at the tip (good looks but a difficult ID)
- Most warblers (22 species) were at our feet (the only food was down at ground level)
- Lots of Scarlet Tanagers on the Woodland Nature Trail (and I literally mean ON the trail)
- Hummingbirds were everywhere last week, but Swainson’s Thrush, Veery and Lincoln’s Sparrows were the conspicuous birds today
- Marbled Godwit and Sandhill Crane were seen in the onion fields
- Red-necked Phalarope, Black-headed Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull seen at Hillman’s Marsh “

**International Migratory Bird Day. Walpole Island, May 14, 2011**

By Betty Learmouth  
Photos by Betty Learmouth

The third annual 2011 International Migratory Bird Day was held on May 14, 2011 at the Walpole Island Heritage Centre. Colourful displays were arranged around the meeting area with attractive posters on display along with T-shirts and crafts for sale.

Attendees included members of the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, Kawartha Field Naturalists, and Lambton Wildlife, as well as local and Walpole Island residents.

Speakers during the morning session included Aimee Johnson, on contract with Parks Canada, who spoke about species at risk across Canada and, in particular, on Walpole Island. Plant species at risk on Walpole Island include the Small White Ladies Slipper, Dense Blazing Star, Pink Milkwort, and Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid. Reptile species at risk on Walpole Island include Five Lined Skink, and Eastern Fox Snake. Bird species at risk on Walpole Island include Bobwhite, King Rail and Least Bittern.

Speaker Myeengun Henry of the Chippawa of the Thames First Nation spoke on Native Traditional Medicines.

Master Bander Carl Pascoe discussed a variety of bird species which were brought from the net area to the Heritage Centre. Some of the bird species shown to visitors were Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Yellow Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Common Grackle, Baltimore Oriole, and American Goldfinch.



Carl Pascoe and participants at banding station

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (RTHU) were the topic of Carl Pascoe's presentation after the lunch break with tips on providing food to RTHUs to the latest information on the migration of RTHUs to the challenge of banding this tiny bird.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird

The fourth speaker of the day was Rachel Powless who spoke on the topic of birds in native culture. Rachel stated that native persons observed bird behaviours and incorporated these sightings into myths or legends which would be remembered. Rachel remarked that all lacrosse players want attributes of the RTHU. The tail feathers of the RTHU are like the shape of the lacrosse stick. Red-winged Blackbirds are "fancy dancers" which are remembered during powwows.

Following the presentation, everyone was invited to the net area where Master Bander Carl Pascoe gave a banding demonstration, including a visit to the net area. Some of the bird species banded were Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak (female) and Orchard Oriole.

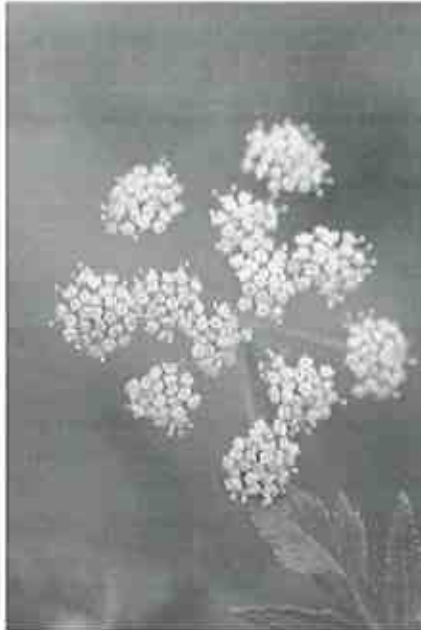


Orchard Oriole (left) and Baltimore Oriole (right)



Female Rose-breasted Grosbeak

The last event of the day was a walk on a remnant prairie where Small White Ladies-slipper and Plantain-leaved Pussytoes were found along with Golden Alexanders which was growing throughout.



Thank you to all the organizers who arranged a wonderful day on Walpole Island to celebrate our birds and their migration.



Golden Alexanders

Small White Ladies-slipper

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### **The Essex Nature Fund**

[http://www.wecf.ca/donor\\_stories.html](http://www.wecf.ca/donor_stories.html)

Building a stronger financial base for the Essex County Field Naturalists Club (ECFNC) has become much easier. Through a partnership with the Windsor Essex Community Foundation, individuals are able to make tax deductible contributions to the Essex Nature Fund at the Community Foundation, ensuring support for the Field Naturalists Club for generations to come.

The Community Foundation began supporting the efforts of the Little River Enhancement Group (Lil' Reg) in the early 1990's . Lil' Reg decided to establish the Essex Nature Fund with the Community Foundation when the Government of Ontario began matching, dollar for dollar, funds donated to community foundations by charitable groups.

The Essex Nature Fund is an endowment, which means that donations are invested and never spent. The interest earned on the fund is forwarded to the ECFNC each year, providing meaningful financial support for generations to come. As of September 30, 2009, the Fund has grown to \$19,000 and we would like to see this reach \$25,000 by the end of 2011.

Memorial donations have been key to the fund's growth. When an individual makes a contribution in memory of a departed friend or loved one the foundation mails a letter directly to the family, advising them of the gift and the impact it will have for the future. All donations to the Fund through the Community Foundation are eligible for a charitable tax receipt to use on the donor's taxes.

Whether gifts come from an individual, group, company, in memory of an individual or to celebrate a special occasion, contributions help build a source of financial stability for the Field Naturalists Club for generations to come.

**Essex County Field Naturalists' Club  
Membership Form – Due January 1, 2011**

Individual membership \$20 / year \_\_\_\_\_ Family membership \$25 / year \_\_\_\_\_  
Student (full-time) \$10 / year \_\_\_\_\_ Sustaining membership \$30 / year \_\_\_\_\_

Tax Receipt Eligible: Life membership \$500 / year \_\_\_\_\_  
Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Publications: Wildflowers of the Canadian Erie Islands by Mary Celestino \$20 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fishes of Essex County and Surrounding Waters By Lynda D. Corkum \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

\* New member special – purchase a publication and receive a free one-year membership!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

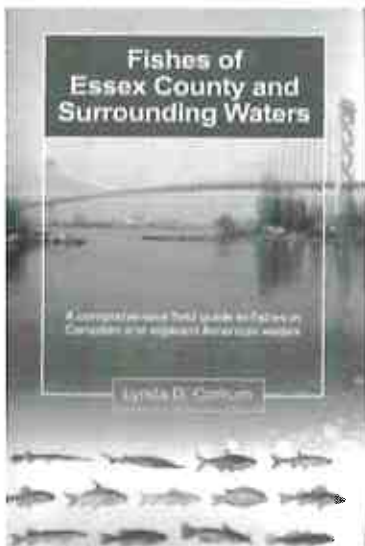
Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please contact me to volunteer at ECFNC events!

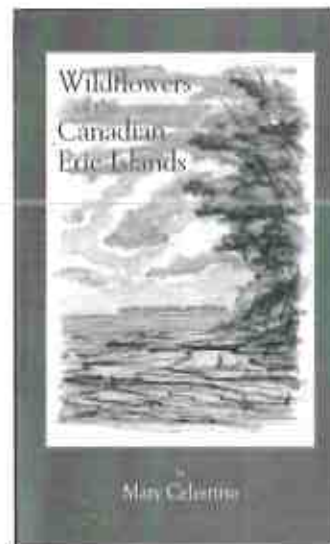
*Make cheques payable to: Essex County Field Naturalists' Club*  
Devonshire Mall P.O., P. O. Box 23011, Windsor, Ontario N8X 5B5

*Thank you!*



**Essex County Field  
Naturalists' Club  
Publications**

Available at Pelee Wings Nature  
Store (519-326-5193), Ojibway  
Nature Centre (519-966-5852) or by  
mail, see membership form.





**ECFNC Activities and Excursions, June - Sept. '11**

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.

**June 12 – ECFNC Spring Excursion – Peregrine Falcon Watching** – Join Club members at the Ambassador Bridge to hopefully watch the recently fledged Peregrines learn life skills from their parents. From Huron Church Road or University Avenue turn west (under the bridge ) to park in University of Windsor parking lot "A" between Peter Street and University Ave. *This is a pay and display parking lot (\$1.50 per hour), and there is metered parking on Huron Church Road.* Meet at 2:00 pm on University Avenue at the Bridge to watch the falcons.

**June 12 – Ojibway Nature Centre** – Join us as we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ojibway Park. Free guided hikes and family activities from noon to 4pm. Call Ojibway 519-966-5852 for details.

**June 23 – Canada South Land Trust Prairie Walk** - Join a guided walk on the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve for a glimpse of early summer flowering plants. Meet at 6:30 p.m. on Titcombe Road at the prairie entrance which is across Matchette Road from the Ojibway Park parking lot. Call Betty at 519-944-0825 to indicate you will be attending and for more information. Donation to the Land Trust’s Legacy Fund is welcome. Refreshments following the walk.

**July 1 – ECFNC Butterfly Walk** - Join Club member Paul Desjardins from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at Spring Garden for butterfly identification. This walk is designed for beginners, but experienced butterfly watchers are welcome too. Meet in the parking lot on Malden Road, opposite Elgin Street.

**July 2 – Ojibway Nature Centre** – Join us for Windsor’s Annual Butterfly Count. No experience required as we venture out into our natural areas in groups. If you have a net, binoculars and a butterfly identification guide, bring them! \$5 participation fee which goes to the North American Butterfly Association to offset compilation costs. Free lunch provided by the Friends of Ojibway Prairie. We gather at 9am at Ojibway Park, dress for the weather, some walking off trail does occur. Call Ojibway 519-966-5852 to sign up or for more details.

**July 13 – ECFNC Members Outdoor Meeting** – Meet at Ojibway Nature Centre at 6:00 pm for pizza and cold beverages followed by a tour of the new Ojibway Nature Centre and a guided hike. We will try to time the guided hike to beat the heat and mosquitoes but come prepared, just in case. Food and drinks are free of charge.

**July 20 – ECFNC Kayaking**- Join club member Mike Malone for a kayak outing. No experience is necessary. One and two person boats will be available. There is no charge for the

trip but members are asked to register by calling Pelee Wings (519-326-5193) as it is limited to 15 participants. Meet at the Pelee Wings store at 4:45 pm. Locale for the trip will depend on weather and lake conditions. If inclement weather or high winds are occurring call Mike at the store to check if the trip is a go.

**July 21** – Canada South Land Trust Prairie Walk - Join a guided walk on the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve for a glimpse of summer flowering plants. Meet at 6:30 p.m. on Titcombe Road at the prairie entrance which is across Matchette Road from the Ojibway Park parking lot. Call Betty at 519-944-0825 to indicate you will be attending and for more information. Donation to the Land Trust's Legacy Fund is welcome. Refreshments following the walk.

**Aug. 10** – **ECFNC Members Outdoor Meeting** – Chimney Swifts in Colchester. Bring a lawn chair and help determine the size of this provincially threatened bird's roost. We will meet at 7:30pm to prepare for the flight show between 8:30-9:00pm. The chimney swift roost is located on the property of the Colchester Public School, located at the north west corner of Bagot Street and Sullivan Street in the Town of Colchester. The Chimney Swift is a provincially Threatened species. Visit <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/birdmon/chsw/about.jsp> for information on Ontario SwiftWatch.

**Aug. 28** – Ojibway Nature Centre - Nectar Festival. Learn about the sweet lives of hummingbirds, butterflies and other nectar lovers. Activities and treats for all ages. No admission fee. Sunday from 9:00 am-noon. Call Ojibway 519-966-5852 for details.

**Sept. 10** – **Peche Island Day** – This is a joint project of the Detroit River Canadian Cleanup, the City of Windsor, the Citizen's Environmental Alliance and the Essex County Field Naturalists Club. The event starts at 10am and ends at 3pm with free shuttle boat rides and tours of Windsor's island park. The last boat leaves the mainland at 1pm. Life vests are provided but participants are encouraged to bring their own. It is a garbage-free event. Volunteers are needed to help with tours, selling cold drinks and snacks and assisting participants on and off boats. Lunch is provided to volunteers. Call Karen at Ojibway 519-966-5852 if you would like to volunteer.

**Sept. 14** – **ECFNC Members Meeting** – Guest speaker: to be announced. Visit [www.ojibway.ca/ecfn.htm](http://www.ojibway.ca/ecfn.htm) for updates. Meet at the Windsor Airport Community Room, 7:30 pm.

**Sept. 17 and 18** - **Blue Kestrel Cafe at the Holiday Beach Hawk Festival** - The Blue Kestrel Cafe will be open on this weekend for the festival. The festival includes hawk watching, workshops, guided tours, banding, etc. Claire McAllister and Shirley Grondin will co-ordinate our Blue Kestrel Cafe. If you are able to help at the cafe, please call Claire McAllister at 519-254-1854.

**Oct. 12** – **ECFNC Members Meeting** – Guest speaker: Dan Mennill. Visit [www.ojibway.ca/ecfn.htm](http://www.ojibway.ca/ecfn.htm) for updates. Meet at the Windsor Airport Community Room, 7:30 pm.