

Essex County
FIELD NATURALISTS'
CLUB

VOL.7,NO.2
JUNE,1990

THE EGRET.





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CLUB NEWS UPDATE

The framed butterflies, first prize in our April raffle, were won by Sue McKenzie. Jeff Larson donated both pictures. The nature videos were won by Bonnie Foley. Linda Moore donated a Sweet William plant, and it was won by Allan Merrit. A total of \$166.00 was raised by the raffle.

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Tickets for the November raffle are now available. A loon print donated by the Print Makers Forum of Windsor will be the prize.

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Dinner tickets for our November dinner are available. Bonnie Foley is the chairperson for the dinner and Johanne Ranger will be assisting.

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Thank you to the leaders of this spring's field trips - Bill Langlois, Faye Langemaid, Bonnie Foley and Tom Hurst. Your contribution to the E.C.F.N.C. activities are appreciated.

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Sandwich West Woodlot - A citizens' group has been formed to protest against development in the woodlot. It is suggested that E.C.F.N.C. members can assist by requesting an environment assessment and tree survey of the woodlot. Write to Jim Bradley, Minister of the Environment, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario. M7A 1A2.

Contact the Sandwich West Municipal offices for details of upcoming rezoning meetings that will take place in the near future (likely late June).

* * * * *

Ruscom Shores Marsh - E.C.F.N.C. members have protested vigorously in the last month regarding the approval of drawings for a proposed golf course to be located on the Ruscom Shores Marsh. Members are urged to follow this issue closely. Re-zoning amendments are required and will be discussed at a future public meeting in Rochester Township, and protests may be made. Meanwhile, your continued pressure by letter writing and expressions of concern are invited so that the Ruscom Shores Marsh may be preserved and restored.

* * * * *

In the World Series of Birding in New Jersey, the Canadian team won the trophy as top out-of-state entry and third overall. The Canadians recorded 199 species in the one-day birdathon. The winners tallied 210 species. Members of the team included Paul Pratt and Tom Hince. Last year, the Canadian team finished fourth.

* * * * *

Little River Cleanup Crusade IV - Thursday, April 12, 1990

From Concord School (Windsor)

As part of our National Wildlife Week celebration in early April our grade 6 and grade 7 classes participated in Cleanup Crusade IV. We joined forces with other school in the Riverside community. The "Green Army" of students, teachers and par-

Laughing Kookaburra
and its distribution
in Australia

BIRDING DOWN UNDER

Jim McAllister



Australia has always been high on my wish list of places to see and when an old naturalist friend and his wife asked Claire and I to join them last July in Australia, we decided to go.

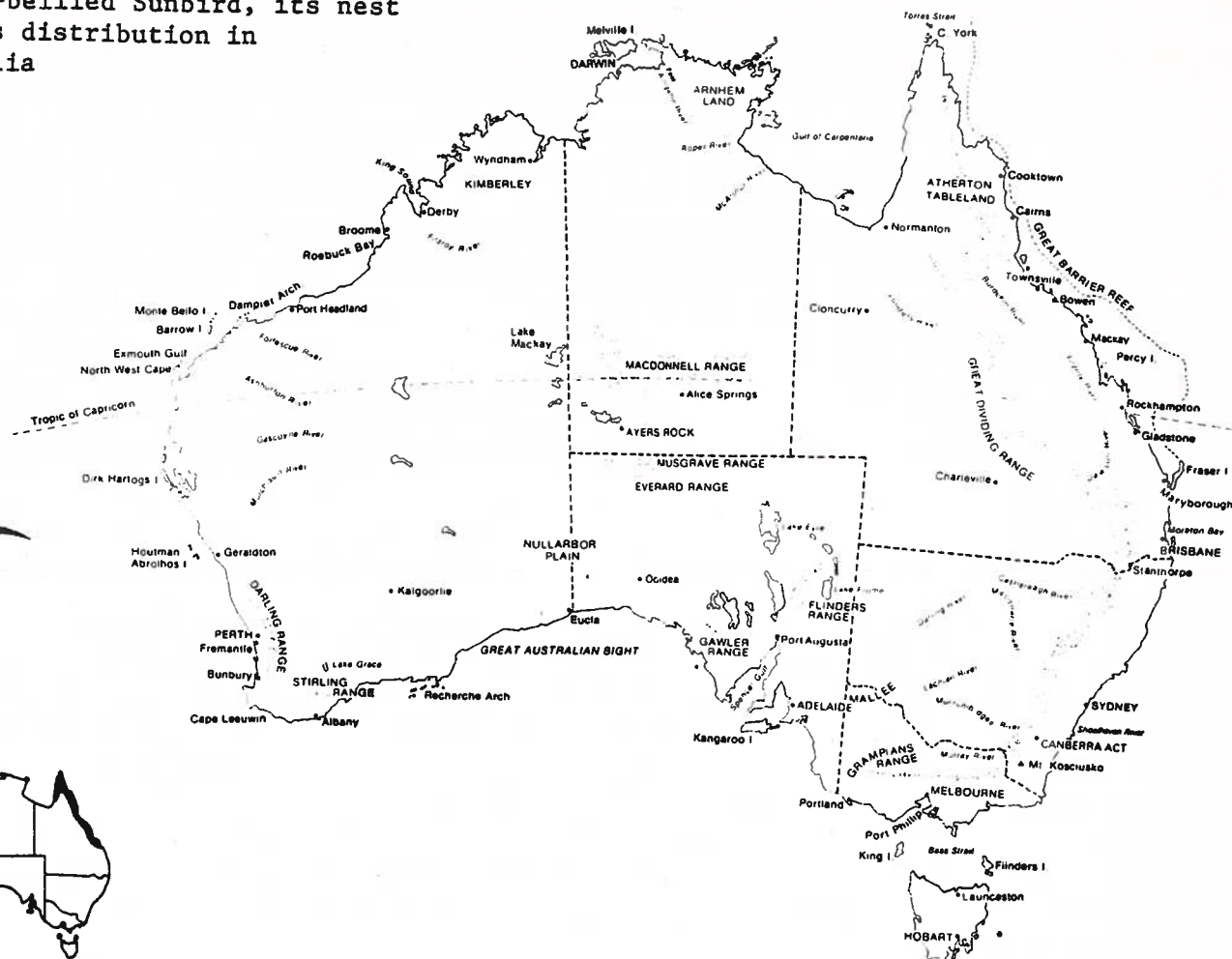
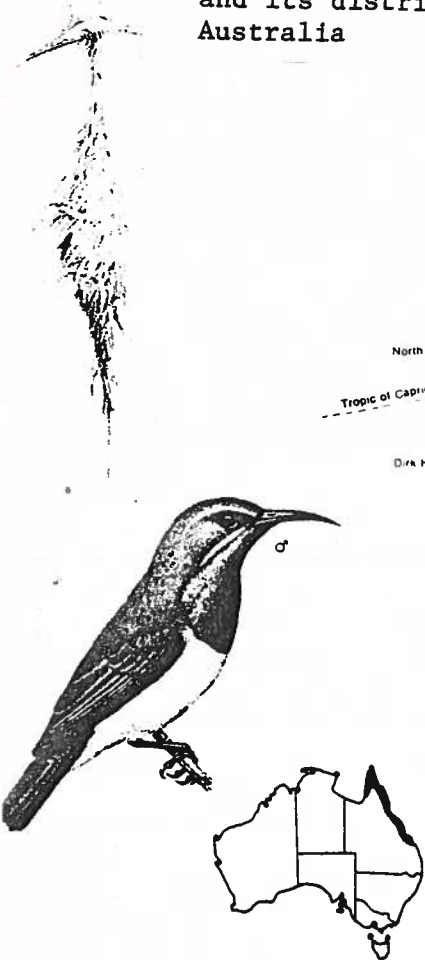
We both did a fair bit of reading on Australia but decided early on to confine our trip to the far north. It was their winter and dry season and the south (Sydney / Melbourne) can be quite cool and wet in July. In addition, about 80 % of Australia's 750 + bird species are found in Queensland (330 of Australia's species are endemic, that is, found nowhere else). We planned to explore Cape York and if there was time, fly to Darwin and visit Kakadu National Park.

We left Detroit at 4:30 p.m. July 1st. and arrived in Cairns, Queensland at 5:30 p.m. July 3rd. In all our trip lasted 36 hours including our overnight stay in Hawaii. We were both fortunate in that we experienced no jet lag either going or coming despite the ten hour time difference as we immediately adjusted our life cycles to local time.

For the first part of our sojourn we made Cairns the centre of our activities and made day trips to the different national parks around Cairns, visited large mangrove swamps, the Great Barrier Reef, the Atherton table lands and the "dry county". There is a long spine of mountains extending the whole length of the east coast where the rainforests are found - tropical in the north to temperate in the south. Moving inland from the coast, one passes over the mountains, and into the "dry country". This can vary from virtually empty expanses of very short scattered grasses amid the stone and rock and the ever present red soil (the dominant colour in Australia) to scattered gum and acacia trees. However, wherever there was standing water (a billabong) as there often is, there can be dense lush stands of gums (eucalyptus) and abundant bird life.

The coastal rainforests are quickly disappearing as the land is being cleared for lumber or farming (sugar cane mainly). It would appear that our Australian counterpart is no better than his Brazilian, Malaysian and probably Canadian counterpart. One area that we had gone to in order to see some of the more exotic local species had been totally cleared in just the couple of weeks since a local birder had last been here. Australian national parks are sometimes disappointing because many are small, often only including a small lake, historic site, a grove of unusual trees or such like with little thought given to preserving ecosystems. Additionally, they allow extensive commercial development.

Yellow-bellied Sunbird, its nest and its distribution in Australia



It was our good luck to meet an excellent local birder/naturalist who not only showed us so many spots in the area but also introduced us to birders from all over the country whose services we were to use later in our trip. All the birders we met were extremely knowledgeable and hospitable and would go to great lengths to ensure we saw all the birds and wildlife possible.

Travelling in Australia can be a challenge because of the enormous distances between cities and the generally high costs and poor roads. Air travel is quite expensive but somewhat cheaper, if arranged outside Australia. Car rentals too are expensive by North American standards but somewhat cheaper if arranged before entering the country.

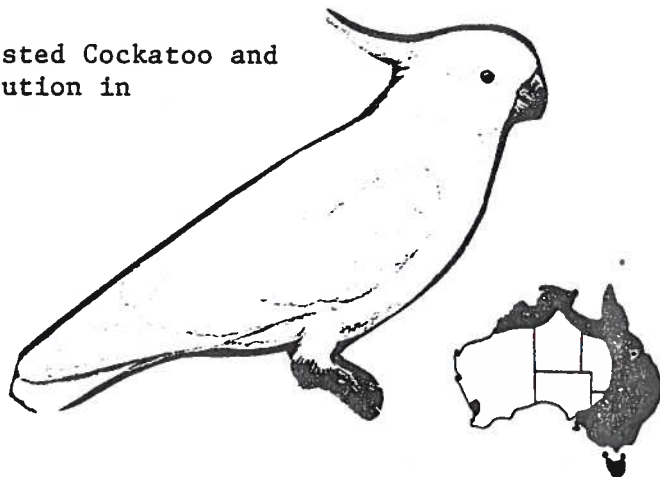
When our Cape York safari was ruled out because of the prolonged wet season we made the decision to drive across the outback to Darwin, a distance of almost 2,000 miles. It was not until our fourth day that we saw a live kangaroo although there were hundreds strewn along the shoulders of the highways, victims of a chance encounter with some terrified motorist or one of the many road trains that hurtle across this vast expanse at breakneck speed. Because this land is unfenced, numerous dead cattle were also found along with other wildlife like camels and dingos by the roadside. No effort is made, so it appears, to remove these car-

casses, leaving them to serve as a blunt reminder of the dangers of night driving in this not so empty land. Besides the emu which is quite wary, large lizards (2 metres plus), there is quite a variety of bird life and occasionally large concentrations of galahs, budgerigars, rosellas, cockatoos and finches.

Galah and its distribution in Australia



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and its distribution in Australia



As soon as we entered the Northern Territory there was a noticeable improvement in the highway but it wasn't till we reached Katherine that there is a noticeable change in the vegetation. This is about the southern limit of the tropical monsoon. From here north the vegetation becomes lush and the temperature is now hot. Even though we were in the tropics the entire time, the nights in the out back can be cool, even uncomfortably so. Eastern Queensland, although warm, experienced considerable cloudy weather. It wasn't till we reached Darwin that we experienced the warm tropical nights.

Darwin is a very new and lovely city, completely rebuilt after the devastating tropical storm in 1974. It is a totally planned city with a very stringent building code (eg., no nails are allowed in construction). It has a very extensive botanical gardens, miles of public beaches and a number of wildlife refuges of varied habitat with trails that yield many bird species and other wildlife. The mudflats at the mouth of Buffalo Creek teem with shorebirds of about 25 species like Greenshank, Bar-tailed Godwit, Eastern Curlew and Mongolian Plover plus a few familiar ones like Sanderling. Watch out for salt water crocs though. They are around and very dangerous.

Kakadu National Park, a huge tract of land leased from the aboriginal people, is a must for anyone travelling to northern Australia. It has some spectacular scenery, a variety of habitat and probably the largest concentrations of wildlife in Australia. This land is sacred to aborigines and has been a gathering place for thousands of years as the rock drawing at Nurulangi will attest. Yellow Waters is the best place to see crocodiles but it's the massive numbers of waterfowl and other bird life that make this place so spectacular. Pied Geese which are the only geese to roost in trees, Plumed Whistling-Ducks and Diving Whistling-Ducks are probably the

most common birds here. Wild horses and feral buffalo and pigs are quite common but very tough to spot. The latter two do considerable damage to the marsh with their extensive wallowing to the point they are being hunted with the hope of eliminating them both. Although we saw neither pigs nor buffalo, we did see their wallows and often heard the gunfire of the rangers.

As one moves about this wonderful country, one is struck by how unusual things are here. Whether it's the platypus with which everyone is familiar, the countless termite mounds some of which can reach heights of eight metres, the seven hundred species of gum trees, some of which flower along the trunk, the ubiquitous kangaroo or the incredible bird life, this is a county that has something exciting to offer to win the most jaded traveller. The snakes, most of which are quite poisonous, are another story.

Even though some of the birds are wide ranging, bird life seems to be more localized than in North America. Similar habitat just a few kilometres apart can offer quite a different assortment of birds than

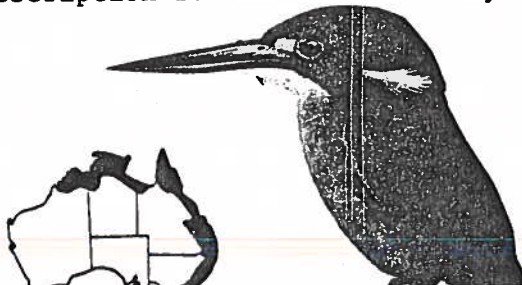
the one next to it. The bird life is amazing both for its variety and the exotic nature of the many different families. Australia has robins and warblers but they are nothing at all like ours. It has pigeons and doves, 24 species in all, but they are among some of Australia's most spectacular birds. They too have kingfishers, nine species plus 2 Kookaburras that range in size from a little bigger than a hummingbird to almost the size of a crow. There are 47 species of parrot-like birds (rosellas, corellas, cockatoos, etc.), plus 25 different races.

Honeyeaters are represented by 54 species, not counting their close relatives, the wattlebirds (5 species), or friarbirds (4 species). Whistlers, babblers, thornbills, bowerbirds, birds of paradise, fantails, cuckoo-shrikes, trillers, pittas, and fairy wrens are some of the other families of birds unique to this part of the world.

In all we saw 258 species of birds in the month we were in Australia, 250 of which were life birds. Birds, however, are only a part of the picture that is Australia. Add to this its other fauna, the unusual flora and the open, friendly people and you have a prescription for an ideal holiday. We're already talking about our next trip.



Rainbow Bee-eater
and its distribution
in Australia

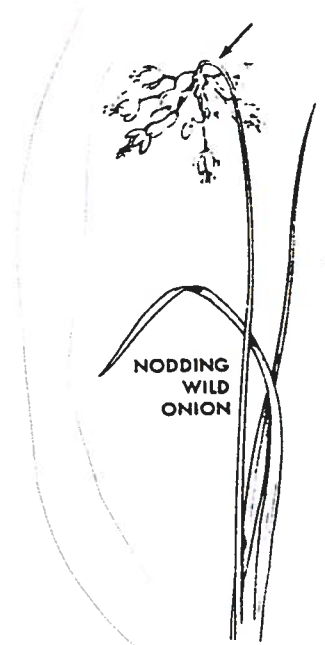


Azure Kingfisher and its
distribution in
Australia

PROVINCIAL RARE PLANTS OF THE STONE ROAD ALVAR AREA*, PELEE ISLAND

(Kamstra, et. al., 1988)

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1) <u>Allium cernuum</u> | Nodding Wild Onion |
| 2) <u>Asclepias purpurascens</u> | Purple Milkweed |
| 3) <u>Asclepias verticillata</u> | Whorled Milkweed |
| 4) <u>Aster shortii</u> | Short's Aster |
| 5) <u>Blephilia ciliata</u> | Downy Wood Mint |
| 6) <u>Camassia scilloides</u> | Wild Hyacinth |
| 7) <u>Campsis radicans</u> | Trumpet Creeper |
| 8) <u>Carex bicknellii</u> | Sedge |
| 9) <u>Carex davisii</u> | Sedge |
| 10) <u>Carex gracilescens</u> | Sedge |
| 11) <u>Carex leavenworthii</u> | Sedge |
| 12) <u>Carex meadii</u> | Sedge |
| 13) <u>Carex muskingumensis</u> | Sedge |
| 14) <u>Carex oligocarpa</u> | Sedge |
| 15) <u>Carya laciniosa</u> | Big Shellbark Hickory |
| 16) <u>Cerastium velutinum</u> | Mouse-eared Chickweed |
| 17) <u>Chaerophyllum procumbens</u> | Creeping Chervil |
| 18) <u>Chenopodium standleyanum</u> | Standley's Goosefoot |
| 19) <u>Cornus drummondii</u> | Rough-leaved Dogwood |
| 20) <u>Corydalis flavula</u> | Yellow Corydalis |
| 21) <u>Euonymus atropurpureus</u> | Burning Bush |
| 22) <u>Fraxinus quadrangulata</u> | Blue Ash |
| 23) <u>Geum vernum</u> | Spring Avens |
| 24) <u>Gleditsia triacanthos</u> | Honey Locust |
| 25) <u>Heuchera americana</u> | Alumroot |
| 26) <u>Hydrophyllum appendiculatum</u> | Appendaged Waterleaf |
| 27) <u>Lactuca floridana</u> | Wild Blue Lettuce |
| 28) <u>Leucospora multifida</u> | Conohea |
| 29) <u>Lythrum alatum</u> | Winged Loosestrife |
| 30) <u>Morus rubra</u> | Red Mulberry |
| 31) <u>Myosotis macrosperma</u> | Scorpion Grass |
| 32) <u>Panicum gattingeri</u> | Gattinger's Panicum Grass |
| 33) <u>Phacelia purshii</u> | Miami Mist |
| 34) <u>Ptelea trifoliata</u> | Hop Tree |
| 35) <u>Ratibida pinnata</u> | Gray-headed Coneflower |
| 36) <u>Rosa setigera</u> | Prairie Rose |
| 37) <u>Spiranthes magnicamporum</u> | Great Plains Ladies' Tresses |
| 38) <u>Thalictrum revolutum</u> | Waxy Meadow Rue |
| 39) <u>Thaspium barbinode</u> | Hairy-jointed Meadow Parsnip |
| 40) <u>Thaspium trifoliatum</u> | Meadow Parsnip |
| 41) <u>Triosteum angustifolium</u> | Yellow Horse Gentian |
| 42) <u>Valerianella umbilicata</u> | Corn-salad |
| 43) <u>Viola rafinesquii</u> | Rafinesque's Violet |



* (Field work conducted by the MNR extended beyond ERCA and FON property boundaries.)

*Provincial status as designated by Argus, et. al., 1989

REGIONALLY* RARE PLANTS OF THE STONE ROAD ALVAR AREA

(Kamstra et. al., 1988)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) <u>Agrimonia pubescens</u> | Soft Agrimony |
| 2) <u>Amelanchier humilis</u> | Low Juneberry |
| 3) <u>Anemonella thalictroides</u> | Rue Anemone |
| 4) <u>Arabis canadensis</u> | Sickle Pod |
| 5) <u>Arenaria lateriflora</u> | Grove Sandwort |
| 6) <u>Asplenium platyneuron</u> | Ebony Spleenwort |
| 7) <u>Calamagrostis inexpansa</u> | Northern Reed Grass |
| 8) <u>Campanula rotundifolia</u> | Harebell |
| 9) <u>Carex crawei</u> | Sedge |
| 10) <u>Carex sartwellii</u> | Sedge |
| 11) <u>Ceanothus herbacea</u> | Sedge |
| 12) <u>Crataegus pruinosa</u> | Hawthorn |
| 13) <u>Eleocharis compressa</u> | Rush |
| 14) <u>Euphorbia vermiculata</u> | Hirsute Spurge |
| 15) <u>Galium boreale</u> | Northern Bedstraw |
| 16) <u>Geranium carolinianum</u> | Carolina Cranesbill |
| 17) <u>Isanthus brachiatus</u> | False Pennyroyal |
| 18) <u>Lespedeza intermedia</u> | Ward-like Bush Clover |
| 19) <u>Myosotis verna</u> | Spring Scorpion Grass |
| 20) <u>Panicum flexile</u> | Wiry Witch Grass |
| 21) <u>Panicum philadelphicum</u> | Wood Witch Grass |
| 22) <u>Physocarpus opulifolius</u> | Ninebark |
| 23) <u>Polygala senega</u> | Seneca Snakeroot |
| 24) <u>Scutellaria parvula</u> | Small Skullcap |
| 25) <u>Senecio plattensis</u> | Prairie Ragwort |
| 26) <u>Symphoricarpos alba</u> | Snowberry |
| 27) <u>Triodanis perfoliata</u> | Venus's Looking Glass |
| 28) <u>Ulmus thomasii</u> | Slippery Elm |
| 29) <u>Verbena simplex</u> | Narrow-leaved Vervain |
| 30) <u>Vicia americana</u> | Purple Vetch |
| 31) <u>Zigadenus glaucus</u> | White Camass |

*Regional status as designated by M. Oldham, 1983

ESSEX COUNTY FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB
SIXTH ANNUAL DINNER

Serbian Community Centre
Kosovo Salon (entrance at rear of Centre)
6770 Tecumseh Road East
Windsor, Ontario

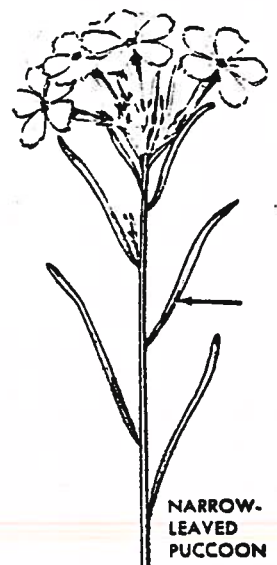
Saturday, November 10, 1990
Bar open 6:00 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m.

Guest Speaker * Auction * Door Prizes

\$20.00 Adult
\$12.50 Children under 12



DOWNY WOOD-MINT



NARROW-LEAVED
PUCCOON

A FIRST FOR ONTARIO
or
A WATERFOWL TRIP BETTER REMEMBERED AS THE DAY WE SAW THE 'F'-BIRD

Anne Barbour

Tom Hince was back at Point Pelee National Park where he belonged. The Friends of Point Pelee wasted no time in taking advantage of Tom's renowned birding skills to schedule a waterfowl tour on Saturday, March 17 with Tom as the guide. Since waterfowl, to me, are lumped together simply as "ducks and geese", this was, I thought, an excellent opportunity to learn a bit about this group of birds and likely to lengthen my life list.

After a week of recording-breaking weather in the 20°C. range, Saturday was forecast disappointingly as "low pressure system moving in from the southwest, temperatures dropping, and chance of rain." Oh well, they say that if the weather is disagreeable for people, it is likely to be good for birding. Today would certainly put that theory to the test.

The group was scheduled to meet in the Marsh Boardwalk parking lot at 8 a.m. Bonnie Foley and I arrived shortly before and had time to greet some other ECFNC friends who were also FOPP members: Margaret McDonald, Welma Walker, Gladys Fisher, Jim and Pat Watson. In all, 40 FRIENDS were gathered to brave the elements with our fearless leader, Tom.

After giving a quick lesson on the importance and the proper use of binoculars, while a Carolina Wren sang its heart out for us and Robins frolicked everywhere, Tom conscripted 3 volunteers to be in charge of extra scopes he had brought along. Next, we all trooped up to the top of the Boardwalk tower to begin our search.

Immediately, a group of ducks was spotted swimming nearby in the marsh, and Tom spoke about sexual dimorphism in ducks, pointing out male and female Buffleheads and a pair of Ringed-Neck Ducks, both lifers for me. The difference in size of these 2 species was obvious from a distance and Tom pointed out other characteristics to look for, including the fact that the Ringed-Neck Duck had no noticeable ring around its neck. We all agreed that it should more appropriately be named Ring-billed duck, for this marking stood out prominently when the bird was viewed through binoculars or scope.

As the ducks swam around to feed, Tom explained about the types of feeding preferences between dabbling and diving ducks, and how man's introduction of smelt to the Great Lakes in the 1940's had so immensely influenced flocks of Red-Breasted Mergansers in our area. Spring and fall records at Pelee prior to smelt introduction showed flocks of a hundred or so in size. After smelt introduction, flocks of Red-Breasted Mergansers, which love to eat smelt, increased into the thousands.

Some ducks taking flight gave Tom the opportunity to explain about differences in flight characteristics: the flap of the wing can be faster or slower, depending on the species, and the angle at which ducks fly above the horizon can also vary. Elsewhere, Blue-Winged Teal, Mallards, Red-Breasted Mergansers, Red-Winged Blackbirds and Cowbirds were spotted.

Shortly after, the bus arrived, and Tom could see that his students were quickly losing interest in waterfowl as they gazed longingly at the heated vehicle. He offered us some encouraging words about how important it was for birders not to coddle themselves, but to face right away, as we had done, the worst weather conditions, so that as the day wore on, things could only get better. "Yes, Tom" we all said, as we stampeded for the bus.

On the bus, Léa checked the attendance, then informed us of a slight change in plans. Our lunch destination had been planned as the Stoney Point Tavern, but when she had called the day before to warn the owners, she had been informed that their buffet wasn't served on Saturdays. Oh no! Would she and Dale have to make sandwiches for 40 people that night? Not if Dale could help it! He suggested she call the Lighthouse Cove Tavern, which proved to be a wise move, for they opened at 11:30 a.m. and would welcome us with open arms; besides, this assured Léa that Dale wouldn't be grumpy all day.

A lone Killdeer was spotted as we neared our first bus stop at the southeast corner of Hillman Marsh. We disembarked, only to be battered by the high winds off Lake Erie. Tom assured us that seeking protection on the lee side of the poplars, or any standing vegetation for that matter, was strictly acceptable birding practice. In fact, such common sense was highly respected in birding circles, and seemingly 'macho' behaviour like standing directly in the wind was looked down on for it was likely to result in a toppled scope. For our efforts here, we were able to list Canada Geese, a single Tundra swan, a Great-Blue Heron, and a magnificent Bald Eagle.

The bus then took us to the opposite side of the marsh, where we stepped down west of the bridge and walked quietly over to it, so as not to frighten off the incubating Great-Horned Owl from her nest in the top of a hollow tree trunk. Scopes were set pointing to this bird. The Bushnell scope offered a fine view of the top of the tree trunk and the bird's head peering out from above. However, there was no comparison when one saw the view afforded by Tom's new KOWA scope. The owl's head filled the entire eyepiece, with yellow eyes glaring directly at us, ear-tuft feathers standing straight up in obvious disapproval. What a KOWAbunga sight! Magnificent! Thoroughly warmed by this view despite the strong cold winds from the southwest, we boarded the bus to head for the Lighthouse Cove, and lunch.

We made our way to lunch via Wheatley Harbour where Common Merganser was added to the day's list. Everyone appreciated the long, relaxed lunch break, during which our devoted leader kept working, spotting Tree Swallows swooping over the neatly trimmed lawn and, upon seeing Herring Gulls with their pink legs, compared them to the smaller Ring-Billed Gulls with their yellow legs. Once refueled with a delicious lunch, topped off with such delicacies as homemade chocolate pecan pie and the chef's tour de force, pumpkin cake, we settled into the bus for a ride to St. Clair Wildlife Area in Kent County.

The bus followed the Thames River to St. Peter's, on what I had learned in my youth to call the 'river road'. Having been raised in Stoney Point, or more appropriately, Pointe-aux-Roches, and with farming relatives on my dad's side of the family still making St. Peter's their home, I quietly reminisced as we passed the familiar landscape on the twisting road. I pointed out to Bonnie the farm of my great-uncle Gerard Larsh who lives right next door to St. Peter's Roman Catholic church. The church is old, and as we passed on the road, we were afforded a view of its backside. I explained to Bonnie, as my Uncle Joe had explained to me long ago, that the building had faced the road when it was built. Back then, however, the road was located between the church and the Thames River. With years of erosion taking place, brought on by numerous spring floods and ice jams as well as increasing boat traffic, the road was gradually washed away, and a large berm now remained to contain the water that often, in spring, threatened to reclaim the marsh land it had formerly possessed and that now provided rich farmland for area farmers.

At the St. Clair Wildlife Area, the bus stopped once on the road so we could scan the farm fields on the east for waterfowl. A Northern Flicker was seen leaving the scene. Tom mentioned that these fields were often water-covered in the spring, to the benefit of waterfowl. The fields were drained now, but we spotted a Shoveler Duck, sleeping next to a muskrat hut, with its head tucked under its wing, American Wigeons flying in a tight group with white patches showing on the males, and American Black Ducks, also flying, showing a silvery underside to their wings. In the farmyard nearby, 2 Mute Swans were noticed, which our leader assured us could be counted on the day's list, introduced or not.

Once back on the bus, we drove to the far end of the road, near Lake St. Clair. Some tired participants decided to forego this final spot, and as the rest of us tromped through the mud to the dike, braving a gale-like wind from the southwest, I'm sure that the thought passed through more than one person's mind that the bus was the better place to be. However, we hadn't come to sit on the bus, so why not make the best of it, right? One never knows what one is going to see, right? Stick this out and it will all be over soon, right? All these thoughts, and more, ran through my mind. The reward was worth the effort.

Out in the shelter of the cat-tails of the marsh, more ducks were swimming, as well as my third lifer for the day: a Pied-Billed Grebe. Its smaller size and distinct head-shape helped to distinguish it from the ducks. As we watched these birds swimming, Tom sighted a buteo hawk soaring far out over the marsh, large wings now flapping as it faced into the wind and hovered, a trait that is seen executed by the Rough-Legged Hawk. As it dipped and rolled in the wind, however, a white band at its back end was obviously visible, so of course, my immediate thought was "It's a Harrier." But, watching it longer, something seemed to me wrong with the white patch: it wasn't in quite the right place.

Meanwhile, Tom had been able to focus his KOWA scope on the hawk, then stood up and continued observing the bird's behaviour, never taking his eyes off of the bird as it soared, then dipped and flapped. Tom drew in a breath and quietly said "You have just witnessed something truly amazing. The first sighting in Ontario of a Ferruginous Hawk." We waited for Tom to say more, but he was speechless. This being the first time I had ever seen Tom lost for words, I realized how important this sighting had been. With the return of his vocal abilities, Tom explained that this was a western bird, sightings of which had been made over the last few years in Michigan, so experts had been anticipating an Ontario sighting soon. Someone in the group suggested to Tom that perhaps today's weather conditions had been partly responsible for the bird's occurrence. You could see the light go on in Tom's eyes. Of course! The strong southwest wind which was making our eyes water had more than likely blown the hawk this way. Once across the Great Lakes systems, the hawk didn't want to cross the open water again, or couldn't, and would likely follow the St Clair River northward until the wind died down or it found a narrow point that would allow it to cross westward again.

Then Tom began enumerating the characteristics he had seen through his KOWA scope: first the rufous flash to the tail's edge which had made him think immediately of a Red-Tailed Hawk; then the white patch that was set too far back for a Northern Harrier; the pinkish colour of the legs held up against the white body; the large size of the bird even at such a distance; the way the bird hovered facing into the wind, as only its close counterpart, the Rough-Legged Hawk is seen to do around here. All of this added up to the highlight of the whole trip. In fact, it would no doubt be for me, the highlight of the birding season. I was convinced of the authenticity of this sighting; the group was convinced; but it remains to be seen if birding officials who rule on such claims could be convinced.

Feeling very smug about having had the good fortune to be a part of this momentous occasion, I boarded the bus, mentally noting that I must write this bird in on my life list in red ink. Settling drowsily back on the bus seat, listening to the hum of conversation reiterating what had just been seen to those who had missed the 'F-bird', I thought how wonderful it was that the weather had been so disagreeable for people. Yes, the theory had definitely withstood the test!

THE BUTTERFLY AND THE BEE

Author unknown

Once upon a time a handsome honey bee
Fell in love with a butterfly,
He met in a tulip tree.
He said "I love you madly
and want to share your life.
Let's fly away to gether,
"Will you be my wife?"

She shook her head in sorrow,
"No No No", cried she,
"For I'm a monarch's daughter
And you're just a son of a bee."

Submitted by - James M. Meredith.

SANDWICH WEST WOODLOT, APRIL 8, 1990

Russ Munro



Trout Lily
Erythronium americanum

The trip to the woodlot on Sunday proved to be a rather pleasant experience for the members who were able to resist the many other activities around Windsor. Our thanks to Bonnie Foley for arranging the occasion - Bonnie has been actively resisting the developers (and the township council) who seem intent on making the area another subdivision.

After gathering beside the home of Mrs. Kavanaugh, one of the owners of the property assembly, we started off across the field some fifteen strong to look for signs of spring. The willow shrubs were the first to give an indication with their already opening pussies and mustard was well advanced with its circle of basal leaves.

As field gave way to woods we saw an Eastern Phoebe flitting ahead of us, and Paul Pratt reminded us to watch for the tail-bobbing characteristic of this grey-brown flycatcher. Our trail followed along the deeply dredged canal, and as we looked across to see tall tulip trees with their buds already swelling, we picked out a little Winter Wren darting from one hiding place to another as it tried to keep ahead of us.

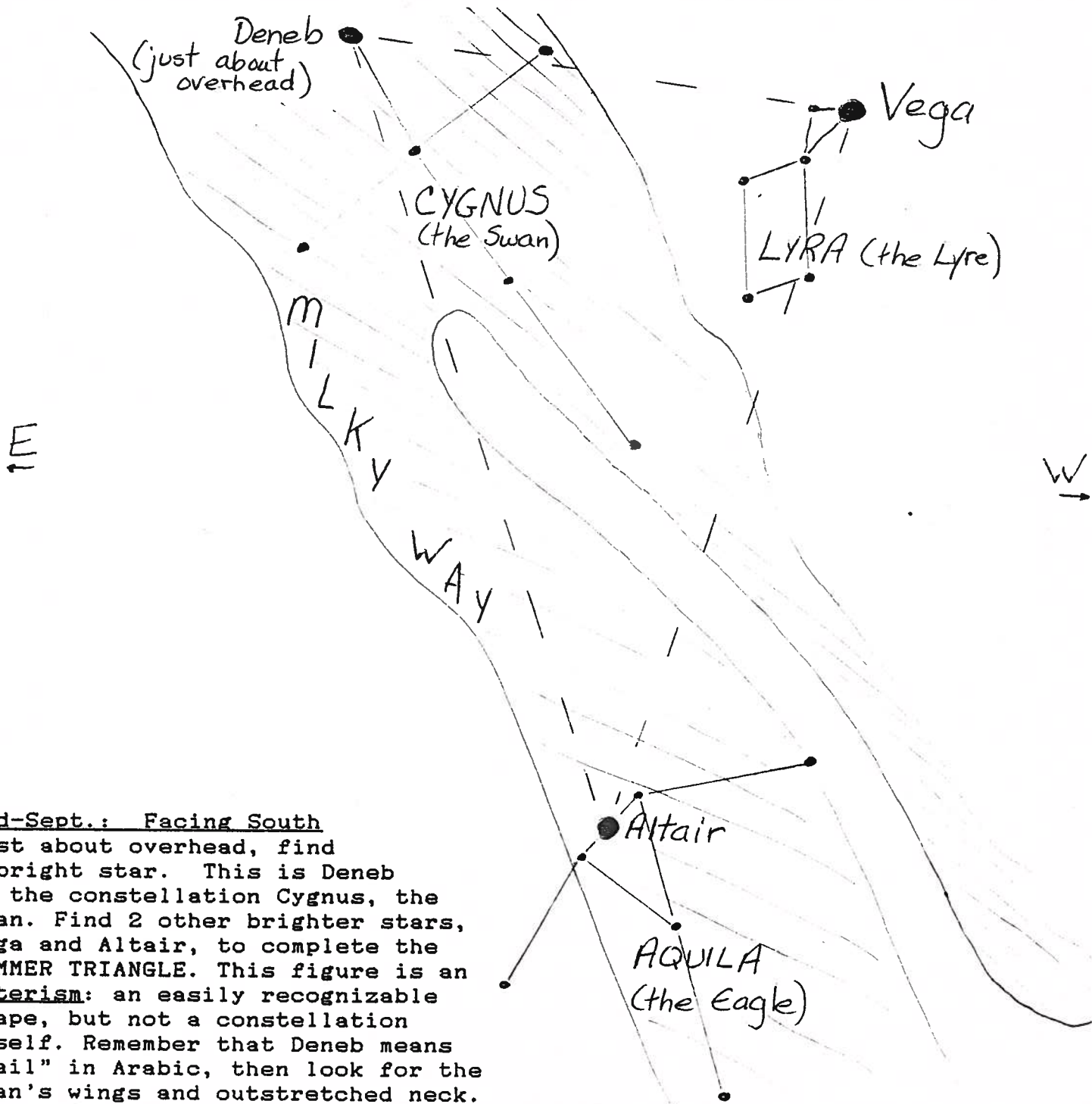
At the old earth-covered dump, the prize of the day awaited us. We saw four Eastern Bluebirds. Two of them, a male and a female, stayed around for some time while we enjoyed a close examination. On our way back, we almost lost our president Tom Hurst, in a posthole. We stopped to look at several Eastern Garter snakes and were surprised by a pair of Ring-necked Pheasants that took off at our feet. At the parking lot of Brunet Park, we saw a raccoon looking out of a drain pipe at us.

To complete a splendid spring afternoon tour, we stopped along the old sidewalk to see trout lilies with their seemingly rain stained leaves already developed and their flower pods ready to open. Again, our thanks to Bonnie and to Mrs. Kavanaugh for making it all possible.

LOOKING UP¹³

with Anne Barbour

at the SUMMER TRIANGLE & its BIRDS



Mid-Sept.: Facing South

Just about overhead, find a bright star. This is Deneb in the constellation Cygnus, the Swan. Find 2 other brighter stars, Vega and Altair, to complete the SUMMER TRIANGLE. This figure is an asterism: an easily recognizable shape, but not a constellation itself. Remember that Deneb means "tail" in Arabic, then look for the swan's wings and outstretched neck.

Notice that the swan flies parallel to the Milky Way. For Aquila, the Eagle, remember that Altair is the "eye" of the eagle, & you will visualize Aquila flying northward, toward Cygnus. The brightest star of the Summer Triangle is Vega. This Arabic word means "the swooping one" or "the descending one", a name that, in ancient times was associated with raptors like eagles, vultures, or falcons.

WHY NOT A WILDFLOWERING BIG DAY?

Kent Glauser

Many members of the Essex County Field Naturalists' have enjoyed a birding big day, but perhaps not very many have attempted, or even thought of attempting, a wildflowering big day. It can be just as enjoyable. The rules are the same: just list as many species as you can identify, by sight or by sound, in one day. Well, almost the same. I doubt that anyone has ever identified a flower by its sound. That advantage goes to the birders.

In another sense though, the advantage goes to the flower listers, since they don't have to get up at 12:01 a.m. and stay on the job until 12:00 midnight listening for the calls of owls and other birds. Without having to give up much sleep, the wildflower lister can begin the quest at daybreak and end it at dusk. Unless, of course, one wants to sacrifice a few hours of sleep to search for blossoms with a flashlight.

Since I am very reluctant to give up any of my "Zs", it was almost daylight before I struggled out of bed on July 24, 1985 for my first solo attempt at a wildflowering big day. After a huge and hearty breakfast—something else I am very reluctant to give up—I packed enough food in the cooler for two more huge and hearty meals and was then ready to begin thinking about listing some wildflowers. As the reader can tell, I have a very well-defined set of priorities. (Doubtless, Paul Fratt will never take me along on one of his birding big days.)

The first area I examined was my own yard and adjacent fields, which, to my surprise, yielded thirty species. Then it was off to Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Crane Creek, and Magee Marsh on the south shore of Lake Erie.

In this area I found several species in bloom that I had expected to

find without a problem, such as the swamp rose mallow, American germander, square-stemmed monkey-flower, Indian hemp or common dogbane, and agrimony. Also in bloom were the not-too-common pale touch-me-not and the green-headed coneflower, which may have been blooming earlier than normal. (Please notice in your flower books the difference between the pale touch-me-not and the much more common spotted touch-me-not.)

Indeed, I found several species during the day that seemed to me to be blooming earlier than usual. Perhaps their blooming times were being effected by the very warm spring we had. Anyone interested in phenology should have had an enjoyable year in 1985, keeping track of blooming schedules that were warped by the strange weather in the Great Lakes area. The late Wilfred Botham, the beloved, grand man of amateur field botany in Ontario and compiler of the book entitled Plants of Essex County, reported a list of almost 200 plants that yielded record early flowering dates. Later in the year, however, many species that normally begin blooming in mid-August through September were behind schedule, possibly because of the much cooler than normal June and the lack of any protracted hot spell in the summer.

Local birders describe the bird migration as being similarly all askew. And, after talks with local butterfly researcher, Doris Stifel, and the naturalists at Point Pelee, I learned that even the famous Monarch butterfly migration was unusual in 1985, with big numbers coming through our area both earlier and later than normal.

After leaving the trail at Magee Marsh, the day became a race westward, chasing the sun, a race that was to take me to Wildwood Preserve Metropark, Oak Openings Metropark, Irwin Prairie Preserve, Michigan's Bird Lake, Lost Nation Conservation Area, and many back roads of southern Michigan.

At Wildwood, several prairie species were added to the list including

dense blazing star, Culver's root, and flowering spurge.

Undoubtedly, the most outstanding find of the day was the small purple fringed orchis (Habenaria psycodes Syn: Platanthera psycodes) discovered in the woods at Oak Openings. It was highlighted by a slowly moving ray of sun that beamed through the canopy of leaves above. With uncanny timing, the moving shaft of light had begun to illuminate the flower at just the right moment to coincide with my arrival. It seemed as though someone had directed a spotlight on this gem, so that I could not miss its rare loveliness. Taking advantage of the opportunity being presented to me, I took a few minutes away from my listing chore to record on film, in natural light, this exquisite moment in the day. Within seconds after I had satisfied the shutterbug in me, the shaft of light moved beyond the flower, its job being done for the day. The cloak of regal light, no longer needed to bedizen a queen, was fragmented by the jagged edges of ferns and fell in tatters as a mottled pattern upon the brown plainness of the forest leaf litter. I could judge by the position of the dense foliage above that my little orchid was not likely to be highlighted again that day.

At Irwin Prairie I was thrilled at the sight of my favorite, though not uncommon wildflower, the cardinal flower. The red, red, red of that flower is so brilliant it will etch your Kodachrome. I have a fondness for red in nature, whether it be red flowers, birds, leaves, berries, rocks, or sunrises and sunsets. What the devotee of Titian is to the art world, I am to the world of nature photography and nature appreciation.

A drive of about one hour took me from Irwin Prairie to Bird Lake in Michigan. Here an enjoyable canoe ride around the shores of the lake netted several new species, among them the marsh or bedstraw bellflower (Campanula aparinoides), water plantain, forget-me-not, and the aquatic species, eel-grass or tape-grass (Vallisneria americana). But, I missed

the delicate brook lobelia that I had found there in July of the year before.

It was late afternoon and the sun felt hot, yet delicious, on my bare back as I paddled toward the dock. Even with nothing on but my shorts and shoes, I had worked up a good sweat. Big day or no big day, it was time for a swim. I suppose I could have listed more flowers for the day if I had not taken time for a swim, but one should never reject the opportunity when it presents itself. A good swim is a celebration of life that transcends almost any other summertime activity. The flowers will be there again next year, and can be enjoyed by nearly everyone, even those who must be confined to an automobile or a wheelchair. But one never knows if, when next summer rolls around, one will be physically able to experience the cooling, invigorating, yet relaxing feel of a good long swim.

It was nearly 7:00 p.m. before I even got into the Lost Nation Conservation Area, where I knew I could increase my list to a number that would surpass all my expectations. The count stood at over 160 species. White wild licorice, Indian pipe, tall sunflower, and purple bush clover were added during walks through woods and open hillsides. Saving the best area until last, I began a walk down a low lying gravel road with wet prairies and streams on either side. The number now climbed fast; I quickly added prairie loosestrife, virgin's-bower, shrubby St. Johnswort, shrubby cinquefoil, bunchflower, water speedwell, watercress, and vetchling. It was getting dark when I spotted some tiny purple blooms on the far bank of a small stream. At first, I couldn't quite make out what they were, but as I focused my binoculars on the fragile flowers a pleased smile spread across my face. The identifying white spots on the throats of the flowers confirmed the presence of the brook lobelias that I had missed along the borders of Bird Lake. I was delighted to learn of one more place where I could find this shy maiden of the banks and share her charms with

friends in the future.

Then it was dark, too dark to continue my search; although, I was sure I could have found still more species with just a few more moments of light. A check of my list before starting for home revealed that I had identified 197 species. A smug glow of satisfaction came over me. I thought of my heroes of exploration and discovery, among them Lewis and Clark, La Salle, John Charles Fremont, Captain Cook, Jacques-Yves Cousteau, and the modern astronauts. In a miniscule proportion, I had experienced their feelings of satisfaction upon completing something that very few people have done before.

This big day experience has been so exhilarating, I thought as I drove home, that I should try it again in a year or two. Next time, I'll choose a day in early August when there are more species in bloom, so composing a list of over 200 will be a cinch. Unless, of course, it's a hot day and I decide to go for a long, refreshing, late-afternoon swim.

Author's note: On August 7, 1989, my friend Bob Atkinson and I did a big day while covering much of the same territory I had in 1985. We shattered the 200 barrier and ended the day with a list of 209 species. You guessed it; it was a cool day.

ESSEX COUNTY FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB
 STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1989
 COMPILED BY NELS EASSEN

| RECEIPTS | | |
|-------------------------|----|------------|
| LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS | | \$1,000.00 |
| FEDERAL GRANT | | 200.00 |
| REGULAR MEMBERSHIPS | | 2,408.00 |
| BANQUET | | 1,401.83 |
| MISCELLANEOUS | | 1,741.14 |
| | | \$6,750.97 |
| DISBURSEMENTS | | |
| DONATIONS | \$ | 205.00 |
| INSURANCE | | 225.00 |
| EGRET PRINTING SUPPLIES | | 1,073.07 |
| POSTAGE, MISCELLANEOUS | | 1,224.32 |
| BANQUET | | 1,181.00 |
| RENTALS | | 293.00 |
| TELEPHONE | | 120.23 |
| BANK SERVICE CHARGES | | 55.51 |
| | | 4,377.13 |
| | | \$2,373.84 |

ESSEX COUNTY FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB
 STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND MEMBERS EQUITY
 AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1989
 COMPILED BY NELS EASSEN

| ASSETS | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| CASH ON HAND | | \$ 50.00 |
| CIBC BANK DEPOSIT ACCOUNT #1 | | 2,303.20 |
| CIBC BANK DEPOSIT ACCOUNT 2 | | 1,000.00 |
| CIBC BANK DEPOSIT ACCOUNT CURRENT | | 2,064.43 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | | \$5,417.63 |
| MEMBERS EQUITY | | |
| TRUST FOR LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS | | \$1,000.00 |
| TRUST FOR PRESERVATION OF HABITAT | | 2,303.20 |
| BALANCE JANUARY 1, 1989 | \$3,043.79 | |
| ADD SURPLUS OF RECEIPTS OVER | | |
| DISBURSEMENTS PER ATTACHED | 2,373.84 | |
| | \$5,417.63 | |
| LESS AMOUNTS SHOWN ABOVE TRUSTS | 3,303.20 | |
| | | 2,114.43 |
| TOTAL MEMBERS EQUITY | | \$5,417.63 |

Camp PPNP. Long wkend may - 2²⁰ nights F.S., 12 people

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Hotline 252-BIRD
E.R.C.A. 776-5209
Ojibway 966-5852
Point Pelee 322-2365

- June 13 - E.C.F.N.C. Monthly Meeting
Topic: Nature 1990
- June 16 - E.C.F.N.C. Field Trip *9am. Learn. Dodge. Historical*
Pelee Island Field Trip
- June 17 - E.C.F.N.C. Field Trip
Ruscom Shores Marsh
Meet at St. Joachim Post Office at 3:00 p.m.
- June 23 - E.C.F.N.C. Field Trip
Visit the Stewart's Woodlot on River Canard.
Bring waterproof footwear, and insect repellent.
Meet at the Ranta Marina on the Detroit River, Highway 18
near the North Side Road at 9:00 a.m.
Contact: Lisa Stewart at 726-5143
Leader: Randy Stewart
- June 27 - E.C.F.N.C. Executive Meeting
- July 5 - Reptiles and amphibians workshop
Ojibway Nature Centre - 7:30 p.m.
- July 6,7 - Bat Weekend at the Pinery Park
York University researchers will be working around large
lights in the evening at the Pinery.
Visitors are welcome.
- July 7 - Reptiles and Amphibians Field Trip
- Aug. 16 - Warbler Migration Workshop
Ojibway Nature Centre - 7:30 p.m.
- Aug. 18 - Warbler Migration Field Trip
- Aug. 31 - Owl Prowl
Devonwood C.A. - 8:30 p.m.
- Sept. 6 - Fall Bird Migration
Ojibway Nature Centre - 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 8 - Fall Bird Migration Field Trip
- Sept. 12 - E.C.F.N.C. Monthly Meeting
Marlborough Community Centre, 7:30 p.m.
Topic: Frederick Law Olmstead, designer of urban parks
including New York's Central Park and Detroit's Belle Isle.
Speaker: Faye Langmaid
- Sept. 14 - Weekend Raptor Romp
Contact: Ojibway Nature Centre
- Sept. 15 - E.C.F.N.C. Field Trip *8 people x 2*
Explore one of the islands in Lake Erie, weather permitting.
Contact: Betty Learmouth (944-2292) for details and reservations.
Spaces are limited. Cost will be approximately \$50.00



- Sept. 14 - Festival of Hawks
 - 16 6:00 p.m. Friday through Sunday
 Holiday Beach C.A.
- Sept. 20 - Learn Your Mushrooms
 Ojibway N.C. - 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 22 - Fall Bird Migration Field Trip
- Sept. 23 - Learn Your Mushrooms Field Trip
- Sept. 26 - E.C.F.N.C. Executive Meeting
- Sept. 28 - Weekend Raptor Romp
 Contact Ojibway Nature Centre
- Oct. 5 - Owl Prowl
 Maidstone C.A. - 8:00 p.m.
- Oct. 10 - E.C.F.N.C. Monthly Meeting
 Topic: Tropical birding and habitat research on
 Mangrove lagoons in Oaxaca State, Mexico
 Speaker: Mike Malone



ESSEX HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The June 27, 1990 meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Kinsmen's Field House, behind the arena and off Talbot Street in Essex. The speaker will be Jeff Larson and the topic is attracting hummingbirds.

Continued from page 1

ents attacked those sections of the Little River park that have large amounts of human debris.

The result was an impressive pile of junk! Once again we pulled out car tires (36 of them), two bicycles, assorted parts of automobile bodies - door, fender, bumper and wheel rims, 10 metres of steel cable, two plastic children's pools, and a variety of plastic items. This community effort was successful and very rewarding.

* * * * *

Earth Day

To celebrate Earth Day many students, parents and staff members returned to Little River on Saturday, April 21, 1990, to continue what was started ten days before. We worked just as hard this time but were able to celebrate afterward thanks to Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI). Mr. Sasso and Mr. Pare from BFI have always donated work gloves for our cleanup efforts. This year was something special°

BFI donated 200 pairs of work gloves, two large trash containers, an Earth Day t-shirt for every volunteer, enough pop and pizza for all of us and a band complete with a gas generator for their electric amplifiers.

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Field Naturalists' Club, P.O. Box 3421, Tecumseh, Ontario. N8N 3C4
Address correction requested.

