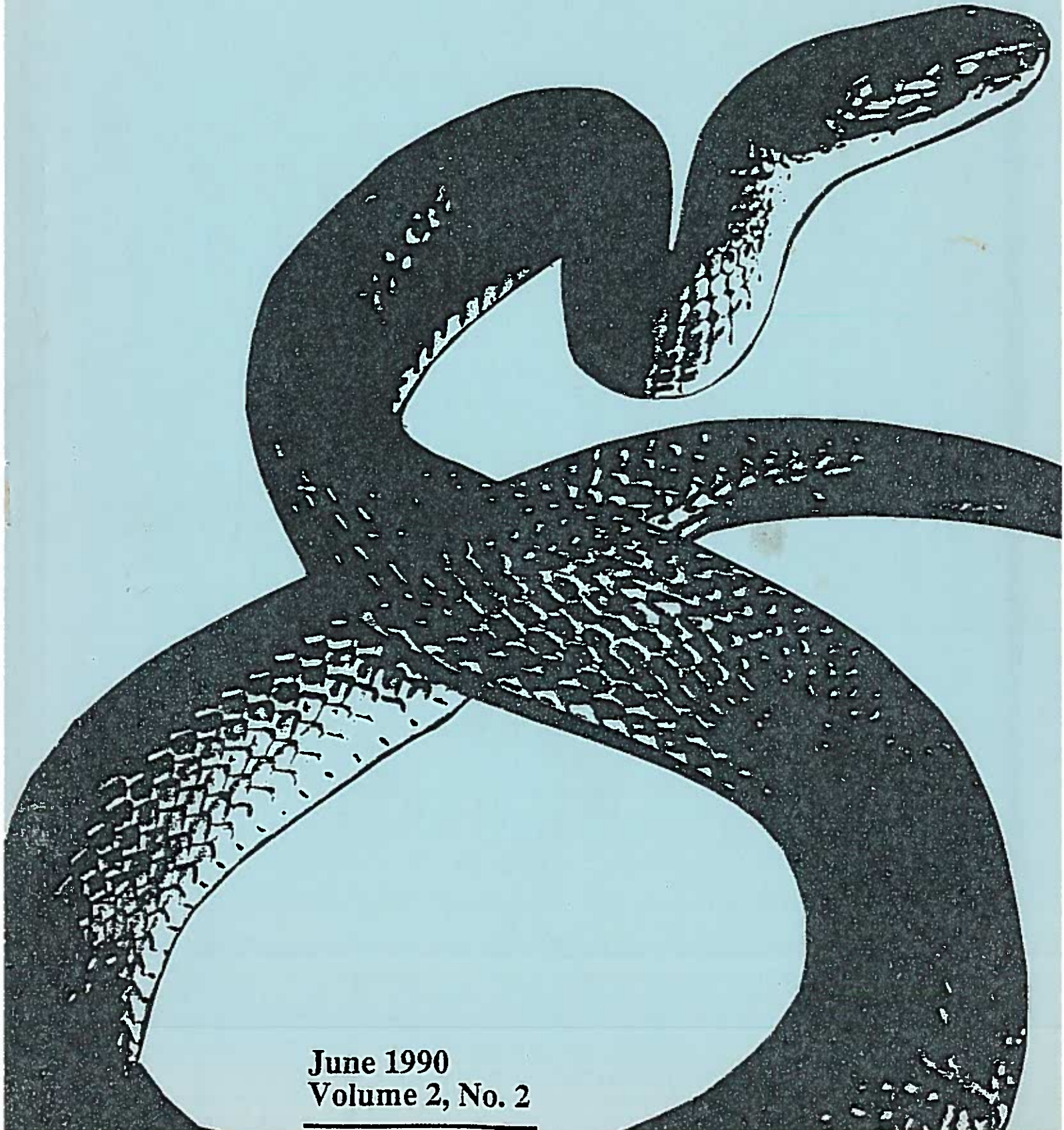


JUNIOR EGRET

SUMMER EDITION



June 1990
Volume 2, No. 2

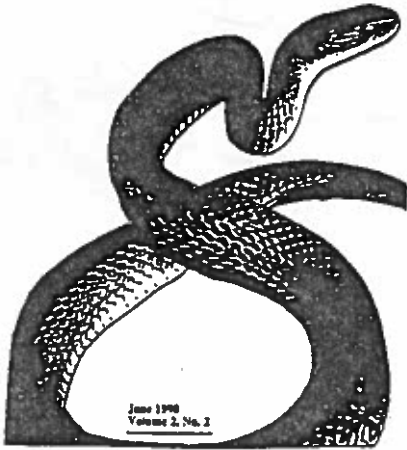


CONTENTS

- pg 1 Nature Road Games
- pg 2 Snakes They're Great
by Shannon Managhan
- pg 8 Meadow Vole Maze
- pg 9 Concord School and
the Environment
by Stephanie Hayne
- pg 10 Snakes and Shovels
by Bev Wannick
- pg 12 Pool Panic
by Carl Szalich
- pg 14 The Living Tree
by Bev Wannick

JUNIOR EGRET

SUMMER EDITION



COVER PICTURE

The Eastern Blue Racer is rarely seen in Ontario. It can be found in the grasslands, and woodlands of Pelee Island. In this issue of the Junior Egret we celebrate the snake!



FROM THE BIRD'S BEAK

J.E. Talks About Turtle Mania

The smash hit Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles has brought fame to our friends, the turtles. Turtle mania has struck! Everyone wants one!

Turtle sales in pet stores are booming. Children are hunting their local marshes, and ditches to find turtles to be their pets. All of this hoop-a-la is causing turtles to suffer.

Turtles living purely on turtle food sold in pet stores eventually die. The turtles need the variety in their diet they would have living out in the wild. Turtle pet food does not provide turtles with all the nutrients they need to stay healthy. When pet store turtles are taken from their homes in the south to become a pet store turtle, these reptiles are no longer part of the areas natural ecosystem. They grow fewer in number, and could even become extinct in areas where too many turtles are taken.

And let's face it, with fewer natural areas left for turtles to live, and the pollution of their habitat makes survival hard enough.

A world without turtles would certainly be a sad place. Help the turtle by telling your friends not to keep them as pets. And ask them to spread the word to their friends so turtles won't go the way of the dinosaur, and become only a memory.



Going on Vacation can be lots of fun, but sometimes the drive can be long and boring.

Nature Road Games

Here are some games J.E. and his family like to play on a long trip.



FIRST AND LAST

Start by choosing a nature subject, for example, mammals.

The first person starts by naming a mammal such as Bat. The second person now must give the name of a mammal starting with the last letter in the word, Bat. He or she could say Tiger. Now the next person must name a mammal which starts with r. The same mammal cannot be named twice. Keep going until you run out of mammals, then start over again with a new nature category.

NATURE SING-A-LONG

Change the wording of your favorite travel song into a nature sing-a-long.

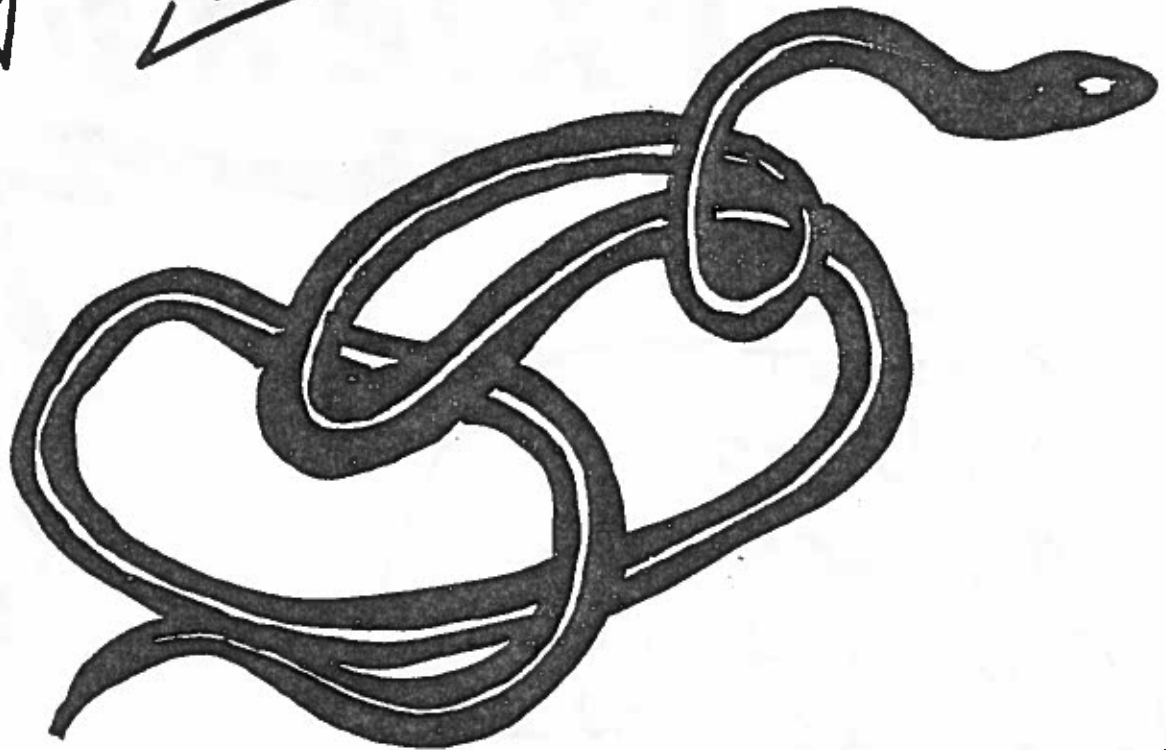
For example:

Old Macdonald's Farm, can be changed to Old insert your name had a marsh. e i e i o
And in the marsh there were some frogs e i e i o
With a croak, croak here...
Keep adding your own marsh, or forest, or prairie wildlife and their calls.

BIRD COUNT

Every time someone spots a bird flying by, or sitting on a tree, that person gets a point. Whoever gets the most points at the end of the trip or whatever length of time you wish, wins.

SHAKES



They're

!!

GREAT

!!

"Please"

~~~~~  
be our

**FRIENDS**

Psssst  
Hi Dudes!  
My name is  
Charlie. I'm a  
fox snake and I  
live in Essex County.  
Let me tell you a little  
bit about us  
**SNAKES**  
.....



Hey  
CHARLIE!!



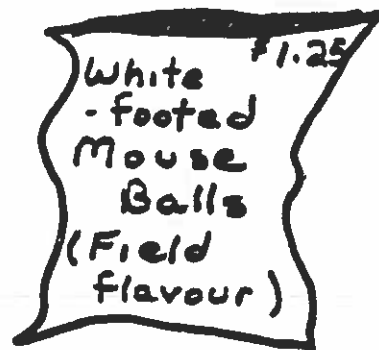
Okay...  
So let me  
tell you a  
few facts

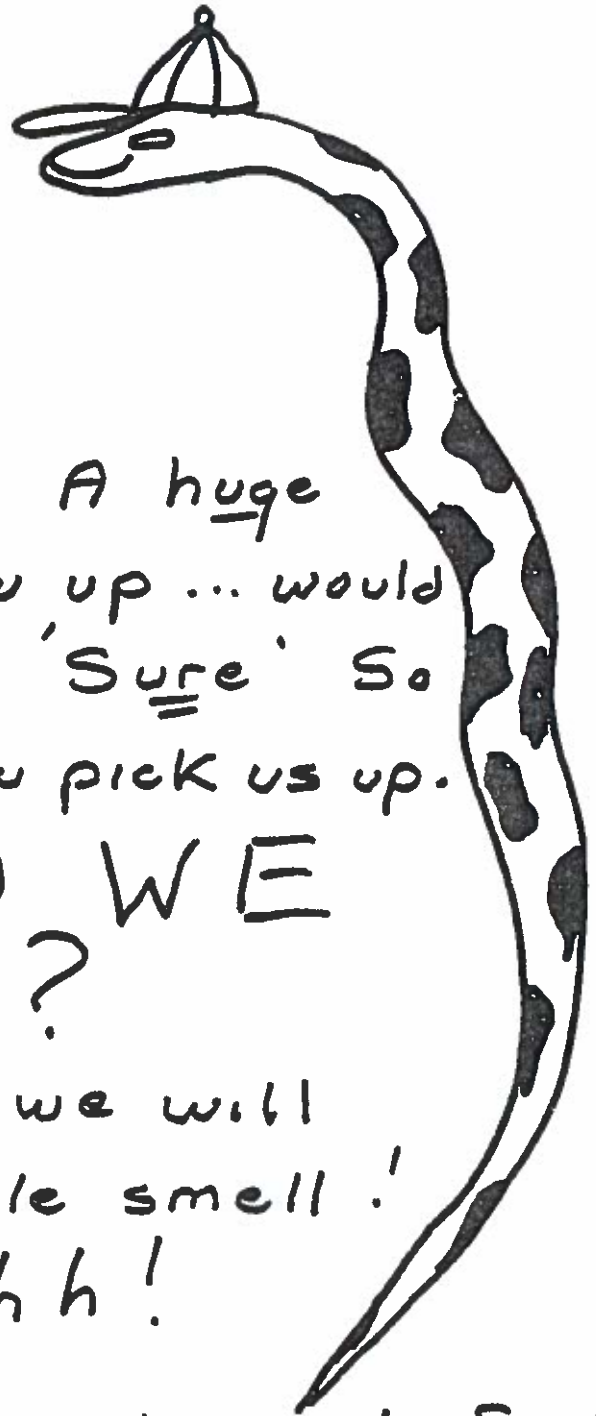
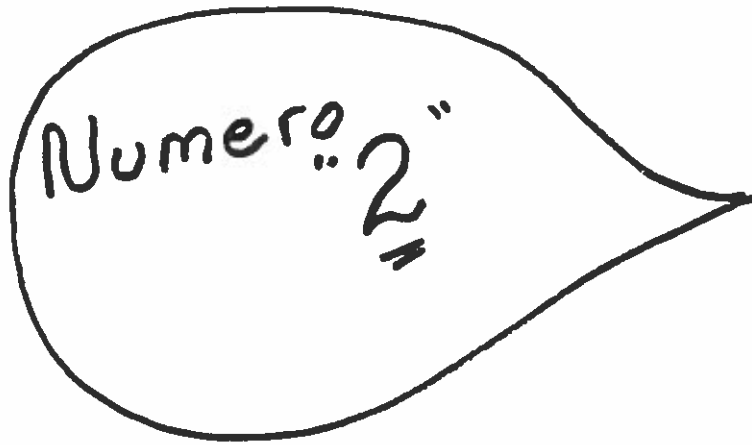
NUMBER "1"

We're much more afraid of  
you, than you are of us! We  
just want to hang out, sleep  
awhile and munch out on a  
few mice, frogs, you know  
- Hey - "when you got the  
munchies - nothing else will



Mmm do "!!"





Just imagine .... A huge giant picking you up ... would you be afraid? 'Sure' So are we when you pick us up.

## WHAT DO WE DO ?

- In some cases we will release a horrible smell !

Aaqqhhh!

(Don't forget - we're petrified)

- And yes, sometimes we will also bite - WOULD N'T YOU ??







# BUT . . . .

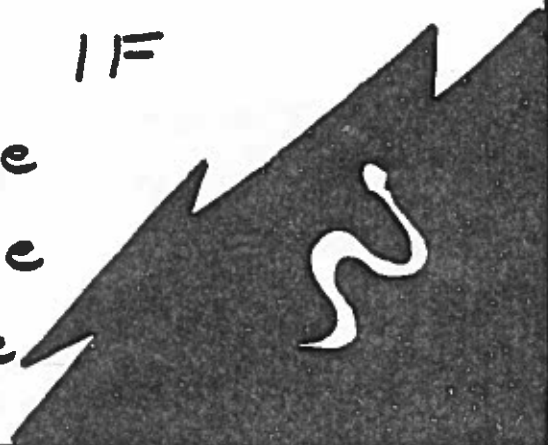
IF you're gentle with us ... and hold us properly - behind the head we will calm down and even be your friend. REMEMBER we try to hurt you because we think you are going to hurt us!

## SNAKE WISE!

Be. THERE IS 1 "poisonous" Snake in Essex Co. The MASSASAUGA. IF



you are not sure what the



... snake is do not go near it  
- leave it be!

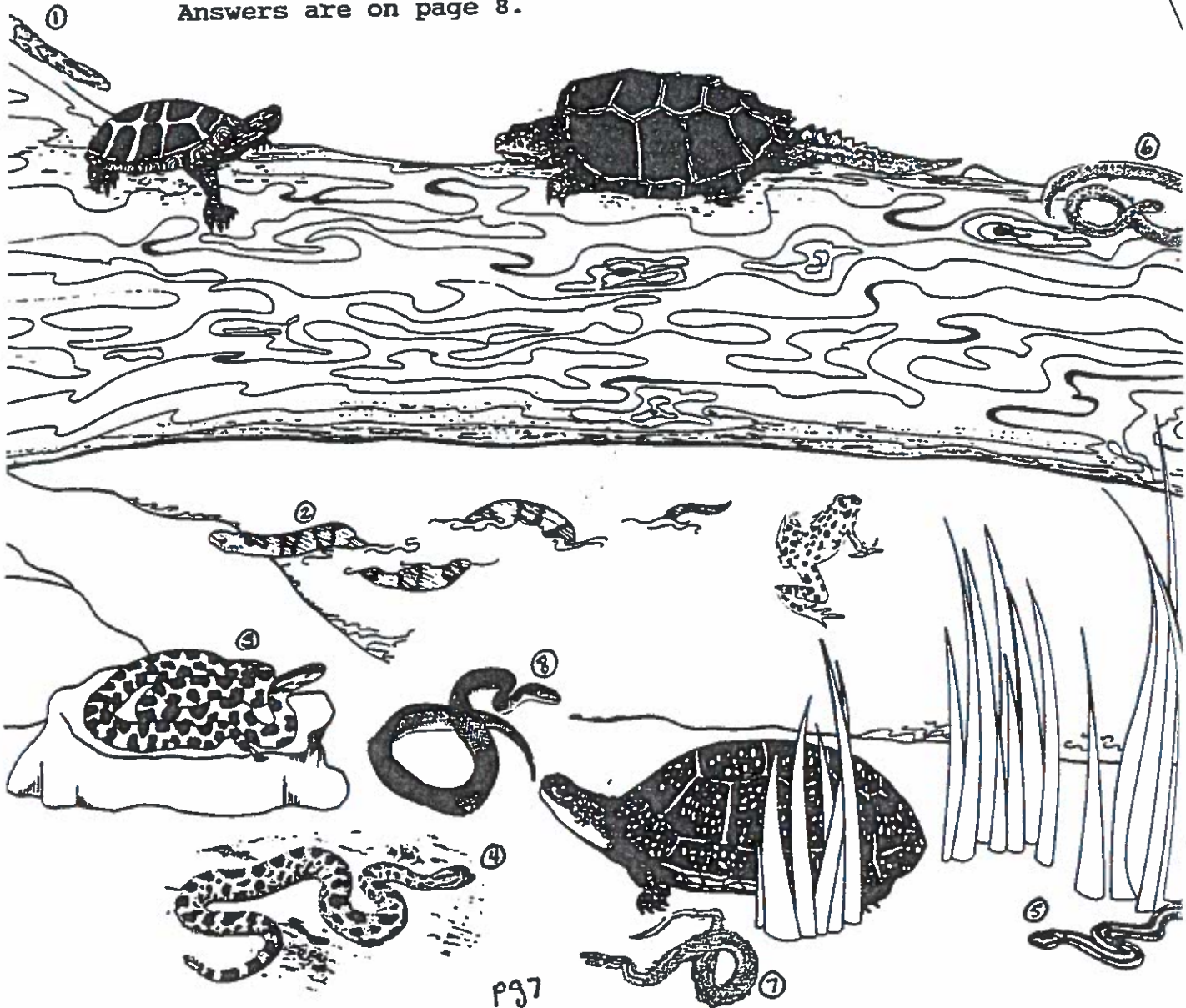
Can you name the  
snakes of Essex Co.?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_



CHARLIE!!!

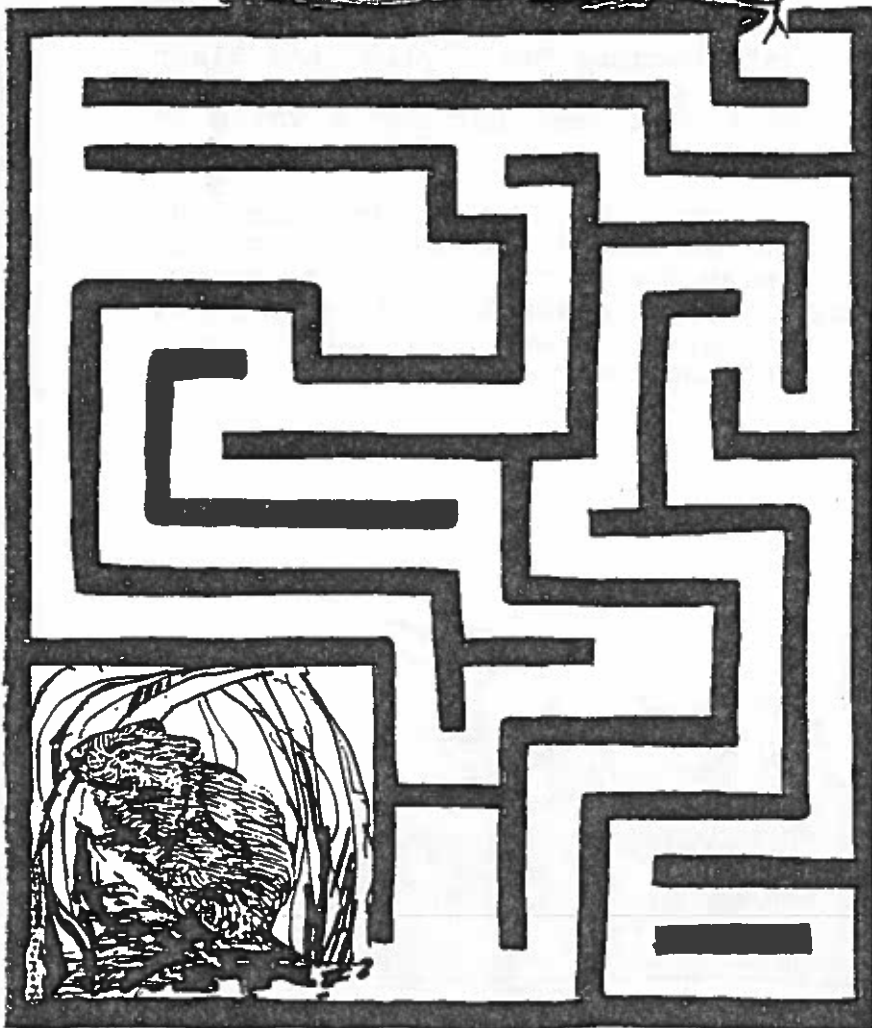
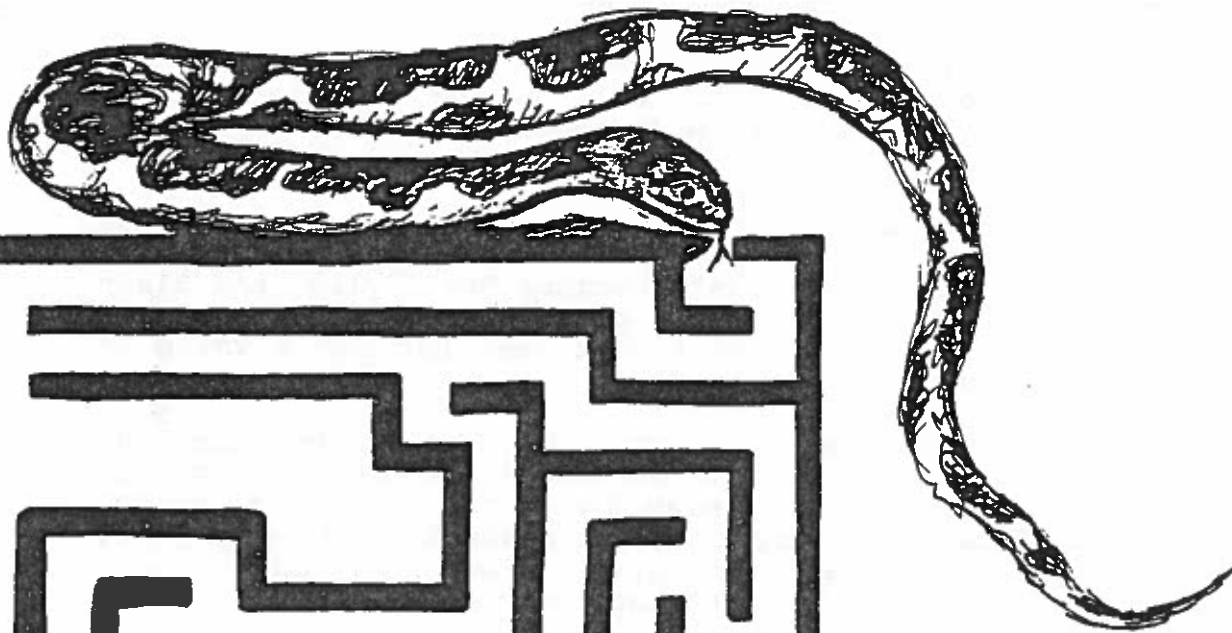
Answers are on page 8.



# Meadow Vole Maze

The meadow vole is a small, but chunky, brown, furry, small-eared mammal which is often called a field mouse. Going on a hunt for meadow voles is not hard at all if you live near a tall grassy field. Meadow voles are famous for their tunnels they cut through tall grass. If you pull aside some of the grasses near a tunnel opening, you will discover the maze of runways meadow voles use to find food, or escape predators, such as snakes, or birds of prey.

Lead the Fox Snake through the maze to catch the meadow vole at the other end.



1. Milk Snake
2. Northern Water Snake
3. Fox Snake
4. Massasauga Rattle Snake
5. Eastern Garter
6. Brown Snake
7. Red-Bellied Snake
8. Blue Racer

Other subspecies of snakes include: Lake Erie Water Snake, and the Butlers Garter Snake.

CONCORD SCHOOL AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
by Stephanie Hayne

On Monday May 14th, Mr. Naisbitt's class went to Little River, and planted 450 trees, and shrubs.

It was certainly a day to remember. Thirty students planting trees to help out the environment around Little River. We had to make four car trips just to get everyone there. Mr. Naisbitt drove some, and Mrs. Piccinin drove three loads in her van. Thankyou, Mrs. Piccinin.

When the last load had arrived everyone was excited, and ready to start. Everybody took some seedlings, went off into groups, and started planting. It was a great day to dig because the ground was soft from all the rain. The only problem was everybody got wet from the dew. Jenny, Beckie, and I were in the last load so there were only enough trees for each of us to plant three trees.

After Mr. Naisbitt had shown us how to plant the trees we headed toward our planting stations. We dug, and planted, and packed, and covered, until the three of us were done planting our nine trees.

In the middle of the morning Mrs. Kylo, one of our student teachers came with her daughter, Blair. We named one of our trees the "Kyllo Tree", because Mrs. Kylo, and Blair both helped plant it. Everyone played with Blair, talked to Mrs. Kylo, and worked! We hadn't seen her for a while so everyone was excited, and happy.

It was almost time for lunch so Mrs. Kylo, Mr. Muir, and Mr. Gall drove people back to the school. A few of us stayed, got things gathered up, and played with two dogs in the water. Mrs. Kylo came back along with Mr. Naisbitt. Before we left, we all looked back, and felt great because we had all done something for the environment that morning.

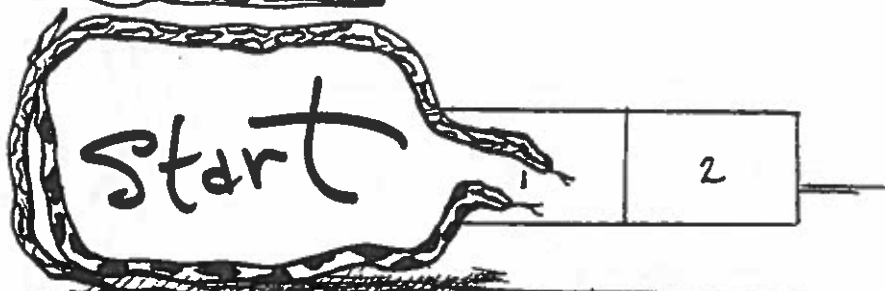


# Snakes and Shovels

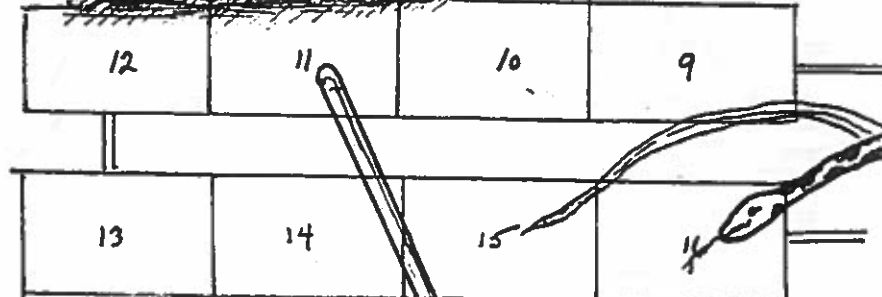
The thought of a snake makes some people tremble.

Seeing a snake causes some people to scream.

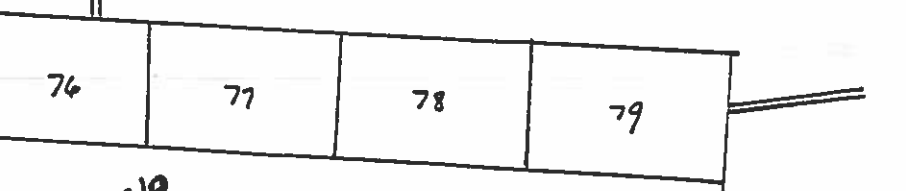
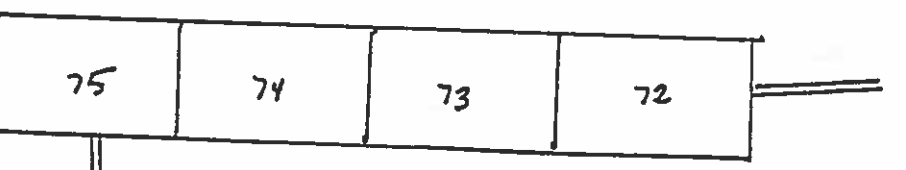
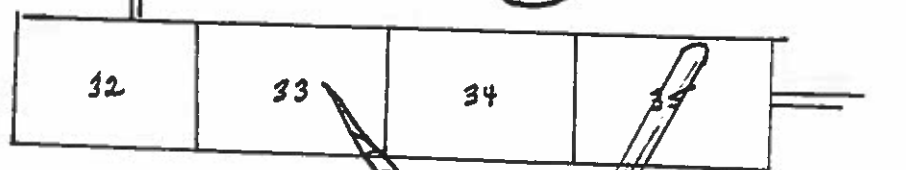
A snake in the yard causes some to run for their shovel!



The fear of snakes is passed from parents to their children. In fairy tales, snakes are often evil. Movie heroes, like Harrison Ford who plays the fearless adventurer, Indiana Jones, in Raiders of the Lost Ark, is shown as being deathly afraid of snakes.



In countries where most of the snakes are poisonous, the folk living there learn about snakes so they can avoid being bitten.



One country where rice farmers had occasionally died from bites placed a bounty on snakes. Many snakes were killed, even the nonpoisonous ones. The snakes had always eaten a large number of harmful rodents such as rats. Since so many snakes were killed, the rat population exploded. Rats everywhere, eating everything, and causing people to become sick with disease, made people realize how important the snakes really were.

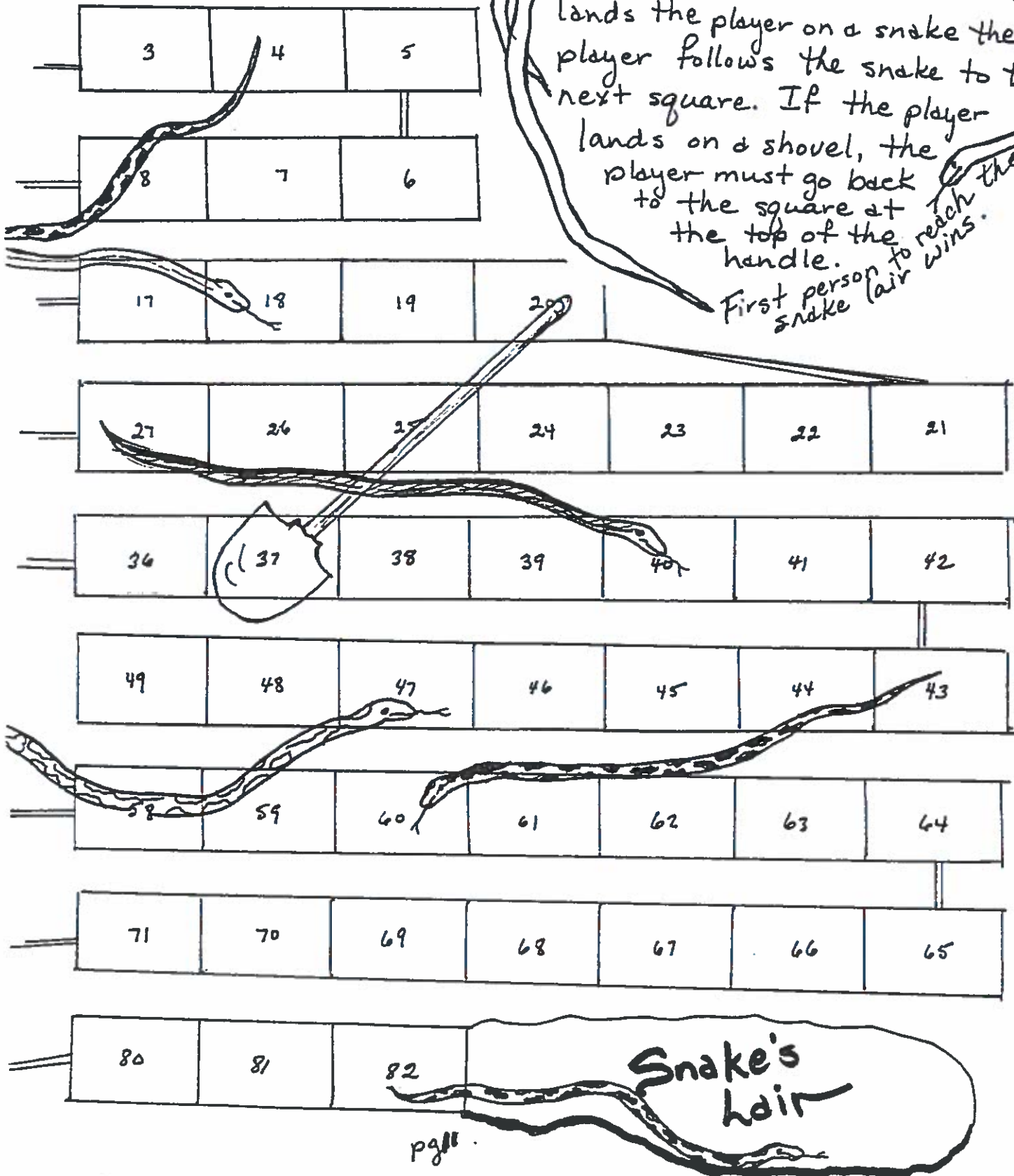
Every creature, even the dreaded snake has a special role in maintaining the natural balance of life on this planet.



# To Play:

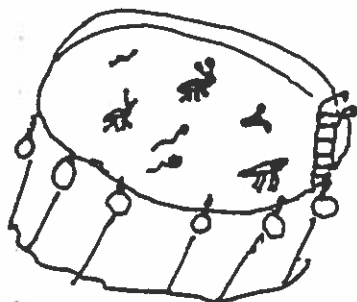
Players move along the squares by the roll of the dice. If the roll lands the player on a snake the player follows the snake to the next square. If the player lands on a shovel, the player must go back to the square at the top of the handle.

First person to reach the snake wins.

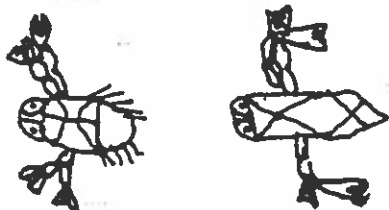


## POOL PANIC

BY Carl Szalich



Attention all bug lovers! Before opening your pool's cover look into the water over the pool cover. You'll see underwater life galore! So far, before my Mom and Dad opened our pool I found seven different sorts of bugs. Two sorts of water boatmen, two water striders, ten predaceous diving beetles, one backswimmer (plea strida), three larvae, and six crawling water beetles.



### Water boatman:

Water boatman swim right side up. They spend a lot of the time clinging to plants. Most feed on algae. They don't bite.



### Predaceous diving Beetle:

Most are black, dark brown, or yellowish. Water beetles have legs that are modified for swimming.

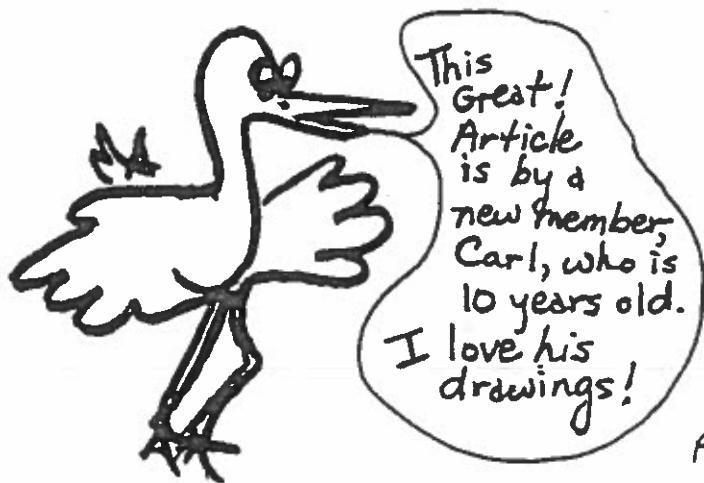


### Backswimmer:

They bite! handle carefully. Their bite is very painful. They can survive under ice.

### Crawling Water Beetles:

Live in shallow water. Eat algae. Poor swimmers. They only eat plants.





Water striders:

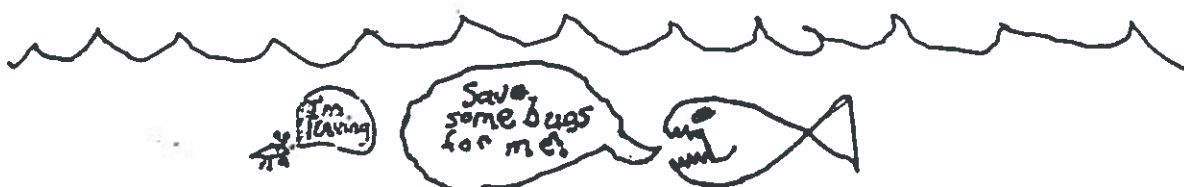
Known as water skaters. Sometimes they jump. Adults don't have wings.



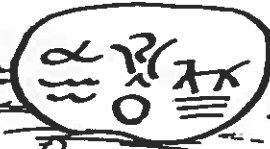
Dragon-fly larvae:

Lay clumps of eggs on the water surface or on plants. The nymph eats other aquatic insects, even small fish! Some nymphs take three months to become adult, others can take up to five years. They leave the water after stages, the skin splits, and the adults emerge. Adults can eat mosquitos.

My brother and I collected these all with a net before our Dad took off the pool cover. Then we put them in an aquarium. Even though it is three weeks later they are still alive and we are still observing them. Some of them have eaten each other. So check you pool cover for surprising *BUGS!*



# Enchanted Rock Adventures



Ever since Josiah and Kate found a magical rock with Indian carvings on it, they have been able to talk to wild creatures. Find out what happens to them in their seventh adventure.

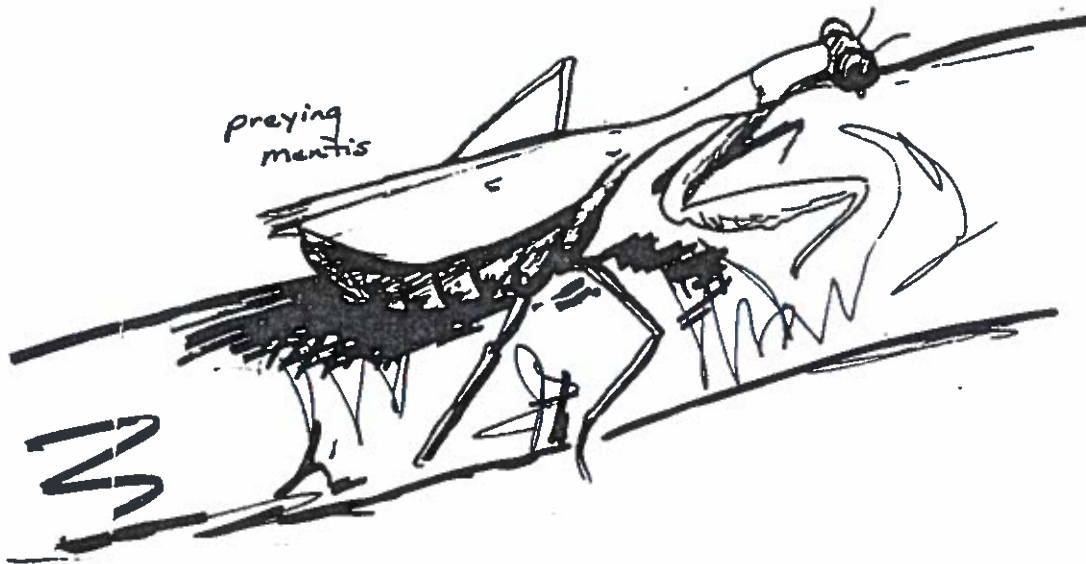
## The Living Tree

A majestic old Black Walnut tree grew in the clearing behind Kate, and Josiah's home. The tree had lived there for many years; its huge branches reached like the arms of a giant far up into the sky. Josiah and Kate were just able to climb up into the tree's lowest branches.

Josiah would take several jumps before he could get a firm enough grip on the tree to pull himself upward. Then having heaved his body up he would somehow manage to swing his legs around to a sitting position atop the massive limb. Kate had a way of scrambling up the trunk. A rope had been rigged to assist her climb but, it still took her a lot of huffing and puffing before she finally sat upon her branch.

Kate's rope was also used to carry such essentials such as sandwiches, note books, magnifying glasses, and field guides. A bucket tied to the end of the rope was loaded with their needs before they ascended the tree. Kate, and Josiah would spend hours up in their lofty perches watching, drawing pictures, and making notes about the busy world of the living tree.

Spiders scurried along the deep, dark crevices in the grooved bark. Beetles fought fierce battles with other species of their own kind. They were the Insect Predator Kings who stalked, and dined on smaller insects, and bugs. Occasionally a Preying Mantis would visit the tree, and put a quick end to a Beetle King's reign.



The sly mantis would stand as still as a leaf until the unsuspecting beetle came near. Instantly the long spiny arms of the giant mantis would clasp the beetle in a deadly grip while its delicate jaws would slowly devour its prey.



Most impressive to watch was the aerial acrobatics of the Tree Swallows. The swallow's antics provided Kate, and Josiah with hours of pleasure. Late spring was the busiest time for the pair, who had chosen to nest in a nearby tree.

Kate, and Josiah watched as each parent took turns bringing dried grass into the hollow to build their nest. It seemed to brother, and sister that nest building was a special ritual for the swallows. First the male would land on a branch, then in a swift and precise flight, land, and pick up a piece of dried grass, fly up, and circle back to the nest. As soon as the male arrived at the nest, the female took flight to find more nest material and then circle back to the nest.

One morning Josiah spotted a small tear-drop shaped egg in the nest using his binoculars. Each day another egg was added until there were nine eggs in the nest. Soon after to their delight Kate, and Josiah watched as each egg cracked, and a baby bird pecked its way out of its shell into the world.



"How come the eggs all hatched on the same day?" Kate asked Josiah.

"The growing embryos all catch up with the embryo which was born in the first egg. That is how nature makes sure most of the baby swallow will survive. If the first egg hatched before the others, the baby bird would grow fat, and eventually crowd the others so they would fall out of the nest." Josiah replied.

Kate, and Josiah watched the squacking hatchlings through their binoculars. The attentive parents took turns finding food, circling back to the nest, and shoving food down the chicks gaping mouths.



Soon after the young swallows hatched, the children and their parents went away to visit their grandparents. The vacation went by very quickly, and everyone found it hard to say goodbye. On the way home, Kate and Josiah became anxious to return home to their tree perches to see how the swallows were getting along. To their surprise, they found the nest bare. The swallow parents had not left though. Josiah carried the magic rock with Indian carvings up into his branch. He rubbed the carvings calling to the swallow at the same time.

"Mr. Swallow where are your children? Did a cat eat them, or something else?"

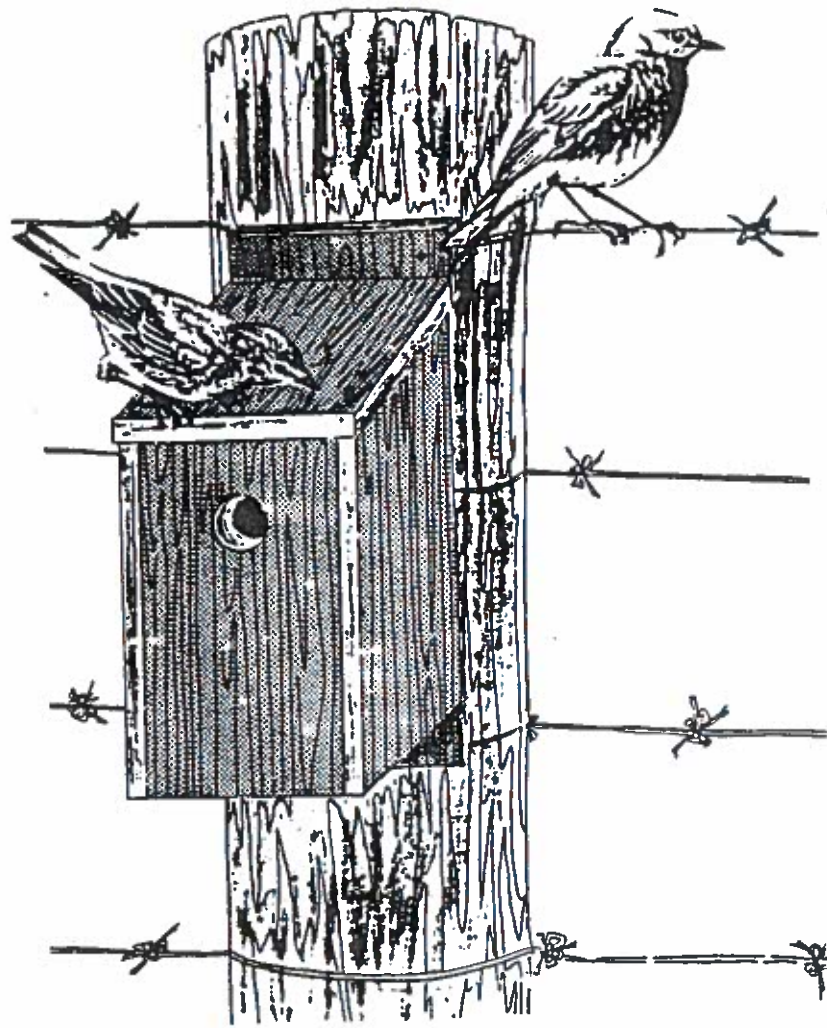
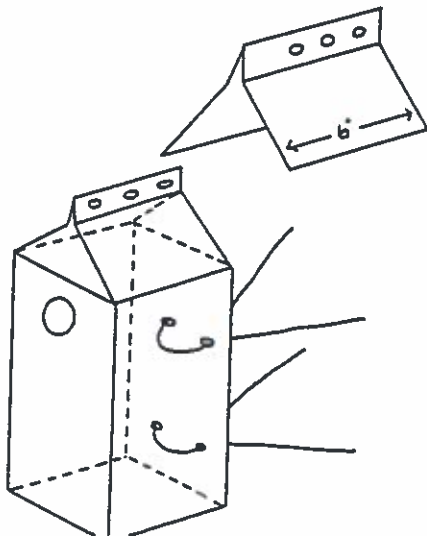
"No little boy," the swallow cried, "they have all learned to fly, and catch insects for themselves. Mrs. Swallow has already started a new family in the nest."

Josiah peered intently into the nest with his binoculars. Yes, there was an egg sitting in the nest. "This time we will be able to see these babies learn to fly," Kate whispered happily to Josiah who still stared at the nest in disbelief. "Isn't life in our tree the awesomeist!" Kate sighed as she munched on her peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

# A Tree Swallow Nest Box To make

Josiah and Kate were reading an old issue of Ranger Rick when they found an article about building bird nest boxes using trash.

Just save a milk carton and cut a hole 3.8 cm in diameter. It will attract Tree Swallows, Blue birds and Sparrows. It should be hung up 2.1 metres from the ground.



## ESSEX CONSERVATION'S BIRD BOX PROGRAM

---

Every spring Essex Conservation builds several hundred bird boxes for land owners interested in providing birds with a place to nest. This program is important because we have so few trees in Essex County. The nest boxes give birds which nest in trees a home here in the county.

The birds which benefit from these nest boxes are; Screech Owls, Tree Swallows, Barn Owls, House Wrens, Eastern Blue Bird, American Kestrel, Common Flickers, and Wood Duck.

For more information about bird nest boxes call Essex Conservation.  
776 5209.

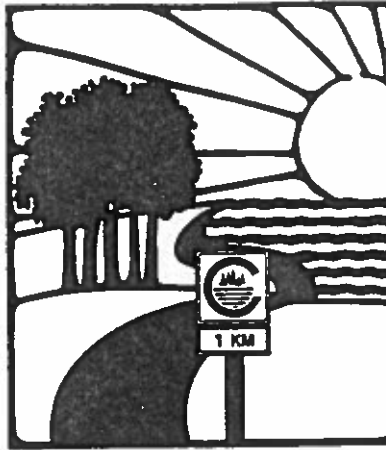
# JUNIOR EGRET

SUMMER EDITION



June 1990  
Volume 2, No. 2

Send your stories, cartoons  
activities and games to:  
**JUNIOR EGRET**  
care of Bev Wannick  
RR#1  
Essex, Ontario. N8M 2X5



*Eventful!*

## CONSERVATION AREAS!

### NATURE SERIES

**BIRD HOUSE BUILDING**  
ERCA Workshop, Essex  
Sat., Apr. 7 - 2 p.m.

**BIRDING AT HILLMAN**  
Apr. 28 through May 21

**MOTHER'S DAY WILDFLOWER WALK**  
Cedar Creek Conservation Area  
Sun., May 13 - 2 p.m.

**OWL PROWL**  
Devonwood Conservation Area  
Fri., Aug. 31 - 8:30 p.m.

**OWL PROWL**  
Maidstone Conservation Area  
Fri., Oct. 5 - 8 p.m.

**HILLMAN MARCH**  
Official Opening  
Fall 1990

### JOHN R. PARK HOMESTEAD

**MAPLE: FIRST TASTE OF SPRING**  
Sun., Mar. 11 - 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

**SPRING PICNIC**  
Sun., May 27 - 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

**SHIPWRECK 'N SHORE**  
Sun., July 8 - 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**CRAFT FAIR & BLUEBERRY SOCIAL**  
Sat., Aug. 18 - Sun., Aug. 19  
10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**HARVEST FESTIVAL**  
Sun., Sept. 30 - 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

**CHRISTMAS IN THE COUNTRY**  
Sun., Dec. 2, 9, 16 - Noon-4 p.m.

Between Kingsville and Colchester on  
Essex County Road 50 at Iler Road.  
Phone 738-2029.

### HOLIDAY BEACH

**TROUT DERBY**  
Sat., May 5 - Sun., May 6  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**MUSIC BY THE BEACH**  
Sat., June 16

**SUMMERFEST**  
Sun., July 15 - All Day

**ESSEX COUNTY SPORTSMEN'S SHOW**  
Sat., Aug. 11 - Sun., Aug. 12 - All Day

**FESTIVAL OF HAWKS**  
Fri., Sept. 14 through Sun., Sept. 16  
6 p.m. Fri. thru Sun.

**HALLOWE'EN HIKE**  
Sun., Oct. 28 - 6 p.m.

South of Amherstburg on Essex County  
Road 50. Phone 736-3772.

Discover, Explore and Enjoy YOUR Conservation Areas

237

Junior Egret

AUTHOR

June 1990

TITLE

| DATE DUE | BORROWER'S NAME | ROOM NUMBER |
|----------|-----------------|-------------|
|          |                 |             |
|          |                 |             |
|          |                 |             |
|          |                 |             |

Junior Egret

237

June 1990