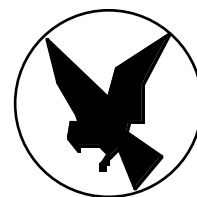


# EARTHWAYS<sup>©</sup>



Earthways is a publication of LAMBTON WILDLIFE INCORPORATED - P.O. BOX 681, SARNIA, ON N7T 7J7

Gordon Catterson - Editor

January, 2009

Cheryl Veary-Webmaster

Website: www.lambtonwildlife.com

All indoor programs are open to the public and are held on the last Monday of the month, from September to November and January to March at the YMCA Learning & Career Centre 660 Oakdale Avenue at 7:30 pm. Articles in Earthways represent the views of the author and not necessarily the views of Lambton Wildlife Inc.

## Indoor Program

January 26, 2009

### Rehabilitating Birds of Prey

Lynn Eves, director of the Bluewater Center for Raptor Rehabilitation, will describe her work in trying to rehabilitate birds of prey, researching their needs and educating the public about these birds and how we can all help to create a harmonious and healthy environment for all living creatures.

February 23, 2009

### Species At Risk: Lambton Area

Kim Gledhill, Conservation Education Technician for the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority and LWI member, will talk about what has been happening with the Aquatic Species at Risk program over the last few years and the new Tree Species at Risk program, both of which stress best management practices to preserve habitat for species at risk.

March 30, 2009

### Urban Insects

Stanley Caveney will talk about some of our local insects and their fascinating and often bizarre lifestyles. He is an entomologist, recently retired as a professor at Western. His presentation will include a bit about insect evolution, diversity of species and recent invasive species in the Sarnia-Lambton area.

April 18, 2009

### Annual General Mtg.-Mandaumin United Church Hall

Business meeting and elections at 4:30 pm, bucket draw opens at 5:00 pm, with the delicious turkey dinner with homemade pies to be served at 6:00 pm. Guest speaker Phil Roberts, well known nature commentator for CBC Windsor, will speak on the Bald Eagle Satellite Telemetry program for Detroit River nestlings.

### In Memorium:

Former LWI member Doria (Doris) Coe died on November 26th, 2008 in Ottawa. She was active in the club during the 1990's and was on the Board of Directors from 1991-'93. She was mentioned on the President's Honour List in 1996 and acted as archivist for several years during the '90's. Doris was a frequent participant in outdoor events and work groups. Our condolences to her family.

Gord Catterson

## Outdoor Program

Outdoor Committee:

Larry Cornelis (Chair) 519-627-8785; Paul Carter 344-2571; Gerry Clements 336-3513; Nikki May 542-8612

Please note: All youth under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult on the outings.

Items marked with an \* are or can be a half day only.

### \*Down River Ducks

Sunday, February 1st, 2009.

Meet: 9:00 a.m. at the Dow People Place parking lot (north of McLean's Centre). Lunch at a local restaurant.

Coordinator: Mary Harmon 542-7112

### \*Howard Watson Nature Trail Clean-Up

Sunday, April 19th, 2009

Meet: 9:00 a.m. at Modeland and Cathcart trail entrance.

Coordinator: Gord Catterson 519-337-1246

### \*Highway 402 Clean-up

Saturday, April 25th, 2009.

Meet at 8:45 am at Wawanosh Wetlands parking lot.

Inquiries: Joe Haselmayer 542-2826

### Walks into Spring 2009: Canatara Park

Wednesdays, May 6th and May 13th, 2009

Meet: 6:00 p.m. at the entrance to Tarzanland.

### Camping in Point Pelee — May 2009

See p. 8 for details.

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## Greetings from the President

2009 started badly for me when I read in the Globe that for 2009 the economy was “hot” and the environment was the opposite. According to the Globe, our priorities are to get the economy back up and running at full speed, no matter what the dire consequences are for the environment. When are homo sapiens going to figure out that the only sustainable economy is one that protects and even enhances the environment? The Detroit 3 certainly have not figured that out.

As I reported in the last Earthways, I picked up “Last Child in the Woods”, by Richard Louv, Algonquin Paperbacks. It received the 2008 Audubon medal and is an American best seller. It is about why the young and the rest of us need nature – saving our children from Nature-Deficit Disorder, a term which he uses to describe the human

costs of alienation from nature, including diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties and higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses. I decided to make it my Christmas reading. If the current people in power (i.e. economic power) don't seem to care much about the environment, then it will be up to our children to turn things around. Things don't look good.

Children are not spending any time in nature...outside of their homes, schools and plazas...let alone in woods and forests. Louv believes that we are seeing the emergence of what he calls “nature-deficit disorder” in children. Children appear to enjoy being inside more, because that is where the electrical outlets are...that power their TV's, computers, computer game systems, ipods, etc. Playing in nature seems so unproductive, off-limits, alien, dangerous and televised. Children have become more sedentary and overweight. Parents may be out jogging, but their kids are inside, looking at TV, computer and game screens. And when they are outside they have their headphones on. They can't just enjoy hearing nature and being out there alone. They can't make their own entertainment. They have to bring something with them. They see computers as the way to future lifestyle and employment. They get dumbed-down by lowest common denominator television and advertising encouraging increased consumption. In the U.S., children ages 6 to 11 (grades 1 to 5) spend about 30 hours a week looking at a TV or computer monitor. Researchers in Seattle found that by the age of 3 months, about 40 percent regularly watched TV, DVD's or other videos. A British study showed that average 8 year olds were better able to identify more characters from the Japanese card trading game Pokemon than native species in the community where they lived.

He emphasizes how important it is to have a contact with nature for human mental health .. adult or youth. Louv goes into great detail about the new relationship between youth and nature, why the young (and the rest of us) need nature, alternative ways of dealing with child boredom, the restrictions to youth enjoying nature, natural school reform, camp revival (apparently the use of American National Parks is way down), the naturalizing of cities and subdivisions and how to turn the anti-nature trend around. He is very in favour of using hunting and fishing as a way of interesting youth (he is a fisherman)... quotes a well-known fly-fisher from Vermont who prefers calling “fishing” – “water treatment” to emphasize the positive aspects of the sport. He did make a good point when he noted that removing of hunting and fishing from human activity would also lose many of the voters and organizations that now work against the destruction of woods, fields and watersheds. He finishes the book with a list of 100 actions we can take to get our children, in their everyday lives, to experience joy and wonder, for them to create their own nature experiences and as they grow up, to expand the boundaries of their exploration.

His point of view seems to emphasize that nature should be saved so it can be experienced more by humans. Throughout the book he noted how important it was when he was a youth to go into woods, cut down trees and make tree houses. He seemed bothered that most nature reserves no longer permit that kind of activity. Perhaps the only way to convince people that preserving nature is important is to show that time spent in nature is healthier than being indoors. Basically human beings have showed over time that they are incredibly poor custodians of the natural environment and that it is surely important to prevent the destruction of the Earth's environment for reasons other than short term human health.

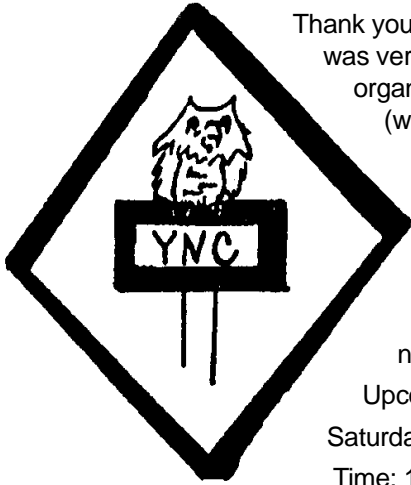
I found the book somewhat of a tedious read, but in fairness, the subject matter is complex and broad ranging. Last Child in the Woods is an important book and hopefully it will have some impact on changing current trends. I am somewhat discouraged by the strength of the denial of environmental problems as exemplified by the 'W' administration and the insistence that the only thing that matters is a strong, growing economy as it is the only route to human fulfillment. Whenever I get discouraged by global trends, I try to turn to doing something positive, locally. “Think Globally – Act Locally” makes a lot of sense to me.

So my conclusion is to recommend that LWI members read Last Child in the Woods, (Saving our Children from Nature-deficit Disorder) but also be thankful that we have people like Melissa Levi, Chandre Sanio, Kim Gledhill and Brenda Lorenz, dedicated naturalists present and past who have developed our Young Naturalists Program. Led by Melissa, our Young Naturalists program has recently been augmented by the addition of a “Junior Naturalists Group” for youth aged 12 – 16. The “Young Naturalists” are youth aged 7 – 11. I understand that there is still room in both groups. I urge all members to think about youth who would get a lot out of the excellent youth programs which are being offered by dedicated Lambton Wildlife members.

They need the full, ongoing support of all of our membership. You will agree that Young Nats is a really, really important LWI program.... especially after you read Last Child in the Woods.

Malcolm Boyd, President.

### Young Naturalist Group



Thank you LWI for supporting our Fundraiser at the November indoor meeting! The fundraiser was very successful; the children raised over \$50.00 for Monarchwatch. Monarchwatch is an organization dedicated to monarch education, conservation and research. (www.monarchwatch.org). Congratulations kids!!! And Thanks LWI for your support!!!

During the month of December the Young Naturalists and the Jr. Conservationists successfully built and painted several Awareness Signs. These signs will be erected at our events throughout the rest of the year to build environmental awareness within our community. Three different themes were used for the signs, one stating 'No Garbage Zone' another 'Butterfly Habitat' and the third 'Baby Tree Zone'. We had a blast creating the signs and hope the greater community enjoys them as well! Good work guys!

Upcoming Young Naturalist Events(kids aged 7-11):

Saturday January 3rd, 2009: Winter Fun Day (Tobogganing and Winter Hike)

Time: 1:00-3:00 Place: Pinery Provincial Park

Saturday February 7th, 2009: Winter Fun Day (Lake Exploration and Games)

Time: 1:00-3:00 PM. Place: Canatara Park (just outside of the Animal Farm).

Upcoming Jr. Naturalist Events (youth aged 12-16):

Saturday January 10th, 2009: Schoolyard Naturalization Planning and Fundraising Project.

Time: 10:00AM-3:00PM. Place: Henderson CA, Petrolia

Saturday February 14th, 2009: Nest Box Construction Project.

Time: 10:00AM-3:00PM. Place: Henderson CA, Petrolia

We still have room in both groups. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Melissa Levi

insektivi@hotmail.com

### Ontario Nature's 4th Annual Youth Writing Contest

We bet you've had a great experience with some part of nature. Perhaps it was collecting and studying frogs at the lake this summer? Perhaps it was climbing your favourite tree in the park close to your home.

Nature is everywhere, miles away from nowhere, and right in your own backyard!

We'd like to hear about what you think about nature.

The challenge:

Think about it and be creative. Your topic is: Every day we make choices that could help or harm our environment. What are you doing that has a positive impact on our environment?

What you need to know:

- You must be an Ontario grade 7 or 8 student.
- It can be an essay, a story, or a piece of creative writing, with a maximum count of 700 words, typed and double-spaced.
- The top three entries will be published in ON Nature magazine, the award-winning nature and environment magazine in Ontario.
- The winners will receive cool prizes for their work, and will be honoured for their achievement at Ontario Nature's Annual General Meeting & Conference.

Send your original entries by February 25, 2009 to:

Youth Writing Contest

Ontario Nature

366 Adelaide Street West, Suite 201 Toronto, ON M5V 1R9

Make sure you have a title page telling us the title of your essay, your name, address, phone number, email address, your parent's or guardian's name, what grade you're in, and the name of your school.

Take a look at the 2007-2008 Contest Flyer (PDF 268k) - teachers are invited to print a copy and post it at their school. Visit <[www.ontarionature.org](http://www.ontarionature.org)>

Ontario Nature's Youth Writing Contest is sponsored by Waste Management.

### The Ausable Trail:

I had long been curious about this trail located along the Ausable River between Hungry Hollow and Joany's Woods. As archivist I have the files on the establishing of the trail and know generally where it is, but had never actually set foot on it. As with many LWI members it remained something of a mystery.

In 1972 Elizabeth Tasker, then LWI President, suggested to Fern Noel that LWI, in conjunction with the Sarnia Hiking Club, establish a hiking trail within Lambton County. After some discussion and survey work it was decided to establish such a trail along the Ausable River valley, but on the Middlesex County (east) side of the river. After a lot of work by a lot of people the 15.6 km trail was officially opened on October 14, 1973. Thus the trail is now 35 years old.

At first the trail was used by both clubs and fulfilled the purpose for which it was created. I recall Fern once telling me about the differing priorities of the two groups hiking together. The Hiking Club always wanted to get on with it while the LWI members would want to stop and look at the flora. However over the years usage declined. Part of the problem was that some of the trail is on private property and owners changed and withdrew the permission granted by previous owners. For this and other reasons the trail is now less used.

During construction the trail was divided into 5 sections, each between 2.5 and 5.0 km, with a leader assigned to work on each. The portion of the trail that does not rely on permission from private owners runs between the west end of Elm Tree Drive and a cairn located near the junction of Coldstream Road and Scout Road, and which constitutes sections 4, 3 and part of 2 of the original sections. The portions from Hungry Hollow in the south to Elm Tree Dr. and from the cairn to highway 7 on the north, are the ones that in part pass over the privately owned land. The middle or public section consists of three portions. The first is identified only by white blaze marks in a heavily wooded area and runs from the west end of Elm Tree Dr. northward to where it joins a dirt roadway which is heavily used by ATVs. This second section then continues on as a roadway to the west end of MacDonald Dr. The third section, also heavily treed and identified solely by blaze marks, runs from MacDonald Drive to the aforementioned cairn. The trail has thus been shortened from the original nearly 16 km to about 11 km.

A couple of years ago Malcolm Boyd mentioned to me that he and Fern planned on going out to the trail to try and do some location work, and would I be interested in accompanying them. I immediately said yes, for as I said above I had long been curious about it. The three of us spent part of a day hiking the section of the trail heavily used by ATV's, trying to locate where the other, less easily identified portion, joins it. Incidentally the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) does allow ATV users access to part of the trail on the premise that ATV usage can be better managed this way rather than denying any access. We did eventually locate where the trail emerges from the wooded portion on to the roadway portion.

Then last year Kevin Crowell called me up and asked if I would be willing to accompany him in walking the trail. He and George Krause have for the past few years been working to clear and better identify the trail to try and encourage greater usage. I should say at this point that there are two philosophies regarding trail usage. One is to make it more user friendly and encourage greater use while the other is to keep it "challenging" and reserved for "real" hikers. Incidentally this latter philosophy is very much in keeping with the view held at the time the trail was created. While the two are not totally incompatible it does raise some conflicting views. When the trail was initially established it was not seen as a sort of "walk in the woods" type of trail, but rather a challenge for serious hikers and should be confined to the cognoscenti, so to speak.

Kevin's purpose in having me along was to see if someone unfamiliar with the trail could follow it. I would walk ahead while he stayed behind and corrected me when I made a wrong turn. Needless to say he did a lot of correcting. The blaze marks are not all that visible and being white, do not stand out. When I suggested using high viz paint Kevin told me that white was an international standard and must be used. My view is that whoever established it as a standard was not using a lot of common sense. The most visible colour is yellow which is why fire hydrants are yellow. When you are driving down a highway and there is a traffic light a kilometre or so away it is difficult at times to distinguish whether it is red or green, but if the yellow light comes on it is immediately clearly visible. My advice would be to ignore the standard and use yellow paint. After all the notion is to guide, not confuse.

Where was I? Oh, yes! I frequently missed the blaze marks and Kevin kept correcting me. While the trail generally follows the river it takes sudden turns up steepish hills and down valleys and away from the more enjoyable (in my view) smooth, flat areas near the river. The original trail designers seemed to follow the philosophy that tougher is better. This is all part of the "challenging" character of the trail. It also was done to reveal interesting spots that would otherwise be missed. Needless to say that Kevin's position that the trail should be more user friendly was amply demonstrated. I would not recommend anyone try to navigate the trail without someone who is familiar with it. Not unless you enjoy being lost in the woods. In fact there have been a few recent cases where exactly that happened. This is not as serious as you may think as simply following the river will eventually get you out. But if it happened near nightfall or to someone who was not fully briefed it could be disconcerting, even dangerous. There is also a side trail which leads to Mystery Falls, well named as unless someone who knows the way is along it will remain an enigma.

Then Kevin again recently called me up to say that the ABCA had agreed to GPS the trail and would I accompany him again, my role being to write this article and inform readers that the trail is now clearly mapped.

Kevin, John Tymar (an original member of the construction group and someone who leads hikes on the trail), myself

and Tracy Boitson from ABCA met on Thursday, October 30th at 9:30 a.m. to do the work. Tracy carried a GPS unit which records the coordinates every 3 meters. She could then accurately map the trail so that in the future its' exact location would be pinpointed. The other purpose was to make sure the trail is not on the private properties.

It took us about five hours to walk the entire length of the trail and Tracy recorded about 3000 readings. This would suggest the trail is about 9000 meters (3x3000) or 9 km. However for part of the way in the northern section she was unable to get a satellite fix as the trees were too dense, so at least 1 km was not recorded. In addition there is about 1 km at Elm Tree Drive which you have to hike to get to the trail. Again Kevin's position that the trail is not adequately marked was demonstrated as on occasion all of us had trouble staying on track.

I should also mention that back in 1975 Fern, Gerry Clements, Ron Laflair and Les Greenop did produce a guide book to the trail. While it does an admirable job of describing the trail, the map is not of a great deal of use in actually guiding you when in the woods, and I would hesitate to recommend that anyone rely solely on it.

Gord Catterson

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### **The Huron Fringe Birding Festival**

Submitted by Therese Estephan,

The Friends of MacGregor Point Park

This is the 12th season for the Huron Fringe Birding Festival and we are planning for it to be better than ever. Our focus continues to be birding and nature.

The Huron Fringe Birding Festival will be held from May 22nd to May 31st, 2009. The Visitor Centre at MacGregor Point Provincial Park will function as the Festival headquarters.

The Huron Fringe Birding Festival celebrates an awareness and appreciation of MacGregor Point Provincial Park and nearby Bruce County. It promotes the excellent birding opportunities along the Lake Huron shoreline. In fact, since the Festival began, it boasts sightings of an average of 150 species of birds.

As the program committee completes its list of presenters and our schedule for the 2009 Festival, they are ensuring that popular leaders such as Michael Carlson, Mark Wiercinski and Doug Martin will return to educate and entertain .... and we guarantee that there will be new experiences to be had by all! We value the dedication, skill and desire of many of the local area's leading naturalists who help us ensure that this Festival is a great experience!

The Huron Fringe Birding Festival is a co-operative project of the Friends of MacGregor Point Park and MacGregor Point Provincial Park. The support of a number of corporate sponsors, including Bruce Power and Ontario Power Generation, enables us to provide this wide array of activities.

Program Updates: Steve Patterson on Saturday May 23rd - Flying Squirrels and Elisabeth Vanstam on Thursday, May 28th - Chimney Swifts. A registration fee applies. Pre-registration is recommended. The New 2009 Huron Fringe Birding Festival Program and Registration Form will be featured on our web page beginning February 1st, 2009 at [www.friendsofmacgregor.org](http://www.friendsofmacgregor.org). Those wishing a hard copy should contact the Park at:

(519) 389-6232/ (519) 389-6231

Friends Of MacGregor Point Park

Box 1979

Port Elgin, Ontario N0H 2C0

fompp@bmts.com

The Huron Fringe Birding Festival is partnering in 2009 with Ontario Nature which is holding its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Southampton on Saturday May 30th at 3:30 p.m. at the Bruce County Museum. This is a wonderful opportunity for some of Ontario Nature's guests to join in our Festival events during the weekend and some of our Festival goers to join in their AGM events.

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### **Protect Birds From Window Collisions**

Reprinted from The Blazing Star, Spring 2008

From Aldona Mitrikas of Wawa, Ontario

I have a very sad story of how I discovered hummingbirds were nesting in our big spruce trees (*Picea* spp.). On our farm on St. Joseph's Island we had a large living room window facing the spruce grove and one summer I found several dead hummingbirds on the deck. I was very upset and realized they were flying into the reflection of the spruce trees in the window. Of course we did what we could by pasting up cutouts of hawks and letting the window get dirty and rain-pattered so it was not as reflective. Hummingbirds and other birds that come near human habitation can easily collide with windows and other reflective surfaces. Many ornithologists now believe that this is the single greatest cause of mortality among birds, apart from habitat loss.

Homeowners and businesses can do their part by reducing or eliminating the reflectivity and transparency of glass. On small panes of glass a couple of hawk silhouettes or anything else pasted on the outside of the window or hung in front of the window may alert the birds to the presence of an obstacle. For large windows the best option is to cover the window with a screen or an opaque film. For more information and suggestions on what you can do to prevent window collisions visit [www.flap.org](http://www.flap.org).

If you do find a live bird that has hit your window place it in a cardboard box or paper bag - making certain that it is sitting upright, not lying on its side (place it inside a donut made of tissue if the bird will not stay up) - and wait for an hour to see if the bird recovers on its own. If not, contact your local wildlife rehabilitation facility for instructions (in the Greater Toronto Area contact the Toronto Wildlife Centre at (416) 631-0662).

### November Indoor Meeting:

Jake Lozon of the Rural Lambton Stewardship Network spoke at the November 24th indoor meeting at the YMCA Careers & Learning Centre on Oakdale Avenue. Jake is the Assistant Coordinator and was filling in for Ron Ludolph who was unable to attend.

Jake was introduced by Larry Cornelis who said that while Jake was relatively new to RLSN he had come on board very quickly and that he, Larry, was very impressed by his quick start. Larry further mentioned that this presentation was long overdue as many people in Lambton County were unaware of this very successful endeavor.

Jake began by explaining that he was one of two assistant coordinators. He said that RLSN was started in 1992 by the government to encourage citizens, particularly farmers, to take steps to initiate environmental projects on their properties. It was felt that often farmers were interested in doing so but because of the marginal nature of farming were reluctant to do so. The Lambton network was a pilot program for the province and because of its' success there are now 44 throughout Ontario. However due to the work of the people involved locally it remains perhaps the most successful one in the province, is the largest and a model for others. While it was largely funded by government initially today government funds are much reduced and it is supported by other sources, although the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture & Food, the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, the OMNR and Ducks Unlimited are strong supporters. Also much of the support comes from industry. Jake explained that there is a stewardship council of about 12 people from across the county who advise the RLSN. The 'rural' part of the name was put in deliberately to accentuate the rural nature of the group as it was felt that farmers do not take kindly to 'city folk' telling them what to do on their own land. In fact as Malcolm explained later there is no land owner contact program for that very reason. Instead they rely on word of mouth encouraging people to contact them.

Jake then proceeded to discuss the various components of their program. They include Tall Grass Prairie Projects, Highway 40 Prairie Passage, Prescribed Burn Program, St. Clair/Sydenham Stewardship Initiative, Healthy Waterways Initiative, and Lambton Hydrologic Cycle.

As Jake explained many of these initiatives are interconnected, with tall grass prairie a particular case. Tall grass prairie is a mix of native warm season grasses that occurred commonly in this area prior to European settlement. Unlike cold season grasses which have shallow roots, they have deep roots which provide superior ability to capture pollutants and are drought resistant. For example mature big bluestem will have roots that go as deep as 8 feet.

RLSN has five seed production sites which were started 11 years ago. At the beginning seed was collected by hand although today they have mechanical equipment to harvest, clean and plant. When the seed was first collected seed from different locations in the area was collected to take advantage of what is known as hybrid vigour. This is when separated gene banks are combined to produce more vigorous offspring. It is why cross breeds of dogs are

more hardy than purebred animals and is used extensively in animal husbandry. He mentioned that in 2008 some 230,000 native flowers were planted. Jake showed pictures of the several pieces of machinery used in the various steps to obtain seed. They are working to become certified by the MTO as a provider of native seed mix for new highway construction and maintenance projects. He said that their seed is so good that 4 lbs. can do an acre compared to nearly double that for less pure seed.

Jake then talked about the Highway 40 Prairie Passage. This is a section of highway 40 between Sarnia and Wallaceburg. It is a first for Ontario and eventually will involve 38 km and 172 ha. of native plants along the highway right of way. Jake mentioned that the sign you see as you drive along highway 40 does not depict a bunch of bananas but rather yellow cone flowers, a native species. The reason for planting these native grasses is that they are much better suited to the SW Ontario climate and provide superior cover. As well they do a better job of intercepting pollutants, control noxious weeds, increase soil porosity, have reduced maintenance costs, hold sediments, capture running water, provide safer roads, make a living snow fence and provide a needed way station for migrating butterflies which nectar on these plants. The intent is to create some 555 ha on MOT highways over the next 5 years. Other opportunities include farm drains and ditches, buffer and filter strips and wildlife management.

Jake mentioned the OptiSolar energy farm on the south side of Sarnia. He said they were working with management there to plant appropriate species. Other locations they are working on include the St. Clair Township sewage lagoons, Bickford Oak Woods, where they are planting several species including high bush cranberry, and MTO leased lands.

Jake also talked about their prescribed burn program which is done to encourage prairie specie survival. The burn is done early in the year before the plants start to grow and burns off the previous years growth, encouraging new growth. As well doing so leaves a fertilizing ash behind and the ground is blackened which enhances the warmth of the sun early in the year. He mentioned that burns had been done along highway 40 and at Turkey Point as well as other places. Members may recall that several prescribed burns have been carried out on LWI properties at Port Franks. Jake elaborated on the St. Clair/Sydenham Stewardship Initiative which is a grant incentive program for landowners as well as the Healthy Waterways Initiative which restores and enhances wetlands in low lying areas.

Finally he discussed the Lambton Hydrologic Cycle. He said that the conversion to row crops destroys natural water flows and the project uses remote sensing technology to map potential water retention areas in partnership with the MNR. The plan is to create earthen berms in appropriate spots such as the low end of oxbow lakes to hold back water.

Our thanks to Jake for an excellent presentation. As Larry said at the beginning it was long overdue. Jake was thanked by Dick Maxfield.

Gord Catterson

**Bluebird Notes:**

Since I failed to report the 2007 bluebird nesting results last year I thought I'd better improve, and so I am reporting on the 2008 season earlier than normal. The 2008 season is our 20th year of activity as I started our bluebird trail in earnest in 1988. The nesting results improved each year in Lambton County until 1992 when we peaked at fledging 79 young. Since 1992 the results have been very erratic. We have fledged 792 bluebirds in the 20 years of activity or an average of close to 40 young birds a year. Doesn't look too bad on the surface but we have only had 7 years out of the 20 where we fledged more than 40 birds in any year. That is only a little over one third of the time. We have been on a down skid from 2002, or six years in a row. 2008 was a very tough year. No birds fledged this year on the HWNT, the Dow Wetlands, the Rupert Reserve, the Hyde Fruit farm, the Bums farm near Oil Springs or the Prout farm south of Forest. Of course our boxes did produce at least double the quantity of tree swallows and a good number of house wrens. In reviewing the results in the Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society newsletter, I find their results are also cyclical and that other trail operators have experienced similar results as I have. A quote from a recent OEBS newsletter states, "the eastern bluebird population in Ontario reached its highest point in the last 60 years in the fall of 2002 and has since declined," confirm my experience.

The eastern bluebird trail experience can often be frustrating but there are many rewards for volunteers that diligently monitor their boxes and produce young birds that carry on their species. The foster "parents" that work with me such as Karen Bums, Ross Graham, Kim Gledhill, Melissa Levi, Judie Scott, Ann Smith and Gloria Strevel can attest to the pleasures of operating part of a bluebird trail. I thank them on behalf of the club and myself for their valuable contribution.

A comparison of the 2007/2008 Bluebird nesting seasons are:

Year	Lambton County		North Bruce Peninsula	
	2008	2007	2008	2007
# of nest boxes	78	80	04	05
# nestings	03	23	15	20
# young hatched	10	23	08	09
# young fledged	10	23	08	09

Submitted by Don Smith

**3rd Annual Carden Nature Festival**

Submitted by Lou Probst,

Carden Field Naturalists

Friday June 5th to Sunday June 7th, 2009

Looking for an affordable weekend getaway? The Carden Nature Festival is the answer. A virtual smorgasbord of environmental delights. Choose from over 100 events - birds, spiders, moths, fish and butterflies. Dragonflies and those fascinating alvar flowers, mosses and lichens. Sitting, walking, pedaling, paddling, cycling, hiking, and flying. Checkout the website [www.CardenGuide.com/Festival](http://www.CardenGuide.com/Festival) after December 15th. Registration begins January 12th, 2009.

The Group Discount is back too. This is a great way to earn your club some money in 2009. Over \$300 was paid out last year. Get signed up and spread the word. Call Gayle at (705) 326-1620 or e-mail at [gayle@couchconservancy.ca](mailto:gayle@couchconservancy.ca) or register on the website after January 12th, 2009.

----- CUT AND MAIL -----

**To help us serve you better  
please circle or check (optional):**

Age Groups: Under 12   12-20   20-40   40-60  
60-80   over 80   or   M. Y. O. B.

Interests:   Birds   Flowers   Animals   Insects  
Fungi   Fish   Trees  
Conservation   Environment  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Activities: Hiking   Camping   Bicycle Riding  
Canoeing   Walking   Talking  
Writing   Cross Country Skiing  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Might be willing to:

Serve on Committee  
Chair Committee  
Serve on Board  
Act as LWI Representative  
Come to Indoor Meetings  
Go on Outings  
Participate in Slide Show  
Be an Advisor

Other Information to Share with LWI:

Need transportation to meetings \_\_\_\_\_  
Special skills or work experience \_\_\_\_\_

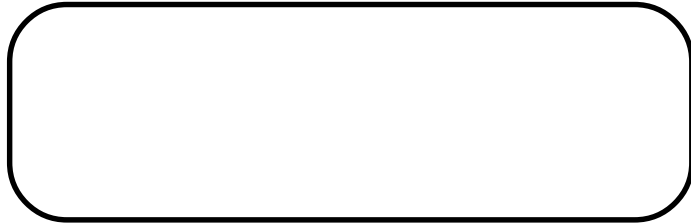
**Camping in Point Pelee: May 12 to 16.**

Paul Carter has just been able to confirm our camping reservations in Point Pelee for this Spring's bird migration. Individual camping reservations are not available within the National Park. There is only one place within the National Park where they permit Group camping and reservations are very difficult to obtain. We have usually booked camping during the first week in May....slightly before the peak of migration, but also before the peak of the crowds. Unfortunately, at that time, the weather tends to be cold and a touch damp and "big birding days" are less common than during the peak of migration.

This year, we have booked our LWI camping time over a week later, at the normal peak of warbler migration... in on Tuesday, May 12 and out on Saturday, May 16th. .. 4 nights, for only \$64.00 per person (total). (Our Point Pelee camping will be right after the Pelee Island Springsong birding festival, May 8 – 10).

Paul has been able to book for 8 adults and 1 youth, at Little Racoon North, between the comfort station and the shelter. This is the prime area. LWI has had to prepay for the sites, so member support is hugely needed. Paul needs your reservations right away. If we have a demand for more than 8, at this time, Paul may be able to get more spaces. That will be unlikely the closer we get to May. A week later than in the past should bring a lot better weather and a lot more birds. Please call Paul Carter as soon as possible with your reservations. 519-344-2571. This is our longest running outdoor program. It is a wonderful way to experience one of the most significant spring bird migrations in North America. Bird at the hottest spot, with our birding experts...it's a great way to learn. Thankfully, Lambton Wildlife members have been able to take advantage of this low cost, amazing birding opportunity for decades. We want to be able to continue this tradition, but this will happen only if LWI members participate.

Malcolm Boyd



**Board of Directors:**

Malcolm Boyd	President
Richard Maxfield	President Elect
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Mary Margaret McGrail	Board Member
Cheryl Veary	Webmaster

Deadline for February issue is  
**Friday, January 30th, 2009**

Please leave typed material or discs in  
mailbox  
at 502 Roosevelt Drive  
or email to:  
gpcatt@xcelco.on.ca

----- CUT AND MAIL -----

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Mail to : Lambton Wildlife Inc. Box 681 SARNIA, ON N7T 7J7



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_ Earthways via email? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Membership fees: Single \$20 Family \$25 Young Naturalist \$15 (\$5 ea. add'l child) (Circle one)

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Business number 11900 4620 RR0001) Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_