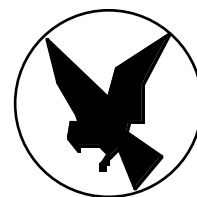


# EARTHWAYS<sup>©</sup>



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

Gordon Catterson - Editor

Cheryl Veary-Webmaster

**November, 2008**

Website: [www.lambtonwildlife.com](http://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

November 24, 2008

### Rural Lambton Stewardship Network

Ron Ludolph, the Stewardship Coordinator for RLSN, will talk about the numerous, comprehensive, multi-partner stewardship projects which focus on projects for habitat restoration, conservation and enhancement. The RLSN promotes private land stewardship at the grass roots level.

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

### LWI Annual General Meeting-Mandaumin U.C. 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.

## Outdoor Program

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.

### Birding Niagara

Saturday, November 29, 2008

Meet: 03:30 a.m. Car pool from Sarnia or meet at Van Wagner's Beach, Stoney Creek at 7:30 am. We will be searching for uncommon to rare gulls and ducks which concentrate in the Niagara Gorge, from above the falls to Niagara on the Lake. Last year we spotted a Northern Gannett.

Contact leader Paul Carter: 344-2571

### Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 13th, 2008.

Register with Alf well ahead if you want to participate so he can arrange coverage for the territories. Participants will meet in the Pinery afterwards for result tallies and refreshments.

Coordinator: Alf Rider 519-786-4213

### \*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

Coordinator: Gord Catterson 519-337-1246

Index	Reports
Indoor Program .....	1
President's Message .....	2
Outdoor Program .....	1
Young Naturalists .....	3
Board of Directors .....	8
<u>Outings</u>	
Skunk's Misery .....	6
<u>Articles</u>	
Phragmites .....	8
Book Review .....	6,7
Carolinian West. ....	4,5
October Indoor Mtg ....	4
Fungi Foray .....	5
<u>Notices</u>	
Deadline .....	8
In Memorium .....	3
Suncor Grant .....	3
Winter camping .....	5
Questionnaire .....	3

## Greetings from the President

Increasing the awareness of habitat destruction wildlife, focussing on birds.

One of the reasons we had the recent public presentation by Hugh McArthur, from Bird Studies Canada, on bird feeding was to increase awareness of the public of its importance and encourage people to feed the birds, especially in the winter. When people see birds up close at their feeders, they will learn to identify them (using an introductory field guide) and then want to identify others. Then they might become interested in their life cycle and numbers distribution and become aware of the fact that bird habitat is generally being destroyed around the world. The Globe and Mail reported on September 23/08 that there has been a precipitous decline of more than 50 percent in the populations of 20 of the most common North American birds over

the past four decades. This has alarmed conservationists who say the trend is an indicator of a serious deterioration in the environment. Hugh McArthur stated at our meeting that bird feeding wasn't important at all in terms of bird health as there was lots of natural feed around for them. He said people should feed birds only in order to see them up close, in their backyards. I spent the next morning with Hugh driving around the Port Franks area looking for possible locations for a bird observatory and I challenged him on that statement. In the grand scheme of things he was clearly wrong. Over the years, there has been a huge destruction of winter habitat for birds that migrate from further north and for the local residents. Clearly there would be much fewer birds being able to winter over in this area compared to time of European settlement, if it wasn't for bird feeding. Hugh must not take part in Christmas counts.

Christmas gifts: There is a plethora of new birding field guides at the book stores. It must be Christmas time as they make such great gifts to anyone interested in birding. Given the number of new field guides and the updating of existing ones, there must be quite a demand. That is good news for increasing environmental awareness.

I visited a Chapters/Indigo book store in Toronto recently and found the following:

- Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America, by Ted Floyd, editor of Birding Magazine. Publisher, Harper Collins. \$29.00. This is one of the new 'Field Guides' which certainly don't fit in your pocket...you need a MEC (Mountain Equipment Co-op) shoulder bag to carry it. (That is another great gift for the birder in your life). It is 512 pages, with only 2 birds on each page -2 or more photographs for each bird. Also included is a birdsong DVD with the songs of 587 birds. This book is likely to become a bible for many.
- Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America, 2008, by Roger Tory Peterson. This is an update by others as Roger is long gone. The guide is 530 pages and 1 inch higher and 1/3 inch wider than the Smithsonian book. I don't consider it a 'field guide', even with a MEC bag. It is, like the popular Sibley guides, more suitable as a car or home guide. This book is for those who think it is sacrilegious to go birding with anything other than a Peterson.
- Field Guide to the Birds of Ontario. By J. Hughes, published by the Royal Ontario Museum. \$30.00
- Birds of Ontario by A. Bezoner, published by Lone Pine, \$27. The Lone Pine series (esp. fungi) are very good.
- Ontario Birds: Chris Fisher: no further information.
- Birds of Canada, by F.J. Alsop, D.K Publications. No further information.
- Also remember the Breeding Bird Atlas of Ontario. See p. 6,7. LWI has ordered 5+ copies so you should be able to purchase it at the reduced price.

Please see the last edition of Earthways for my plug for the new Field Guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Algonquin Park and surrounds. It can be ordered from the Friends of Algonquin Park. Mine arrived quickly and it is really well done.

I also 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.

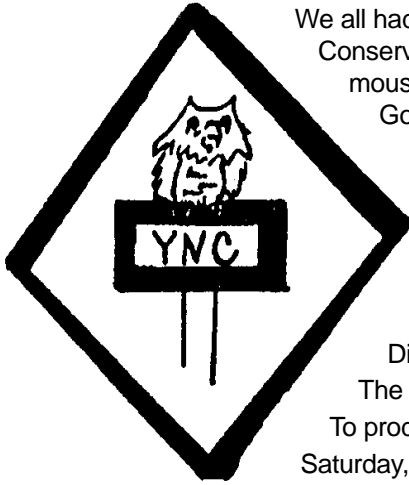
If none of the above gift ideas interest you and you are tired of giving people 'things' that they likely don't really need or want, (and who might be tired of receiving such gifts), please consider giving those special people a membership to Ontario Nature or better still to Lambton Wildlife (if they are out of towners, they will still get Earthways). Or, as more and more people are doing, make a donation in their name to Lambton Wildlife, to go towards our purchase of rare, natural habitat to save it from destruction. We will give you a tax receipt. We hope to more fully develop a gifting program similar to that developed by Nature Conservancy Canada.

Enjoy your strategic environmental gifting, your winter feeders and hope to see many of you at our Christmas Bird Count on December 13. Call Alf Rider (519-786-4213) if you are interested.

Seasons Greetings

Malcolm Boyd

### Young Naturalists



We all had a wonderful day at the Bluewater Centre for Raptor Rehabilitation (BCRR). The Jr. Conservationists spent the day there volunteering at the centre. They helped to clean bird and mouse cages, feed the birds, clean up the centre and even do some landscaping work!!!

Good job guys! The Young Naturalists joined us for a tour around the centre and enjoyed a guided hike through the property's woodlot with one of the BCRR's educational birds – Striker (an American Kestrel). It was a fascinating experience for kids and parents alike!!

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

Monday November 24th, 2008: Fundraiser Sale @ Indoor LWI Monthly Meeting.  
Time: 7:00-7:30 we will be selling 100% recycled Christmas Gift Tags!

Did You Know?:

The US alone sells over 1.9 billion Christmas Cards every year!!!

To produce this many cards requires approximately 300,000 trees!!!

Saturday, Dec. 13th, 2008: Painting 'Awareness Signs' @ Canatara Park (just outside of the Animal Farm). Time: 1:00-3:00 PM.

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

Saturday November 15th, 2008: Rammed Earth Bricks Project @ Henderson CA (Petrolia). Time: 10:00AM-3:00PM.

Saturday December 6th, 2008: Sign Building @ Henderson CA (Petrolia). Time: 10:00AM-3:00PM.

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

Melissa Levi

insektiv@hotmail.com

#### LWI Member Questionnaire:

The returns to date have been disappointing. Many didn't notice it in the October Earthways or read my "Greetings from the President" column. The questionnaire is the last 2 pages of the October Earthways. Please tear it off, fill it in and submit it at the November 24th general meeting or mail it ... our address is on the first page of Earthways. If you cannot find the October Earthways, please contact Dick Maxfield (jmaxfield@sympatico.ca or 519-542-7914) and he will send you one, or Gord Catterson (519-337-1246 or gpcatt@xcelco.on.ca) and he can send you one electronically. They will also be available at the November meeting. We were hoping to use the results from this questionnaire to improve on what we do at Lambton Wildlife. It is really important that you fill it out and submit it.

Malcolm Boyd

*Once again Dick Maxfield has obtained this grant for LWI. Well done, Dick!*

#### Suncor Energy Foundation Grant

Suncor Energy Foundation (SEF) has awarded \$2,000.00 to Lambton Wildlife Inc. as part of SEF's 2008 Community Service Grant program. The award is in recognition of LWI's volunteer work to make the Sarnia-Lambton community a better place to live. LWI has received \$14,500.00 in grants from SEF over the past 8 years.

#### In Memorium:

A longtime LWI member Joan Banks died on October 14th, 2008 at Marshall Gowland Manor where she had resided for the past few years. While not recently active in the organization she was very active in the club's earlier years. She was a member of the executive alongside founding members Peter and Elizabeth Tasker and was one of the members of the Charter Board.

She was also instrumental in the successful completion of fund raising for the purchase of Mandaumin Woods when it was purchased in 1972.

An active gardener she was renowned for her orchids and won many awards and prizes for them. Some may recall the gorgeous display of them when Robert Bateman spoke at SCITS many years ago. More recently she remained active on LWI outings and frequently accompanied her husband Peter on his 'Fungi Forays'.

A celebration of her life attended by many friends including many LWI members was held at the Sarnia Riding Club on October 19th.

Donations in her memory to LWI, the Alzheimer Society or charity of choice in lieu of flowers have been requested.

Our condolences to Peter and family.

Gord Catterson

### October Indoor Meeting:

There was a very good turnout of about 110 members and friends for the October meeting which featured Hugh McArthur of Bird Studies Canada speaking on Project Feeder Watch.

Prior to Hugh's talk President Malcolm Boyd introduced a trial speaker system which the club is considering purchasing if reports on it are favourable. Ever since the indoor meetings were moved to the current location sound has been a problem, and it is hoped this system will resolve it. Initial feedback seemed positive.

Malcolm also had examples of the two types of phragmites mentioned in last month's Earthways. One is the domestic species *Phragmites australis americanus* while the other is the European common reed *phragmites australis australis*. They look very similar but the non-native plant is highly invasive and can thrive even without water. Malcolm pointed out the differences which were described in the Earthways article, but having the two plants side by side helped to differentiate them. (See also p.8).

Hugh was then introduced by Joan Difruscia who said that Hugh has a BA in Musical Arts from UWO. He was for 35 years a school teacher and is currently a Director with Bird Studies Canada. He was a founder of the Friends of Long Point Bird Observatory, is widely traveled, is a rug hooker and a fan of the Toronto Maple Leafs. As the husband of a rug hooker I can assure you that the last two require infinite patience.

Hugh began by saying that Project Feeder Watch operates in Canada and the U.S.A. with about 2500 watchers in Canada and about 13,500 in the U.S. He described it as a citizen science endeavour which involved the public in professional research. It was started in 1987 and studies the distribution and abundance of birds which frequent bird feeders. Monitors record the birds that visit bird feeders coast to coast and from Florida to the N.W. Territories. Watchers are particularly concentrated in the N.E. states and the west coast. The data is used to monitor bird movement and the spread of disease.

An example is the spread of house finches and a disease that affects their eyes causing them to go blind and die. As a result of legislation passed in the United States regarding free flying birds in captivity pet shop owners were forced to release 50 caged house finches in the 1940's. They have since spread across the continent and are now one of the most frequent feeder visitors

Hugh then went on to describe how the system works. The first step is to set up the count site. He said to establish a bird friendly habitat that can be easily viewed. Bird friendly means having bushes and trees close by to which the birds can retreat should a predator appear. He also described the various types of feeders that can be used. These fall into essentially four categories, hopper, platform, nyger (or tube or thistle) and suet feeders. The last one is a small cage which will accommodate a cake of suet.

The counting involves selecting 2 days every 2 weeks within the count period of November 8th through to April. The observation time is flexible but must be the same two days

every second week for a predetermined time. The length of time is not rigid but should be consistent and you should keep track of the amount of time you spend observing. The next step is to do the actual counting including both birds attracted to your feeder but also those that are attracted to plantings. Predatory birds should be included but not birds merely flying overhead. You count the most you see at one time but don't add them together. For example if on day 1 you saw two cardinals and on day 2 you saw three you should report three, not five.

Finally the data is submitted. This can be done by sending in the data by computer or mail as it is collected, that is after each two day count period. This is preferred. You can also submit it by hand if you are close by. The second method which is less desirable is to submit it at the end of the count period. You also report weather conditions and the amount of time spent counting.

Hugh mentioned that the top five species sighted are black-capped chickadees, blue jays, American goldfinches, hairy woodpeckers and dark-eyed juncos.

After signing up you receive a kit which includes an instruction book, recording sheets, a poster, a calendar and 4 issues of BirdWatch, the Bird Studies Canada magazine.

Hugh was thanked by Maris Apse for a fine presentation.

Gord Catterson

### ON Regional Meeting:

The fall meeting of the Carolinian West region was held in Ingersoll on Saturday, November 1st. In attendance were the Ingersoll Nature Club, McIlraith Field Naturalists, Carolinian Canada, Sydenham Field Naturalists, Friends of Rondeau, Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee, Lambton Wildlife Inc., St. Thomas Field naturalists, and representatives from Ontario Nature.

The meeting commenced under the new Chairperson, Anne McArthur from Friends of Rondeau. She succeeded Brenda Lorenz who has been Chairperson for the past several years.

The first issue was the usual roundtable discussion of recent events in the various clubs. One noteworthy item was McIlraith reporting that they had held their 100th anniversary bird count, and were the first organization in Canada to start an annual bird count. Apparently two school boys started the count in 1909, before the club was known as McIlraith. They also reported receiving a Trillium grant to study bald eagles in their area.

Carolinian Canada mentioned a new initiative, that of investigating species at risk. Also a new program pursuing a habitat outreach strategy which involves connecting with other groups.

Nelson Laporte reported for LWI describing recent programs such as the native plant and birding courses as well as publishing initiatives which are being pursued. I mentioned the recent (Thursday, Oct. 30th) mapping of the Ausable Trail by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority which I will describe in an upcoming article.

Ingersoll reported on a new brochure which they have

produced on the Lawson Nature Reserve in Ingersoll. The Natural Habitat Network of Essex County & Windsor reported that they now have 50 different species under cultivation in their Seeds of Hope program. They are also continuing their project of certifying home landscaping. As well they have a rain barrel project which uses old rain barrels to collect rainwater which can be used to irrigate plants.

Brenda Lorenz reported that the 2010 ON AGM will be held in Sarnia as a joint project of 5 groups. The groups are Sarnia Urban Wildlife, L.W.I., Sydenham F.N., Friends of the Pinery and Carolinian Canada.

St. Thomas reported that they are looking at a new book by Alistair Mackenzie and Scott Gillingwater on Reptiles & Amphibians.

Friends of Rondeau said that they were anticipating a new park superintendent as the former manager has retired.

Clare Mitchell, the regional coordinator, reviewed the AGM resolutions to be debated at the AGM. One resolution addresses the issue of the siting of wind turbines in an important bird area near Lakes St. Clair and Erie. The deadline for submission of resolutions is Christmas.

Clare emphasized the Nature Almanac and said it was not being used as well as it could. This is a calendar on the ON website which member clubs can use to post their upcoming activities for the benefit of other clubs. She also made a plea for the submission of articles for Nature Network News, the monthly newsletter she publishes.

Next she mentioned that applications for insurance are due by Nov. 30th and that about half of the member clubs use it. She also mentioned that there are many resources on the website for member clubs to access. A good example is a speakers list with 130 speakers on it. Also material for junior naturalists.

She then noted that the 2009 AGM will be held in Southampton in conjunction with the Huron Fringe Birding Festival. LWI members may recall Doug Pedwell and Stewart Nutt from the March 2007 indoor meeting when they talked on this huge activity.

Finally she mentioned the deadline for the 2009 Conservation awards is March 6th, 2009.

Anne Bell, Director of Conservation and Environmental Education for ON then talked on several ongoing and new initiatives. First was the Boreal Forest Project which Jennifer Baker talked to the club about in September of 2007. It is an area of 225,000 sq. kms. or twice the size of England or 19 million hockey rinks. It is mainly north of the 50th parallel and the aim is to permanently protect 50% of it from logging and mining. However she said there is a great deal of opposition with legislation coming up and proposed changes to the Mining Act are especially troublesome. Another concern is clear cut logging threatening the woodland caribou as well as birds who depend on the boreal forest for reproduction.

Anne also mentioned a project to produce a herptile atlas for eastern Ontario as well as ALUS, the Alternative Land Use Services project which provides financial aid to farmers to encourage environmental initiatives.

Finally Jessica Happl and Bill Bes made a presentation on a project in Woodstock that they have been pursuing for the past few years. They are members of the Friends of Pittock which was formed to protect a natural corridor running along the Gordon Pittock reservoir which is managed by the Upper Thames Conservation Authority. The town wanted to sell off 3 areas to developers for home building and construction of a golf course. The group demonstrated the changes to this natural area over the past 50 years or so and demonstrated how small it had become over the years as developers were allowed to take over many of the natural areas. They said that by using the words found in the conservation authority's own management plan they were able to convince council to vote to preserve the natural areas, showing how a determined effort by citizens can effectively turn thing about. They have a website at <[www.friendsofpitock.ca](http://www.friendsofpitock.ca)>

The next meeting is scheduled for March 29th and will be held in Sarnia.

Gord Catterson

### Fungi Foray

On October 4th Peter Banks led us through a portion of the Lambton Heritage Forest and later to an area close to Mystery Falls. We were surprised that the number and variety of mushrooms were not as high as we expected. However this did present the opportunity to more closely examine those we did find. We found over forty species from tough, long lived Polypores to small, wilting Mycena.

We learned of the difficulty of identifying Russala. How the mushroom peels and tasting a small portion, which most of us did, are helpful. Would history be different if Peter had been Claudius' chef?

Yet another great outdoor meeting. Thanks Peter and all participants.

Chris Holding

*Last chance. Call Fern if you are interested.*

### Winter Camping:

I've been discussing with Ron Baker, who is a director on the board for Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory, a winter trip (Feb. 09) to note whatever wildlife is resident in February in the Cabot Head, Wingfield basin area. The Bruce Trail used to go through this area but now skirts it.

The high Cabot Head escarpment, and the large basin is very scenic, and harbors much wildlife. The idea is to snowshoe in from Dyers Bay to the basin or light house, and camp there for a few days. While there we would scout the area for any wildlife, or signs of, and take in the scenery. This is cold tent camping and involves snowshoeing some 10 km to get to the reserve area. We would not use the lodge that is there since it is closed up for the winter. I'm organizing this trip through the Lambton Outdoor Club and would welcome any able LWI member. (the key word here is "able"). My contact phone number 542-9694 or email <[fern@ebtech.net](mailto:fern@ebtech.net)> for anyone interested.

Fern Noel

### Sorry You Missed It !

On the LWI October outing it was Larry Cornelis who led the parade which began in Newbury.

Newbury is a little town nestled in the heart of Skunk's Misery in Middlesex County. Early settlers' hopes of earning a living farming were dashed because the sandy soil would not cooperate. However it did support large numbers of skunks. So trapping skunks and exporting the pelts became the "modus vivendi". The furs were sold as "sable".....an agreeable product for sellers and buyers and a misery for the skunks!

Nine of us enjoyed the fresh air and sunshine which followed us on trails through three different properties open to the public and owned by the County. Larry described them as being among the best Carolinian sites in SW Ontario. Although logging had taken place in the past we were amazed at the not-often-seen 100 foot canopy.

Among the ferns we saw were: Northern lady fern with its comma shaped spores, royal fern, sensitive fern which has separate spore fronds and doesn't like the cold, large Interrupted fern whose sporing leaflets are found midway along the stalk, New York fern whose pinnae run the full length of the stalk, spinulose wood fern, and cinnamon fern which gets its name from the colour of its separate spore frond.

Our main focus was on trees: Flowering dogwood with its lovely red leaves and berries; black cherry (with the burnt corn flake bark), one of which had a 1.5 foot diameter trunk; sassafras trees growing in groves formed from underground root spread. They came in all sizes from seedlings to a "giant" with a 1 foot diameter. Scraped sassafras bark emits a distinctive aroma - the essence which is used to make root beer! The leaf shapes vary and the vibrant yellows, oranges, and reds can all appear on the same tree at once. We also admired shagbark hickory, the smooth bark of the American beech, black ash, service berry, and the endangered American chestnut which once comprised 75 % of our deciduous forests. Today it is struggling to survive and we no longer see mature trees. Young trees seem to get off to a good start but soon succumb to an introduced fungus. We were thrilled to see one that had reached 20 feet!

There were many interesting shrubs. The *viburnum acerfolium* sported lovely pink maple shaped leaves and blue berries. The fragrant rubbed bark of the spicebush was a good identifier. Nannyberry showed off next year's flower buds. The witchhazel had lost its leaves but was adorned with bright yellow flowers with threadlike twisted petals. Blue beech/ironwood showed long rippling "muscles".

Lunch time found us all in a row on the sunny side of a dirt road perched on bales of straw which Larry had brought for that purpose....a picnic to remember!!

Herbaceous plants of interest included tall sunflower, bedstraw, horse balm, Virginia knotweed, clear weed, bristly green brier, blue-stemmed goldenrod, blue cohosh, and white baneberry.t

Our tour ended in the shadow of a mighty tulip tree - our "piece de resistance"! The large straight rough barked tree

was "balding" at the base, something that doesn't happen until the tree is at least 150 years old. The height of the balding is a good indicator of the age of the tree, which Larry put at 170 to 180 years. The base was buttressed and we gazed way up to the stag headed top. Mature tulip trees will be the tallest trees in the deciduous forest.

Larry had scouted the area the previous day which made our day perfect! We really appreciate it, Larry and hope to do it again soon!

Judie Scott



### Book Review

Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005.

This is a huge, beautiful book, packed with information interesting to birders, but also fascinating to anyone caring about the natural world and the changes we are seeing in it in our lifetimes, specifically in Ontario. It was published in late 2007, the second such

Breeding Bird Atlas, the first having been produced exactly 20 years ago, so not only does it give a picture of the current status and distribution of the birds of the province, but it permits quite precise quantification of both increases and decreases in bird populations as well as advances and retreats in their Ontario range across the last two decades. It is a monumental work. Data were collected by 3417 observers, clocking 152,263 hours of effort over the five years, in a landmass stretching from Middle Island in Lake Erie, at the latitude of Rome and northern California, to the subarctic tundra on the shores of Hudson Bay. And this prodigious amount of data is brilliantly presented. Each of the 286 breeding species has a lucid written account illustrated by superb photos of the birds themselves, often accompanied by nest and habitat shots. The maps are amazing. Each species has a Breeding Evidence map, clearly demonstrating its likely presence or absence in every one of the 10km squares covered (100km in northern Ontario), with dots to show if the species was recorded in both atlases, only the first one, or newly in the current one, giving an invaluable picture of range expansions and contractions. Point Counts – recording all birds seen and heard at prescribed locations for exactly five minutes – also allowed the production of Relative Abundance maps for almost half the breeding species, often giving a surprising picture of where relatively common species are in fact most common.

The face of Ontario has changed dramatically in the last 20 years, and human population growth and changes in land use are well reflected by this atlas. In the south, the suburban sprawl of cities, with the resultant loss of wetlands and agricultural acreage, has driven out some more reclusive bird species, but has also encouraged those more able to adapt to urbanization – just think of all those Canada geese

grazing on condominium lawns beside our yacht-filled harbours, and the "McDonald's" gulls fighting over spilt French fries in our paved-over malls. But with the abandonment of marginal farmland, there has also been a significant increase in forest cover across northeastern North America, and this has benefited some shyer woodland species.

One of the more surprising findings of this second atlas is the fact that, overall, more species have increased rather than decreased in numbers in Ontario in the last 20 years. Though there were variations by region and habitat, over the whole province 74 bird species showed statistically significant population increases, while 39 showed significant decreases. Common Ravens have expanded south into much of the land they probably occupied before the pioneer clearances and eastern bluebirds have survived European starlings usurping their nesting cavities by volunteers setting-up starling-proof nest boxes along many new "bluebird trails" in open country. But grassland birds and the aerial foragers – swallows and swifts, nighthawks and whip-poor-wills - seem in precipitous decline, for reasons that are unclear, probably complex, and evident across North America.

So, this book is wonderful to browse through, or to consult for specific information - a must for the cottage or the Toronto backyard. It is thoroughly scientific, yet uniformly well written and accessible, with wonderful far-ranging chapters outside the actual species accounts. It is most attractively illustrated, and the whole production is of an extremely high standard. It is published by a partnership between Bird Studies Canada, Environment Canada, the Ontario Field Ornithologists, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and Ontario Nature. The book is large (and quite weighty), 9x12", with over 700 pages, and sells for \$92.50 plus GST. To order the Atlas, phone 1-800-440-2366 (416-444-8419 in Toronto) or go on-line at [www.birdsontario.org](http://www.birdsontario.org)

Margaret Bain

Dr. Margaret Bain (M.B.Ch.B 1961, F.R.C.S.Ed. 1965) is a retired obstetrician-gynaecologist with an (almost) obsessive interest in birding, in Ontario and around the world. She is the Ontario Regional Editor for the quarterly publication *North American Birds* and was the 2005-2007 Chair of the Ontario Bird Records Committee. This review first appeared in the EDUCT newsletter, Issue 18, September 2008, of the Edinburgh University Club of Toronto.

----- 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Atlas of the BREEDING BIRDS OF ONTARIO

Order today while quantities last.

The ideal gift for yourself, and for anyone interested in birds and nature.

The full retail price including GST is \$97.13.

Your club can purchase the book for only \$77.70!

(when ordering 5 or more copies; includes GST and shipping within Canada.) n.b. LWI has already done so!

How to order:

Place a credit card order by phone:

416-444-8419, or 1-800-440-2366 (within Ontario)

or complete this order form and mail the form and payment to:

Ontario Nature, 366 Adelaide Street West, Suite 201,  
Toronto, Ontario, M5V 1R9

Please allow up to three weeks for delivery.

Order by November 14 to ensure pre-Christmas delivery.

Please send us \_\_\_\_\_ copies.

\_\_\_\_\_ Payment enclosed (please include cheque, payable to "Ontario Nature")

Please charge my:  MasterCard  VISA  AMEX  
Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Club Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_

Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Yes! My club plans to donate the book(s) to libraries in our community.

Again LWI has already done so!

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 \_\_\_\_\_

**Phragmites:**

Soon after the article "A new Subspecies of Common Reed Grass Invades Our Wetlands" appeared in the September Earthways, Malcolm Boyd asked me if I could bring a specimen of the native subspecies to the next LWI meeting to show our members the difference between the native and the invading species. When I told him that I had never seen the native plant Malcolm decided to abandon the idea.

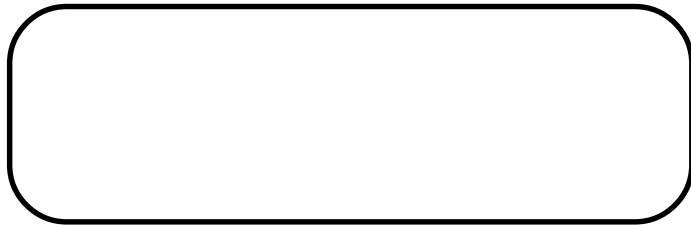
Five days before the October meeting we met John Haggeman, Manager of the St Clair Marsh Wildlife Refuge, at a reception in Strathroy. John H. said that both the native and the introduced subspecies are found in the St.Clair Marsh and that the Sydenham Field Naturalists were coming there the day before our LWI meeting.

Larry Cornelis was at the St.Clair Marsh outing and brought us specimens of the native subspecies and a specmen of the invasive alien for comparison. These are the reeds that I took to the LWI meeting.

John Haggeman said that the native plant grows somewhat sparsely with considerable diversity of other plants underneath whereas the alien grows very densely, crowding out everything else. The native has reddish brown internodes at the base of the stem while the alien is all pale yellowish brown. The flowering plume is more delicate and tends to bend over on the native while the invasive plume is more dense, upright, and persistent. The invasive plant tends to be more robust and taller. Larry Cornelis said that he could easily see the difference between the two subspecies when there were patches of both in view.

Disturbing notes are that Jane Bowles says that she has seen invasive plants with red lower internodes and it has been suggested that the two subspecies may hybridize. If anyone spots a patch of the native species please let me know. Take a picture or bring me a stem.

Dorothy Tiedje



**Board of Directors:**

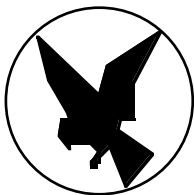
Malcolm Boyd	President
Richard Maxfield	President Elect
Janet Bremner	Past President
Mary Martin	Secretary
Bill Scott	Treasurer
Wayne Bowen	Board member
Krista Cowieson	Board Member
Robert Difruscia	Board Member
Joe Donohue	Board Member
Alexia Gladdy	Board member
Tania Havelka	Board member
Melissa Levi	Board Member
Eric Marcum	Board Member
Mary Margaret McGrail	Board Member
Cheryl Veary	Webmaster

Deadline for January issue is  
**Friday, January 2, 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_