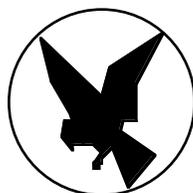


Lambton Wildlife Incorporated



*A Guide to
The
Natural Areas
Of
Lambton County*

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We need the tonic of wildness, to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground.

At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be infinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed because unfathomable.

We can never have enough of nature. We must be refreshed by the sight of inexhaustible vigor, vast and titanic features, the seacoast with its wrecks, the wilderness with its living and its decaying trees, the thundercloud, and the rain which lasts three weeks and produces freshets. We need to witness our own limits transgressed and some life pasturing freely where we never wander.

*Henry David Thoreau
Walden*

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Guide to the Natural Areas of Lambton County

1st Edition

2009

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Lambton Wildlife Incorporated (LWI) is the leading field naturalist, conservation and environmental group in Lambton County, and one of the foremost naturalist groups in Southwestern Ontario. It has a long and proud record of environmental leadership not only in promoting the natural environment but also by acting to secure and preserve important habitats in Lambton County.

LWI was founded in 1966 as the Lambton Field Naturalists. Its purpose as described in the by-laws is to encourage and promote the conservation, preservation and protection of the natural environment, and in particular to be concerned with the natural history of Lambton County.

LWI has received many awards and recognition for the work it has done including several from the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, the Mayor's Honour List, the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce Certificate of Recognition, Imperial Oil Volunteer Excellence Certificate, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Award, the Sarnia Lambton Visitor and Convention Bureau Ambassador Award, Carolinian Canada Conservation Award and the St. Clair River Waterways for Wildlife's 2002 Environmental Stewardship Award. LWI looks forward to continuing its important work in the future in order to protect and enhance our natural environment.

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Information published herein is believed to be accurate. However LWI accepts no responsibility for certifying the accuracy of the information and visitors to these sites are solely responsible for their own safety and should obtain permission if necessary, before entering any site.

Preface

This guide is intended to be a general introduction to natural areas in Lambton County. It also includes brief descriptions of significant natural areas reasonably close to, but not within, Lambton County. Some examples include Rondeau Provincial Park, Point Pelee National Park, Walpole Island First Nations Territory and Joany's Woods. All are outstanding natural areas accessible from Lambton County within a short drive. As well several interesting sites in nearby Kent county are included.

The guide came about as a result of a bird identification course presented by Lambton Wildlife Incorporated in 2006. Participants asked if there were a guide to birding "hot" spots in the county and, while there are several guides to specific areas, there appeared to be none that catalogued the whole county. Subsequently it was decided to try and include references to good botanical areas as well as good insect and fungi locations. This guide is designed to point out the key natural areas not only to local residents but also visiting naturalists. It will show what this area has to offer, and therefore serve as an invitation to potential visitors.

For the birder, limitless possibilities exist. One can see at least 250 species of birds in the general area in one year with some effort. Some of the best marshland available for waterfowl in Canada is located in this area. Lake St. Clair is also the main staging area for migratory waterfowl in Ontario. In 2000 the eastern Lake St. Clair area was designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA), as is the Port Franks Forested Dunes. Not surprisingly, many species may be seen flying overhead. Swans are a good example in the spring. They may be seen in large flocks during the month of March at "Lake Smith" (the lake no longer exists) behind the Lambton County Museum. Resting flocks may also be observed in fields around Wallaceburg.

For those interested in plants there are descriptions of a variety of interesting locations which contain many species of plants. As well there is an attempt to highlight the best spots for finding butterflies, damselflies and dragonflies and a brief guide to good fungi locations.

The maps on pages 15 & 16 are intended to orient visitors as to where the areas are located relative to major roads, and are not meant to be accurate road maps. People visiting these sites should do so in conjunction with the directions for each location and a reliable road map.

Flora & Fauna in LAMBTON COUNTY

Lambton County is located on the northwestern edge of the Carolinian Life Zone (the Eastern Deciduous Forest biome) that extends from Georgia and the Carolinas west to the Mississippi River. Species such as paw-paw, Kentucky coffee tree, southern flying squirrel, opossums, Acadian flycatchers and many others rarely occur north of this zone.

Horticulturists refer to the county's largest community, the City of Sarnia, as being in Zone 5b to 6 which supports the healthy growth of vegetation found in more southerly areas of the United States.

This climatic condition means that the St. Clair River to the west never freezes and Lake Huron seldom completely does. That is not to say that spring ice packs from Lake Huron can't jam the river from shore to shore in March. What it does mean is that these same bodies of water can support large colonies of water birds in mild winters and numerous nesting land-birds in the summer.

The county is also a part of the great Mississippi Flyway over which migrating northern nesting birds pass in the spring and fall. This situation gives rise to a very large number of unusual sightings of species that usually are found elsewhere on the continent the rest of the year.

In the information that follows you will see that, over the last 25 or more years, the diversity of bird species seen here exceeds 350, all of which are properly documented and/or confirmed by competent observers. The locations of these sightings are described and the species seen there are usually defined by seasonal occurrence.

The county is bordered by the Ausable River in the east, Lake Huron to the north and follows the shoreline south and west to the city of Sarnia and the Village of Point Edward, then south to Walpole Island with the St. Clair River to the west, then east to County Line Woods and north to the Ausable River near the village of Arkona. The southern border is Lambton Line.

Birding

The excellent natural areas to explore include the Ausable River valley, Lake Smith, Pinery Provincial Park, Kettle Point, Lambton Area Water Supply, Point Edward, Sarnia Bay and the waterfront, Canatara Park, St. Clair River, Walpole Island, County Line Woods, Wawanosh Wetlands and sewage lagoons at Grand Bend, Thedford, Bright's Grove (Sarnia), Sombra and Port Lambton. Many other areas, as described in this guide, also provide good birding opportunities, and locations relatively close to Lambton County such as Point Pelee and Long Point are outstanding.

Seasonal birding is a fact of life in "hot spots" in Ontario. In the information that follows winter birding is at a low level for numbers and species. The best records in winter for the Ausable River valley, Lake Smith, Pinery Provincial Park, and Kettle Point come from the Christmas Bird Counts in December. Most sightings from the Lambton Area Water Supply are recorded in fall. Sarnia Bay is recorded during the Christmas Bird Count by the Bluewater Audubon Society in Port Huron, MI. Canatara Park is monitored year round by LWI naturalists. The St. Clair River is covered by Lambton Wildlife's (LWI) Down-river Ducks trip in late January or early February. Walpole Island is covered during the Christmas Bird Count in December by the Sydenham Field Naturalists Club in Wallaceburg. There are, to our knowledge, no regular visits to County Line Woods in any season. Sewage lagoons are usually checked on regular field outings by LWI in spring and fall. The remaining records from any location are gleaned from individual records kept by respected and knowledgeable naturalists. Pinery Park records come from the park staff or visitors. Point Pelee, of course, is a must for all serious birders in May. The latest Atlas of Breeding Birds of Ontario, published in 2008, is an excellent source of information on locations. It can be found in most libraries.

Butterflies

Lambton County is home to a great many butterfly species and the various natural areas are good places to locate them. Most famously is the Karner Blue which was once resident in the Pinery and the nearby Karner Blue Sanctuary. It is now extirpated although there are plans to reintroduce this species if the right conditions can be re-established. An annual butterfly count is held in June at the Pinery Provincial Park, perhaps the most productive area for butterfly enthusiasts. The following natural locations are some of the best spots to locate butterflies, listing some but by no means all butterflies found there.

Walpole Island: Cloudy wings, snout, mulberry wing, Acadian hairstreak, hackberry, tawny emperor, coppers, dusky wings, giant swallowtail, mulberry wing, and skippers.

Skunk's Misery: Hackberry, snout.

Joany's Woods: Snout, hackberry, tawny emperor.

Theford Bog Area: Meadow fritillary, Milbert's tortoise shell, Baltimore, skippers, commas, swallowtails, question mark, wild indigo duskywing and eastern tailed blue.

Pinery: Hackberry, hairstreaks, elfins, little sulphur, spicebush swallowtail, dusky wings, black dash, little wood-satyr, skippers, olympia marblewing, Baltimore and northern pearly eye.

Hay Swamp: Red spotted purple, white admiral, Milbert's tortoiseshell, crescent spots.

L. Lake Management Area: Silvery checkerspot, tiger swallowtail, coral hairstreak, tawny crescent, common buckeye, great spangled fritillary, spicebush swallowtail, black swallowtail and common sootywing.

Karner Blue/ Lambton County Forest: Delaware skipper, duskywings, cloudy wings, coppers, silver spotted skipper, questionmarks, swallowtails, spring and summer azures, hairstreaks, little wood satyr, common wood nymph, northern broken dash skipper and fiery skipper.

Ipperwash: Olympia marble wing, elfins, giant and tiger swallowtails, dusted skipper, Delaware skipper, coral hairstreak, eyed brown, Appalachian brown and southern cloudywing.

Canatara Park: Prairie ringlets, eastern tailed blues, eyed brown, bronze copper, eastern tailed blue, Delaware skipper, Viceroy, American lady, painted lady, Peck's skipper, Milbert's tortoise shell, clouded and orange sulphur as well as a large variety of common species.

Port Franks Forested Dunes: Appalachian brown, viceroy, eastern tailed blue, long dash, hobomok, spring and summer azure, eyed brown, giant swallowtail and Acadian hairstreak.

McKeough Conservation Area: Baltimore, coral Hairstreak, banded Hairstreak, black and tiger swallowtail, bronze copper and least and European skipper.

Reid's Conservation Area: Hairstreaks, skippers, great spangled fritillary, Appalachian brown, eyed brown, and northern pearly eye.

Wawanosh Wetlands: Dion skipper, Egremet, least skipper, bronze copper, prairie ringlet, banded and gray hairstreak, wood nymph and little wood satyr.

Howard Watson Nature Trail: Wood nymph, little wood satyr, snout, little sulphur, Baltimore, variegated fritillary, fiery skipper, great spangled, Aphrodite, Viceroy, red-spotted purple, common ringlet, European skipper, least skipper, common buckeye and Monarch.

Dragonflies and Damselflies

These insects can be found in profusion throughout Lambton County but the following locations are considered the top ten.

Port Franks Forested Dunes, "L" Lake Management Area

Ausable River

Hungry Hollow

Marthaville

Perch Creek

Moore Concession

Bickford Oak Woods

Wilkesport Habitat

McKeough Floodway

Bossu Wetland

Dragonflies such as the green darner, clubtail, river cruiser, shadow darner, springtime darner, Halloween pennant, black-shouldered spinyleg, flag-tailed spinyleg, swamp darner and many

skimmers can be found. Damselflies include the amber-winged spreadwing, the American rubyspot and the eastern red.

Generally the occurrence of dragonflies in Lambton County occurs from May to October with a June-July peak, while damselflies occur a bit earlier.

Plants

Lambton County's comparatively benign climate means that it is host to many Carolinian species, so-called because they are plants that are normally found more commonly south of here. There are many examples but trees such as tulip, hackberry, eastern flowering dogwood, blue ash, black cherry and various oaks are prevalent here. Shrubs and forbs include buttonbush, fringed pucoon, rigid goldenrod, flowering spurge, butterfly weed and a variety of grasses such as big bluestem, little bluestem, nodding wild rye and porcupine grass. More detailed examples are found in the descriptions of the various natural sites. However the Howard Watson Nature Trail is of particular interest, especially in the Modeland Road to Blackwell section.

Fungi Foraying in Lambton County

What is a mushroom? According to Roger Phillips, an acknowledged fungi expert, "a mushroom is only the reproductive part (known as the fruit body) of the fungus organism, which develops to form and distribute the spores." (Mushrooms and Other Fungi of North America, 2005)

So now that we know the definition of a mushroom, the question is: Where do we find them? Finding mushrooms is largely a process of being in the right place at the right time. Season is very important. While some mushrooms prefer spring, most are more prevalent in the fall. Weather is also an all important factor. A relatively dry summer and fall will produce but a modest crop. So although you find fungi at a certain place at a certain time one year, there is no guarantee you will find them there again the next. The opposite is also true.

A great thing about searching for mushrooms is that it is not necessary to travel far afield to look for them. Take a careful look on your own property and it is quite likely you will find some. A nearby municipal park such as Canatara Park in Sarnia (entrance off Christina St. N.) is often a good place to begin your hunt.

Any conservation area, municipal nature reserve, or woodlot will probably yield good results. Here are some other areas within Lambton County that have provided good results in the past:

Lambton County Heritage Forest. North on Port Franks Road at intersection with Highway 21. Forest is on your left. (See p. 17)

Karner Blue Sanctuary. North on Port Franks Road at intersection with Highway 21. Right on Whatman Street to where it joins Nipigon Street. (See p. 16)

Pinery Provincial Park. Park entrance off Highway 21 southeast of Grand Bend. (See p. 20)

Mandaumin Woods Nature Reserve. West side of County Road 26, south of Confederation Line and north of Churchill Line. (See p. 18)

Lambton County Natural Areas:

Art Teasel Wildlife Refuge

This property is named for a long time and enthusiastic Sarnia naturalist. Art established the Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee (SUWC) as a sub-committee to advise Sarnia City Council. The reserve is a former tree nursery for the City of Sarnia and has now reverted to a more natural state. In addition to many trees it includes a couple of small ponds which host various wildlife. Migrating and resident ducks and other birds and animals are attracted to the rich diversity of the two ponds on the site. The mature trees from the nursery provide shelter for a wide variety of animals, including species of owls. The SUWC is working to enhance this habitat by planting native trees and shrubs and encouraging the naturalization process to continue.

Directions: Located on the south side of Blackwell Road about 0.4 km east of Modeland Road in Sarnia. Exit highway 402 at Modeland Road north. Blackwell Road is about 2 km north of highway 402.

A.W. Campbell Conservation Area

Trails criss-cross through the A. W. Campbell Conservation Area allowing you to visit Carolinian forest and floodplain. Over 8 km. of trails along Morrough Creek are host to wildflowers and interesting tree species such as blue ash, sugar maple, oak and beech.

Website: www.scrca.on.ca/CA_Trails.htm

Directions: The A.W. Campbell Conservation Area is located on Shiloh Line just east of County Road 79 near Alvinston.

Ausable River Valley & Ausable Trail

The Ausable Valley extends from the village of Arkona in a north-westerly direction to Lake Huron. The valley is bounded by the counties of Lambton to the west and Middlesex to the east. The valley is an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) and is protected by the Province of Ontario.

The area is Carolinian woods, bogs, and flood plains. Some of the notable trees and shrubs include hackberry, yellow birch, black cherry, bitternut hickory, tamarack, hemlock, black walnut, flowering dogwood, Canada yew, and American hazelnut. Some notable wildflowers are: shining lady's-tresses, Loesel's twayblade, spotted coralroot, Hooker's orchid, dwarf ginseng, prairie loosestrife, pipsissewa, Oswego-tea, cardinal flower, swamp lousewort, Seneca snake-root, harbinger-of-spring, twin leaf, squirrel corn, Dutchman's breeches, blue cohosh, rue-anemone, Indian cucumber-root, mad-dog skullcap, and golden saxifrage.

Although agriculture impinges on the forests that once would have dominated the terrain bordering the Ausable, there are still remnant tracts with Carolinian aspects. Acadian flycatchers, hooded warblers, and Louisiana waterthrush all breed here and prothonotary warblers have bred on occasion in past years. Several species of woodpeckers are found here year round and pileated, red-bellied and hairy woodpeckers can be viewed in both summer and winter. The river acts as a migrant corridor from Lake Huron and always has great birding potential in spring and fall.

It is also home to the Ausable River Trail which winds its way along the east side of the river valley. Joany's Woods (see below) lies just north of this area. Mystery Falls, a little known waterfall gem, can be accessed from the trail or by following the blue trail leading northwards from the west end of Elm Tree Drive.

Website: www.abca.on.ca

Directions: From Highway 402 exit onto Highway 79 and go north to Highway 22 (Egremont Road), then east to the Arkona Road and travel north to Arkona. Make a right turn in the

village center and follow County Road 12 east to Sylvan Rd. Turn north on Sylvan Road into Hungry Hollow and continue north. The valley and trail can be accessed from the west end of either Elm Tree Dr. or MacDonald Dr. Also from the cairn located near the intersection of Scout Rd. and Coldstream Rd. (See also Joany's Woods). It is strongly recommended that someone familiar with the trail provide direction.

Bear Creek Marsh/Pigeon Marsh

Although currently access is limited this is a significant area for marsh wildlife. Managed by the CWS (Canadian Wildlife Service).

For more information, contact:

Marsh Manager, St. Clair National Wildlife Area,
R. R. #1, Pain Court, Ontario. Phone: 519-354-1418.

Directions: Located at the very north end of Bear Line SW of Wallaceburg.

Bickford Oak Woods

This 308 ha woodlot was the largest privately owned wooded land in Lambton County. In 2002 it was purchased by the Nature Conservancy of Canada and turned over to the Ministry of Natural Resources to operate as a conservation reserve. It has hosted uncommon birds such as the cerulean warbler, prothonotary warbler, and possibly hooded warbler. Beaver are also present. A great blue heronry is situated there as well.

No ATV activity is allowed. Trails and access points may be developed in the future for hiking and educational purposes.

It has a diverse habitat with oak/hickory upland, spring pools and wooded swamp. The deep woods and interior forest habitat of Bickford Oak Woods (BOW) is ecologically significant and provides a home for many species of flora and fauna. There are many rare species in B.O.W. including pin and Shumard oak, American sycamore and flowering crabapple. Bickford is best known as the only site in Canada where swamp cottonwood (*Populus heterophylla*) has been identified. The wetland values of B.O.W. are also significant and a visit to the wooded swamps, interior beaver wetland complex and the buttonbush lined sloughs is an exciting, almost primordial, experience.

Directions: This significant woodlot lies 25 km south of Sarnia at the corner of Bickford Line and Hwy 40 in Lambton Co.

Bluewater Trails

An extensive network of on and off road multi use trails that runs from downtown Sarnia and Sarnia Bay. It includes the existing Howard Watson Nature Trail (see below), the Waterfront Walkway and Canatara Park. As well a bike lane through the Chemical Valley (Vidal St.) connects Bluewater Trails to the St. Clair River Trail farther south.

Website: www.bluewatertrails.com

Directions: The trail can be accessed from many points including beneath the Bluewater bridges, the Howard Watson Nature Trail, and Canatara Park.

Bossu Wetland

This is a privately owned former farmland of 16 acres which was restored to a wetland by Larry Cornelis, a naturalist and environmentalist living near Wallaceburg. A natural wetland that was bordered on the east by the Sydenham River's northern branch, it was farmed for many years. It had been flooded every spring and this was taken advantage of by Larry to create 4 ponds. Now many of the plant species that had been lying dormant for many years have grown including cattails, rushes, sedges, water plantain, skullcap, bur marigolds and

several others. As well wildlife has moved in including ducks, geese, gulls, turtles, snakes, muskrats, toads, frogs and numerous other species of birds.

Directions: It is located north of Wallaceburg and is 3 km from there on Nelson Street. Call Larry at 519-627-8785 to arrange to see the wetland.

Bright's Grove Lagoons Woodland

The Bright's Grove sewage lagoons were dug well off the road within a maple woodland and must be accessed by walking up an internal road for two hundred meters. The woodland is south of the most north-easterly of the 3 lagoons. The property belongs to the City of Sarnia and the 35 acre woodland is managed by the Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee, which hosts a conducted visit at prime trillium time. At other times the road into the property is closed with a locked gate and a short piece of fence and permission from the city of Sarnia must be obtained to enter the area.

An all day sit at the valve pit in Bright's Grove in 1983 produced 105 species in a 24 hour period. This was a North American record which, at the time, included many warblers and sparrows. Of course it is all about waterfowl and shorebirds, with Hudsonian godwits, ruffs, willets, red knots, American avocets, and black-necked stilts. A groove-billed ani in 1988 stole the show, as it was only Ontario's fifth record of this southern cuckoo.

This woodland is an example of the "wet woods" that once were common in Lambton, and it is the best place in Sarnia to see spring ephemerals. In addition to the well-known spring wildflowers there is a lot of false mermaid (*Floerkea proserpinacoides*) a plant that is found, worldwide, only in the continental U.S.A. and adjacent Canada. Also there are native sycamore trees and spectacular climbing vines. There is a path in the woodland which can be accessed from about the middle of its eastern edge, about 800 m from Lakeshore Road.

Directions: The entrance to the Bright's Grove sewage lagoons is south off Lakeshore Road, 1.3 km east of Waterworks Side Road (Bright's Grove) in Sarnia.

Camp Saredaca

Camp Saredaca (SARNIA REcreation DAY CAmp) is a fine 10 acre example of a Carolinian forest. Here you will find more than twenty different species of native trees including sycamore, shagbark hickory, slippery elm, swamp white oak, and butternut. Many native shrubs are represented such as elderberry, spicebush, nannyberry, and prickly ash.

There is a splendid display of white trilliums in the spring and some Jack-in-the-pulpit, Virginia waterleaf, wild garlic, and red doll's eyes. This woodland is close to town and the main path is wheel chair accessible.

Directions: located at the southwest corner of the Blackwell Road-Telfer Sideroad intersection in Sarnia. The entrance is on Blackwell Road a short distance to the west of Telfer Road.

Canatara Park/Tarzanland

The crown jewel of Sarnia's parks, Canatara Park was purchased 75 years ago for the enjoyment of Sarnia's residents, but no one has benefited more than its natural history lovers. The wooded picnic area is a manicured oak-pine complex that surrounds a small lake (Lake Chipican) and abuts small dunes and the lakefront. Tarzanland in the park is a piece of dense Carolinian woodland traversed by walking trails. Combine this with its geographic location and you have a perfect blend for good birding. In spring Tarzanland can be overrun with warblers and has played host to worm-eating, hooded and Connecticut warblers and, more than ten years ago, one Townsend's warbler. Tanagers, grosbeaks, thrushes, vireos, and sparrows flock through in both spring and fall. This "Little Lake" (Chipican) is often covered by domestic waterfowl in summer and it is not unusual to see a barnyard muscovy in a flock of redheads

or hooded mergansers. This beautiful oak savanna forest and sandy waterfront is also popular with swimmers, picnickers, and walkers. Don't forget to visit the children's animal farm while visiting.

Canatara Park is bounded by Lake Huron to the north, Michigan Avenue to the south, Point Edward to the west and Christina St. to the east. The main entrance to Canatara Park is located at the intersection of Cathcart Blvd. and Christina St. in the north end of Sarnia. Tarzanland is located to the left of the entrance to the park off Christina St. Trees include several Carolinian species. Some notable trees growing naturally are sugar maple, black, red, white and swamp white oak, black cherry, pin cherry, beech, yellow birch, serviceberry, black walnut, butternut, shagbark hickory, black ash, tulip tree, and alternate-leaved dogwood. Shrubs include witch hazel and buttonbush. Wildflowers growing in the woods include bloodroot, trilliums, jumpseed and large-flowered bellwort.

Outside Tarzanland Kentucky coffee tree and Ohio buckeye have been planted. Flowers include lopseed, frostweed and skullcap. Also in the park are a few acres of planted tall grass prairie.

Directions: Canatara Park can be reached from Hwy. 402 by exiting north at Christina St. and proceeding about 1.5 km to Cathcart Blvd. Turn left into the park.

Centennial Park

Many activities are held at this park throughout the year. This lovely waterfront park is a great downtown park at which to picnic and enjoy boats traveling up and down the St. Clair River. There is a beautiful walkway along Sarnia Bay and the St. Clair River and is a good spot to view waterfowl. It includes a boat launch area and eating facilities.

Directions: Situated in the downtown core along the waterfront on Front Street at London Road.

Chenal Ecarte (Snye River)

This tributary of the St. Clair River is known by many names (Snye Carte, Snye Channel), but it loosely translates as the "Lost Channel". It forms the eastern boundary of Walpole and St. Anne's Island First Nations Territory, and empties into Lake St. Clair.

Hérons, terns, bitterns, ducks, coots and grebes nest in the marshes. In the winter pied-billed grebes are sometimes seen as well as great blue herons. Wild ponies once roamed St. Ann's Island after the War of 1812 but were finally rounded up in the late 1960's. St. Anne's Island is also the alleged burial site of the great Chief Tecumseh.

Directions: Located west of Wallaceburg and south of Port Lambton on the River Road.

Clear Creek Forest

Clear Creek is a very large forested area of over 300 hectares. A campaign was initiated in the summer of 1999 to acquire the property and it was purchased for preservation by the Nature Conservancy of Canada and turned over to Ontario Parks. Additional property to the south was acquired more recently bringing the total protected area to over 1000 ha. It contains many uncommon trees and the most significant feature aside from size is an area containing old-growth trees. It has some of the largest hardwood trees in Ontario and a beech tree estimated to be over 300 years old. The forest is home to several at-risk species including the Acadian flycatcher, red-headed woodpecker and the southern flying squirrel. A trail runs through the main part of the forest.

Directions: Located southeast of Highgate in southeastern Chatham-Kent (north of Clearville on highway 3). The trail can be accessed off Cochrane Line, just west from Duart Rd.

County Line Woods

This is a patch of Carolinian and maple woods in the far southeast corner of the county. It verges on the Bothwell Sand Plain and has many of the same birds. Breeding species include blue-winged, golden-winged, mourning, and hooded warblers, Acadian flycatcher, black-billed and yellow-billed cuckoos, and white-eyed vireo. Although it is as far as one can drive from Sarnia and remain in Lambton County, it is a great place to explore when leaving the county for other birding spots in southern Ontario. As its name implies, the woods lies along a north-south road that separates Lambton and Middlesex counties.

Directions: Go south on Hwy.79 from Hwy 402 past Alvinston to the Mossie Line. Turn east on this road to Watterworth Road which is the last intersection in Lambton County. The woodlot is both north and south of this intersection and is more extensive on the Lambton side.

Dennis Rupert Prairie Reserve

Sarnia's first "ecopark" is a twenty-one acre area that contains two rare native plants - Sullivan's milkweed and Riddell's goldenrod. Henslow's sparrow, an endangered bird in Ontario, has been sighted here. Butterflies are particularly attracted to the Riddell's goldenrod. A short trail runs through it. It was established in the fall of 1998 after several years of negotiation. It is named in memory of naturalist Dennis F. Rupert, a Past President of Lambton Wildlife Inc., who recognized its importance many years before.

Directions: The park is located near Bright's Grove on Brigden Sideroad, which runs between Lakeshore Rd and Michigan Ave. in the northeast part of Sarnia. It is approximately 1 km south of the Lakeshore-Brigden Road intersection.

Dow Wetlands

The idea for The Dow Wetlands was born when a large quantity of clean soil was required to cap a former Dow landfill. Dow worked alongside local environmental groups and an environmental firm to design the wetland complex. In 2002 the original 7 acre Dow Wetlands grew to 20 acres and is home to 8,000 trees and shrubs. The 7 ponds and streams are host to emergent plant life such as cattails, bulrushes and arrowhead which provide food and shelter for wildlife. The property is owned by Dow Chemical Canada Inc. but is open to the public during the day.

It is also a busy nursery in the spring to muskrat, ducks, geese and song birds.

Directions: The wetland is situated at the southwest corner of the intersection of LaSalle line and Hwy. 40. There is a large Dow Wetland sign at the top of the drive that takes you in to the wetland.

Grand Bend Rotary Nature Trail

A 9 km. trail extending from Pinery Provincial Park to Grand Bend alongside highway 21. The trail winds through meadow wildflowers and lies between the Pinery Provincial Park and highway 21. It was created and funded by the Grand Bend Rotary Club.

Directions: The trail starts at the entrance to the Pinery Provincial Park and can be accessed at any point between there and Grand Bend.

Highland Glen Conservation Area

Nestled along the beautiful shore of Lake Huron this small out of the way site is a popular spot for fishing, swimming and boating. Highland Glen provides fishing access, boat ramp and docks. It has picnic tables and a beach.

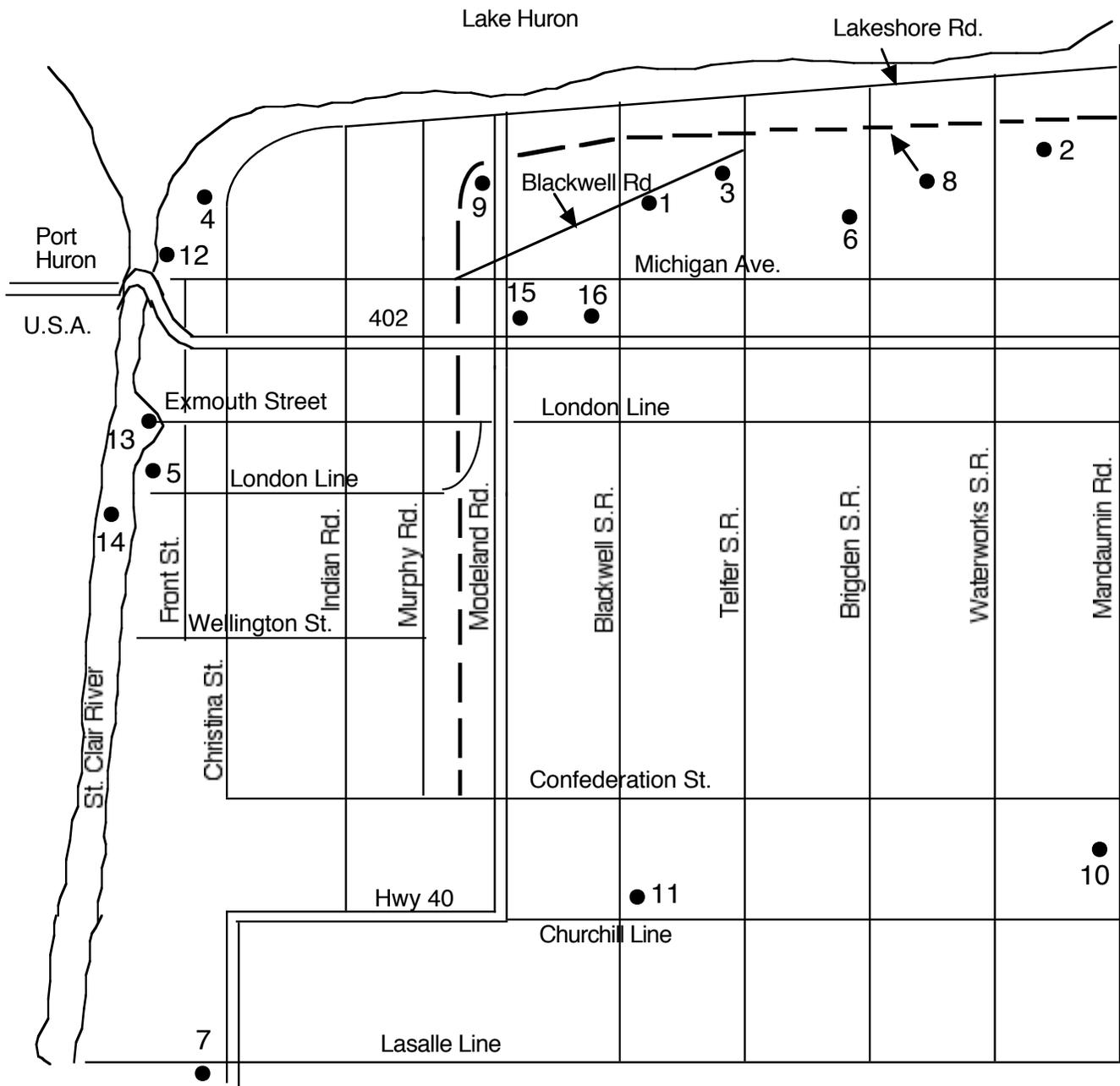
Directions: Located about 20 km east of Sarnia on Lakeshore Road just east of Blue Point at the intersection of Lakeshore and Oil Heritage Roads.

SARNIA MAP

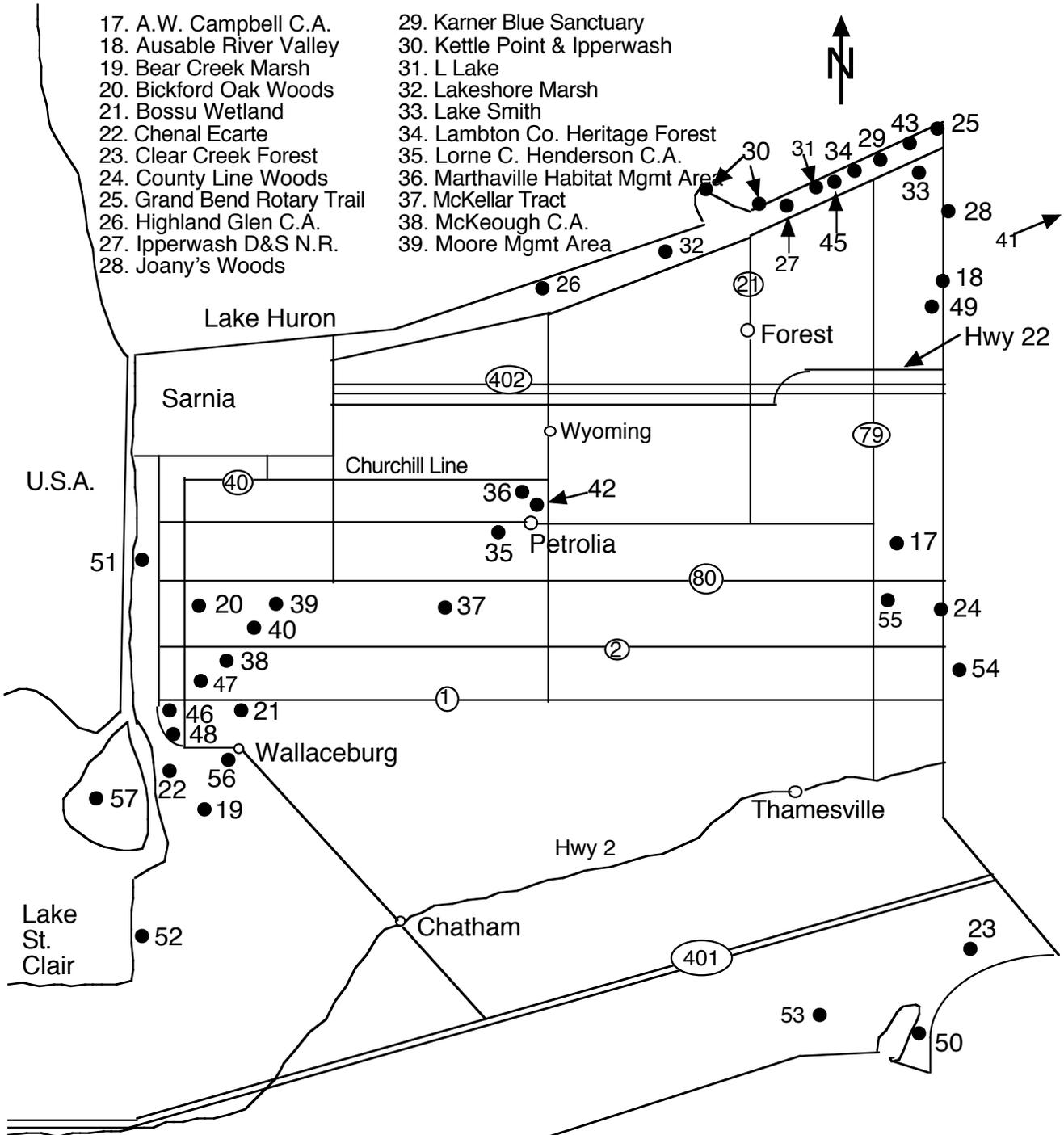
- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Art Teasel Nature Reserve | 9. Logan's Pond |
| 2. Bright's Grove Sewage Lagoons | 10. Mandaumin Woods |
| 3. Camp Saredaca | 11. Perch Creek Mgmt Area |
| 4. Canatara Park | 12. Pt. Edward Waterfront Trail |
| 5. Centennial Park | 13. Sarnia Bay |
| 6. Dennis Rupert Prairie Reserve | 14. St. Clair River |
| 7. Dow Wetlands | 15. Suncor Nature Way |
| 8. Howard Watson Nature Trail | 16. Wawanosh Wetlands |



Map not to scale



COUNTY MAP



- 17. A.W. Campbell C.A.
- 18. Ausable River Valley
- 19. Bear Creek Marsh
- 20. Bickford Oak Woods
- 21. Bossu Wetland
- 22. Chenal Ecarte
- 23. Clear Creek Forest
- 24. County Line Woods
- 25. Grand Bend Rotary Trail
- 26. Highland Glen C.A.
- 27. Ipperwash D&S N.R.
- 28. Joany's Woods

- 29. Karner Blue Sanctuary
- 30. Kettle Point & Ipperwash
- 31. L Lake
- 32. Lakeshore Marsh
- 33. Lake Smith
- 34. Lambton Co. Heritage Forest
- 35. Lorne C. Henderson C.A.
- 36. Marthaville Habitat Mgmt Area
- 37. McKellar Tract
- 38. McKeough C.A.
- 39. Moore Mgmt Area

- 40. Nicholl's Mem. Forest
- 41. Parkhill C.A.
- 42. Petrolia Discovery Trail
- 43. Pinery Provincial Park
- 44. Point Pelee National Park
- 45. Port Franks Forested Dunes
- 46. Prairie Plantings
- 47. Reid's C.A.

- 48. Roberta Stewart Wetland
- 49. Rock Glen C.A.
- 50. Rondeau Provincial Park
- 51. St. Clair River Trail
- 52. St. Clair National Wildlife Area
- 53. Sinclair's Bush
- 54. Skunk's Misery
- 55. Sydenham River Corridor
- 56. Wallaceburg Sycamore Woods
- 57. Walpole Island

Howard Watson Nature Trail

This former CNR right-of-way passes through a combination of urban and rural areas in Sarnia. The 16 km. trail stretches through wooded areas and alongside wetlands. An access to Lake Huron is available at Telfer Side Road and at Mike Weir Park a little farther east. This is a great trail to experience birds and wildflowers while hiking.

The trail is named after the municipal councilor who was instrumental in saving the railway right of way as a linear park. The Grand Trunk Railway was built in 1869 and Sir Casimir Gzowski, Peter Gzowski's great grandfather, was the engineer in charge of the construction. The Blackwell Prairie, an outstanding tallgrass prairie remnant, is in the section of the Howard Watson Nature Trail between Modeland and Blackwell sideroads. There are outstanding displays of tall prairie grasses on the trail such as big bluestem, Indian grass, nodding wild rye, and porcupine grass. In addition there is little bluestem, wild lupine, stiff leaved goldenrod, flowering spurge, butterfly weed, and the rarities fringed puccoon and green milkweed. There are benches and an interpretive centre with pictures of the trail wildflowers and history at the west side of the Modeland Road access (about 200 m. south of Lakeshore Road) and there is a small parking area on the east side of the same intersection.

Website: www.bluewatertrails.com or www.lambtonwildlife.com

Directions: The trail stretches from Camlachie (east of Sarnia) on the east end and runs due west alongside Lakeshore Road to Modeland Road. After that it turns south and passes through urban areas to McGregor Road where it terminates. It can be accessed at many road and street intersections along its route.

Ipperwash Dunes and Swales N.R.

This nature reserve is owned by the Nature Conservancy of Canada and is managed by Lambton Wildlife Inc. It is a nearly 56 acre property and contains unique ecological features characterized by forested sand dunes and sloughs which extend inland from lake Huron.

It is a biologically diverse area containing oak, cedar, hemlock, tamarack, birch, pine, spruce and tulip trees. It has abundant shrubs including chokecherry, dwarf juniper, fragrant sumac, roundleaf dogwood and honeysuckle. Both oven bird and ruffed grouse have been seen.

There is as well an extensive list of wildflowers and groundcover including bracken fern, Canada mayflower, creeping snowberry, Jack-in-the-pulpit, maple leaved viburnum, meadow-rue, Virginia creeper, wild grape, wild lettuce, wintergreen, enchanter's nightshade and rattlesnake fern.

Directions: Located just south of Ipperwash Beach and west of Army Camp Road. Drive west from Army Camp Road on Clemens Line.

Joany's Woods

Located north of County Road 7 (Thompson Line) just west of the village of Sylvan, this woodlot was purchased and named by Tom Doherty in memory of his daughter. It is a 367 acre property lying east of the Ausable River in Middlesex County. It was purchased by the Thames Talbot Land Trust in 2007. Lambton Wildlife Inc. established a trail through Joany's Woods as an extension of the Ausable Trail. It is part of the Ausable River Valley Carolinian Canada site and is a provincially significant ANSI (Area of Natural and Scientific Interest).

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority has classified it as an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). It is one of the largest forests remaining in Middlesex County and is home to many Carolinian species including black cherry, white oak, red oak, black walnut, white ash, shagbark hickory, beech and tulip trees. Forest cover ranges from deciduous swamp to upland hardwood forest. It is interspersed with areas of coniferous restoration and small ponds.

Website: www.ttlc.ca

Directions: From the village of Arkona travel north on highway 79 to County Road 7. Turn right and go about four km east to the village of Sylvan. At Sylvan turn left onto Sylvan Road and go about 2 km to Elliot Drive. Turn left on Elliot Drive and go about 1 km to Boot Hill Road. Turn left at Boothill Road (at the bottom of the hill) and the entrance to Joany's Woods is about 1 km. The south end of the trail can be accessed from where the Ausable River passes under County Road 7. Park at Vernon Road at the top of the hill after the bridge if travelling east and walk down to the trail entrance.

Karner Blue Sanctuary

This dry oak-pine woodland is currently ranked by the NHIC as S1, extremely rare in Ontario. Until the late 1980's this was the home of the Karner blue butterfly. The most notable flower is the wild lupine. Also found here are pipsissewa, large-leaved shinleaf, round-leaved pyrola, prairie ragwort, thyme-leaved sandwort, lyre-leaved rock cress, bearberry, plains puccoon, rough blazing star, cylindric blazing star and butterfly weed. Shrubs include New Jersey tea and narrow-leaved New Jersey tea. Sand-loving Iceland lichen is found in "the bowl" and rough fruited panic grass is beside the path. This property is owned by Lambton Wildlife Incorporated.

Website: www.lambtonwildlife.com

Directions: From highway 21 turn left at Northville onto Port Franks Road (McPherson's restaurant) and go north about 2 km to Whatman Road. Turn right on Whatman and go about 0.5 km. to the Karner Blue Sanctuary sign.

Kettle Point and Ipperwash

Kettle Point is a First Nations territory and one of the best birding locations in Lambton County. The vegetated and rocky shoreline has long hosted a spectacular fall and winter bird population. All three jaeger species, gulls such as Sabine's, little and Franklin's gulls, black-legged kittiwakes and hordes of waterfowl that feature all three scoter species. Common and red-throated loons, and numerous raptors head the list of the more sought-after birds in the fall. Spring has a far more leisurely pace but is still very interesting and coincides with warbler and passerine movements that often contain vagrants. Further north in the fall one can often find winter finches such as red and white-winged crossbills in the dune areas between Kettle Point and the former Ipperwash Provincial Park.

The late fall is the best time when cold northwest winds bring down northern birds. It is possible to drive on the wide expanse of beach on the north side of the point. The point is also a good spot to see concentrations of snowy owls in the late fall. One can also see the unique concreted rock formations called kettles. These are large rounded stones created some 350 million years ago and are unique in North America. There are some areas, although not readily accessible, that contain some uncommon plants.

Directions: Kettle Point can be reached from where Lakeshore Road meets Hwy. 21, west of Pinery Park and Port Franks. Drive north on W. Ipperwash Road.

L Lake Management Area.

L Lake is part of the forest tract encompassing the Karner Blue Sanctuary, the Lambton County Forest and the Port Franks Forested Dunes. Its main feature is the lake after which it is named and on which waterfowl can be seen. Encompassing 69 acres it is owned by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.

Directions: Exit Hwy 21 and go north on Outer Drive west of the former army camp. L Lake is located just west of Port Franks at the intersection of Riverside Drive and Outer Drive. The entrance is just before the road turns east.

Lakeshore Marsh/Shashawandoh Cr.

The lot is owned privately and has a wide diversity of wildflowers, sedges and trees. Significant is cardinal flower, tall white lettuce, late figwort and many tulip trees.

Directions: Located one lot west of the United Church Camp on Lakeshore Road about 35 km east of Sarnia.

Lake Smith

Lake Smith is the historical name for a vast marsh system that characterized the landscape east of the sand dune system that dominates the Huron shoreline from Upperwash to Grand Bend. Before its drainage for agriculture in the late 1950's this area would have served as a major staging area for waterfowl in migration. In March the fields are allowed to flood and so still serve as a large rest area for tundra swans and Canada geese. There are always a few rarities mixed in such as Ross's and greater white-fronted geese. In fall the fields provide feeding areas for passing shorebirds and migrating raptors such as northern harriers and rough-legged hawks.

Directions: Lake Smith can be reached from Hwy. 21 just west of the Pinery Provincial Park entrance by taking Greenway Road, just east of the Lambton County Heritage Museum, and going east about 1.5 km. to the fields on either side.

Lambton County Heritage Forest

This forest contains 570 acres of oak-savanna and Carolinian forest. Over 100 significant species of flora and fauna have been recorded on this site, including healthy populations of dwarf hackberry. It is also a popular site to observe fungi in the fall (collecting is not allowed without a permit.)

Directions: It is located just north of highway 21 on the Port Franks road. Turn north off the highway at Northville (McPherson's Restaurant) and watch for signed access from Port Franks road. Access is also available from Outer Drive and from the NW corner of the Port Franks Community Centre.

Logan's Pond Wildlife Preserve

A former gravel pit which has been preserved as a natural area within the City of Sarnia. It hosts a large number of waterfowl, particularly during migration, as well as muskrats, fish, amphibians and a variety of plant life. It is bordered on the west by a former landfill site and on the north by the Howard Watson Nature Trail (see above).

Directions: Located near the intersection of Modeland Road and Cathcart Blvd. in Sarnia. Walk west about 150 metres from the interpretive centre at Modeland and Cathcart to the viewing platform. Can also be accessed from Blackwell Road on the south side, just east of the Sumac Lodge retirement home.

Lorne C. Henderson CA

The Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area is a birders delight. Over 5 km of nature trails wind through a variety of habitats including wetlands, grasslands, floodplain and upland forest.

Map available www.scrca.on.ca/trails

Directions: Henderson C.A. is located 2 km west of Petrolia on Petrolia line.

Mandaumin Woods Nature Reserve

This twenty-acre woodlot has a wide diversity of spring ephemerals and many sedges. The woodlot was purchased by and is managed by Lambton Wildlife Incorporated to preserve the

forest which includes sugar maple, beech, basswood, bitternut and shagbark hickory, black ash, black cherry and some oak and elm. A path winds through the woodlot.

Directions: Located about 1.5 km south of the village of Mandaumin (intersection of Mandaumin Road and Confederation Street) on the west side of Mandaumin Road (highway 26). Mandaumin is 5 km south of highway 402.

Marthaville Habitat Management Area

The Marthaville Habitat Management Area is owned by the County of Lambton and managed by the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority. This example of a gravel pit rehabilitation includes wetlands, forest and tall grass prairie. A 3 km loop trail provides an excellent vantage point to watch the development of the site into a haven for wildlife.

Directions: Located 1 km north of the village of Marthaville on the west side of Marthaville Rd. (Or travel 3.7 km north on Marthaville Rd. from Petrolia Line just west of Petrolia)

McKellar Tract

This natural area was donated to the Province by the McKellar family. It has been enhanced by Ducks Unlimited to contain wetland areas. There are woodlot areas, as well as a pine plantation.

Directions: Located a few miles east of Moore Wildlife Area on Bickford Line south of Sarnia.

McKeough Conservation Area

A 3 km trail winds through a forest just south of the McKeough dam. This trail goes through a prime Carolinian forest which supports a large population of rare blue ash as well as other uncommon trees. The grass floodway channel and treed berms make for excellent wildlife habitats. The dam and diversion are a flood protection system for the town of Wallaceburg. It follows the 10th concession to the St. Clair River, and occupies about 220 ha of land. Near the dam are woodlots providing nesting and feeding sites for a wide variety of birds. Some nesting birds include chickadees, thrashers, hawks, owls and woodpeckers.

Throughout the dam area are ungroomed trails that wind through a variety of habitat. On the southwest side of the dam a small area has been set aside for Carolinian-type trees. Several trees, complete with sign plates, were planted as a project of the Sydenham Field Naturalists. This site is maintained by the Saint Clair Region Conservation Authority. The SCRCA has several conservation parks along the Sydenham River that provide recreation, nature study, land management, and flood control.

For more information, contact:

St. Clair Region Conservation Authority

205 Mill Pond Cr.

Strathroy, Ontario

N7G 3P9

Ph. (519) 245-3710

Website: www.scrca.on.ca/CA_Trails.htm

Directions: The trail is located on Holt Line immediately south of the dam between Hwy. 40 and Kimball Road (Co. Road 31) north of Wallaceburg.

Moore Wildlife Habitat Mgmt Area

The Moore Habitat Management Area includes an experimental tall grass prairie site, flood-plain forest, upland forest and open shrub areas. This area is prime upland bird habitat. Four km. of trails crisscross this diverse site.

A creek runs through its valley with old oxbows evident. There are a significant number of uncommon trees (eg. hackberry). It is home to a number of birds including tufted titmouse, chickadees, and red-bellied woodpecker. Every winter at least one yellow-rumped warbler resides in the woods feeding on poison ivy berries. Usually 8 or 9 can be seen with some effort. It is also a good place to find butterflies, especially in the prairie areas.

Website: www.scrca.on.ca/CA_Trails.htm

Directions: The Management Area is located on Bickford line about 1 km. east of the Kimball Road facilities parking lot.

Nicholl's Memorial Forest and Wetland

Trees have been planted and a wetland area created for wildlife habitat and wood duck boxes have been installed. There are pine trees along the riverbank that can host a variety of birds. Owls have been observed in these trees in the winter. It is a good place to watch for nesting birds.

Directions: Located about 12 km north of Wallaceburg on Kimball Rd. (west side) between Wilkesport and Bentpath Line.

Parkhill Conservation Area.

This 800 ha. area is managed by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority. It contains an extensive forest consisting mainly of maple, hickory and ash trees with some conifers, and is representative of some of the large forested areas in Middlesex county. It also has abundant wildlife in the form of rabbits, squirrels, foxes and occasional deer as well as many resident birds and, of course, transients during migrations.

The Parkhill C.A. includes an extensive trail system with sections taking anywhere from 20 minutes. to 3 hours to complete. It also contains a large reservoir created when the Parkhill Creek Dam was constructed in 1969. It allows for water sports such as canoeing, fishing and windsurfing. Camping is also available.

Directions: Located just north and east of Parkhill. It is bounded by McGuffin Hills Drive and Hwy. 81. Centre Rd. to the south leads into the area.

Perch Creek Habitat Mgmt Area

Perch Creek Habitat Management area is owned by the County of Lambton and is managed by the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority. This 200 acre property includes floodplain and upland forest, hedgerows, open meadow and wetlands. Over 5 km. of trails takes the hiker through a variety of habitats.

Website: www.scrca.on.ca/CA_Trails.htm

Directions: Located on Churchill Line just east of Blackwell Road and the former landfill site on Blackwell Road.

Petrolia Discovery Trail

A charming covered bridge welcomes you to this 4 km. trail. Four trail loops meander through a wooded area alongside the Sydenham River.

Website: www.town.petrolia.on.ca

Directions: Located on Petrolia Line in the centre of Petrolia, across from Bridgeview Park.

Pinery Provincial Park

Pinery Provincial Park is a natural jewel tucked in the sand dune and oak-pine complex habitat that once fringed much of the lower Huron shoreline. Considered one of our most endangered ecosystems, the park protects a section of the old Ausable River channel that runs from its "grand bend" down to where it drains into Lake Huron at Port Franks. There are strong

Carolinian influences that have resulted in prothonotary warbler breeding occurrences. The park still has a few cerulean warblers, a declining species of grave concern in recent years. Prairie warblers once bred in the dunes close to the lakeshore and still turn up from time to time. In fall there are large flocks of water birds that congregate along the shoreline. Recent rarities include western grebe, brown pelican, and Pacific loon. Pine grosbeaks and Bohemian waxwings periodically descend on the *viburnum* shrubs along the riverbanks and Townsend's solitaires have been occurring on an almost regular basis in the past 10 years. Over 200 species of birds have been observed. In the fall thousands of waterfowl and loons congregate offshore.

This park in northern Lambton County has a significant place in natural history. It was formed by sand dune succession, and supports one of the largest hardwood forests left in southern Ontario. Oak savanna is particularly dominant. There are over two-dozen mammals including the flying squirrel, and meadow-jumping mouse. The Pinery is Lambton County's largest and most important natural area. It has 10 well-marked hiking trails, a bicycle trail, cross country ski trails and 10 km of sandy beach on Lake Huron. The largest oak savanna forest left in Canada supports many birds, animals and the wetlands are home to many aquatic species. At 2,400 hectares it has over 643 species of vascular plants in 100 families. There are several rare plants found only in Canada here in the dune area. Some of the more notable flowers are: Blue hearts, ram's head orchid, showy ladies slipper, grass pink, fall coral-root, Dutchman's breeches, golden corydalis, grass-of-parnassus, wild lupine, cardinal flower, 3 species of blazing star, blessed thistle, frostweed, and hairy willow-herb.

Some of the trees and shrubs are at the north end of the Carolinian zone. These include: Tulip tree, sassafras, dwarf chestnut oak, dwarf hackberry, sand cherry and fragrant sumac. Near the Pinery the only viable population in Canada of the rare Karner blue butterfly was once found. A section of land next to the Pinery has been protected in order to provide a habitat for this beautiful insect in the hopes that it may return someday. (See Karner Blue Sanctuary).

Fishing, canoeing, and camping are available as well. The park is open year-round to include winter activities also. For more information, contact:

Superintendent, Pinery Provincial Park,
R. R. #2 Grand Bend, Ontario.

NOM 1T0

Ph. (519) 243-2220

Website: www.pinerypark.on.ca

Directions: Located on Hwy. 21 just north of Port Franks and south of Grand Bend.

Point Edward Waterfront Trail

Lambton Area Water Supply (LAWS) is the official name for this place, located where Lake Huron empties into the St. Clair River, although often referred to as the Point Edward lighthouse. This "sit and wait" viewing station on the north side of the water plant has become famous for its storm fallouts in fall when jaegers, rare gulls including Sabine's, black-legged kittiwakes, scoters, King eiders, red phalaropes, and huge numbers of loons funnel down Lake Huron to the mouth of the river. This often gives birders great views seldom seen outside of the Arctic. In fact, any bird using the lake for direction is liable to pass here and, in 1988, a magnificent frigatebird was sighted. Peregrine falcons nest on a platform beneath the original bridge and is a project of the Port Huron Audubon Society.

A scenic trail connects an array of waterfront parks along the St. Clair River and mouth of Lake Huron. The completed trail extends from Canatara Park to the Bluewater Bridge and links up with Venetian Village and the nearby casino.

Website: www.bluewatertrails.com

Directions: The trail can be reached by taking Christina St. North in Sarnia to Michigan Avenue, then west to Point Edward to St. Clair St. Turn right on St. Clair St. and then left onto Victoria St., then right again on Fort St. to the end. Parking available on the north side of the water plant or under the twin bridges.

Point Pelee National Park

This famous park has the distinction of being the southernmost mainland point in Canada. Both Pelee and Centre Islands in Lake Erie are further south. It is an excellent example of Carolinian forest. Reptiles and amphibians abound, as well as rare birds, plants and trees. Point Pelee is best known as Canada's finest bird watching spot and every year birders from around the world come to visit. It is located on the crossroads of two major flyways. Up to 384 species of birds have been recorded in the park area as of May 2008. For example, all species of gulls recorded in Ontario have been seen in the Pelee birding area.

A long boardwalk gives access to the extensive marshland. The park is open year-round for day-use and has an excellent visitor centre. Nearby is Hillman Marsh Conservation Area, just west of Wheatley. It is good for viewing waterfowl and shorebirds in times of low water. A trail follows part of the dyke. Also adjacent to the marsh on the west side off Hillman Road is a shorebird habitat that was developed in 2002-03. It is controlled to attract shorebirds during times of migration in the spring (to the end of May). The rest of the season, it is used for farming.

Directions: The park is located about 8 km southeast of Leamington.

Port Franks Forested Dunes N.R.

The Port Franks Wetland and Forested Dunes ANSI (Area of Natural and Scientific Interest), is a unique combination of ecosystems located near the Lake Huron shoreline. It is 139 acres, owned by the Nature Conservancy of Canada and is managed by Lambton Wildlife Incorporated. It has been also designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA).

For an enchanting nature experience hike along the trail in this nature reserve. On level ground you will pass through an outstanding display of native shrubs, some in bloom, such as nannyberry, spice bush, ninebark, highbush cranberry and five different species of dogwood. Seedling tulip trees grow along the path and larger tulip trees are found farther off the path. The path rises a little when you reach Mud Creek where you will find different shrubs. Downy arrowwood, witch hazel, bladdernut, and lots of the area's great rarity, dwarf hackberry, can be seen.

If you continue you will pass through a stand of hemlock. Some who have gone all the way to Outer Drive via the L Lake Conservation Area have seen the spectacular sand hill cranes. There are no trails up the dunes to the north of the path but energetic people can easily go into the woods and climb a dune for a view of L Lake and surroundings. L Lake is a wetland area lying to the west and north of this area. (See above).

Located a bit south of Pinery Provincial Park and adjacent to the village of Port Franks, this is a unique natural area. It is host to uncommon plants and birds. Some endangered birds and ones that are usually found farther north have nested here. In the Lambton County Heritage Forest (see above), several hooded warblers have been found. As well, the endangered Acadian flycatcher has been located on occasion. Other birds usually found nesting farther

north include the blackburnian warbler, black-and-white warbler, black-throated blue warbler, and blue-headed vireo.

Website: www.abca.on.ca

Directions: Exit Hwy. 21 north and east of Sarnia at Northville (McPherson's Restaurant) and drive north into Port Franks. Turn left on Riverside Drive and watch for Huron St. and turn in at the sign. Drive to the end of Huron St., walk on the bridge across Mud Creek, follow the trail to the big wooden sign and then take the left hand trail beyond. It is also accessible from Outer Drive through the L Lake Management Area.

Prairie Planting

The Sydenham Field Naturalists (SFN) have assisted the Rural Lambton Stewardship Network to establish a small plot of prairie wildflowers and grasses which can be best observed in mid to late summer.

Directions: Located at the intersection of highway 40 and Whitebread Line north of Wallaceburg. It is identified by a large sign.

Reid Conservation Area

This area was donated to the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority in 2003 by sisters Jean & Lena Reid in memory of their parents George & Catherine Reid (Grant). It is a good sized property of about 170 acres, mostly wooded, with about 30 odd acres being farmed. This farmland will be ultimately be added to the conservation area.

The Sydenham River winds along the edge of the property with some former river channels cutting through it providing some wet areas. The soil is clay which means that some Carolinian species such as tulip tree and sassafras found farther north in sandy areas are not present here. However there are a lot of interesting and even rare plants found. There are 6 oak species present including white, chinquapin, red, swamp white, Shumard and bur.

The woods in spring are carpeted with spring beauty and many patches of both yellow and white trout lily. At a wet spot near the entrance there are some wood duck boxes which have been put up and are used by screech owls during the winter. Spring peepers are common in the spring. Plants include cut leaf toothwort, wild ginger, wild leek, wild garlic, Virginia waterleaf, dwarf ginseng, Mayapple, Dutchman's breeches, wild blue phlox, violets, buttonbush, harbinger-of-spring, Jack-in-the pulpit, wood anemone, red & white trilliums and the rare false mermaid.

Spring birds include kinglets, black throated green warblers, red-breasted woodpecker and wood thrush. Other birds seen include cuckoo, Cape May warbler and chestnut sided warbler. These are just a few of the birds either resident or that pass through during migration. This site contains the first known colony of the southern (northern oak) hairstreak (*satyrium favonius Ontario*) butterfly in Canada.

Directions: The Reid Conservation Area is located just south of Tulloch Line and west of Kimball Road on Duthill Road north of Wallaceburg.

Roberta Stewart Wetland

A small wetland created by Ducks Unlimited adjacent to MacDonald Park along the Chenal Ecarte in 2004. It was naturally a marsh before being drained in the mid 1900's for farm use. During its first months of existence the wetland attracted hundreds of shorebirds during migration in the fall of 2004. Eventually plant life will establish itself, and it will become more suitable for waterfowl and other wetland wildlife. Over 110 species of birds have been recorded in or seen from this wetland.

Directions: Located south of Sarnia near the end of Langstaff Line NW of Wallaceburg on the Snye River.

Rock Glen Conservation Area

For all you rock hounds, explore and experience the history of glacial periods, First Nation's artifacts and more at this unique ecosystem within the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's jurisdiction. The Devonian era limestone contains many fossils including trilobites, brachiopods and crinoids. The site has an excellent museum and visitor's centre with interpretive displays as well as a large collection of artifacts. Also there are several interesting trails through wooded areas and a lovely waterfall. One trail leads down to the Ausable River where many fossils can be found. Visitors are cautioned to limit the number they take.

Website: www.abca.on.ca

Directions: East of Sarnia and about 1 km. north of the village of Arkona. Turn to the right from highway 79 and follow signs to Rock Glen.

Rondeau Provincial Park

Rondeau is a 4816 ha park in southern Kent County which extends out into Lake Erie. It comprises a large stand of hardwood Carolinian type forest. Five nature trails suitable for hiking and some cycling allow the naturalist to observe the wide spectrum of flora and fauna. Rare reptiles and amphibians abound, as well as plants, birds and animals. Uncommon trees include the sassafras and tulip. Twelve percent of the herbaceous plants at Rondeau are considered rare in Ontario or Canada. Examples include the wild yam root, yellow mandarin, tall bellflower and false mermaid.

Rondeau has been host to 80% of the bird species found in Canada. At least 353 species as of May 2008 have been officially recorded in the Rondeau circle, with about 147 breeding records. The rare prothonotary warbler has its largest breeding ground in Canada within Rondeau. Many southern bird species overshoot their migration and end up in Rondeau. Examples include the Kentucky warbler, Swainson's warbler, blue grosbeak, and summer tanager. The park is open daily, year round, and has campsites.

For more information, contact:

Superintendent, Rondeau Provincial Park

R. R. #1 Morpeth Ontario.

N0P 1X0 Ph. (519) 674-5404

Website: www.rondeauprovincialpark.ca

Directions: Approx. 60 km SE of Wallaceburg at south end of Kent Bridge Rd.

Sarnia Bay

The waterfront along Sarnia Bay usually hosts good numbers of waterfowl in the fall and this population often attracts various raptors. Snowy owls, peregrine falcons, merlins and all three accipiters can be seen hunting along the waterfront for gulls or rock pigeons. Rarities include common and king eiders, Harlequin duck, eared grebe, Brant and our only county record of Ross's gull.

Directions: Sarnia Bay can be reached from Hwy. 402 at the Front Street exit. Proceed south along Front St. to Exmouth St. It is immediately south of Exmouth Street. Parking is available at the McLean Centre or at the municipal parking lot a bit further south.

St. Clair River

The St. Clair River is bordered by the St. Clair Parkway which has always been a favored summer drive for local residents. It provides great viewing access to the rafts of ducks and gulls and other migratory waterfowl that congregate near the shore from November to April.

There are many stopping places along the way with favorites being the outfalls at the Lambton Generating Station or near Cathcart Park. Redheads, canvasbacks, scaups, and common goldeneye predominate but the careful observer can often see a Harlequin duck, a Barrow's goldeneye or a king eider. Arctic gulls enjoy the ice floes and, in a good winter, it is not unusual to see scores of glaucous and Iceland gulls mixed in with the abundant groups of American herring and great black-backed gulls. In the winter thousands of ducks (especially canvasback, redhead and goldeneye) use it to feed. Many other species are also seen during the winter. In December of 1995, the rare ivory gull made an appearance north of Sombra for a few days.

This 50 km long waterway is the main connecting water route between the upper and lower Great Lakes. It starts at Lake Huron (Point Edward) and empties into Lake St. Clair at Walpole Island. Along it on the Canadian side are numerous parks for picnicking or camping. One such park is Brander, which contains a woodlot with a trail through it. It has a good variety of trees, and is especially good for watching warblers during migration times. Not too far behind the woodlot are the Port Lambton sewage lagoons that are good for observing waterfowl and other water-related birds. White-winged tern (Ontario's first record, 1991) have been recorded there in the past. 190 species of birds have been recorded in or around Brander Park.

Directions: The best access to the river from Hwy. 402 is from the Front St. exit. Drive south on Front St. to London Road then east two short blocks to Vidal St. Turn right on Vidal St. and go south through the downtown area and the Chemical Valley. The road turns west to the St. Clair River where it becomes the St. Clair Parkway. This route will take you all the way to Walpole Island.

St. Clair River Trail

In 2002 the St. Clair River Trail was completed along the St. Clair Parkway and riverbank. It runs from Sarnia to Port Lambton and is good for walking and cycling. Enjoy the trail stretching from LaSalle Line north of Corunna to Port Lambton along the scenic St. Clair River. Lots of opportunities to view waterfowl and migratory birds. A bike lane through the Chemical Valley connects to the Bluewater Trail (see above).

Website: www.xcelco.on.ca/~st.clair/

Directions: Located on the St. Clair Parkway River Rd. from Corunna to Port Lambton. See directions for St. Clair River.

St. Clair National Wildlife Area

This wildlife sanctuary managed by the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) on the eastern shore of Lake St. Clair is a unique place to observe both nesting and migratory waterfowl. It is largely a manmade marsh, which was originally a pasture prior to WW II. In 1940 it was acquired by a hunt club and converted into a wetland for hunting. In the middle 1970's it was converted into a wildlife sanctuary. A wide variety of birds, fish, snakes, turtles and frogs live there. These can best be observed on the trail (5 km return) that runs atop the dyke, extending through the centre of the marsh. A centrally located viewing tower gives an excellent panoramic view.

Wildlife highlights tend to be concentrated in the spring and fall. For birders, over 180 species can be observed in one year. During migration up to 20,000 ducks may use the sanctuary at one time. Rarities in the past have included a snowy egret, glossy ibis, vermilion flycatcher and tricolored heron. A white-winged dove was seen nearby in July 2002. Every summer one

is almost guaranteed to see yellow-headed blackbirds, a more westerly species. The trail is open daily, year-round.

It also contains outstanding populations of American lotus and swamp rose mallow.

Directions: Approx. 20 km west of Chatham on Townline Rd at end of Heron Line.

Sinclair's Bush

This is a small, but excellent example of Carolinian forest. A portion of it has been set-aside by the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Other parts are privately owned. The tulip tree, paw-paw tree and Kentucky coffee tree grow within. There are also some uncommon wildflowers within the woodlot. It is very good for observing several types of flora and fauna.

Directions: Approx. 25 km SE of Chatham. Follow Rd. 3 SE of Blenheim to Centre Line and turn right on Harwich Road. Follow south to curve.

Skunk's Misery and Crown Lands

The Skunk's Misery area includes several tracts of land that make up the Middlesex County Forest, a 1400 hectare complex. It is excellent for observing uncommon warblers (golden-winged, blue-winged, hooded and cerulean) and wildflowers in the spring. It is also excellent for observing other uncommon birds.

The area is an outstanding example of a Carolinian forest. It is part of the Bothwell Sand Plain region where rare species such as the whorled pogonia grow. Carolinian tree species found here include sassafras, tulip tree, American chestnut, black gum and flowering dogwood. The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority also owns and manages the Mosa Forest and Fennel Property Conservation Area in the heart of Skunks Misery. (See also County Line Woods above).

Directions: Approx. 20 km NE of Thamesville between Bothwell and Newbury just east of County Road 14 along the Kent/Middlesex county border. A small portion lies in Lambton County. The Mosa Forest is at the intersection of Longwoods and Clachan Roads. The Carolinian Canada signature site plaque is located directly across from the hospital in Newbury.

Suncor Nature Way

Created as a storm water management project it runs east from Modeland Road immediately north of Hwy. 402 and connects to Wawanosh Wetlands (see below) via a bridge over the Wawanosh drain. It has walking trails and the waterway is used by a variety of birds.

Directions: Exit highway 402 at Modeland Road north. The nature way parking lot is almost immediately on your right.

Sydenham River Corridor

A Carolinian Canada Coalition signature site. The majority of these Carolinian woods are privately owned, although there is public access at the Carolinian Canada sign onto public land owned by the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex. Rare herbaceous Carolinian species such as green dragon, Virginia bluebell and lizard's tail grow here as well as blue ash and Kentucky coffee trees.

The Sydenham River also has the most diverse selection of freshwater mussels in North America and up to 34 species have been recorded in the river. The endangered eastern spiny softshell turtle has a significant population along the river also, especially in the east branch.

Directions: Located about 5 km south of Alvinston at the Grays Bridge crossing of the Sydenham River on Pratt Siding Drive. Take highway 79 south from Alvinston to Oil Springs Line and go east about 2 km.

Wallaceburg Sycamore Woods

This is a small (11 acres) but quite diverse wooded area that was purchased by the Sydenham Field Naturalists in 2006. Even though there has been some human impact over the past several decades it is of very good quality and surprisingly lacking in non-native species. The woodland is really interesting: a huge red oak, all kinds of other large trees such as red, silver and Freeman's maple and many of the namesake sycamore trees. Buffer strips on the south and west sides of the woods have been planted with tall grass prairie species. The prairie grasses (little and big bluestem, Indian grass, switch grass) have germinated and for much of the buffer area are growing quite well.

Directions: WSW is located in the southwest corner of Wallaceburg. Go south on Walnut Street from highway 40 on the west side of Wallaceburg. The access is between private homes and while an easement has been obtained permission should be sought from the homeowners before crossing.

Walpole Island First Nations Territory

Known as Bkejwanong (Where the Waters Divide) in the native language, Walpole Island is arguably the most important ecological system in Ontario. This is a complex of delta islands covering 24,000 hectares at the mouth of the St. Clair River and is one of the most biologically diverse areas in Canada. Very rare plants exist here, some of which are found nowhere else in Canada. It contains over 700 species of plants, 90 of which are provincially rare. Rare birds are also found on the island and in its surrounding marshes.

It's status as a First Nations territory has protected it so that we now have the opportunity to study it's natural features. If you are a botanist there is no better place to visit, but its birding potential is just as important. Vast marshes cover the bottom third of the island where yellow-headed blackbirds perch and King rails call amidst a chorus of Sora and Virginia rails, coots, moorhens, and pied-billed grebes. There are breeding colonies of black-crowned night herons and great egrets. The island is a stronghold for breeding redhead ducks and Forster's terns. The open savannas represent one of the rarest habitats in Canada. It is home to a small population of northern bobwhite (the last stronghold of northern bobwhite in Canada, but the species is severely declining), blue-winged, golden-winged and cerulean warblers and yellow-breasted chat. These are just some of the more interesting warblers that breed in the scrubby oak woods that border the savannas.

The island also has examples of Carolinian forest, tallgrass prairie, oak savanna and prime marshland. There are many rare species here of which 45 have been designated as "Species at Risk" including Kentucky coffee tree, hop tree, black gum, goldenseal, prairie white fringed orchid and swamp rose mallow.

Permission must be obtained from the Walpole Island First Nations Band Council or Heritage Centre to visit this area.

Directions: Located approximately 5 km west of Wallaceburg on Hwy 33.

Wawanosh Wetlands CA

This property is owned by the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority and received initial funding from Lambton Wildlife Incorporated amongst others. It has ponds which host various water birds as well as other species, a memorial forest and has a stand of Riddell's golden-rod. This small, converted wetland (a former gravel pit) area east of Sarnia is good for observing waterfowl, especially during migration times. Grebes and coots nest here in good numbers. Rare birds have included American avocets and snowy egrets. In the nearby fields and pastures, one can look for uncommon geese and shorebirds. In 2002 the area was extended to the west along a drainage creek to Modeland Road. (See Suncor Nature Way).

Website: www.scrca.on.ca/CA_Trails.htm

Directions: Wawanosh Wetlands is located just north of Highway 402 on Blackwell Road. Watch for the sign on the west side of Blackwell Road.

Miscellaneous Conservation Areas [SCRCA]

There are numerous woodlots and conservation areas on flood plains of the Sydenham River owned by the SCRCA. These are open to the public for daily use and nature study. Some have nature trails. Camping is available at certain areas also.

County sewage lagoons are also always good birding spots and Lambton's are as species rich as any lagoons in Ontario. The Wawanosh Wetlands (see above) share many of the same birds that characterize the lagoons. The Bright's Grove lagoons (see above) have received more attention because of the dizzying array of rare species that appear there, but every lagoon mentioned here has produced good birding.

Port Lambton's and Sombra's lagoons have the good fortune of hosting birds that wander away from Walpole Island while the other three collect species that follow the Huron shoreline.

Directions: Port Lambton lagoons are located on the Lambton Line (County Rd. 1) less than a kilometer east of Port Lambton.

The lagoons at Sombra are found on the Smith Line within a kilometer of the St. Clair Parkway.

From Hwy. 79, on the western outskirts of Thedford, the local lagoons can be seen on the north side of the highway before it turns south into town.

Although Grand Bend is in Lambton County geographically, its sewage lagoons are not. They are located off of Hwy. 81 on the Mollard Line (Stephen Concession 22).

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