

EARTHWAYS[®]



Earthways is a publication of LAMBTON WILDLIFE INCORPORATED-P.O. BOX 681 SARNIA, ON N7T 7J7
Gordon Catterson-Editor Modris Zandbergs-Distribution **Summer 2010**
Cheryl Veary-Webmaster Website: www.lambtonwildlife.com

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

Indoor Program

September 27th **The Urban Coyote**

Lesley Sampson, wildlife educator and co-founder of Coyote Watch Canada, has studied coyotes for 15 years. She will help us to better understand and appreciate these creatures, teaching us not to fear them but admire them as self reliant hunters. There will be samples of scat, skulls and audio howls with explanations of their meaning.

October 25th, 2010 **Following the Flight of the Monarch**

Professor, Dr. Jeremy McNeil, of UWO, teaches courses around the world and is the holder of many awards and distinctions. He will discuss the remarkable migration of the monarchs from Canada to Mexico and the chemical and other cues which guide it.

November 29th 2010 **Pollination and Pollinators**

Vicki Beard, founding member of Pollination Guelph and a City Councillor will tell us about turning a garbage dump into a bloom filled haven for birds, butterflies and other pollinating insects through the vision the Guelph Pollination Initiative had for a local 100 acre landfill site. Vicki received the 2007 North American Advocate Award for this.

January 31, 2011 **Natural Treasures of Lambton County**

An educational film, commissioned by Lambton Wildlife, written and produced by Larry Cornelis will be shown. Larry will introduce it and explain how and why it was made. Afterwards, Larry and the videographer, Danny Alexander, will tell about their experiences and answer questions.

February 28th 2011 **Canaries in the Coalmine**

Mike Cadman is a songbird biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service and was the Coordinator of The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Ontario (2001-2005). The atlas documents how bird distributions and abundances changed between 1981-1985 and 2001-2005. It illustrates the patterns of increase and decrease, expansion and retraction, providing insight into the challenges faced by our birds and what those indicate about our environment. Join us for an entertaining presentation that will both inform and inspire.

Outdoor Program

Butterfly Outing Saturday, July 17, 2010

Meet: 8:00 am at St. Christopher's high school for carpooling to the Skunks Misery area for a butterflying adventure with Brenda and Ben. It'll be a great opportunity to learn all about these amazing insects. Bring your binoculars and water to drink.

Inquiries: Brenda Kulon – 869-2833

South St. Clair River Boat Cruise Sunday, August 22, 2010

Meet: 1:00 pm at Leeland Gardens (just north of Port Lambton).

All aboard the Hammond Bay for a 3 hour cruise south past Walpole Island to Lake St. Clair. Cost is \$32:00 per person (includes lunch and refreshments).

Inquiries and reservations: Larry Cornelis – 339-8785

***Howard Watson Nature Trail Bike Rally** Saturday, September 11, 2010

Meet: 10:00 am at Modeland and Cathcart entrance. Our first bike outing. Bike the HWNT and answer the nature questions based on what you see and find on the trail. Prizes awarded. Families welcome.

Inquiries: Larry Cornelis – 339-8785

Nature Walk at the Lorne C. Henderson C.A.
Saturday, September 25, 2010

Index	Notices
Indoor program.....1	Deadline.....8
Outdoor program.....1	Dave Ellis.....8
President's message.....2	
Board of Directors.....8	Articles
	Call of the Bruce.....3,4
Reports	Spring 2010.....3
ON AGM.....6,7	Volunteers.....5,6
Earth Day.....8	
Pelee island Birding.....4,5	

Greetings From The President

“Summertime and the living is easy.” You might remember these lyrics from the George Gershwin opera Porgy and Bess. They have a certain ring to them as summertime living can be easy. It gives you a chance to get outdoors, have a picnic, go boating, putter in the garden--the choices are almost limitless. Some of you will take the opportunity to do some traveling, perhaps to the cottage or even farther a field.

For Janice and myself, it was a chance to take a cruise on the Rhine River to celebrate her retirement from the teaching profession. She retired last year but for one reason or another we were not able to get away until this summer. We had a great time and during the trip I did observe a few things of an environmental or ecological nature you might find interesting. In any of the cities or large towns of Belgium or Holland we passed through, construction

cranes vied with church spires to dominate the skyline, and it looked like the construction cranes were winning. Building seems to be going on everywhere and if the economy was indeed in a recession, it did not appear evident from all the activity going on. The shops were busy, restaurants and clubs doing a lively business. The canals and rivers were full of ships and barges laden with cargo.

As we cruised along the river, we could see some wind farms, but not as many as I had expected. In the Low Countries they seemed to be mostly situated in industrial areas away from population centres; in Germany and France, they generally were located on the top of hills, with villages underneath nearer the river bank. Of course we saw only a small portion of each country, but those farms we did see seemed to have been placed fairly unobtrusively away from homes and people.

In Belgium and Holland especially, bicycles are a principle means of transportation, not an after thought as in North America. There are simply thousands of them and they seem to have developed a relationship with vehicles and pedestrians that allow all to flow along seamlessly. There are reputed to be more bikes in Amsterdam than there are people as many families have more than one.

At the central train station in Amsterdam, which is also the main terminal for bus and tram transportation, there is what I call bicycle farms. They are huge parking lots stacked with literally thousands of bikes of people who ride to the station and then take a bus or tram to work. How you would ever find your own bike amongst all those thousands is a mystery to me, but apparently they do.

Another quaint custom in Amsterdam is to toss any bike found not locked securely into the nearest canal. Each year when the water level is lowered in a canal for maintenance purposes, the bikes are fished out, repaired and then given to the next crop of incoming students attending university, a kind of unique cycle recycling project.

The number of bicycles does not mean there are few cars on the road. There are lots of them and they are not all small cars by any means, and the price of gasoline doesn't seem to defer them from driving fast. There are many more stylish brands and models of cars than we ever see in North America. I did notice some Kia, Hyundai, and Toyota dealerships which I found interesting.

On any of the trips we took through the countryside to visit towns and villages, the homes were always neatly kept and front yard gardens were by no means a rarity. Usually, the homes were surrounded by a neat hedge, and almost always, adorned with lots of flower gardens and planters. There was very little garbage or litter cluttering the street; I am sure this is at least partly due to the fact there are not many fast food or take-out coffee places either. The villages are very picturesque and leave a very favorable impression.

One of the largest ports on the Rhine is the French city of Strasbourg. It is also home to a number of institutions of the European Union such as the European Parliament and the European Court of Human rights. For hundreds of years, the city has swayed between French and German rule, but regardless of the power in charge one of the cherished symbols of the city has been the stork.

One avenue near the European Union section of Strasbourg is fronted by quite beautiful and expensive homes. Along the avenue were about 40 trees all of roughly the same height and every tree was topped by a stork's nest containing young birds and a parent, quite a sight to see.

In the 1970's there was a crisis as the stork population was declining rapidly. The storks wintered in North Africa and each year fewer and fewer were returning to the Strasbourg area. The solution devised was to remove the young from the nest and place them in an aviary for three years. After that time, the young storks lost the instinct to winter in Africa and could be safely released to the wild.

The program was an outstanding success and the stork population has been restored to its former numbers. Incidentally, the people living on the Avenue de la Cigonge are not great stork lovers, as the birds are incredibly messy.

There you have a brief look at some of my insights on our travel to Europe. We had great weather for our trip and hopefully there will be lots of good weather ahead this summer to enjoy.

Don't forget to look at the upcoming events listed in the LWI's program brochure. Although the Indoor Meetings are in recess till September, we have lots of exciting outdoor outings coming up so I encourage you to take advantage of them. Take care and stay safe.

THE SPRING OF 2010

By Blake A. Mann

This past spring was a bit of a roller coaster. Early on the weather was very pleasant—in fact too pleasant! Wildflowers and tree leaf-out were at least two weeks ahead of average. Some butterflies were enticed to emerge by the very warm and sunny weather of April. Many early records were set across southern Ontario. Birds, on the other hand were a bit tardy to arrive for some reason. In May, the weather was damp, windy and cool (on weekends!). The nice April weather was a sure sign, at least to me, that May would be unpleasant weather-wise.

On March 19, a Wilson's phalarope was discovered by Michael Irwin at Blenheim sewage lagoons. It was a provincial early record by a long shot! It stayed well into the month of May to greet other migrant phalaropes. Up to seven Wilson's phalaropes were seen one early May day, while later on, several Red-necked phalaropes were present. It was a good season for phalaropes at Blenheim.

While birds did not arrive in numbers until late April and early May, butterflies made a good showing instead. I had a spring azure at Point Pelee April 3, only two days after the record early date. At Brander Park, Port Lambton April 13, a black swallowtail caught my eye. This was an extremely early date, and must have been some sort of record for at least the local area.

At Toronto, butterfly enthusiast Bob Yukich found many early records and some big numbers to boot.

Speaking of numbers, red admirals broke some records by arriving by the thousands around the 29th of April. The admiral is an immigrant and their food plant in Texas was in abundant supply this spring. Some remarked that this was the biggest invasion since at least 1968!

Other species showed up rather early, including a silver-spotted skipper at Reid CA May 4. It looks like a good year for butterflies in 2010. Last year was terrible, so it would not be difficult to beat.

It seemed warblers were slow to arrive this year, but we found a northern parula at Rondeau Park on April 18. It was record early for the local area. Blenheim lagoons was good for shorebirds as well. On May 3, four marbled godwits were present along with a few long-billed dowitchers. Three days later, a remarkable total of 15 long-billed dowitchers were feeding there. As well, a dark Ibis flew over for some observers, but never settled down. A cattle egret frequented a horse pasture near Erieau during this time.

On May 17, one lucky photographer got on a curlew sandpiper, a rarity for Ontario. Just the day before, a female yellow-headed blackbird stopped by and stayed for three days.

The big rarity at Rondeau Park this spring was a female blue grosbeak in the campground. It was seen by many and became quite an attraction. Perhaps it was too much of an attraction, as some boorish photographers went overboard so to speak.

The weather was something to be desired in May, especially on weekends. For four weekends in a row, the weather went downhill, but birders persisted. May 8-9 weekend was excellent, especially for warblers.

May is not complete without camping at Point Pelee. Lambton Wildlife members teamed up with a couple Sydenham Field Naturalists May 13-14. I only spent the first two nights, but it was enjoyable as the first morning saw a fall-out of birds in the fog. We spent the whole morning at the Tip area. The highlight was a Kirtland's warbler. It turned out to be the second of three Kirtland's for the Pelee area this spring.

After the holiday weekend, it seemed migration came to a screeching halt. Although some birds were still moving through, those still on the fly kept going. It was one of the quickest ends to migration that I have seen.

Many good birds were found in the province this spring, but too many to mention here.

The Call of the Bruce...

Seventeen LWI members answered the call this year in mid June. The weather was perfect, the hospitality warm and the botany awesome. We are grateful to Alice and John Bellar who organized activities which began with wine and cheese Friday evening followed by a pizza supper. They managed to convince a somewhat reluctant Larry Cornelis to be our guide this year. It was Larry's first trip with LWI to this very special part of Ontario. Seventeen pairs of eyes and ears and varying degrees of familiarity with the areas visited added up to unequalled enthusiasm, great spotting and hundreds of questions and suggestions.

The Saturday morning outing began at the Dyer's Bay alvar - "a unique habitat consisting of limestone bedrock that lies flat and open with little or no soil. It has an extreme microclimate. In the winter needle like ice crystals can churn up what little soil there is; in spring water collects in shallow pools with some areas remaining flooded for weeks. By summer surface temperatures can reach over 40 C. The pools disappear and shallow soils dry to a crisp. Because these conditions are too tough for most trees a distinctive set of species - not just higher plants but also mosses, lichens, birds, land snails, leaf hoppers and other animals - call alvars home. Ontario contains 85% of the alvars in North America. An unusual variety of wild flowers, grasses, lichens are native to the Great Lakes - like the globally rare bright yellow Lakeside daisy."

The dark purplish leaves and short stature of the columbine present an appearance very different to what we see here in southern Ontario. Larry pointed to this as a good example of a species adapting to the environment in which it grows. We admired Seneca snakeroot, yellow lady's slipper, and tiny pink twinflowers among other species waiting to be pollinated.

We then moved north to the Crane River area where the rapidly flowing cold water is conducive to the breeding of black-flies. We spotted horsetail, Canada anemone, and the lovely little pink pyrola. After examining a vertical rock face where we found maidenhair spleenwort, bulblet fern, and fragile fern, we followed the call of a pileated woodpecker who sat still for us while a flicker flew past. The Bellars once again opened their home where we enjoyed the lunches we had brought.

After lunch we met at Singing Sands at Dorcas Bay (part of the Bruce National Park system) where we circled a fen on a board walk. Friday night's rain made it obvious that fens have water flowing through them. Their pH is alkaline. They are rich in calcium and magnesium, but poor in nitrates. Here they are home to rose pogonia, spike lobelia, insectivorous plants such as pitcher plants and lance leafed sundew, and tall tuberous Indian plantain. The woodland path was flooded so we walked the beach where we spotted blue flag, silver leaf, sticky tofieldia, and a wonderful patch of butterwort in full bloom. It was baffling to find several large areas of dwarf iris which showed no evidence of past or future flower stalks. We got down on our knees to get a good look at the tiny horned bladderwort whose leaves grow below the soil surface and whose minute bladders trap soil organisms.

Our day ended with a visit to the big new National Park Interpretive Centre off Hwy. 6 near Tobermory. The comprehensive land exhibits lead us slowly down to what we might see if we ventured underwater at Fathom Five. Dinner was served at a restaurant and we retired happily looking forward to another wonderful day.

Sunday morning we gathered on the Georgian Bay side of the peninsula where a short walk into a bog ended at a large cluster of very large showy lady's slippers about to burst into bloom. Nearby Cathedral Woods presented a high canopied deciduous maple and beech forest which delivered the filtered light required by a profusion of wildflowers. The variety of ferns was notable - among them hart's tongue and northern holly ferns. We chuckled when our leader was spotted lying face down in a patch of poison ivy, leaning over a precipice which was home to a purple stemmed cliffbrake! Just as we turned to go back to our cars we were treated to a fleeting glimpse of a black throated blue and a black throated green warbler.....a fitting end to a fabulous day.

Judie Scott

Pelee Island Spring Song weekend: May 6 to 9, 2010:

We have a tradition of going to Pelee Island every year for spring birding. The "we" includes my wife Nora, who usually won't travel that far or take that amount of her time to go birding with me. However she is the one who "pushes" to go to Pelee Island each spring. That is because for almost 10 years, a famous Pelee Island summer resident, Margaret Atwood, has organized the Pelee Island "Spring Song" celebrations. "Spring Song" includes a weekend of birding at likely one of the best spring migratory birding locations in North America and attending a banquet at the Pelee Island Winery, hosted by Margaret, featuring a major Canadian author. Nora calls it the quintessential Canadian cultural event – combining love of nature with love of reading books by great Canadian authors, while sipping Canadian wine.

Each year, Margaret invites a major Canadian author to talk at the banquet. In the past she has had celebrities such as David Suzuki and Alice Munroe, Giller prize winners such as Vincent Lam (Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures) and Joseph Boyden (Three Day Road, Through Black Spruce). This year, Brian Brett, from Salt Spring Island and the author of "Trauma Farm" was the speaker. He is not yet well known but Margaret will change that. Listening to his description of the early morning bird songs on his farm was a treat. Margaret Atwood seems to be working very hard at encouraging new, Canadian authors.

This was the first year that she could not attend her own event as she was in Israel receiving a major literary award. But her guests all showed up. Robert Bateman was the 'celebrity birder' and 'surprise guest' Steward McLean (CBC) was also there along with Brian Brett.

Margaret's husband, Graeme Gibson, is a strong supporter of the bird banding program on the island and the Spring Song event is a major fund raiser for the banding station. From noon on Friday to noon on Saturday they hold a "birdathon": a contest to identify the most birds in a 24 hour period. People set up teams to compete for the 'Botham Cup'. You can participate either by car, or by bicycle (becoming a Green Team). The Cup is awarded to the Green Team which identifies the most species.

The Botham Cup had almost become the property of Lambton Wildlife alumnae Rob Tymstra. More recently he has teamed up with Lambton Wildlife's world-traveling birder, Paul Carter. This year, Rob could not defend his long grip on the Botham Cup as he was at the beck and call of a carpenter who was supposed to show up to help build his new house

on the Island. So Paul asked Larry Cornelis (another member of LWI's very large collection of amazing birders) to join him on bicycles, and even through a major storm they won the event handily.

The storm was actually a gale, which stopped the ferry from running for a full day. The ferry is part of the magic of the Island...it is sometimes unpredictable (storms, out of service for repairs, etc). The 1.5 hour trip across to the island from Leamington sets your mood. You are cut off from the rush and bustle of the mainland as long as you shut off your Blackberry of course. The good news for us non Blackberry users is that they don't work all that reliably on the Island. The birding at the Island is really great. I like it especially as there are many more birds than bird watchers - something that often can't be said about Point Pelee. The pace is slower. You know you are in the rural area. Everyone is friendly. You wave to all passing motorists, whether you know them or not.

The second major prize presented in the evening is the Rubber Chicken. Margaret looks for new rubber chickens as she travels throughout the world each year. Last year's winner of the illustrious Rubber Chicken award was our own Larry Cornelis!!!

A lot of Lambton Wildlife members attend this event, even though it is not on the Club events calendar. It is not yet a club event as the logistics are significant. Ferry trips have to be reserved as does a place to stay, which carry significant deposits. There are a large number of B & B's on the island, which are set out on their websites. Another issue is that the banquet tickets are limited. They cost \$65.00, go on sale at the beginning of January (from the Pelee Island Heritage Centre) and run out fairly quickly.

I go for the birding, but Nora goes for the banquet. She also goes birding with me, which is a real treat. We have been going to Pelee Island since the late '70's as the former clerk-treasurer of the Island was a good friend from university. It is a wonderful get away. Highly recommended.

For further information on how to plan your trip, check out the website of the Pelee Island Heritage Centre (Ron Tiessen, General Manager) or contact Paul Carter or myself.

Malcolm Boyd

Volunteers to help maintain our Land Trust Properties.

When we did our questionnaire last year, we asked whether members were aware that Lambton Wildlife either owns or manages parcels of ecologically important lands and operates as a Land Trust. Of the 30 responses, 29 stated that they were aware of this important LWI function. The properties we own are the Mandaumin Woods and the Karner Blue Sanctuary in Port Franks. We also manage 2 large properties for Nature Conservancy Canada, (NCC) under 50 year agreements. They are the Port Franks Forested Dunes and the Ipperwash Dunes and Swales Nature Reserves. We are in the process of trying to negotiate the purchase of a significant expansion of the Karner Blue property.

Over the years we have had a small group of very dedicated volunteers undertake the maintenance on these properties. That maintenance can include brush clearing, invasive weed removal, or helping with plant and animal inventories. These jobs are required on a continuing basis on all properties. Not only do we have to maintain and augment the natural values of these properties, but we have to monitor what is changing in the ecosystems and how we are doing in implementing the management plans. Up until recently, the mapping for the properties was not good enough to be able to record and manage all the pertinent data. The mapping is now digitized and accurate.

We want to become much more active in our maintenance, to ensure that these properties maintain their fairly rare natural values over the long term. We are looking for volunteers to help us with the property maintenance.

On the questionnaire we asked people to indicate their interest (on a scale of 1 to 5) in participating in activities relating to managing our properties. Over 30% of the responses expressed an interest in participating in activities related to managing LWI properties (removal of invasive species, cleaning trails, monitoring species at risk). This is vital information for us, as we would like to move towards having regular 'work days' on our properties. We didn't have a hugely large response rate for the questionnaire, but we hope that a 30% interest rate in the questionnaire will translate to a significant interest within our large membership.

We used to have members use their own chainsaws to remove trees that had been inappropriately planted in rare Savanna openings, or cut down a tree that had fallen but was hung up over a trail. We used to apply Roundup(™) to patches of invasive non-native weeds. Now-a-days it is just not that simple to have work parties. We have now purchased chainsaws but everyone who uses them has to have special safety training through formal chain saw courses. That makes sense as we have to ensure the safety of all who assist on work parties. The Province now requires that

anyone using controlled 'pesticides' (herbicides in our case) must receive formal training on their proper use. That also makes sense. We are about to organize chain saw and chemical applicator courses for our members who volunteer to help maintain our properties.

We will also need a lot of people who want to help out with other than our tree or noxious weed removal programs. We need people who are willing to learn how to identify rare species and noxious weeds. We need people who would enjoy walking through our properties and help us with making inventories of the plants and animals we come across or possibly help us mechanically remove invasive species (leaving the spraying to others). They don't have to be botanist keepers. They don't have to know the Latin names for species of plants and animals. They just have to want to learn more about what wonderful species we have on our properties.

For example, the small shrub-like tree, the dwarf hackberry, has been recognized as a species at risk by the Canadian and Provincial Governments. (COSEWIC status of "threatened" and listed as S-2: "imperiled"). A dwarf hackberry recovery plan has been recently established. Much of the dwarf hackberry which occurs in Canada is found in the Port Franks area. There are patches of dwarf hackberry in both the Port Franks Forested Dunes and Ipperwash Dunes and Swales properties. This rare plant is likely present in the property we are now trying to purchase. It is really important that we monitor where this plant occurs and try to undertake management which will increase its numbers.

Another job we undertake is the maintenance of the trails within our properties. That usually only requires the use of loppers to cut overhanging branches, or pulling out weeds that often occur along the trails.

We usually only have work parties before and after it is hot and buggy in the bush....when it is really pleasant to be outdoors....the spring and fall, and sometimes early and late in the winter.

We would really appreciate it if you could come forward and tell us you are interested in assisting with our properties, in some way. If you know of someone who would likely be interested in helping out if they were approached, please tell us. Please contact myself or John Bellar if you are interested in getting some training in the safe operation of chainsaws and the safe application of vegetation control chemicals such as Roundup™. John is the overall manager of our maintenance programs. Please tell us if you have an interest in assisting us with plant and animal identification.

Our Property Managers are:

Karner Blue Sanctuary	Brenda Kulon	519- 869-2833
Port Franks Forested Dunes	Robert DiFruscia	519- 332-0830
Ipperwash Dunes & Swales	Klaus Keunecke	519- 243-1722
Mandaumin Woods Nature Reserve:	Wayne Bowen	519- 899-4406

You may wish to help out only at one or two of the properties and not do the jobs that require taking a safety course. In that case, please indicate that to John or contact the Property Manager you would like to work with directly.

Lambton Wildlife members have been amazingly supportive of our Land Trust function, in particular in making donations to land purchases. We now need your help to make sure that we look after these properties properly. Please contact us if you are interested. We don't care if you wish to help a bit or a lot. We need all the help we can get.

Malcolm Boyd: 519-344-4414 email: boydmbnh@cogeco.ca
John Bellar 519-869-4526 email: johnbellar@sympatico.ca

We will really appreciate any and all offers of assistance.

Malcolm Boyd
Chairman, Land Trust Committee.

Carolinian Canada & ON AGM's:

On the weekend of May 28th, 29th and 30th Carolinian Canada and Ontario Nature held their annual general meetings in Sarnia. The meetings and conference were held at Lambton College with outings to several spots in Lambton County or nearby.

It was originally suggested to be held here by Brenda Lorenz, one of Lambton County's foremost environmentalists. LWI recognized Brenda's outstanding contributions to the local environment by presenting her with the club's Environment Award at the AGM in 2007. As a result of a lot of hard work by Brenda and her committee, helpers and volunteers the event was an outstanding success and there were many kudos from attendees expressing their appreciation for the very

impressive program which included speakers, workshops and trips. Even the weather was spectacular with three days of cloudless blue skies and perfect temperatures. I would list all of the people who made this conference a success but I would undoubtedly miss some and cause resentment. However congratulations to all of you! YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE!

Pat and I attended the whole conference and very much enjoyed it. Friday was spent at the Lambton College student residence's ballroom where Friday was devoted to Carolinian Canada's AGM. On Friday night after the AGM meeting and banquet a trip down the river on the Duc d'Orleans complemented the day. It was a beautiful evening for being on the river and a lot of enjoyable socializing accompanied by music was a lot of fun. Brenda even managed to provide a full moon under a clear sky.

On Saturday we travelled with about 40 other people to Walpole Island, led by Larry Cornelis, where Jane Bowles took us on a tour of two areas on Walpole, the Oak Savanna and the nearby Prairie Dock Prairie which the Walpole Island Land Trust is negotiating the purchase of. It was really interesting having an expert like Jane who spent several years working for the Walpole Island Heritage Centre doing inventories of the plants that are there. She said that when you laid down a 1 metre square frame and started documenting the plants therein you might come up with perhaps 20 or more rare species. In fact she said one of the problems on Walpole Island is that people do not realize how rare many of these plants are, and it is hard to convince them to conserve when they are so plentiful there. I remember a story of Larry Lamb from the University of Guelph confronting a farmer who was plowing up a field of rare small white lady's slippers. I think Larry lost.

Later at the Heritage Centre we were treated to a banding demonstration. The people doing the banding are 2 of only 6 in Canada who are authorized to band hummingbirds, and they brought one in to show us how they do it. The process was absolutely incredible as they proceeded to first find the birds legs (they are tiny and almost invisible), then put on the band which of course is a tiny clip, measure the bird, weigh it and finally release it. (It weighed 2.7 grams). The man held the bird while he talked about what they do and periodically fed the bird as he did so. You would think the bird would be so stressed it would not feed but in fact it sucked the solution greedily and you could actually see its' tiny tongue darting in and out. It was then placed on someone's hand when it was released. It simply sat there for about 15 seconds before it flew away, back to where it had been captured. They do not use mist nets but rather use a somewhat complicated cage which the birds can enter, being attracted to a feeder inside, but once in cannot navigate out. They then reach in and grasp the bird while it is perched. In answer to a question he said that the best solution to feed them is a 4:1 water to sugar solution, briefly boiled and cooled. He said not to use commercial solutions as they are of uncertain composition. When we first arrived they also had a yellow warbler to show us and everyone got a close up look at this beautiful little bird.

After the bird demonstration was had a talk from Clint Jacobs on what the Heritage Centre is doing to both preserve rare habitat and to educate young people on their heritage. They are currently trying to educate people, particularly young people on their language, which he said few in the community could speak fluently.

Clint also talked about their new land trust and mentioned the help they had received from Don Gordon, Executive Director of the Thames Talbot Land Trust, in setting it up. He also talked about the land they are working to purchase called the Prairie Dock Prairie. This is owned by someone who lives on Walpole Island and they are looking to raise \$100,000 to purchase it, pay legal fees and set up an administrative fund. It is home to many rare species such as prairie dock and white gentian, which grows nowhere else in Canada. They have already a commitment from Lambton Wildlife and Sydenham Field Naturalist for \$20,000 and are looking for donations for the rest. Anyone looking to assist can do so by mailing their donation to the Walpole Island Land Trust, P.O. Box 22032, Dufferin Ave. Postal Outlet, Wallaceburg, ON N8A 5G4. A tax receipt will be issued.

That evening the ON AGM banquet was held with an excellent speaker, Jack Imhof, giving a talk entitled "Navigating through the Biodiversity of Canada's Stream Corridors: A Personal Voyage." Jack talked about his personal encounters with rivers around the world. He is a distinguished biologist and is National Biologist with Trout Unlimited Canada. There was also a silent auction as well as an open auction of various donated art.

On Sunday morning participants gathered at the shelter in Canatara Park for a hot breakfast. Again the weather was beautiful and the conference ended with people heading out to one of several tours which included Bickford Oak Woods, Port Franks Natural Areas, Ausable River Valley (Joany's Woods) and Canatara Park. A quite spectacular week-end and congratulations to Brenda for initiating it and carrying it off with the help of her many volunteers.

Celebrating Earth Day:

Each year LWI organizes two clean-ups around Earth Day. The first (usually) is the Howard Watson Nature Trail cleaning organized by myself, while the second is the highway 402 clean-up arranged by Joe Haselmayer. We have been doing this for many years now while the nature trail cleaning is now over 20 years old. Here is Joe's account of the 2010 highway clean-up:

April 24th was breezy and cool, but dry, as we cleaned the south side of highway 402 from Airport Road to Mandaumin Road. We had a good turnout of 24 volunteers who were willing and able to spend a couple of hours to improve the appearance of our valued environment. Thank you to: Marilyn, Dick, Janice, Mary M., Cindy, Gord, Doug, Bill, Ken, Heather, Larry, Rob, Jill, Dave, Pam, Annette, Mary B., George, Kevin, Chris, Carole, Tony and especially Zev.

The previous Sunday the nature trail was cleaned from Modeland Road south to Confederation. The sections east of Modeland were cleaned previously by several groups. On the Thursday Peter Hill, Bill Hoad, David Dell and myself did the trail east of Mandaumin. While this is quite a long piece (about 5 km) it is normally not very littered, and the four of us can do it in a couple of hours. This section of the trail gets less use than other sections and as a result accumulates less trash. Much of what does find its way onto the trail is blown over from the highway.

Also a cub group organized by Doug Winch did a great job of cleaning from Mandaumin to Waterworks. They actually cleaned up the highway ditch in addition to the trail and managed to fill a trailer with what had been picked up. As well the 4T's (Tent Toters & Trail Trotters) organized by Lorne Longley came out on the previous Saturday and did the section from Waterworks Side Road to Brigden Side Road. Finally Janet Bremner organized cleaning from Brigden to Blackwell Side Road as she has done the past couple of years. We do not clean the section from Blackwell to Modeland as the people in that section do a good job of keeping it clean.

This year we had a very large turnout as we did a year ago. Last year we had a large contingent of Tim Horton employees helping us. They assisted us again this year but the greatest numbers were from the Worley Parsons group, an engineering company working from the former Dow Modeland headquarters building. They had some 50 people out including some young people and between these two groups as well as Melissa Levi and her Young Nats and regulars we had about 75 people in total. This allowed us again to do a very thorough job and to include the sections south of London Road which we don't always get to with fewer people.

As some people may recall the Howard Watson Nature Trail was established amidst controversy. There were people, including some in LWI, who opposed establishing the trail. The intervening years have shown the vision of the early trail supporters to have been valid. Today there is no way the City would consider selling off the trail to adjoining land owners, as the then Sarnia Township Council proposed doing back in the 1980's, without a huge outcry. I have always felt that the vulnerability of the trail was it

Board of Directors

Richard Maxfield	President
Janet Bremner	President Elect
Malcolm Boyd	Past President
Avalon Hamlin	Secretary
Bill Scott	Treasurer
Ken Bulgin	Board member
Krista Cowieson	Board member
Kerry Gardiner	Board member
Tania Havelka	Board member
Bill Hopkins	Board member
David Jenniskins	Board member
Eric Marcum	Board member
Mary Margaret McGrail	Board member
Shawn McKnight	Board member
Doug Winch	Board member

In Memorium:

Dave Ellis, a long standing member of Lambton Wildlife died on May 25th. Both he and his wife Carolyn were members of LWI for many years. A memorial service was held in Sarnia on June 23rd. Our condolences to Carolyn and family.

Deadline for September issue is

Friday, September 3rd 2010

Leave material in mailbox at

502 Roosevelt Drive or

email to

gpcatt@xcelco.on.ca

becoming so badly littered that people who oppose it would have grounds to complain, and that it was vital that the trail be kept clean. Hopefully when the people currently organizing the clean-up are unable to continue there will be others to carry on.

My thanks to everyone who participated but especially Peter, Bill, David and Fern for assisting with the organization.

Gord Catterson