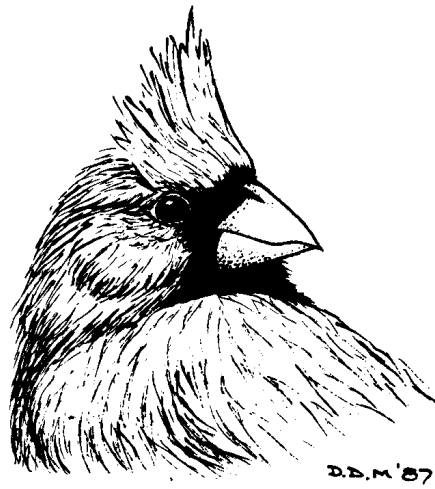


**McIlwraith Field Naturalists  
of London, Ontario Incorporated**

**2008/2009**

**ANNUAL REPORT**



# Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
A Brief History of the McIlwraith Field Naturalists	1
REPORTS of DIRECTORS, APPOINTEES, COMMITTEES and OTHERS	2
• President’s Report	2
• Past President’s Report	3
• Archivists’ Report	4
• Birding Wing Report	4
• <i>The Cardinal</i> Report	6
• Cedarcroft Report	6
• Conservation Report	7
• Field Trips Report	10
• Indoor Meetings Report	12
• London Advisory Committee on Heritage Report	13
• Membership Report	14
• Middlesex County Woodlands Advisory Committee Report	14
• Middlesex County Stewardship Council Report	17
• Nature Displays Report	18
• Ontario Nature Report	18
• Publicity Committee Report	19
• SwiftWatch (London) Report (May 2008 to August 2009)	19
• Thames Talbot Land Trust Report	21
• Urban League of London Report	22
• Website Report	22
Awards	23
Board of Directors and Appointments	23
Auditor’s Report	<del>26</del> Deleted: 25

## A Brief History of the McIlwraith Field Naturalists

The origins of the McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London go back to 1864. In that year, William Saunders, a local druggist, and a number of his contemporaries organized the London Branch of the Entomological Society of Canada. The study and collection of insects was a popular hobby during Victorian times and the society flourished. In fact, interest was so strong that, for several decades, London functioned as the entomological capital of Canada.

In 1890, the Entomological Society broadened its interests to include other branches of natural history. Accordingly, sections devoted to botany, ornithology, geology and microscopy were organized. These prospered for a time, and meetings, field trips and collecting expeditions were held to study insects, plants, birds and fossils. William E. Saunders, son of William Saunders, was the founding president of the ornithological section and was to remain its driving force and most prominent member until his death in 1943. In 1902, the ornithological section changed its name to the McIlwraith Ornithological Club, to honour Thomas McIlwraith of Hamilton, the foremost ornithologist in Ontario at the time. The new name was first used by the club in 1903.

By 1904 interest had waned, and all four sections – botany, ornithology, geology and microscopy – had ceased active operation. Two years later, the parent Entomological Society moved its headquarters to Guelph. For a number of years London had no organization that met formally in the cause of natural history.

London's annual Christmas Bird Count – first organized in 1909 by two local school boys – eventually came under the auspices of the McIlwraith group. Today it stands as the second-longest continuously running count in Canada. The only branch of the

Entomological Society to survive the decade-long hiatus of meetings was the McIlwraith Ornithological Club. Reorganized in 1915, it has met continuously ever since, although in 1965 its name was changed to the McIlwraith Field Naturalists to reflect an expanded interest in all aspects of natural history. A constitution was adopted in 1970 and the society was incorporated in 1972. In its early years the revived club met in a variety of locations including members' homes, the Collegiate Institute, Normal School, YMCA and London Life. In 1940 it began meeting in the "new" library at 305 Queens Avenue, where it remained for 56 years. In 1996 the meeting place moved to First-St Andrews Church at 350 Queens Avenue, and in 1998 to the Civic Garden Complex on Springbank Drive, which is the current venue.

For many years meetings focussed around films, slides and discussions of birds, with a gradually increasing interest in other species and also in conservation issues. Field trips were and continue to be held on a regular basis. A quarterly publication, *The Cardinal*, first appeared in 1951. At various times over the years, the club sponsored Audubon film nights, a non-credit course in natural history at Fanshawe College, a junior naturalists' group, Trees for London (which promoted the planting of native trees and shrubs), and local and regional reptile research and protection initiatives. Several times the club has hosted conferences of its provincial and national affiliates – the Canadian Nature Federation in 1974 and 1990, and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists in 1962 and 1981.

A conservation committee was established in 1966 and an archives in 1967. MFN's nature reserve, Cedarcroft, located near Delaware, was officially opened in 1983. A Birding Wing, for those particularly interested in birds, began meeting in 1988. In 2000, a group of MFN members set up

the Thames Talbot Land Trust, which maintains close links with the MFN although it is now an independent organization.

A highlight of MFN's year is the annual Conservation Awards banquet. The group sponsors the London Christmas Bird Count each December. The popular *Guide to the Natural Areas of London and Vicinity*, edited by Shirley Lorimer and first published in 1995, is now in its fourth edition (2007). The Nature Line (519-457-4593) and MFN website ([www.mcilwraith.ca](http://www.mcilwraith.ca)) keep members and others informed of nature sightings and club activities. MFN representatives sit on

several advisory committees that work to protect various natural areas and parks.

Initiatives spearheaded by individual MFN members include Project Peregrine (which monitored London's downtown falcon family for a decade), the Skunk's Misery Butterfly Count (held annually in July), London SwiftWatch (which promotes Chimney Swift conservation and monitoring) and Nature in the City (an annual six-lecture series presented through the cooperation of the London Public Library).

Winifred Wake

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## REPORTS OF DIRECTORS, APPOINTEES, COMMITTEES and OTHERS

### President's Report

It takes many hardworking people to make any organization run smoothly, and I thank all of the Board Directors, Appointees, and other Club members who have contributed to the McIlwraith Field Naturalists' success for 2008/2009.

This year several MFN members were recognized for their contributions to the natural world. Sandy Levin received the London Community Foundation Ivy Award for Excellence and he directed his \$1000 prize donation toward McIlwraith Field Naturalists. Sandy also received a Special Recognition Award at the Annual Awards Banquet for his noteworthy efforts to protect significant woodlots in London. Winnie Wake received a Special Recognition Award to acknowledge her efforts in creating two ongoing programs, SwiftWatch and Nature in the City. A Thank You Award was presented to Katherine Turner for her six years of service on the Board of Directors. The MFN nominated the Thames Talbot Land Trust for an Ontario Nature award, and

it is a pleasure to report that they received the Steve Hounsell Greenway Award at the Ontario Nature AGM in May. TTLT was also recognized by Anne Marie DeCicco-Best as a "Featured Community Organization" at a January meeting of City Council.

This was a milestone year for the Christmas Bird Count. London is the first city in Canada to take part in 100 consecutive CBC's. Thanks to Pete Read for organizing the count and its accompanying events, as well as designing a commemorative pin for the occasion. He also spent many hours researching past Christmas Bird Counts and preparing several articles for publication in *The Cardinal* and the 109<sup>th</sup> CBC issue of *American Birds*.

The MFN continued to advocate enjoying and preserving Nature. General and Birding Wing meetings were held from September to April and members had the opportunity to take part in a wide variety of field trips. We thank the many members who participated in the Christmas Bird Count and the Annual Butterfly Count. Nature in the City, a

cooperative program between the MFN and the London Public Library, was presented at the Central Library. Pat Tripp organized the fourth season of this successful series of six talks. Project Peregrine volunteer monitors were not needed this year as the nest failed for the third year in a row.

Bird Studies Canada/MFN received a one year collaborative Ontario Trillium grant of \$61,200 for monitoring studies and community/school outreach programs in connection with Chimney Swifts and Bald Eagles. The grant period was July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. The MFN acted as a community sponsor for the Upper Thames River Conservation Area's application to EcoAction for a grant to create a marsh at Fanshawe Conservation Area to be used for habitat and outdoor education.

UTRCA received the last of four \$10,000 installments from the \$40,000 Inch Bequest. In total, 295 students and members of the community planted 814 native shrubs and trees ranging in size from 60 cm to 250 cm. The projects were completed at

- The Brown farm in the Dingman Creek watershed
- Pond Mills Education Centre
- Hastings Park in the Stoney Creek watershed
- Chesham Heights Park
- Mitches Park

The MFN again donated \$1000 to the London Public Library for the purchase of nature related books for the children and adult libraries. Money was also provided for the purchase of birdseed at Pond Mills Environmental Centre. In March an additional \$2000 was donated to the London Woodland Coalition's fund.

The Club was the recipient of several donations this year. Bequests were received from the following estates:

- Shirley Ann Cutler - \$1000
- Sarah Gould - \$1500
- Patricia Cole - \$1000

We received a \$5000 donation from the same family that gave a very generous donation last year. The MFN was chosen as the recipient for the proceeds of the Huron College Fashion Show and as a result we received \$2000.

The Club appreciates all the extra effort that Anita Caveney has put forth this year. As well as completing her duties as Past President, she has taken on the roles of Indoor Meeting Coordinator and Conservation Chair. Thank you, Anita, for all your hard work.

The MFN has sent letters of support for several conservation issues, including the Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan, the proposed zoning change of land immediately south of Meadowlily Woods ESA, Komoka Provincial Park, Long Point Causeway Improvement Project, and the Thames Valley Corridor Study – Phase 2. Anita and Winnie Wake were very involved in the review of the Sifton Bog Master Plan Update which was accepted by Council on February 2, 2009.

The MFN accepted funds and issued tax receipts for two environmental causes:

- The London Woodland Coalition fundraising campaign is designed to help with legal fees incurred at the OMB hearing concerning the criteria for identifying and protecting significant woodlands as defined in the City of London by-law OPA 403. This issue is ongoing as London developers and landowners have applied to the Divisional Court for leave to appeal, on a technicality, the OMB's original decision in favour of the by-law. The Divisional Court hearing is scheduled for November 2009.
- The Stoneybrook Heights/Uplands Residents' Association fundraising campaign will help with costs incurred to prepare for an OMB hearing concerning the building of

- service infrastructure through the Provincially Significant Wetland at 34 Debbie Lane.

There was a need for improvement in the MFN's outmoded method of recording membership information and we thank Hugh Casbourn for the endless hours he put into developing a new database. His expertise has been invaluable in creating a user-friendly method of organizing club records.

The Board would like to express appreciation to the retiring Directors. Leslie Rockwell served as Recording Secretary for nine years and Pete Read served as Birding Wing Chair for twenty-six years.

A major motion was passed by the Board of Directors in June to change the public name of **McIlwraith Field Naturalists to Nature London**, subject to approval by a majority vote of a quorum of the membership at the September 2009 general meeting.

In addition to my duties as President, and in the absence of a Vice-President, I organized the Annual Conservation Awards Banquet. I worked with Helen Zirtlides at the Hellenic Community Centre to arrange a date, cost, the menu, room setup, etc. I provided input for the beautiful brochure produced by Karen Auzins, who also made the signage for the raffle table. I typed up menus for each table and Pete Read and I prepared centerpieces with bits of evergreen and cardinal picks which were circled on the tables with Anita's wreaths. We set up the Bucket Raffle tables with the items generously donated by members. Between the raffle on the night of the banquet and a re- raffle at the next Birding Wing meeting for some leftover items, a total of \$652.00 was raised. I wrote the citation for Winnie Wake's Special Recognition Award and it was presented to her by Pete. Many Board members and others contributed to making the banquet run smoothly and a good time was had by the 110 attendees.

Sue Read

## Past President's Report

This was a much busier year than I had anticipated, largely because of duties outside of my position as Past President.

On November 1, Sue Read and I attended the Carolinian West Regional Meeting of the Ontario Nature Network in Ingersoll, hosted by the Ingersoll District Nature Club. On March 29, the MFN's Ontario Nature Representative, Pat Tripp, and I attended the Carolinian West Regional Meeting in Sarnia, hosted by Sarnia Urban Wildlife.

In January, the MFN Board decided to change the arrangements between the MFN and the London Public Library as specified in the MFN Manual. The MFN positions of Saunders Librarian and Saunders Children's Librarian were retired because it was deemed inappropriate for the MFN to continue to stipulate duties for library employees. On behalf of the Board, I drew up a Terms of Agreement between the two organizations to outline the MFN's requirements of the Central Library for future donations of MFN monies to the W.E. Saunders Library and the W.E. Saunders Children's Library. The Central Library welcomed the change. Two librarians will sign the Terms of Agreement on an annual basis.

As the Nominations Chair, I contacted prospective candidates for election to the Board of Directors, and conducted the election of Directors at the AGM on February 20.

On May 30, I attended the Ontario Nature AGM and Conservation Awards ceremony in Southampton, together with Pat Tripp and Stan Caveney. The Thames Talbot Land Trust, which had been nominated by the MFN, won The Steve Hounsell Greenway Award, a new award. It was accepted on behalf of the TTLT by its president, Stan Caveney.

At the Annual Awards Banquet on November 14, I read the citation for Sandy Levin's Special Recognition Award, even though he couldn't attend the banquet, and presented the award to him at a later date.

In the evening of May 6, I led a field trip at Komoka Provincial Park, with assistance from Winnie Wake.

On May 10, I attended the Thames Talbot Land Trust's dedication ceremony for the Inch and Ivey Trails at Joany's Woods. Here, I was invited to say a few words about the Inches on behalf of the MFN. I also assisted Stan Caveney with leading a hike for participants along the Inch Trail.

Anita Caveney

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## Archivists' Report

During the year 2008/09, the MFN Archives received a number of requests for information. Three came from within the club membership, while the remaining five originated with other conservation/naturalist groups or the Ministry of Natural Resources. In all cases, the club's archival holdings were searched for material relevant to the inquiry and replies were prepared. When no relevant documents could be found, if possible, suggestions were offered on other possible sources of information.

The following is the list of requests processed:

- Records of bird sightings and anecdotal reports of London Christmas Bird Counts beginning in 1909.
- Photographs of London Christmas Bird Count activities.
- Records of historic former Chimney Swift roosts in London and region.
- Records of early Christmas Bird Counts held in Woodstock.
- Photographs of Ned Saunders.

- Information on mole study skins prepared by W.E. Saunders.
- Documentation to verify MFN membership of a deceased club member.
- Records of heritage trees in London.

In the spring of 2009, Hugh Casbourn and Betsy Baldwin, co-editors of *The Cardinal*, made digital copies of all photographs contained within the archives. This will make such material much more readily available for use in *The Cardinal* and elsewhere.

In the past year, through membership in the Archives Association of Ontario, the MFN archivists were able to tour several other archives facilities in the region. This enabled them to see how other archives are organized and managed.

The archivists continue to welcome donations of materials related to MFN history.

David and Winifred Wake

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## Birding Wing Report

The Birding Wing continues to be active. We enjoyed many indoor meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday, from October through November and January through March. Our September meeting was a joint one with the regular club meeting, which continues a tradition. The speaker was Bruce Parker who talked about Monarchs. The other talks included October's meeting with Joan and Barry Attridge's summer birding in Australia, November's meeting with Steve Pike about Argentina, and January's meeting with Pete Read's talk on 100 years of Christmas Bird Counts in London. In February, Jean Iron gave a talk on Akimiski. This was followed in March with Paul Prevett and Candy McManiman on Chile.

The Nature in the City series of talks held at the downtown library in January and February included a birding talk about urban owls by Jodie Allair from BSC. Thanks to Pat Tripp for organizing these talks.

In the fall of 2008 and spring of 2009 a study was made at Saunders Pond on bird reaction to presence of people, to help decide if a blind was necessary on the newly constructed viewing platform on the west side. The venture, proposed by the Upper Thames River CA, and mostly completed by Jason McGuire, was carried out primarily with migrant waterfowl in mind, but also kept track of nesting species. While not totally definitive, as the study was not one of a controlled experiment, the results indicated that disturbance appeared to be minor, leading to the decision that a blind was not necessary at this time.

Specific birding trips that were held throughout the season were well attended also, and included trips along our own Thames River at Springbank, Kilally Woods, Westminster Ponds, a few out to Komoka Park, and further afield to the St. Clair River, the Bruce Peninsula, Hawk Cliff, Long Point and Kettle Point. After his talk on urban owls, Jodie Allair from BSC ran an owl prowl near London which attracted many participants. Reports for some of the outings are in *The Cardinal*.

Two additional trips involved other clubs. Rob Read and Gavin Platt lead a birding trip to Skunk's Misery, and Ian Platt and Pete Read lead one to Hawk Cliff, both for the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Some MFN members attended these trips.

Throughout the summer and fall, various birding activities were completed in Middlesex County, such as Breeding Bird Surveys, as well as lots of individual private trips undertaken by our local birding community.

Baillie Birdathoners for our Club in May were Ann and Ted Henderson. They brought in donations for Bird Studies

Canada and for McIlwraith. Thank you to Ann and Ted and our Birdathon contributors. Also thanks to the others who did their own independent Birdathons which supported the Club.

Pete and Sue Read organized another successful Christmas Bird Count in December of 2008. This was our 100<sup>th</sup> annual London CBC. We had over 100 participants in the field and about 70 feeder watchers. A commemorative pin was given to those who took part. Sue organized and ran the pot-luck supper. Help for the Pot-luck came from many but especially in the kitchen from Ann Henderson and Mary Dagleish. Many articles and pictures appeared in the *Cardinal*. There will be a feature article about the event in the Audubon/American Birding Association journal called *American Birds*, in the CBC issue coming in the fall/winter of 2009-2010. Other special events included the talk at the Birding Wing mentioned above. This was a notable celebration of a great achievement, the first club in Canada to have 100 consecutive CBCs.

Also in the winter of 2008-2009 the Great Backyard Bird Count took place during the week of Feb 13 to 19, 2009. Cornell Lab of Ornithology and US Audubon Society run the count each year. Thanks to Hugh Casbourn for the reminders and the updates.

Pete continues to keep track of the Middlesex bird records. Many thousands of sightings were posted and reports were made to *The Cardinal* and to the American Birding Association for inclusion in the publication *American Birds*.

The McIlwraith Nature Info Line was again run by Bob McGee, Rick Martin, and Gail McNeil and provided information about bird sightings and events, as well as recorded other noteworthy news. Thanks for your work.

In the spring of 2009, the Peregrine Falcon pair on the City Centre Buildings was again

checked to see about nesting activity. Pete and Sue Read have resigned as monitor co-ordinators, so the MNR provided nest checks. Though it was noted that there were eggs, nothing came of it, and no breeding success was reported again in 2009, and as a result, the Falcon Watch did not materialize. Late in 2009, the male Toledo, perished on the side of a building downtown. The remaining female is a bird of unknown lineage. Hopefully a new mate will arrive.

Bird Studies Canada ran the SwiftWatch this year. Many of our club members enjoyed keeping tabs on the roosts resulting in much data being obtained. There were some setbacks as two of the roost/breeding chimneys were torn down.

Thanks again to all those who helped make the Birding Wing successful this year. In the fall of 2009, Gail McNeil will take over the role of Birding Wing Chairperson. I wish her well in her new job.

I would like to thank all the many people who have helped me during my years on the board of MFN, particularly in the role of Birding Wing Chair, since its inauguration in 1988.

Pete Read. Co-ordinator

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## ***The Cardinal Report***

MFN published four issues of *The Cardinal*, in November 2008, and February, April, and August 2009, printed by The M & T Printing Group. The numbers of copies printed per issue were similar to those of the previous year, between 420 and 455. The November and August issues each had 40 pages, the April issue, 48 pages, and the February issue, 52 pages. The February issue was a special one, celebrating London's 100<sup>th</sup> Christmas Bird Count in December 2008.

Thank you to all MFN members who submitted articles, reports, artwork, photos,

or ideas to *The Cardinal* during the year. A number of non-members also made valued contributions. We are always delighted by the generosity of so many people in making written submissions and/or allowing us to use their artwork or photos. Without the excellent submissions by our contributors, *The Cardinal* would not exist. We were particularly pleased this year by the number of new contributors.

Cardinal editorial committee members were Barbara Bain, Anita Caveney, Shirley and Jack Lorimer, Shelley Markland, Winnie and Dave Wake, as well as ourselves. We are very grateful to the committee members for all the work they did in writing, researching, proofreading, providing illustrations, and, at regular meetings and outside of them, in discussing and offering advice on all aspects of *The Cardinal*. Kate Collins-Thompson and Roslyn and Jim Moorhead also kindly did proofreading last year. Thanks go as well to Joan Taylor, Shirley and Denzil D'Mello, and Don Perrie, for looking after the mailing of each issue of *The Cardinal*.

Most *Cardinals* go to club members, but there are also complimentary copies regularly sent to organizations (mainly other naturalists' groups) and London Public Library branches, and a few copies given to individuals and organizations on a promotional basis.

Betsy Baldwin and Hugh Casbourn, Editors

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## **Cedarcroft Report**

The Fall Cedarcroft Day was held October 18 with 8 volunteers attending. The trails were walked and cleared. A tree that had fallen from the ravine, narrowly missing the cabin, was trimmed.

The Spring Cedarcroft Day was attended by 9 volunteers on May 2. The trails were cleared of fallen branches. The Thames

River was still quite high restricting access to some paths resulting in finding other paths that are not well traveled. The trilliums in varying colours were in bloom all around the property.

Fence posts along the east property line were reinforced with T bar. The wood was deteriorating, resulting in fallen or weak posts. The west bridge was repaired. Many of the 2 X 4's were missing or rotten.

More vandalism was found at the cabin. The screen door was damaged in the spring resulting in another visit from the O.P.P. Luckily, this was the only incident of the year.

Glen Winegarden, Manager

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## Conservation Report

In the absence of a designated Conservation Co-ordinator for the year, I acted as the interim co-ordinator. I appreciate the help received from other members with monitoring of environmental issues. Several important issues were followed during the year, and the MFN provided input on most of these. Details and documents relating to the issues listed below may be found in *The Cardinal* and/or the Club's Conservation records.

The Board decided that, owing to the vacancy in the position of Conservation Co-ordinator, club members would be encouraged to take a role in monitoring conservation issues in their neighbourhoods and send reports back to the Board. A number of members are actively involved in keeping an eye on development proposals, ESA Conservation Master Plan updates and management, and other environmental matters.

The MFN and Bird Studies Canada received a collaborative Ontario Trillium Foundation grant in the amount of \$61,200 for Chimney

Swift and Bald Eagle monitoring and educational outreach, to cover projects from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. Elisabeth van Stam from Bird Studies Canada co-ordinated the SwiftWatch monitoring of fall roosts. Several MFN members monitored fall roost and spring nest activity.

On behalf of the MFN, I provided further comments on the Preliminary Komoka Provincial Park Management Plan, in an article by Randy Richmond titled "Nature lovers try to save park" (part of his series, "A River", in the *London Free Press*). I was also interviewed in Komoka Prov. Park by Randy Richmond for Part 17 of "The Toy Boat Tour", a video series in conjunction with "A River", covering the full length of the Thames River. At the time of writing this report, there has been no word from the MNR about the final classification of Komoka Prov. Park under the proposed new Plan.

In August 2008, the MFN was notified that the London Development Institute and landowners were seeking leave to appeal the 2008 OMB hearing decision in favour of the City of London regarding its OPA 403 (relating to threshold criteria for Significant Woodlands). The Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Divisional Court will judge the appeal in 2009. The MFN continued to accept donations to the London Woodland Coalition's fundraising campaign to defray costs of a lawyer engaged by Sandy Levin to support the City at the Divisional Court hearing. The MFN also voted in favour of a further \$2000 donation to the campaign.

The MFN continued to monitor the proposal by Sifton Properties to install infrastructure through a Provincially Significant Wetland in the Stoneybrook Heights area (Gibbons/UWO Block 1, 34 Debbie Lane). When the City refused permission to allow this, Sifton Properties appealed the decision to the OMB. There have been several OMB hearings in connection with this project during the past 11 years, with the latest one

due to start on October 5, 2009. The MFN agreed to accept donations from the Stoneybrook Heights/Uplands Residents' Association towards a fund to pay legal costs incurred by the SH/URA to hire a planner and lawyer to defend the City's decision at the OMB hearing. Several environmental groups, including the MFN, had urged the City to buy the land. The SH/URA and the City hired ecologists to study the woodland in the significant wetland to determine whether it is a significant woodland, which would strengthen their case.

On August 5, the Club wrote a letter to the Planning Department at City Hall to say that the MFN does not support the Development Application OZ-7430 by landowners and SmartCentres for development of a Wal-Mart- anchored shopping plaza at the northeast corner of Commissioners and Meadowlily roads (168 Meadowlily Road South). In October 20, 2008 Council deferred a decision on the application and directed the Civic Administration to initiate a City-led Area Plan for all lands designated Urban Reserve east of Highbury Ave and surrounding Meadowlily Road South. The Terms of Reference for this Area Plan will include provision for an independent Environmental Impact Study, which will include an examination of the impact of the adjacent sports fields, and an update of the Meadowlily Conservation Master Plan. On March 25, I attended a public meeting to review the Terms of Reference for the Meadowlily Area Planning Study.

Winnie Wake attended a Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan Stakeholder meeting on September 16. I wrote a letter on behalf of the MFN to Monteith Brown Planning Consultants and Ross Fair at City Hall to express concerns about the management of ESAs as outlined in the Strategic Master Plan. (See the April 2009 issue of *The Cardinal*.)

The MFN wrote a letter of support for Bird Studies Canada's grant application to the

Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk to fund a Chimney Swift project. The application was successful.

In November, the Board wrote a letter to Mayor Travale of Norfolk County Council in support of the Long Point Causeway Improvement Project, aimed at reducing mortality rates for amphibians and reptiles.

Several MFN members, including those serving on the Local Advisory Committee for the Sifton Bog Conservation Master Plan update, attended public and private meetings with City and UTRCA personnel and amongst themselves (Oct. 29, Nov. 3, Jan. 22, Jan. 26, Feb. 2, Apr. 6 and Apr. 20) mainly in connection with the proposals for dealing with the White-tailed Deer overabundance at Sifton Bog. Council adopted the updated Sifton Bog Conservation Master Plan on Feb. 2, except for the sections relating to deer management. The Environment and Transportation Committee was directed to come up with recommendations by March 29 for deer control, and decided to support a deer cull as one of the options. Council decided not to make a decision about lethal versus non-lethal methods of control until February 2010, when more scientific data will be available.

On November 26, several MFN members attended a Public Open House in connection with the Thames Valley Corridor Plan – Phase 2. Participants were asked to complete a survey questionnaire. On June 17, several MFN members attended a public meeting organized by City planners to unveil the draft Recommendations and Maps for the Corridor Concept Plan and Strategies, and submitted comments. A major concern of naturalists is the possibility that paved pathways and other infrastructure may be installed in ESAs. The MFN is advocating against 3-metre wide paved multi-use pathways and concrete bridges in ESAs.

On January 14, the MFN wrote a letter to the

Provincial Government expressing the Club's support for the termination of hunting and ATV use in the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site.

On March 5, the MFN posted a comment on the Environmental Registry website urging government strengthening of the Draft Lake Simcoe Protection Plan. On July 23, the Club posted a further letter on the website in support of the Lake Simcoe Protection Act.

On April 7, Gail McNeil represented the MFN at a community meeting for the "Vision Southwest" Area Plan.

Anita Caveney, Interim Co-ordinator

**FIELD TRIPS REPORT FOR 2008/2009. Co-ordinator: Cathy McCrae**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Leader/s</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Highlight:</b>
Sept. 28/08	Meadowlily Woods ESA	A. White, B. Prentice	2 hours	20	sunny, 20°	identified plants and t
Oct. 5/08	Komoka PP	D. McCallum, S. Legeza	2 hours	27	beautiful, 14°	saw a number of wildf fungi species
Oct. 12/08	Gibbons Park	B. Bain	2 hours	17	beautiful, 25°	11 bird species, wildfl Woolly Bear caterpilla
Oct. 18/08	Cedarcroft	G. Winegarden	3.5 hours	8	sunny, 10°	cleared trails and falle several bird species s
Oct. 19/08	Westminster Ponds	B. Yurkoski	2 hours	25	sunny, 11°	12 bird species and n and wildflowers
Oct. 26/08	Kettle Point, Pinery PP	I. Platt, J. Taylor	3.5 hours	9	rainy	21 bird species seen
Nov. 2/08	Fanshawe CA	K. Turner	1.5 hours	18	sunny but windy	9 bird species seen
Jan. 1/09	Springbank Park	C. McCrae	2 hours	14	overcast, -8°	25 bird species identifi
Feb. 8/09	Kilally ESA	C. McCrae	1.5 hours	19	sunny, 1°	10 bird species seen; buckthorn, sumac not
Feb. 13/09	Seed Road, Coldstream CA, Coldstream Road	J. Allair	3 hours	64	cold, -5°	Snowy and Eastern S Owls seen
Mar. 15/09	Vauxhall Park	A. White	2 hours	35	beautiful	many saw first Robins and Redwings of sea: Mourning Cloak butte
Mar. 22/09	Aylmer WMA and Sewage Lagoons	C. McCrae	2 hours	10	overcast, 4°	36 bird species seen

**FIELD TRIPS REPORT FOR 2008-2009. Co-ordinator Cathy McCrae**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Leader/s</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Highlights</b>
Mar. 28/09	Long Point	I. Platt, G. Platt, J. Taylor	7.5 hours	23	sunny, 7°	approximately 80 bird species including Bald Eagle and Sand Crane
Apr. 19/09	Mitchell Sewage Lagoons and Hullett WMA	C. McCrae	7 hours	12	windy, 10°	45 bird species, 3 types of fern
Apr. 29/09	Kilally ESA	M. Dawdy	1.5 hours	53	cool, clear	Osprey, American Woodcock seen
May 1-3/09	Bruce Peninsula	C. McCrae	2.5 days	8	windy, mostly sunny	90 bird species including American Bittern and Bald Eagle
May 2/09	Cedarcroft	G. Winegarden	3.5 hours	9	sunny, 11°	cleared trails; 13 bird species
May 6/09	Komoka PP	A. Caveney	2.25 hours	14	drizzly, 18°	Spring Azure butterfly seen 14 bird species including Eastern Towhee; many flowering plants
May 13/09	Circle R Ranch	E. and G. McNeil	2 hours	9	rain	many native plants and fungi
May 20/09	Coldstream CA	R. Read	1.5 hours	13	sunny, cool	flowering plants and 14 bird species
May 24/09	Port Stanley	C. McCrae	3 hours	15	sunny	Whimbrel seen on breakwater
May 27/09	Kains Woods ESA	C. Quinlan	1.5 hours	4	foggy, 22°	Red Eft phase of Red-spotted Newt, wildflowers and native plants
June 3/09	The Coves ESA	J. Goodwillie	2 hours	32	cool, 6°	Black Walnut trees; Osprey, Rose-breasted Grosbeak
July 5/09	Skunk's Misery	A. White	11 hours	38	sunny	53 butterfly species seen; a Compton's Tortoiseshell and Gray Comma; high counts of other species

## Indoor Meetings Report

Because the position of Indoor Meetings Co-ordinator was vacant throughout the year, I acted as the interim co-ordinator. Many thanks to all members who assisted in any way to make the meetings run smoothly, especially the projectionists; the coffee, tea and cookies co-ordinator; the members who introduced or thanked the speakers; and, most importantly, the guest speakers themselves.

There were 7 indoor meetings, including the Annual Awards banquet. Presentations are listed below:

1. **September 19, 7:30 pm. The Biology, Migration and Tagging of Monarch Butterflies.** MFN member **Bruce Parker** discussed these aspects of Monarch butterflies and his involvement with Monarch research studies in collaboration with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Entomology Department at the University of Kansas. Introduced by Anita Caveney and thanked by Sue Read. Attendance: approx. 100.
2. **October 17, 7:30 pm. Nature in Art: The Making of a Field Guide.** Accomplished artist and writer **Fiona Reid** discussed the travels and work involved in the preparation of her book *A Peterson Field guide to Mammals of North America*. The talk featured illustrations of her detailed artwork of mammals and her field studies, and included a sprinkling of very entertaining anecdotes. Introduced by Anita Caveney and thanked by Pete Read. Attendance: approx. 85.
3. **November 14, 6:00 pm. Annual Awards Banquet. Silence of the Songbirds. Dr Bridget Stutchbury,** Professor of Biology and Canada Research Chair in Ecology and Conservation Biology at York University, discussed her thought-provoking book *Silence of the Songbirds: How We are Losing the World's Songbirds and What We Can Do to Save Them*, with its insights into the many threats our songbirds are facing in South, Central and North America. Many of these threats are dire and need urgent attention. Introduced by Dave Martin and thanked by Blaine Prentice. Attendance: 110.
4. **January 16, 7:30 pm. Travels in Florida and Panama Canal.** MFN member **Karen Auzins** gave a humorous account of the natural history and other aspects of a recent trip to Florida and a cruise in the Panama Canal with her husband, Eric, whose video and photos illustrated the talk. Introduced by Anita Caveney and thanked by Stan Caveney. Attendance: approx. 85.
5. **February 20, 7:30 pm. AGM. Decline in Pollinators. Dr Jeremy McNeil,** Helen Battle Professor of Chemical Ecology in the Biology Dept. at U.W.O., gave us an update on research about the causes of recent declines in various pollinator insects, such as Honey Bees that are being ravaged by Colony Collapse Disorder. Introduced by Anita Caveney and thanked by Pete Read. Attendance: 70 at the talk, 41 at the AGM.
6. **March 20, 7:30 pm. Wallaceburg Sycamore Woods and Turin Paw-Paw Woods.** Sydenham Field Naturalists **Tom Chatterton and Herman Giethoorn** described the SFN's involvement with the protection and stewardship of the Wallaceburg Sycamore Woods and the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Turin Paw-Paw Woods in the Sheldon Tract in Chatham-Kent. Herman's photos illustrated the talk by Tom. Introduced by Anita Caveney and thanked by Pat Tripp. Attendance: approx. 80.

7. **April 17, 7:30 pm. Members' Night.** There were six short presentations by members:
- **Judy Kwasnica: Groundhog Day in Antactica.** The audience cruised vicariously with Judy to Antarctica to view whales, seals, various species of penguin, icebergs, continental crags, and dramatic landscapes and seascapes.
  - **Eva D'Amico: Native Plant Gardening.** Returning to terra firma, the audience viewed the native wildflowers and shrubs in Eva's garden and appreciated tips about the reasons for the choice of her plants.
  - **Jim Bristow: Colours of the World.** Jim started out with words of praise about the programs and speakers featured by the MFN, accolades always welcome to the ear. His shared some of his beautiful landscape and nature photography, accompanied by the soothing music of Vanessa Williams.
  - **Cathy Quinlan: British Columbia – Exploring Low to High.** The audience resumed its vicarious travels, this time with Cathy to British Columbia. From the Sea Stars in the Pacific Ocean's coastal shallows to wild blue Lupines mixed with a flaming red and yellow Paintbrush species in the terrestrial high alpine meadows, the photos captured an array of fascinating flora and fauna along the way.
  - **Hugh Casbourn: Cheap Camera in the Backyard.** It's hard to believe that so many wonderful insects, with an assortment of other animals, can be found with a "cheap camera" mostly in a backyard. Hugh's presentation was a testament to the keen eye he

and family members have for observing Nature in its many forms, and capturing it photographically so that it can be appreciated by all. It was good to see larval and adult forms of many insects in the same frame.

- **Barbara Bain: Basket Birdhouses.** Barbara shared her photos of extraordinary bird houses featured at London's 2009 Home and Garden Show. It's amazing what the mind can conjure up in the way of decoration for wicker baskets, with assorted offerings from Nature – seeds, nuts, cones, twigs, bark, shells, etc.

Speakers were introduced by Anita Caveney and thanked by Sue Read. Attendance: approx. 55.

Many thanks to Karen Auzins for offering to return to the position of Indoor Meetings Co-ordinator for the 2009/2010 year.

Anita Caveney, Interim Co-ordinator

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## London Advisory Committee on Heritage Report

As noted in previous reports, most of the LACH agenda is concerned with built heritage. However, there is a strong appreciation among members and staff for natural heritage and parkland issues. The following items are some of the more notable ones, from Sept. 2008 to Aug. 2009.

1. A woodlot at 4866 Wellington Road, site of a proposed development, was a subject of discussion and LACH recommended protection of the woodlot.
2. An access trail/entrance way to the Coves ESA through the former Ah So Gardens site was discussed and

- supported by LACH.
3. The building of a Gazebo at the Elsie Perrin Williams Estate was supported by LACH after some discussion. The establishment of a city/county archives is being urged on by LACH.
  4. The deer in the bog issue was discussed at some length, with LACH recommending council follow the professional advice of UTRCA, MNR and City of London Administration. Preservation of the Meadowlily Bridge is sought as LACH recommended it be added as a priority 1 heritage resource.
  5. LACH discussed the issue of dumping over ravine banks and received reports on the Thames River Corridor Study, noting that natural heritage matters are receiving little attention in this study. LACH was informed that some buildings near Saunders Pond are to be removed (4 will be retained). LACH expressed concern that the ponds need to be protected during this work.
  6. **Coves Sub-watershed Plan Implementation Committee** has seen more land come under city ownership with the accession of a piece on the west side of the west pond off Springbank Ave. The development of the Ah So site entrance to the Coves is edging closer to reality as the MOE works through the approval process. There are some hopeful signs that the old paint factory site near the trailer park could come under city ownership. Residential development on the site is very unlikely.

Jim Cushing, MFN Representative

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## Membership Report

At the end of August, 2009 our membership peaked at 350 households. For several years, our membership hovered around 300 households, but for the past three years our membership has been slowly rising. There are many new members joining because they have friends who are MFN members, they have read our brochure, they have attended the Nature in the City series, or they have found our website.

Although the greatest concentration of McIlwraith members lives in London and the surrounding area, people still enjoy being connected with this group even when they move to a new location.

I wish Ann Day great success as she tackles the Membership Secretary appointment. Her good friend, Sharon Jorgensen will also help her during busy times. Between the two of them, I am sure that the membership will continue to rise.

Joan Taylor, Membership Secretary

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## Middlesex County Woodlands Advisory Committee Report

We had two meetings over the time span of the "MFN year", September 2008 to August 2009.

At the meeting on **October 15, 2008** the following were discussed:

### **1. Work Completed by Forestry Students**

John Trott gave a report on the different work projects that the summer students did this past year. They included: installing a gate at Big Swamp, working on the trails at the Banks tract, and a multitude of tasks in Southwest Middlesex, including cleanups, sign-erecting, and mapping 911 numbers.

## **2. Boardwalks in McLaren Tract**

John Trott also reported that the summer students used the County garage on Simpson Road to build 50 sections of board walk that will be moved and installed at the McLaren Tract across from the Newbury Hospital in mid-October. He said that this work would be completed with the help of the works department of Southwest Middlesex.

## **3. Sale of Timber – Patterson & Tunks Tracts**

- John Trott gave a report on the timber sale at the Patterson & Tunks Tracts. He reported that he had some concerns with the high volume that was harvested and after meeting with Brian Kington, Forest Consultant, these concerns have been rectified. The reason some areas were being cut more heavily than others is to allow more light to penetrate the canopy for the regeneration of Oak and Black Gum species of trees.

- John Trott reported that there was a possible sighting of Emerald Ash Borer in the Patterson & Tunks Tracts, but the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is still waiting for the laboratory results.

## **4. Terms of Reference to Hire an Ecologist – Dr Jane Bowles**

Dr Bowles gave a brief report on the draft terms of reference to hire a biologist to study certain tracts where endangered species are located. More development of these terms was needed. Some were concerned that no logging would occur and thus lose out on the money gained, but Dr Bowles and I felt that since we were ahead of schedule, selecting a biologist and doing the study could be done in time for 2010. Besides the protection of endangered and threatened flora and fauna, which have been found in those tracts required us to proceed cautiously.

After more debate the following motion was made:

Moved by Dr Bowles, Seconded by Earl Livermore

That the High Conservation Value Forest sub-committee review the Draft Terms of Reference (JMB 04 April 2008) and report back to Steve Evans by the end of November 2008 with their final recommendations. Carried.

Further to the discussion on the hiring of an Ecologist the following motion was made:  
Moved by Wes Hodgson, Seconded by Earl Livermore

That the County of Middlesex put \$5,000.00 in the 2009 budget to cover the costs in the hiring of an Ecologist. Carried.

Pete Read and Jane Bowles gave a report on the Thames Talbot Land Trust. They indicated that the Trust is actively looking at properties in the area.

John Trott reported that the sign that the summer students were working on needed help to complete and install. John Trott reported that he has been in contact with Mr Flegel, a shop teacher at Glencoe and he and his students could do it.

Moved by Wes Hodgson, Seconded by Pete Read

That the County of Middlesex make provisions for funds in the 2009 budget to cover this project. Carried.

The following motions were also made:  
Moved by Brian Kington, Seconded by Len Moore

That the County Road Department be approached to remove fencing along County woodlots on Concession Drive. Carried.

Moved by Wes Hodgson, Seconded by Amos Fennell

That next year's summer students locate and mark any boundaries where County woodlots abut private woodlots. Carried.

Moved by Dr Bowles, Seconded by Pete Read

That next year's summer students work on a comprehensive butterfly plan that would include mapping the different vegetation

communities, restoration of habitat, and a vegetation cutting policy. Carried.

At the meeting on **April 15, 2009** the following were discussed:

**1. Patterson/Tunks Tracts – Update**

Due to poor weather conditions, Porter Lumber has been given an extension to the Timber Harvest Agreement and will resume cutting in late August of 2009. John said that it will take approximate 3-4 days to complete.

**2. Boardwalk at McLaren Tract**

John Trott reported on the boardwalk at the McLaren Tract and the extension that would complete the trail loop. The general consensus of the Woodlands Advisory Committee was that the boardwalk should be completed in 2009 at a cost of about \$5000.

**3. Summer Forestry Students**

John Trott reported that because of the economic recession, the amount of tree harvesting in the County has dropped. This has freed up some of his time allowing him to do more work in the County Woodlands. It was suggested that a summer student wasn't needed.

Further to the discussion the following motion was made:

Moved by Jane Bowles, Seconded by Lee Talbot

That the County Planning Department staff be given the discretion to hire a student if needed. Carried.

**4. Butterfly Habitat**

At the October 2008 Woodlands Advisory Committee meeting, Dr Jane Bowles reported on roadside cutting in Skunks Misery. Dr Bowles indicated that improper cutting times were resulting in the loss of butterfly habitat at Skunk's Misery. At that meeting, there was a motion that in 2009 the summer student could work on a Comprehensive Butterfly Plan that would include mapping the different vegetative communities, restoration of habitat, and a cutting policy. John Trott asked Dr Bowles

if the County did not hire a summer student this year, would she hire a student to complete this one task. Dr Bowles said that the timing is tight, but she would look into it.

**5. Terms of Reference to Hire an Ecologist – Dr Jane Bowles**

Dr Bowles went over the Terms of Reference. She indicated that the Subcommittee on High Conservation Value Forest had an email conversation and that there were very few changes made to the Draft Terms of Reference from last year (JMB04April 2008). Dr Bowles indicated that the three consultants that the County had contacted to get pricing at the start of this process 2 years ago were not comparing apples to apples. The Woodlands Advisory Committee members all thought that the document was well prepared and covered all work that needed to be done. Dr Bowles indicated that there could be funding available for this work from the province and through the federal Species at Risk programs, but applications would have to be submitted by May 1, 2009.

Earl Livermore thought that in a lot of cases applying for funding ends up in a lot of extra time spent with little to show.

Further to the discussion and some discussion, the following motion was made:

Moved by Don Nisbet, Seconded by Wes Hodgson

That Vance Blackmore, Steve Evans and John Trott be given the power to recommend an ecologist. Carried.

**6. New Business**

Following a discussion the following motion was made:

Moved by Jane Bowles, Seconded by Don Nisbet

That Wes Hodgson bring the issue of ATV trespassing and vandalism to the attention of the OPP at the Police Services Board and see what solutions they would recommend to this on-going problem. Carried.

As one can see, the county-owned forests continue to be managed. With membership

from a wide group of interests and ideologies, it is hoped that compromise between active and passive management continues in order to preserve the areas which need protection. Note that there is a Middlesex County Forest Operational Plan for 2007-2011 and a County of Middlesex Woodlands Management Plan 2002-2021, both prepared by Silv-Econ. Our club representative should be familiar with these two, any revisions, and succeeding documents as they are written. Though accepted by the council for Middlesex County, revisions are being made each year. Also, there have been various interpretations of parts of the Management Plan which sometimes leads to confusion as to the intent and implementations of parts of the plan and therefore the amount of active management.

In order to fully protect important sections of these woodlands which contain endangered and threatened species, it is vital to have a knowledgeable member of our club on that committee so that concerns can be seen to in a timely matter, before irreversible damage is done by logging and other active management processes.

The Woodlands Advisory group is made up of “invited” interest groups and individuals, who are approved via motions and their acceptance to the group voted on at the council level. Among others, the committee includes members from the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Lower Thames Valley CA, a local logger, horseback rider enthusiasts, local farmers, and woodlot owners, a couple of technical advisors, and a representative of McIlwraith Field Naturalists. Also present are staff and council from Middlesex County. Each addition in membership is accompanied by such an “election”. Thus, if a new member of McIlwraith Field Naturalists should be asked to be the liaison on the Woodland Advisory Committee, that person would have to go through the process.

Pete Read, MFN Representative

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## Middlesex Stewardship Council Report

The Middlesex Stewardship Council, along with other county-based stewardship councils across Ontario, was created by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to assist landowners with on-the-ground environmental and agricultural stewardship projects. The Middlesex Stewardship Council (MSC) is made up of volunteers representing different organizations including agriculture, environmental (MFN), angling/hunting clubs and academia, to name a few. The focus is on rural Middlesex.

The councils are given seed money each year from the MNR to spend on local projects. The Council directs the Coordinator and other contract staff to seek matching funds for projects the council deems important in Middlesex. Cale Selby is the coordinator and he has been very successful in raising funds and coordinating many excellent on-the-ground projects in the county. Some of the projects started or funded in 2008/09 are listed below.

- A tallgrass prairie was planted (seeded) on a former agricultural field within Camp Sylvan (Scouts camp). Funding came from the Species at Risk Stewardship Fund. The sandy soil is ideal for prairie plants and the scouts are already hiking through and learning about this habitat. A neighbour has now expressed interest in doing the same on his land. Large prairie plots will provide excellent habitat for insects, grassland birds and maybe even American Badger.
- The Council supported a First Nations Stewardship Rangers program for aboriginal youth in Middlesex. The Rangers participated in a wide variety of outdoor environmental projects from tree cutting, to garbage cleanup, to trail maintenance, etc.

- A series of wetlands were created on Barbara McNabb's property in Southwest Middlesex, along with tree planting. The council is assisting Ms McNabb in naturalizing her entire farm over the years. Funding partners included Ducks Unlimited, Thames River COA (Canada-Ontario Agreement), Trees Ontario and others. Shorebirds started using the shallow marshes almost as soon as they filled up with water.
- Council members who live in the Bear Creek and Wye Creek watersheds, approached farmers about buffering the watercourses that run through their properties. A neighbourly visit was all that was required to get the majority interested. The council paid for the trees that were planted and the landowners gave up a little bit of crop land. Stream-side vegetation improves water quality and the aquatic habitat.
- The Forests for Life Program is up and running in Oxford, Elgin and Middlesex, with financial support from the Community Go Green Fund to hire staff and coordinate this popular program. The program entails working with Community Living London, local schools, conservation authorities, Scouts, Reforest London, UWO and others to collect local tree seeds and plant them in nurseries for later local use in the respective counties. The seedlings will be planted out for 2-3 years and then used in local reforestation projects. A nursery site for Middlesex is being sought.
- On September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the council and guests took a bus tour to some of the projects mentioned above to see first-hand how they are doing and what goes into their design and execution and to hear from the

landowners themselves about why they decided to do their stewardship projects.

Cathy Quinlan, MFN Representative

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## Nature Displays Report

On behalf of MFN, displays on eighteen nature and conservation topics are made available for public education purposes. Each display features colourful pictures accompanied by text, mounted on a three-panel board set up on a table. Information on the MFN and its programs is also provided.

During 2008/2009 displays were mounted on five occasions:

- Bald Eagles – Northridge Library, March to April 2009
- Spring Wildflowers – Northridge Library, April to June 2009
- Chimney Swifts – Landon Library, April to July 2009
- Butterflies – Landon Library, August to September 2009
- Chimney Swifts – Ontario Nature event at Springbank Park, August 23, 2009

Winifred Wake

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## Ontario Nature (FON) Report

Sue Read and Anita Caveney attended the Carolinian West Regional Meeting of the Ontario Nature Network in Ingersoll on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. It was hosted by the Ingersoll District Nature Club. Anita Caveney and Pat Tripp attended the Carolinian West Regional Meeting at the Sarnia Kinsmen Centre hosted by Sarnia Urban Wildlife on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Full reports of these meetings are included in the February and August 2009 issues of *The Cardinal*.

Issues discussed at these meetings included concerns about the effect of wind turbines on wildlife, clubs' land and wildlife preservation activities, and outreach work.

Pat Tripp and Anita Caveney attended Ontario Nature's AGM in Southampton on May 30<sup>th</sup> at which the Thames Talbot Land Trust was awarded the new Steve Hounsell Greenway Award for its purchase and preservation of Joany's Woods. The nomination had been made by McIlwraith Field Naturalists. Stan Caveney accepted the award on behalf of the TTLT.

The Network meetings continue to provide valuable ideas about club management. In addition, the club representatives describe environmental issues in their areas. Significant issues are passed forward to Ontario Nature for lobbying and discussion. It is good to be a part of a respected and strong provincial association advocating for nature in Ontario.

Pat Tripp, MFN Representative

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## Publicity Committee Report

The distribution and circulation of Nature London publicity has remained much the same over the past year. Recently, new volunteers have expressed interest in assisting with publicity. This support is much appreciated and follow-up contacts will be made. Part of the challenge is adjusting to the changes in local (but less-local!) print media. These outlets are decreasing as the internet is increasingly the information communication method of choice. This shift enables MFN publicity volunteers to circulate MFN publicity to sites available through A-channel and Rogers Cable, for example, from the comfort of their homes. Publicity volunteers edit and collate MFN event information and circulate it to a variety of media outlets and community venues. E-mail is used to circulate information to many

of the print and radio outlets such as *The London Free Press*, *The Londoner*, CJBK, and CFPL. The Publicity Committee meets as needed, depending upon the event calendar. Publicity flyers are generated and these are circulated for posting to local businesses and to all the libraries of the London and Middlesex library systems. The committee circulates the majority of the MFN brochures in conjunction with Hugh Casbourn, brochure creator. The Publicity Committee will also be assisting in the advertisement of the 2010 Nature in the City lecture series.

Leslie Rockwell, Publicity Administrator

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## SwiftWatch (London) Report (May 2008 to August 2009)

During 2009, the Chimney Swift was officially designated as Threatened by both the federal and provincial governments.

In late June of 2008, Bird Studies Canada (BSC) and the McIlwraith Field Naturalists were jointly awarded \$61,200 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. All monies went to BSC, which served as project administrator. The grant period ran from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. Funding was to cover bird conservation initiatives, centered on Chimney Swifts and Bald Eagles in Middlesex and parts of Elgin counties. The major goals were to 1) increase community awareness, 2) increase youth awareness and involvement, 3) increase capacity / build community partnerships, and 4) increase community volunteerism.

In May and June of 2008, London SwiftWatch undertook an intensive (up to twice-weekly) monitoring effort focused on about a dozen and a half chimneys that were considered to be potential candidates to host spring roosts. Three roosts were identified. Since these chimneys also served as roosts of non-breeders during the summer nesting

season, twice-weekly monitoring was maintained until early August.

During June, July and early August of 2008, London SwiftWatch revisited the 46 nesting chimneys (one pair of swifts per chimney) that had been known to be active in 2007 and found 38 to be occupied in 2008. Many previously unchecked chimneys were also visited. In 2008, a total of 93 London chimneys were found to be hosting swifts. Of these, three that were not used in 2007 had been active in a previous year. In all, 202 chimneys (in 151 buildings) were assessed. Thirty-four volunteers helped with data collection. They were kept up to date via weekly e-mail communications.

In early August of 2008, Bird Studies Canada took over the management of Chimney Swift monitoring in London. For the remainder of that season, London volunteers helped test a new monitoring protocol, submitting all data directly to BSC.

During the 2009 season (May to September), Bird Studies Canada continued to refine and test monitoring protocols and data collection and reporting procedures for Chimney Swifts, using London volunteers. In addition, local efforts were ongoing to document occupancy of chimneys by swifts during the nesting season. Of the 93 active chimneys identified in 2008, 81 were occupied in 2009. Eight chimneys believed to have been unoccupied in 2008 were active in 2009. In total, 182 chimneys in 154 buildings were checked for swift occupancy during the 2009 nesting season.

In the current reporting period, London SwiftWatch continued its outreach and education initiatives. Information was provided and thank-you certificates were presented (usually in conjunction with short talks on swifts) to the following swift landlords: Huron University College, New St James Church, Ryerson School, Kensal Park School, Thames Valley District School Board (Dr Bill Tucker, superintendent), St Paul's Cathedral, City of London (Mayor

Anne Marie DeCicco-Best), Wortley Village Valu-Mart, Frederick Mueller Law Office, Centennial House Apartments, and 95 Ridout Street apartments. Contact was made with several additional swift landowners, as well as with the City's Heritage Planner and other stakeholders. A representative from London SwiftWatch attended a workshop on Chimney Swifts hosted by Bird Studies Canada in August 2009.

Displays on Chimney Swifts were set up at the Geranium Walk (Ryerson School), Landon Library and Springbank Park. Full-length PowerPoint presentations on Chimney Swifts were delivered to the Environmental Club at King's University College, St Thomas Field Naturalists Club, and Landon Public Library. A potluck supper for 28 SwiftWatch volunteers was hosted in November 2008.

In March 2009, thanks to the Chimney Swift connection, students at Huron University College named MFN as the designated beneficiary of their spring charity fund-raising fashion show; a cheque for \$2000 was later presented to the MFN. An illustrated 20-page fact sheet (updated annually) on Chimney Swifts in London is posted on the MFN website. An eight-page document for landlords of Chimney Swifts was created in 2009. London SwiftWatch responded to a number of inquiries about swifts received via phone and e-mail. The Trillium grant funding has expired, but London SwiftWatch maintains its close collaboration with Bird Studies Canada to advance the cause of Chimney Swifts.

Although London SwiftWatch at present (August 2009) is not an official program of the MFN, it has its roots in the MFN and members of the club have supported it from its inception in 2004.

Winifred Wake

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## **Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT)**

The 2008/2009 year was an eventful period for the Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT).

The summer of 2008 marked the initiation of a study at the Meadowlily Nature Preserve to determine the effects of various non-lethal tissue collection techniques on butterfly health. A butterfly survey added several new species to the property's list including the Giant Swallowtail and the Tawny Emperor which are ranked as imperilled or vulnerable provincially.

In October of 2008, TTLT was pleased to be the local host for the 2008 Partners for Land Protection conference. This event was co-sponsored by the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) and the Carolinian Canada Coalition (CCC). The conference was an opportunity for TTLT to highlight activities at its Meadowlily Nature Preserve, one the conference field trip sites.

In November of 2008, as the TTLT's invited guest speaker, renowned ecologist Mary Gartshore shared her insights regarding the restoration of altered landscapes. Mary discussed various approaches to large-scale restoration efforts to enhance natural cover within our region. In her talk, Mary showcased a variety of projects that yielded both expected, and unexpected, results.

For each property it secures, TTLT sets aside an endowed Stewardship Fund. Income generated by the Fund is used to finance various property management activities. As the TTLT's endowed funds have grown, the Board investigated options that would provide a reliable income while keeping the capital secure. Accordingly, the Board authorized, in the fall of 2008, the creation of the Thames Talbot Land Trust Fund within the London Community Foundation.

In March of 2009, the Trust's dual mandate to protect both agricultural and natural lands was furthered with the securement of the Blain farm. The farm is located just west of Wardsville, in Elgin County, and features 20 ha of productive cropland as well as 1.3 km of river frontage. Between the cropland and the river are 6 ha of riverine forest, which connects the Thames to the core of the Skunk's Misery forest complex, a priority landscape for the Trust.

In advance of the spring property work days, TTLT also sponsored a chainsaw training course in March for five of our property stewards. The course provided instruction and certification in the safe operation of chainsaws, which are invaluable tools in keeping property trails open and safe for users.

The advent of spring was marked by volunteer days at a number of TTLT properties including Newport Forest, Joany's Woods, the Eberhardt farm and the Meadowlily Nature Preserve. TTLT's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Mother's Day walk was held at Joany's Woods on May 10, 2009. The event included the dedication of the Ivey and Inch trails following a year of intensive work by many volunteers to prepare the property for public use. Both the Ivey and Inch families were instrumental in the securement of this key Carolinian site.

At the Trust's Annual General Meeting on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Andy Kroeker, Jim Rule and Gordon Saylor were newly elected to the Board of Directors. In a talk entitled *Revisiting the Thames River: Observations from a canoe*, Pat Donnelly outlined the challenges and surprises encountered during a nine day paddle to the mouth of the Thames, a trip previously undertaken by London artists Paul Peel and William Lees 130 years ago, in 1877.

The summer of 2009 marked another milestone in TTLT's history with the securement of Tiedje Woods. The property comprises 15 wooded acres situated in the

Ausable River valley. A wide variety of mammals, birds, trees and herbaceous plants flourish at the site, including cuckoos and phoebes. The Trust thanks John and Dorothy Tiedje for entrusting TTLT with the perpetual stewardship of this remarkable site. A dedication ceremony is planned for the fall.

TTLT continues to enjoy the support of many MFN members for which we remain most grateful. For more information, visit [www.ttlc.ca](http://www.ttlc.ca).

Bernie VanDenBelt, MFN Representative

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## Urban League of London Report

Since its establishment in 1969, the Urban League of London, a non-profit registered charity, acts as an umbrella organization for community groups in London. It is composed of representatives from 27 neighbourhood associations and 3 city-wide organizations as well as 8 individual members.

The Urban League has served as a support network for its member associations for 40 years, offering information and resources so that they can effectively implement their own local initiatives.

The Urban League gives the Green Umbrella Award annually to individuals who demonstrate community citizenship in London. Gosse Van Oosten received the Green Umbrella Award for 2009. He “walks the talk”, being a supporter of Bullfrog Power, serving on Bicycle, Transportation and Safety committees, serving as past Chair of the Thames Regional Ecological Association, and is active in many other community and environmental endeavours.

The Green Brick Award is given annually to recognize developments that take community concerns into account at both the

planning and development stages of a project. The London Potters’ Guild received the Green Brick Award for 2009, for the renovations of the property at 664 Dundas Street, which is the home of the London Clay Arts Centre. This is the first Clay Arts Centre in Canada.

For our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, at the Annual General Meeting, Gil Penelosa, of Walk and Bike for Life, gave an inspiring talk and slide show that illustrated how cities in several countries around the world had become more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. He encouraged us to create partnerships where *Environment, economic Activities, Recreation, Transportation and Health* (EARTH) are all considered, and to translate this talking and thinking into ACTION.

The Urban League meets on the last Thursday of the months September to November and January to May. In June, the Annual General Meeting is held. Meetings are held in Grosvenor Lodge, 110 Western Road at 7:30 p.m., with networking from 7 – 7:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings.

For more information on the Urban League of London, where and how it is involved, go to [www.ul.london.on.ca](http://www.ul.london.on.ca).

Gail McNeil, MFN Representative

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## Website Report

Again this year, our website was hosted by Ken Dimson through his company Cambrian Software. Thank you, Ken, for the computer time and space and for paying the domain fee. The design of the website continued along the format of using the home page as a place to advertise upcoming events. The website continues to be divided into the following sections: Home Page, Indoor Meetings, Outdoor

Events, Birding Wing, Membership, The Cardinal, and Links.

The website was also used to promote Nature in the City, a series of six talks organized and promoted by Pat Tripp with the assistance of the London Public Library.

More use was made of the website as a vehicle for distributing information in the form of .pdf files. The Annual Report and fall brochure were made available to members through the website. The SwiftWatch Brochure and Fact Sheet were also available for download.

Hugh Casbourn, Webmaster

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## AWARDS 2008/2009

### Special Recognition Award

Sandy Levin  
Winifred Wake

### Thank-you Award (Suncatcher)

Katherine Turner

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008/2009

President	Sue Read
Past President	Anita Caveney
Vice-President	vacant
Treasurer	Don Lodge
Recording Secretary	Leslie Rockwell
Birding Wing Chair	Pete Read
Cedarcroft Manager	Glen Winegarden
Conservation	vacant (interim: Co-ordinator Anita Caveney)
Director at Large	Rick Martin
Director at Large	Blaine Prentice
Field Trips	Cathy McCrae
	Co-ordinator
Indoor Meetings	vacant (interim: Co-ordinator Anita Caveney)
Ontario Nature Rep.	Pat Tripp



## APPOINTMENTS 2008/2009

Archivists	Dave Wake, Winifred Wake
Brochure Producer	Hugh Casbourn
Butterfly count	Ann White
Co-ordinator	
<i>The Cardinal</i> Advertising	Cathy McCrae
Co-ordinator	
Christmas Bird Count	Pete Read
Cookie and Coffee/tea	Susan Legeza
Co-ordinator	
Editors, <i>The Cardinal</i>	Betsy Baldwin, Hugh Casbourn
Heritage Co-ordinator	Jim Cushing
Membership Secretary	Joan Taylor
Middlesex Stewardship	Cathy Quinlan
Council	
Middlesex Cty Woodlands	Pete Read
Advisory Committee	
Migration Secretary	Pete Read
Nature Line Co-ordinators	Bob McGee, Gail McNeil, Rick Martin
Publicity Administrator	Leslie Rockwell
Sales Co-ordinator	Marge Wake
Sifton Bog Master Plan	Anita Caveney, Stan Caveney, Winifred Wake
Update Local	
Advisory Committee	Bernie VanDenBelt
Thames Talbot Land Trust	Gail McNeil
Urban League of London	Marie Moverley
Volunteer Co-ordinator	Ken Dimson
Web Host	Hugh Casbourn
Webmaster	Ellie Contursi
W.E. Saunders Children's	(until Jan. 2009)
Librarian	

## OTHER PROJECT CO-ORDINATORS

'Nature in the City' series	Pat Tripp
SwiftWatch	Bird Studies Canada

*This annual report has been compiled by  
Anita Caveney, Past President, 2008/2009.*

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