



Nature London

2022-23

Annual Report

Table of Contents

PRESIDENT’S REPORT	5
PAST PRESIDENT’S REPORT	7
REPORTS FROM DIRECTORS, APPOINTEES AND COMMITTEES	9
ARCHIVES	9
AWARDS BANQUET	10
BIRD FRIENDLY CITY INITIATIVE	10
BIRDING WING	11
BOOK DONATIONS	12
<i>THE CARDINAL</i>	12
CEDARCROFT	12
CHIMNEY SWIFT PROGRAM	13
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT	17
CONSERVATION ACTION COMMITTEE	18
ECO-GRANTS PROGRAM	20

E-NEWSLETTER AND E-MAIL COORDINATORS	22
FACEBOOK REPORT	23
FIELD TRIPS	24
GUIDE TO THE NATURAL AREAS IN LONDON AND REGION	37
IMAGE DATABASE	38
INDOOR MEETINGS	38
INFO@NATURELONDON.CA	40
LONDON ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK	41
MANUAL SECRETARY	41
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY & MEMBERSHIP DATABASE	42
ONTARIO NATURE (FEDERATION OF ONTARIO NATURALISTS)	42
OSPREY MONITORING	45
REFRESHMENTS COMMITTEE	47
SAUNDERS LIBRARY (LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARY)	47
THAMES TALBOT LAND TRUST	48
URBAN LEAGUE OF LONDON (ULL)	50
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR	51

WEBSITE	51
YOUTUBE ADMINISTRATOR REPORT	52
AWARDS 2022-2023	55
APPOINTMENTS 2022-23	55
BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022-2023	56

President's Report

As always, the beginning of September is a time of transition for Nature London as some board members conclude their terms and new ones begin theirs. The club is fortunate to have individuals with a wide array of interests and skills willing to step forward to assume these leadership roles.

August 31st marked the conclusion of the board terms of both Dan Tigchelaar and Chrisoula Van Oirschot. We are most grateful for their contributions, especially as we navigated the turbulent waters of the COVID-19 pandemic and wish them the best in their future endeavours.

New to the board for 2022-23 were Darby Alderson and Don Taves. Darby, an Administration and Engagement Coordinator with Thames Talbot Land Trust, brings a wealth of organizational skills and youthful energy to her new role. Don also brings an impressive skill set and invaluable experience to the table through his many years in the medical profession. Both have proven to be valuable additions to the board.

In the summer of 2022, we made an appeal to the membership for volunteers to fill the vacant roles of President and Vice-president. We were delighted to have Bob Wright agree to take on the vice-presidency for 2022-23 with Don Taves offering to serve as President in 2023-24. My sincere thanks go to both individuals for stepping up to the plate, so to speak.

I extend my sincere appreciation as well to Gordon Neish, who moved to Past President after serving three years as President. I am also most grateful to Lesley Pergau and Liz Bell who continued in their executive roles as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. Thanks to all of you for your exemplary efforts!

In October, we took our first tentative steps towards returning to in-person meetings with both our Indoor and Birding Wing meetings being offered in hybrid form. With each meeting, we gained experience and learned to overcome the inevitable glitches. I know members appreciated having the option to attend in person or online. All this would not have been possible without the invaluable technical support provided by Chris Baldock, Gordon Neish, Glenn Berry, and Garth Casbourn.

For many advocates of conservation, 2022-23 was a tumultuous time, especially with respect to provincial environmental policy. Despite widespread opposition, numerous regressive policies were enacted. These included Bill 23 and associated regulatory changes that further weakened conservation authorities, local input over land use planning, and protections for Provincially Significant Wetlands. It also saw the removal of 7400 acres of land from the Greenbelt, something Premier Ford had previously vowed not to do.

These changes were rammed through on very tight timelines with the government showing little regard for public opinion. Our sincere thanks go to the members of our Conservation Action Committee, chaired by Sandy Levin, who coordinated several Action Alerts in response to the

government's proposed course of action. Although our efforts failed to sway the government in 2022-23, the dramatic reversal of the Greenbelt withdrawals in the fall of 2023 would eventually prove that "it ain't over 'til (we say) it's over".

Powerful antidotes to the negative environmental news of the year could be found within our Indoor Meetings program coordinated by Glenn Berry, Ruth Dickau, and Rick Martin. Two especially bright spots for me were the presentations at our January and April meetings. The January meeting featured brief presentations from each of our Eco-Grant recipients from the previous year. What tremendously uplifting presentations these were with so much excellent work being supported locally through this program, which has rapidly become one of the club's core activities. Our thanks go out to chair Jennifer Evans and her Eco-Grants Committee members for all their efforts.

In April, Nature London capped off its indoor programming for the year with Members' Night. This evening featured three diverse yet equally uplifting celebrations of nature by Jack Blocker, Cathy Quinlan, and Don Taves. The fourth and final presentation, by Ric Symmes, was entitled "Advice from 60 Years of Campaigning for Nature Protection". I found his reminder that *Trend is not destiny* motivation to "keep on keeping on" despite some worrying trends.

Nothing Nature London does would be possible without the tremendous effort of our amazing volunteers. While some volunteers have roles that provide them with some profile within the club, many others work quietly behind the scenes in equally important roles.

In 2022-23, we were pleased to present Special Recognition awards to Cathy McCrae – for her efforts as our Field Trips Coordinator and as a trip leader – and to Susan Relecom for her service as our Giving Coordinator. Conservations Awards were presented to Antler River Rally for their Thames River clean-ups and to Karen & Eric Auzins for their longstanding efforts including the donation of the Auzins Nature Sanctuary to Thames Talbot Land Trust. A Suncatcher Award will be presented to Jane Edwards in the fall of 2023 for her work on the Indoor Meetings Committee.

As a further expression of our appreciation, the board was pleased to host our first Volunteer Appreciation Social in several years at Hickory Ridge Golf & Country Club in June. It was a most enjoyable celebration of your efforts, despite the rainy weather that day. To all our volunteers – those beginning, those continuing, and those departing from their roles – a sincere thank you for your invaluable contributions.

Even after the indoor meeting schedule had concluded for the year, many activities continued through the spring and summer. Outdoors, field trips continued under the leadership of Evelyn Rogers, the maintenance of Cedarcroft was overseen by Barb Kaiser and her committee, and an array of monitoring programs were in full gear. Indoors, planning continued for the return of some treasured club events.

A survey of the membership this year showed substantial support for resuming our in-person Awards Banquet. As such, a Banquet Working Group, chaired by Darby Alderson, was struck this spring with the hope of reviving this much-valued tradition in the fall of 2023.

A tip of the hat also goes to the members of the Nature in the City Committee under the leadership of Kathleen Holland. We look forward to the fruits of their labour with the return of this immensely popular program in the winter of 2024.

Stacey Jaczko and her team are to be commended for their efforts in coordinating the club's participation in the "Birds as Bridges" conference, held August 8-12, 2023 in London and hosted jointly by the American Ornithology Society and the Society of Canadian Ornithologists.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Gordon Neish and his team who are updating our by-laws and other documents to comply with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act – essential "behind the scenes" work.

Nature London is a vibrant organization thanks to the efforts of you – our members, donors, and volunteers – under the leadership of a highly capable and committed board. Again, my special thanks go to the members of the executive – Gordon Neish, Bob Wright, Lesley Pergau, and Liz Bell – who have been of particular assistance to me this past year. It has been a tremendous privilege to serve as your President.

In tandem with my own departure from the board, Mike Channon also concluded his term as of August 31, 2023. I have appreciated Mike's sharp eye for detail and thoughtful comments. His efforts on the Cardinal Committee and as editor of the *Guide to Natural Areas of London and Region* have been exemplary. Many thanks, Mike!

By the time you read this Annual Report, Don Taves will be well into his year as President, and I know the club will be well served with him at the helm. Thank you, Don, for stepping forward to take on this essential leadership role. I am grateful to Gordon Neish as well, for agreeing to stay on an extra year in the role of Past President, and for all his efforts in assembling this report – no mean feat! Welcome, as well, to our newest board member, Matthew Palarchio.

In closing, I would encourage you to persevere in your efforts "To Preserve and Enjoy Nature". Increasingly, the two elements of our motto are inextricably linked: we need nature and nature needs us!

Submitted by Bernie VanDenBelt

Past President's Report

Nature London's Annual Report is an important accountability document that provides highlights of our achievements and documents the range and scope of our activities for our membership, government agencies, and the general public. As the person responsible for compiling the Annual Report, as part of my role as Past President, it is gratifying to see the broad range and scope of Nature London's activities. Much of this would not be possible, of course, without the skill, dedication, knowledge, and time devoted to Nature London by its volunteers. This in turn helps Nature London to achieve its goals *to acquire and disseminate knowledge of natural history, to*

conserve wildlife and protect its natural habit, to stimulate interest in and understanding of nature and its protection and preservation, and to develop and sponsor special interest groups in the various fields of natural history or, in short—to preserve and enjoy nature.

Given the bumpy path through the pandemic, and a significant challenge to develop and maintain Nature London's core management and administration capacity, we owe a particular vote of thanks to Bernie VanDenBelt who played a key role in getting Nature London back on a steady footing and to Don Taves for providing the steady guidance that will take us into the future. This said we have dealt with, are continuing to deal with, and will be continuing to deal with a fair amount of churn as volunteers come and go; however, turnover is par for the course for many volunteer organizations and provides an opportunity for bringing new energy and ideas into the organization while it creates a challenge for recruitment and retention and achieving a healthy balance of experience and institutional memory along with new energy and creativity. I would encourage every member to consider taking on one of the volunteer positions in Nature London and to not necessarily be constrained by the current structure if they have a new focus or initiative in mind that is consistent with our mission.

Another initiative that is underway is the revision and updating of Nature London's governance. As a volunteer-led charitable organization incorporated as a nonprofit under Ontario's Corporations Act—an Act that was replaced by Ontario's Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA) on October 19, 2021— existing non-profit corporations, like Nature London, have a 3-year transition period (i.e., by October 19, 2024) to bring their governance documents into conformity with ONCA.

Incorporated over fifty years ago as the McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London Ontario on March 17, 1972, our key governance documents are the Letters Patent (renamed Articles by ONCA) and the Bylaws. These have been revised through a consultative process with Nature London members with the assistance of our Board of Directors and a subcommittee of the Board, with special thanks going out to Grant Hopcroft, Stephen Jarret, Sandy Levin, and Bob Wright for their contributions. A key resource throughout this process has been through Nonprofit Laws Ontario's Community Legal Education Ontario and most especially Benjamin Miller who has provided outstanding advice and assistance. Kudos also to Susan Gergich and Pillar Nonprofit Network for facilitating meetings.

As I write this, the current plan is to seek membership approval of our Articles and Bylaws at the Annual Meeting on February 16, 2024, after which we hope to get everything buttoned down shortly thereafter. As noted in the Manual Secretary's report another upcoming "under the hood" task will be to revise the Procedures Manual. Participating as a team member in this project could be an interesting challenge for some Nature London Members, especially those who might have an interest in or background in human resources management or organizational management.

Submitted by Gordon Neish

Reports from Directors, Appointees and Committees

Archives

Nature London Archival Fonds

The Nature London (NL) fonds, an independent holding, is housed, free of charge, in the restricted-access area of the London Room of the Central Public Library (LPL). Due to insufficient space at LPL, additional material is stored at the archivists' home on a temporary basis.

Ongoing accruals include *The Cardinal* and club documents such as Board minutes, annual reports, and bi-monthly e-newsletters. Other items relevant to the history of Nature London are accepted as opportunities arise. For the most part, new materials are currently kept in the archivists' home, where they are stored according to the Series to which they have been tentatively assigned.

Other Activities

- Helped an inquirer locate a copy of the 1985 Klinkenberg plant list of Komoka Park
- As part of the series "Vignettes from Nature London's Past", wrote A Dubious Distinction for London, Ontario [first North American record of European Skipper], *The Cardinal* 272:31, Summer 2023
- Assisted Pete Read in editing and revising the last article of a four-part series on the history of bird record keeping by Nature London and its predecessors
 - Keeping Track of Bird Records, Part 4, 1983-2020, *Cardinal* 269:34-39, Autumn 2022
- Wrote In Memoriam: Olga Nemerovski [long-time swift monitor], *Cardinal* 270:19, Winter 2023
- Assisted in preparation of nomination of Bernie VanDenBelt for the Ontario Nature Conservation Leadership Award for 2023
- By invitation of a subcommittee of the Canadian Archives Association, served on a panel of five on a national webinar on Community Archives
 - DW gave 15-min PowerPoint: history of Nature London, its archives, challenges faced, etc. (46 computers connected)

Submitted by Winifred and David Wake, Archivists for Nature London

Awards Banquet

The Awards Banquet was cancelled for 2022-23 due to the pandemic and the awards were presented virtually in conjunction with our virtual presentations.

Bird Friendly City Initiative

Bird Friendly London continued to grow over the past year. Social media presence increased with currently almost 900 hundred Instagram followers and 1700 on Facebook. The content of the website expanded with blogs, more species profiles, and more information on how to help birds. A list below details some of the events that Bird Friendly London either sponsored or participated in. The Nature London Eco-grant that was received in 2022 was helpful in providing funds for some of these events. In 2023 London was recertified as the country's only High Level Bird Friendly City. Bird Friendly London continues to advocate for sustainable environments that can support bird populations in the city of London.

- In September 2022 held a native plant exchange event at Reimagine Co. featuring a presentation by Dr Mhairi McFarlane from the Nature Conservancy
- Provided free signs for private property owners to alert drivers to the presence of wildlife and cut down on roadkill
- Contributed to the design and cost of building a Barn Swallow nesting structure at Western University (part of the Eco-Grant funding was used for this)
- Participated in the Celebrating Natural Connections at Fanshawe Conservation Area in November 2022. Built pinecone bird feeders and led bird hikes.
- Commissioned a nature-themed mural on the glass at the Reimagine Company to prevent window collisions
- Distributed free bird seed to community members in need, along with education about feeding the birds
- Received an award from Nature Canada as 2022 Conservation Partner of the Year
- Sponsored a presentation by Dr. Leanne Grieves from the Society of Canadian Ornithologists on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in March of 2023
- In spring 2022 participated in EarthFest, hosted a birdwatching hike at the coves, and a “Big Sit” accessible birdwatching event, and participated in the London-Middlesex Children’s Water Festival
- Published a new educational comic about the secondary effects of rodenticide along with a pamphlet with more information
- As part of the “Birds as Bridges” ornithological conference hosted a bird night at the London Brewing Co-op

Submitted by Stacey Jaczko

Birding Wing

The Birding Wing Committee members for 2022-23 were Garth Casbourn, Kathy McCoy, and Stacey Jaczko. We decided to return to in-person events at the Civic Garden Center this year. It was also decided to have these events also available on Zoom for those who did not wish to attend in person. Glenn Berry provided much-appreciated audio-video help.

October 21, 2022

Boost Your Birdwatching Game and Take Your Birding skills to the Next Level

The speaker for October was Paul Nicholson. Paul is well known to Nature London members and the London birding community. He started us off back in person with a great presentation. He went through 20 great tips on how to learn to identify more birds and become a better birder. It included tips on two of the toughest categories gulls and shorebirds and how to make them less daunting. It was a great start back at the Civic Garden Center.

November 25, 2022

Travels Through the Arid Kalahari

Lyle Friesen and Carol Weaver shared pictures, stories, and sounds of their time spent in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park that straddles South Africa and Botswana. This is one of the largest parks in the world and we had a great introduction into this unique world which has relatively little human disturbance. Attendance was lower than hoped due to COVID-19 issues, but many people enjoyed this fantastic presentation on Zoom.

February 24, 2023

Exploring (and Birding) Canada Along the Trans Canada Trail

Sonya Richmond and Sean Morton presented on hiking the entire Trans Canada Trail from Newfoundland to Victoria British Columbia. They shared stories of their adventures and pictures of the birds that they observed along the way. They talked about things we can do to help birds and some of the apps we can use to become involved in citizen science.

March 24, 2023

Backdoor Birding

Laure Wilson Neish is a Nature London member and a well-known birder and photographer whose photos have appeared in many publications, signage, and apps. Laure shared the story of two London neighbourhoods she has lived in, highlighting some of the exciting local species she has seen and photographed from home. She discussed how you can improve your backyard habitat to attract birds and encouraged us to plant more native species of plants. It was a great presentation which hopefully inspired us all to improve our own backyards.

Submitted by Stacey Jaczko

Book Donations

After a very slow 2021 / 2022, 2022 / 2023 was a very busy one for both the receipt and sale of donated books and related items. Nature London received eight donations of used nature books, and more than seven donations of nature-related puzzles, games, nature magazines, and bird figurines.

With this year's resumption of some indoor meetings, sales picked up. There were notices in each edition of *The Cardinal* to say that donations and purchases could also be arranged by contacting me directly, which resulted in some sales. I had an open-house book sale at my home in April and sold books at a Friends of the London Civic Garden Complex event in April. A few books that had not sold over several years were sold to used bookstores in the spring, and a few others were donated to visitors to the Nature London table at an Earthfest event.

Total revenue from sales of used books and other nature-related items was \$994.

Submitted by Betsy Baldwin

The Cardinal

The Cardinal, as usual, was published four times in the year (Issues number 269, 270, 271, and 272) with a total of 140 pages. It continues to be available online at the Nature London website for members only. The online version is in full colour, has clickable hyperlinks, and may be printed at home as required. In the print version circulated by mail, only the covers are in colour. An increasing number of members are opting for the online version only, which has generated some printing and postage savings (unfortunately in a tight race with rising printing costs).

We continue to use that back cover to feature a montage of striking nature photographs submitted recently by Nature London members. More submissions are always welcome.

The current members of *The Cardinal* committee are: Muriel Andrae, John Berry, Susan Berry, (John and Susan are unrelated despite sharing a common surname!), Mike Channon, Ellen Mamandras, and Carrie Long. Thanks are also due to our dedicated support people: Hugh Casbourn and Gail McNeil for current membership mailing labels, Glen Winegarden and Leslie Rockwell for stuffing envelopes, and Mike Channon for mailing.

Submitted by John Berry

Cedarcroft

Another fairly quiet year has passed at Cedarcroft. Folks were still being careful because of COVID-19 so only a few activities for Nature London members were organized during this year.

Salamanders were discovered among the bricks outlining the spot where we used to make campfires, so we covered the area with flagstones and now use a firepit on the flagstones. The volunteer committee did have a February Family Day event complete with a scavenger hunt, courtesy of Phylis Ede, and a wiener roast with cider provided by Jim Jarrett. Later that month there was our first evening owl walk with Jim Jarrett and Evelyn Rogers leading the way.

We investigated the possibility of building a platform on the property for Ospreys to use. However, the presence of three bald eagle nests along the Thames close to Cedarcroft made that unrealistic.

The volunteers took turns doing monthly checks on the property during the winter. As well, Daisy McCallum kept the bird feeders filled. There seemed to be lots of folks keeping an eye on the property over the winter months.

We continue to have spring and fall clean-up sessions. We are still battling garlic mustard, periwinkle, and buckthorn. Our two newest benches had plaques installed on them this past spring when they were put out for the summer. The Cedarcroft sign on the entrance gate was repainted by Dave Daugherty. Part of an old fence near the end of the pond was cleared up as well this year.

We had several trees fall across the trails during the year and often our volunteers with chainsaws were able to clear them up. One tree was found over the cabin in December...after we just had the roof resingled in the summer of 2022! However, no harm was done. In July a dead ash fell across a junction of trails and was too tough for our volunteers to handle safely so Davey Trees were able to clear it up.

Submitted by Barb Kaiser

Chimney Swift Program

This account covers the 13 months from November 1, 2022, to November 30, 2023, a period that includes the 2023 swift season and the subsequent wrap-up period. Nature London's swift program has continued to operate independently, while collaborating and sharing information with other swift stakeholders. The 2023 London program was overseen by Glenn and Susan Berry, Sandy and Ric Symmes and Dave and Winnie Wake.

During 2023, organized monitoring at 18 chimneys was carried out on 20 evenings by more than 65 volunteers. Extra visits to these and other sites produced data for a total of 501 visits to 98 swift chimneys.

During the year, the organizing team held regular discussions (Zoom, in-person, e-mail) regarding swift programming in 2023 and beyond. Sandy and Ric retired from the committee at the end of August. At the end of November, Winnie stepped down as Chimney Swift Liaison to take on a much-reduced role.

Glenn and Susan have assumed full leadership of the organized monitoring program. In October, they sent a survey to all previous monitors, who indicated strong support for both

participating in and assisting with the 2024 monitoring program. A committee was formed. It held its first Zoom meeting on November 20.

A summary of 2022/2023 swift activities is presented below in three categories (with some overlap): Education/Outreach, Conservation/Advocacy, and Monitoring/Data Collection.

Education/Outreach

- Revamped swift page on NL website; new and updated materials; password-protected page for monitors.
- Prepared new/updated business cards, pamphlets, handout sheets, etc.
- Delivered Zoom PowerPoints on swifts to 2 naturalists' clubs:
 - Manitoulin Island, Jan 27 (30 computers); follow-up PowerPoint on citizen science possibilities re swifts.
 - Niagara Falls, May 10 (24 computers connected).
- Responded to multiple e-mails on swift-related subjects, e.g.,
 - How to find swift chimneys, capture methods for swifts, summary of construction and use of artificial swift towers in Canada, suggestions for best places to see swifts.
- On Apr 22 at EarthFest in Citi Centre Plaza, created/staffed a swift display with handouts (in conjunction with NL).
- Through info sharing, developed/strengthened relationships with swift stakeholders in MB, QC, and Maritimes.
 - Continued regular communications with Ontario SwiftWatch.
- On Aug 10, led evening walking tour of downtown swift chimneys for 10 delegates to American Ornithological Society conference; display, handouts; observed 1 active nest chimney, watched 120 swifts enter roost for night.
- Throughout the season, monitors acted as swift ambassadors, engaging passersby, and providing info on swifts.

Publications

- Chimney Swift Monitoring: Highlights from 2022, G Berry, *Cardinal* 270, Winter 2023, p 33.
- Releasing Hand-reared Chimney Swifts in London, G Berry, *Cardinal* 270, Winter 2023, pp 34&35.
- Flying Free: Chimney Swifts Released at Huron College, W Wake, *Cardinal* 273, Autumn 2023, pp 28&29.
- In Memoriam: Remembering Debbie Lefebre [swift rehabilitator], W Wake, *Cardinal* 273, Autumn 2023, p 42.

Conservation/Advocacy

- Provided info to discussion on possible harms of fireworks to wildlife.
- At the request of members of the biology dept at Western, provided suggestions for possible research topics on swifts.
- Handled the transfer of frozen swift cadavers from Debbie Lefebre (former operator of Swift Care Ontario) to Professor Keith Hobson at Western for use in research.
- Facilitated 2 releases of hand-reared Chimney Swifts; reports and brief PowerPoints prepared for each event.
 - Aug 27 – 11 banded swifts (2 with Motus tags) from Le Nichoir of Hudson, Quebec, at Huron College.
 - Sep 2 – 2 swifts from Destined to Fly of Harrowsmith, Ontario, at Mount Brydges.
- Searched (unsuccessfully) for new roost chimneys in nearby towns that might serve as potential release sites.
- Advised city ecologist that swifts nest in the chimney of a building in east London where redevelopment is planned and urged that no inappropriate alterations or construction activity be permitted.
- Provided input/comments on paper on weather and human disturbance re outcomes of breeding Chimney Swifts.
- Provided 6 owners with customized info on best practices and summaries of swift use of their 15 chimneys.
- After the federal government released the Chimney Swift Recovery Strategy in August, responded to chimney owners who contacted Nature London seeking clarification on their responsibilities.
- Completed digitization of all London swift data (2003-2023), ~5900 entries; shared with researchers at Western.
 - Data currently being used for an honours project: “Effects of Weather on Chimney Use and Roosting Dynamics in *Chaetura pelagica*”; more student projects on London swift data are expected in the future.
- To assist Breeding Bird Atlas, visited small towns in the region and confirmed swifts nesting in five chimneys.

Monitoring / Data Collection

Organized weekly Tuesday-evening monitoring in London (including four extra spring migration dates for the national roost monitoring program of the Canadian Wildlife Service).

- Tried to create meaningful and enjoyable experiences for volunteer monitors.
- Updated monitoring guidelines, parking info, field forms, online data entry portal, safety protocol, etc.
- Revamped delivery of communications to monitors, with a focus on privacy and security of personal information.
- Recruited new monitors via NL e-newsletter, *The Cardinal*, club Zoom meetings, EarthFest, personal contact, etc.
- Engaged >65 volunteer monitors (core of ~50), rotated weekly to different assigned chimneys.
- By July, welcomed >12 new monitors; mentored by experienced volunteers.
- Monitored 18 chimneys weekly May to September (plus additional daytime and evening visits).
 - Terminated monitoring 3 weeks earlier than in 2022, as swifts headed south on migration earlier in 2023.
- Sent weekly updates: assignment schedule, memory joggers, table, and analysis of recent results.

Other monitoring

- Monitored 80 other chimneys (mostly 1 visit each, some in daytime); 75 in London, 5 out of town.
- Identified 2 new active swift chimneys in London and 4 out of town.

Collected a total of 501 data entries from 98 chimneys (spreadsheet sent to Ontario SwiftWatch at end of the season).

- Prepared end-of-season swift monitoring report for 2023 (38 pages); distributed to monitors, other stakeholders.

Highlights of monitoring in 2023

- Start of spring monitoring delayed one week due to very cold weather.
- In late June and at other times, smoke from northern wildfires interfered with scheduled monitoring nights.
- Compared to recent years, lower spring migration numbers, higher roost numbers during nesting season.
- Compared to fall migration in the past 6 years, numbers peaked lower and earlier, roosts emptied earlier.
 - Combined tally for 13 chimneys peaked at 675 on Aug 8, lowest and earliest fall peak in 6 years.

- Largest single-night count at 1 roost = 374 (Labatt's, Aug 22), lowest high fall count at 1 site in 20 years.
- Last chimney occupied was Smith Fruit on Sep 12 (1 bird), 3 weeks earlier than 2022.
 - Earliest last date of occupancy since monitoring began in 2003.
- Of 18 chimneys, 10 produced no young; results are inconclusive for others, though some young likely fledged.

Collected sightings of Common Nighthawks, Barn Swallows, and bats.

London data appear to be showing a long-term trend of decreasing swift numbers and earlier fall departure (though no corresponding earlier spring arrival).

- As no equivalent fall monitoring is done elsewhere in Canada, London data may hold key insights.

Though 2023 was not a great year for swifts, the support from monitors, organizing committee members, and Nature London was unsurpassed. Sincere thanks to all. What a truly amazing team, and what important work is being achieved on behalf of swifts!

Submitted by Winifred Wake, (outgoing) Chimney Swift Liaison for Nature London, November 30, 2023

Christmas Bird Count

Our 114th Annual Christmas Bird Count was held on December 17, 2022. We had 152 people in the field within about 50 parties, and some of them counted their feeders and were joined by another 33 at feeders. I am glad so many people get to enjoy the tradition of our CBC.

Weather for the Count was mild, yet windy, and recent conditions resulted in a good number of species and individuals counted. Despite this, our total number of species was a great 79 species, and the number of individuals was about 23000 which is good.

Full results have been published in *The Cardinal* and displayed on our Nature London website (<http://www.naturelondon.com/bird-watching/>). I would like to again thank Hugh Casbourn for creating and continuing the awesome statistical spreadsheet which we can use to see patterns in our results. After the totals were compiled, I again sent the results to the Audubon Society.

Nature London's continuous contribution to this worthwhile project is a fact for which our club can be proud.

Submitted by Pete Read, London CBC Coordinator since 1983

Conservation Action Committee

The following abbreviations are used in this report:

CA = Conservation Authority
CAC = Conservation Action Committee
CMP = Conservation Master Plan
ESA = Environmentally Significant Area
FOTC = Friends of the Coves
NL = Nature London
OLT = Ontario Land Tribunal
ON = Ontario Nature
OWES = Ontario Wetland Evaluation System
PIC = Public Information Centre
TAG = Trails Advisory Group
TVP = Thames Valley Pathway
UTRCA = Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

This year's Conservation Action Committee consisted of seven Nature London members: Sandy Levin (Chair), Anita Caveney, Margo Does, Bill Maddeford, Roslyn Moorhead, Wayne Tingle, and Dave Wake. The CAC held no in-person or virtual meetings during the year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no CAC field trips to monitor ESAs were held. Two members of the CAC serve on the City's Trails Advisory Group, which makes recommendations to City staff on trail siting and maintenance in London's ESAs.

Work undertaken: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CAC field trips to monitor ESAs were not held. The following issues monitored or items addressed by the CAC included:

1. City Hall Updates

- **London's ReThink Zoning:** The CAC was monitoring the City of London's ReThink Zoning project, which resulted in a new zoning by-law for the City that is consistent with the London Plan. Zoning decisions also affect London's ESAs and Significant Woodlands. An online survey was posted on the City website for feedback. The CAC requested a meeting with City staff in 2023 to review the parts of the draft by-law that apply to London's Natural Heritage System
- **Neighbourhood Decision Making:** Each year, through its Neighbourhood Decision Making program, the City encourages citizens to propose projects in their neighbourhoods. CAC was concerned about a winning project that involved placement of benches in Westminster Ponds ESA. ESAs are not parks, and protection of an ESA's integrity is a top priority. A member of the CAC followed up with City staff and the ESA Management Team from the UTRCA about CAC's concerns. City staff stated that the benches would be placed along paved pathways or in areas that have a high level of disturbance, not in sensitive areas.

- **Provincial Government Legislation:** The Provincial Government introduced legislation to accelerate new residential construction. The legislation would limit the ability of CAs to protect species at risk and restrict their ability to appeal land-use decisions to the OLT. There were also proposed changes to the OWES that appeared to eliminate wetland complexing, such as the Arva Moraine Wetland Complex. CAC and other NL members were encouraged to review the postings on the Environmental Registry and submit comments.
- **South Branch TVP Extension:** The CAC submitted comments to the City on the proposed South Branch TVP Extension, which would follow the location of a sewer pipe. Members of the CAC who attended a PIC were told the pipe would be installed through directional drilling. Design details were not yet available. It will be at least a 5-year project.
- **Bill 23:** The CAC issued an Action Alert asking that members make 10 phone calls to area MPPs (preferably those in the government) that week to demand changes to Bill 23 and opposing the weakening of the Greenbelt. However, Ontario Bill 23 was passed, despite strong opposition from many quarters, including NL's Board and the CAC. Provincial regulations that weakened the OWES were also implemented. Conservation Authority staff who reviewed the Provincial Government's updated posting on the Provincial Planning Statement found that no changes had been made to the natural heritage policies from what was contained in the PPS 2020.
- **Hard Assets inventory:** The City retained a consultant to prepare an inventory of the hard assets in its ESAs. To enable the advancement of Conservation Master Plans for ESAs, to guide their management, the City undertook an inventory, condition assessment, and replacement cost valuation of all City assets within twelve managed ESA lands (trails both hardened and natural, as well as boardwalks, railings, and benches). The City would also be undertaking CMPs for four of its ESAs that have never had plans.

For more information on the above items, please refer to the Conservation section in the Fall 2022, Winter 2023, and Summer 2023 issues of The Cardinal.

2. CAC actions

- The CAC issued an ActionAlert to club members to ask them to oppose Ontario Bill 23.
- CAC members attended a PIC at Pond Mills Library in connection with the Meadowlily Servicing and Trail Plan and submitted comments.
- Some CAC members submitted comments on the Green Alliance's Proposal for the River Road Park.
- Some CAC members met with Kevin Edwards, Manager, Long Range Planning, Research and Ecology, and Emily Williamson, Ecologist at City Hall to get to know one another and discuss ESAs, etc.

- Some CAC members submitted comments opposing a proposed development on Gideon Drive opposite Komoka Provincial Park.
- A CAC member attended the FOTC AGM and reported back to the CAC. Among the items covered at the meeting were 1) Sherwin Williams paint company's refusal to sell its former industrial property in the Coves to the City of London, and 2) updates on the remediation of Silver Creek to prevent soil loss and prevent erosion of the banks. The West Pond at the Coves is being silted up by the creek.
- A TAG representative from the CAC attended a TAG walk to review the urgent relocation of a boardwalk in Kains Woods ESA, near the Shore Rd entrance. The replacement boardwalk was constructed in mid-May 2023. There was a City email consultation with TAG members regarding placement of benches in Westminster Ponds ESA, and one in Meadowlily Woods ESA, and TAG members were able to provide written comments.

3. Conservation Awards

Conservation Awards were presented to:

- Antler River Rally, led by Tom Cull and his family for their longstanding efforts and significant contribution to the cause of conservation, and raising public awareness of the importance of both the Thames River and the promotion of the health of the river.
- Karen and Eric Auzins, for their efforts to conserve native species and wild spaces, and their longstanding and significant contributions to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

4. Advocacy with Ontario Nature

NL joined Ontario Nature and many other environmental organizations to endorse a letter to David Piccini, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, urging him to implement key recommendations of the government-appointed Protected Areas Working Group, to partner with Indigenous Nations, and engage the public to implement a strategy to protect 30% of our land and waters by 2030.

Submitted by Anita Caveney

Eco-Grants Program

In January 2023, we extended an invitation to local organizations to apply for funding, and we were pleased to receive numerous applications.

The Eco-Grants Committee assessed these applications using a comprehensive evaluation tool, considering their alignment with Nature London's objectives, feasibility of the proposed plans, budget considerations, and acknowledgment of Nature London's mission. After careful

evaluation, four outstanding applications were chosen for funding in March 2023. Presentations from these organizations will occur at the January 2024 Indoor Meeting.

Here are the projects that have been awarded:

Public Education Project

Antler River Rally submitted by the Urban League of London

The Antler River Rally is a volunteer-run group organizing garbage cleanups along the river.

This proposal involved two parts: revamping the Antler River Rally website and an educational bumper sticker campaign. The old website (www.antlerriverrally.ca) was outdated and had limited functionality. The new website (now up!) allows the group to share cleanup events on a calendar and map page.

The bumper stickers hope to raise awareness of garbage that accumulates from drivers tossing litter out of their vehicles. This initiative is still to come.

“Greening Greenway” Project

ReForest London

The funding request is to plant 600 trees and 200 shrubs in Greenway Park to restore the forest canopy through 7 separate public planting events. Using a large number of volunteers, supervised by experts, the planting events both restore the environment and increase public awareness of tree planting. Planting was completed in summer 2023.

Apiary Workshops

LOLA Bees submitted by the London Environmental Network

This is a funding request for workshops about native pollinators and honeybees at LOLA Bees’ two apiary locations in London. The workshops included 6 summer sessions and 6 in-class workshops with the Thames Valley District School Board. The workshops had interactive elements for both parents and their children, as well as a “zine” (an artistic pamphlet) to take home to remember the experience. The project included very strong recognition for our organization including online and permanent signage of the Nature London logo.

City Nature Challenge

TTLT

Funding is to support the City Nature Challenge, a worldwide iNaturalist competition that occurred in London at the end of April 2023. The initiative involved several other local environmental groups including TTLT and UTRCA. Through hikes and talks, the City Nature Challenge hopes to get more Londoners involved in iNaturalist and posting about local wildlife sightings. Public engagement is a valuable asset to the community and the scientific knowledge base.

Submitted by Jennifer Evans

E-Newsletter and E-Mail Coordinators

The E-Newsletter is a twice-monthly email publication for members issued on the 1st and 15th of each month. The primary purpose of the E-Newsletter is to alert members to Nature London events during the following three weeks. In addition, we include a limited list of other items that we believe might be of interest. This year we used the list to circulate a member survey regarding a possible Awards Banquet.

The E-Newsletter is concise and depends heavily on hyperlinks to more detailed information on the Nature London Website as well as links to other sources and references to information printed in the Cardinal. This is a powerful partnership.

This year, we distributed 24 E-Newsletters to 592 member subscribers using the MailChimp database and mailing system that we have used since 2014. This year Mailchimp changed its policy that allowed us service with no charge. We did secure a “charitable discount” and have carried on with MailChimp at a cost of approximately \$ 15/month. We have investigated a couple of alternative services that might be free, but to date, we have not found a reliable no-cost alternative to Mailchimp. This service does leave us room to conduct some additional surveys like the banquet survey using the same or different member lists.

The E-Newsletter service is possible because of the support and talent of many other Nature London Volunteers including: Glenn Berry’s great work on the Website, Kathleen Holland’s YouTube channel, the Cardinal volunteers, the Trip Leaders and Coordinators, Hugh Casbourn who manages the member information, Gail McNeil with membership information and many others. The Newsletter would not have much substance without them, and we greatly appreciate the team effort on behalf of our amazing club.

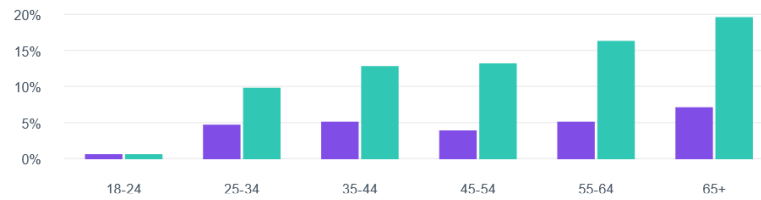
Submitted by Ric and Sandy Symmes

Facebook Report

In 2023, Nature London's Facebook page continued to increase its reach. As of December 2023, the Nature London Facebook page had almost 1,000 followers. Here is a graph of the distribution of NL Facebook followers:

Age and Gender

Men 27.20%
Women 72.80%



NL's Facebook presence is integrated with the website, *The Cardinal*, YouTube channel, and the email newsletter.

Submitted by Mady Hymowitz

Field Trips

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
1	Sept. 7, 2022 9:00am-11:00am 2 hours	Kelly Stanton ESA Cathy Quinlan	13	Calm, warm, sunny morning	Great Blue Heron, Wood Ducks, Beaver Lodge at the storm water pond. Plants: grey and red osier dogwood, bitternut hickory, cottonwood, trembling aspens, hawthorn, and buckthorn, Prairie Grasses: Big Bluestem and Yellow Indian grass. Evening Primrose, heath aster, Flat-topped Goldenrod, and Goldenrod Gall. Common Milkweed, Sweet White and Red Clover, Joe-Pye Weed, Purple Loosestrife, White Turtlehead, nettles, and white willow. Also seen Canada Warblers.
2	Sep. 14, 2022 9:30am-11:15am. 1 ¾ hours	Two School Hiking Trail Evelyn Rogers	9	19° and sunny	Northern Cardinals, Blue Jays, Cedar Waxwings, American Goldfinch, Gray Catbird, Cooper's Hawk, American Crow, Green Herons, Great Blue Heron, Wood Ducks, Mallards, Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, American Robin, and some Painted Turtles.

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
3	Sept. 21, 2022 10:00am-noon 2 hours	Weldon Park, Arva Jim Jarrett	10	19° sun and cloud	Gray Catbird, Black-capped Chickadees, Blue Jays, White-breasted Nuthatch, Canada Geese, American Robins, and Mourning Doves. Trees: Red Bud, Basswood, Linden Coffee, and an Osage Orange Tree with full, large grapefruit-sized fruit. Also, a Weeping English Beech. Lots of wildflowers, fruit-bearing shrubs, and wild grape vines.
4	Sept. 17, 2022 9:00am-11:30am 2.5 hours	Ross Park Cathy McCrae	7	Foggy, mostly cloudy, 20°	Gray Catbird, Belted Kingfisher, Lesser Yellowlegs, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Parula, Yellow-rumped Warbler. Flowers: 3 colours of jewelweed, asters, and tickseed
5	Sept.24, 2022 10:00am-11:30am 1 ½ hours	Coldstream C.A. Jim Jarrett	12	Cool but sunny	Hairy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Cormorants, American Robin, White-breasted Nuthatch, Song and White-throated Sparrows, Northern Flicker, Cedar Waxwings, Great Blue Heron, Northern Cardinal, and Black-throated Green Warbler. Anita Caveney identified Zig Zag Goldenrod, Spotted and Pale Jewelweed, Wood Nettles, Woodland Sunflowers, along with fungi, including Turkey Tail, green lichen, and several different species of Bracket.

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
6	Oct. 15, 2022 9:00am-11:00am 2 hours	Warbler Woods ESA Cathy McCrae	8	Slight drizzle, then cloudy, 10°	Birds: Blue Jay, Red-winged Blackbird, Ring-billed Gull, Turkey Vulture, American Crow, Northern Cardinal, European Starling, American Goldfinch and Robin, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Downy Woodpecker and Hermit Thrush. Plants: Canada Wood Nettle, Solomon's Seal, Asters, Wild Basil, various maple trees, Black Cherry, and Hickory Tree
7	Oct. 19, 2022 9:00am-10:30am 1 ½ hours	Westminster Ponds, Beaver Pond Kathleen Holland	13	Sunny, clear, and 8°	Birds: Belted Kingfisher, Great Blue Herons, Wood Ducks, Mallards, Song, White-throated and House Sparrows, American Goldfinch, Red-tailed Hawk, Canada Geese, Palm and Yellow-rumped Warblers Northern Flicker and Red-winged Blackbirds. Beaver and 5 White-tailed Deer
8	Oct. 22, 2022 9:00am-11:00am 2 hours	The Coves Evelyn Rogers	13	Sunny and warm Started at 7° and finished at 17°	Birds: Belted Kingfisher, Great Blue Herons, Purple Finches, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Cormorants, Wood Ducks, Mallards, American Robins and Crows, Cedar Waxwings, Song, White-throated and House Sparrows, Goldfinch Red-tailed Hawk, Turkey Vultures, Canada Geese, Northern Cardinal, and Dark-eyed Juncos. Plants: Poke Weed, Bittersweet, and Staghorn Sumac

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
9	Nov. 19, 2022 9:00am-11:00am 2 hours	The Coves Cailin Kennedy, Gail McNeil, and Cathy McCrae	22	Sunny, cold and windy	Mallards, Canada Geese, Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers, Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Cardinals, Blue Jays, American Crows and Robins, Downy and Red-headed Woodpeckers, European Starlings, Black-capped Chickadees, Red-tailed Hawks, Merlin, Fox, Tree and Song Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos and Cedar waxwings. Also, a coyote and a deer.
10	Dec. 3, 2022 9:00am 15 minutes	Kids' Christmas Bird Count Cathy McCrae, Bernie Vandenbelt, Gail McNeil, Diane Calzonetti, and Evelyn Rogers	14	Pouring rain and heavy winds. 6°	Due to poor weather conditions and safety concerns, the event was canceled.
11	Dec. 8, 2022 10:00am-11:45am 1 ¾ hours	Morrison Dam, Exeter ON Lissette Verbeem	9	Overcast, 3°, light breeze, water open	American Coot, Mallard, Hooded Merganser, Canada Geese, Domestic Duck, American Crow, American Goldfinch, Downy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Northern Cardinal, and House Sparrows. Also a White squirrel, Grey squirrel, and fresh evidence of a beaver.

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
12	Jan. 1, 2023 10:00am-12:00pm 2 hours	Greenway Park Cathy McCrae	28	Overcast, 2°	Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Canada Geese, Ring-billed Gulls, Mallards, Buffleheads, Common and Hooded Mergansers, Black-capped Chickadees, Brown Creeper, Northern Cardinal, Cooper's Hawk, Dark-eyed Juncos, Blue Jays, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Goldfinch, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Rock Pigeon, European Starling, and Mourning Doves.
13	Jan. 16, 2023 6:30pm-8:00pm 1 ½ hours	Medway Heritage Trail Lisette Verbeem	5	Calm, cloudy, no precipitation, dry ground for the most part.	Great Horned Owl seen, and Canada Geese heard.
14	Jan. 28, 2023 8:00am start 7.5 hours	Sarnia, St. Claire Region Cathy McCrae	13	Mostly overcast, up to 0°, light wind.	40 bird species, the highlights were Rodd's Snow Goose, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Merlin, Glaucous Gull, Northern Flicker, Snow Bunting, Eastern Bluebird.
15	Jan. 28, 2023 9:00am-11:00am 2 hours	The Coves Jennifer Evans	14	Rain and cold, 0°	Eastern Screech Owl, Belted Kingfisher, 2 Carolina Wrens, and 2 Song Sparrows
16	Feb. 19, 2023 9:00am to 11:30am 2.5 hours	Fanshawe C A Cathy McMrae	22	Partly sunny, 4°	18 species, Bald Eagle, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, American Robin, Hand fed birds at a few locations.

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
17	Feb. 20, 2023 11:00am to 1:30pm 2.5 hours	Cedarcroft Barb Kaiser, Daisy McCallum, Phyllis Ede, Jim Jarrett, Evelyn Rogers	15	Sun and partial cloud, 4°	Had a scavenger hunt looking for 20 items. Cooked hotdogs and marshmallows over the fire pit. Enjoyed Jim's famous apple cider. Also had hot chocolate and cookies. Birds seen: Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Black-capped Chickadees, American Crows, and Goldfinches.
18	Fe. 28, 2023 7:00pm to 9:00pm 2 hours	Cedarcroft Jim Jarrett	6	Clear, calm but cold and lit by a 1/2 moon	Looking and listening for owls but did not see or hear any. One member commented how wonderful and calming it was to stand around a fire pit and enjoy each other's company and watch the night sky. Jupiter and Venus were side by side in the western sky. Highly recommended to do it again!
19	Mar. 15, 2023 10:00am to noon 2 hours	MacNaughton Trail, Exeter Jim Jarrett	7	Perfect Day!	15 bird species: Dark-eyed Juncos, American Robin, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbirds, Mallards, Canada Geese, American Crows, Northern Flicker, Mourning Doves, and White-breasted Nuthatch. Animal tracks: coyote, squirrel, raccoon, opossum, and rabbit.

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
20	Mar. 19, 2023 10:00am to 12:30pm 2.5hours	Aylmer WMA and Sewage Lagoons Cathy McCrae	9	-3° with cold northeast winds	Aylmer WMA: 22 species including over 4000 Tundra Swans, Greater White-fronted Goose and Snow Goose, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Pintail, and Northern Flicker. Aylmer Sewage Lagoons: 19 species including Common Merganser, Greater Scaup, Ruddy Ducks, American Wigeon, Killdeer and Horned Lark
21	Mar. 26, 2023 8:00am to 3:00pm 7 hours	Hullett Provincial Park Cathy McCrae	15	Sunny, fairly light winds, warmed to 7° in the afternoon	6 Bald Eagles, Sandhill Cranes, lots of Tundra Swans, Northern Pintails, American Wigeons, Rink- necked Ducks, Hooded and Common Mergansers, Buffleheads, and some Songbirds.
22	Mar. 26, 2023 2:00pm to 3:00 pm 1 hour	Gibbons Park Cailin Kennedy	8	Sunny	Event had to be changed from Mar. 25, 2023, to Mar. 26, 2023, due to poor weather conditions. Great Horned Owls, American Robins, Common Grackles, European Starlings, White- breasted Nuthatches, Downy Woodpecker, Canada Geese, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Northern Cardinals.

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
23	Apr. 11, 2023 1:00pm to 3:00pm 2 hours	The Coves Cailin Kennedy and Henry Van Horik	14	Sunny and warm	Mallards, Canada Geese, Great Blue Herons, Northern Cardinals, Common Loon, Pied-bill Grebe, Northern Pintail, Blue Jays, American Crows, American Robins, Common Grackles, European Starlings, Black- capped Chickadees, American Goldfinches, Red-tailed Hawks, Turkey Vultures, a chipmunk, and turtles.
24	Apr. 17 2023 2:00pm to 4:00pm 2 hours	The Coves Cailin Kennedy and Henry Van Horik	6	Snowy and overcast	Mallards, Canada Geese, Great Blue Herons, Northern Cardinals, Blue Jays, American Crow, American Robins, Common Grackles, European Starlings, Black- capped Chickadees, Red- bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, American Goldfinches, Sharp- shinned Hawk, Turkey Vultures and Wood Ducks.
25	Apr. 19, 2023 10:00am to 12:30pm 2.5 hours	Dorchester Mill Pond Jim Jarrett	13	Cool and sunny, 2°C	Signs of Spring: Blooming Skunk Cabbage, Marsh Marigolds, Mayapples, and blooming Red Trilliums, the shrubs and bushes were sprouting new leaves. Birds seen and heard: Northern Cardinal, Black- capped Chickadees, Belted Kingfisher, male Wood Duck, Canada Geese, Mallard, American Goldfinches, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Blue Jays, Eastern Phoebe, Ruby- crowned Kinglet, Northern Flicker, Downie, and Red- bellied Woodpeckers. Animals: Muskrat and Painted Turtle.

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
26	Apr. 25, 2023 9:00am to 11:00am 2 hours	Komoka Provincial Park Kathleen Holland	7	Sunny and cool, below 10°C	Eastern Meadowlark, Eastern Bluebirds, Field Sparrows. Song Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows, American Goldfinches.
27	Apr. 25, 2023 7:00pm to 9:00pm 2 hours	Kilally Meadows ESA Cathy McCrae	6	Light rain then cloudy. 5°C	17 Bird species including Osprey, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hairy Woodpecker, Eastern Towhee Field Sparrow. But for the first time in 30 years no American Woodcock, but a Coyote seen in the area. Wildflowers: Lesser Celandine, and Bloodroot. Also 3 deer.
28	May 4, 2023 9:00am to 11:00am 2 hours	Westminster Ponds Stacey Jaczko	9	Cool, cloudy and overcast	Hairy and Downie Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, White-throated Sparrows, Tree and Baen Swallows, and one Chimney Swift.
29	May 6, 2023 9:00am to 11:00am 2 hours	Kelly Stanton Stacey Jaczko	8	Sunny and warm	19 species seen, the highlights were the Rose- breasted Grosbeak and the Eastern Meadowlark.

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
30	May 10, 2023 9:30am to 11:30am 2 hours	Cade Tract (UTRCA) Cathy Quinlan	12	18°, sun and cloud, and a light wind.	<p>Birds: Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, Eastern Kingbird, Field and Song Sparrows, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Red-winged Blackbird, Warbling Vireo. And Bobolinks.</p> <p>Flowers: Marsh Marigold, Bloodroot, and Twin Leaf. White Trillium, Kidney-leaf Buttercup, Wild Geranium, Red Baneberry, Trout Lily, Stary False Solomon Seal, Lily of the Valley, Blue Phlox, Squirrel Corn, Bedstraw, False Mermaid, Mayapple, Purple and Yellow Violets, Solomon Seal, Wood Anemone, Virginia Creeper, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, False Solomon Seal</p>
31	May 17, 2023, 6:30pm to 8:00 pm 1.5 hours	Coldstream Conservation Area Lisette Verbeen	9	10° and sunny	<p>Flowers Red Trillium, Trout Lily, Blue and White Violets, Foam Flower, Bloodroot, Mayapple, Marsh Marigolds, Black Currants, Skunk Cabbage, and Dogwood.</p> <p>Birds: Blue Jays, American Crows, American Robins, House Wren, Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, Great Blue Heron, Black-capped Chickadees, Nuthatches, and Swallows.</p> <p>A knot of Cedar Roots in the swamp. Just outside Ilderton, we viewed a successful breeding pair of Bald Eagles.</p>

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
32	May 19, 2023, to May 22, 2023 3 days	Bruce Peninsula Cathy McCrae	15	Rain on Friday, misty on Saturday, and sun on Monday	104 species seen or heard. Highlights: Sandhill Crane, Green Heron, Sora, Red-necked and Pied-billed Grebe, Common Loon, Wilson's Snipe, Great Egret, Common Raven, Brown Thrasher, Brewer's Blackbird, Trumpeter Swan, American Bittern, all 3 mergansers, American Woodcock Whip-poor-will, Merlin. 18 Warbler Species: Ovenbird, Blue-winged, Cape May, Northern Parula, Blackburnian, Black-throated Blue and Green, and Pine

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
33	May 20, 2023 9:00am to 10:30am 1.5 hours	The Coves, SLOW, EASY SHORT WALK Evelyn Rogers	11	Cloudy and cool	Birds: Northern Cardinal, Yellow Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, Baltimore Oriole building a nest, Song Sparrow, Blue Jay, Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck, Red-winged Blackbird, American Robin, and Goldfinch, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpecker, Canada Geese with goslings, Bald Eagle and Gray Catbird. Wildflowers: Starry and False Soloman Seal, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Wild Garlic and Nettles
34	May 31, 2023 6:30pm to 8:15pm 1.75 hours	Mount Pleasant Cemetery David Wake	19	27°C and sunny	Tulip Tree, Cucumber Magnolia, Horse Chestnut, Ohio Buckeye, Osage-orange, Sycamore, London Plane, White Pine, European Larch, Various oaks and maples
35	June 4, 2023 9:00am to 11:00am 2 hours	The Coves Evelyn Rogers	9	18° and sunny	Turkey Vultures, Black-capped Chickadees, Brown-headed Cowbirds, Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbirds, Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Doves, Hairy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Common Crows, American Goldfinches, House Wren, Song Sparrow, Great Blue Herons, Mallards and Canada Geese. Heard: Yellow Warbler, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireo, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Belted Kingfisher, Chestnut-sided Warbler and Gray Catbird.

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
36	June 13, 2023 9:00am to 11:00am 2 hours	The Coves Evelyn Rogers	7	Sunny but cool, 10°C	Red-tailed Hawks, Belted Kingfisher, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, House Wren, Gray Catbird, American Goldfinches, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackles, American Redstart, Mourning Doves, Killdeer, Great Blue Herons, Turkey Vultures, Osprey, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpecker. Nesting: Great Crested Flycatcher, Yellow Warblers, Baltimore Orioles, Northern Cardinals. Fledged: Downy Woodpeckers, American Robins, Canada Geese, Wood Ducks and Mallards

	Date/Time/Length	Location/Leader	Hikers	Weather	Highlights
37	Aug. 11, 2023 9:00am to 11:00am 2 hours	Meadowlily Nature Preserve and Shelbourne Park Cathy Quinlin	12	Mix of sun and cloud, 20°	Trees: Black Walnut Grove. Burr Oak, Pin Oak (a huge specimen), American Beech (a huge specimen), Butternut (possibly a hybrid), Mayapples (many with ripe fruit, a rare find) Prairie under the hydro corridor: Purple Coneflower, Tick-trefoil, Bee Balm, Big Blue Stem, Black-eyed Susan, and Sundrops. Bees: bumble bees, European Honeybees, and smaller bees. Butterflies: Red-spotted Purple, Silver Spotted Skipper, and Monarch. Non-native Plants: Knapweed, Black Locust trees, and Chicory. Birds: Red-tailed Hawk, Gold Finches, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Wood Pee-wee, Wood Duck family, and Mallard Family in stormwater pond. American Toad

Submitted by Evelyn Rogers

Guide To the Natural Areas in London and Region

Between September 1, 2022, and August 31, 2023, fourteen boxes, 20 copies per box were sent out for distribution. There are sixteen boxes remaining in inventory.

Submitted by Mike Channon

Image Database

The database continues to be housed on a dedicated HP 17” Zbook computer. Work continues on removing duplicate files and indexing images for easier search and retrieval. Backups are maintained on an external solid-state drive.

Members continue to contribute their photographs of their nature observations and also as recorders of club meetings and field trips. Images used in each issue of *the Cardinal* are indexed for easy retrieval to ensure that our publications use a wide variety of images without significant repetition. The database now contains over 16,000 images. These include:

- Nature specimen photographs: birds, mammals, reptiles, insects, plants, and wildflowers (approx. 12,000 images),
- Views of natural areas,
- Photographs of club meetings, field trips, workshops, banquets, awards,
- Archival material including old photographs of historical interest,
- Drawings by members of birds, plants, etc.
- Graphics used in the production of *the Cardinal*.

We have many excellent photographers among the Nature London membership who continue to provide excellent images of plants, birds, insects, etc. We feature the best new images from Nature London’s members on the back page of *the Cardinal*.

Submitted by John Berry

Indoor Meetings

During the 2022/2023 season, Nature London indoor meetings were a mix of virtual meetings via Zoom, and hybrid format with in-person meetings at the Civic Garden Complex live-streamed on Zoom.

September 16, 2022

Ryan Johnstone, Wildlife Research Technician with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, gave a virtual presentation on *Wild Pigs in Ontario*. Ryan discussed how wild pigs (escaped European boar and other domesticated pigs) represent “ecological trainwrecks” and how problematic they are once they are established. He talked about the efforts of the MNRF to track, monitor, and capture any wild pigs in Ontario to try to prevent their spread into this region.

October 14, 2022

Dr. Cameron Tsujita, Associate Professor of Paleontology Western University, gave an in-person presentation on the *Fossils of Arkona*. Dr. Tsujita introduced Nature London members to some of the important fossil localities in southwestern Ontario. After an introduction to the geological context, he showed the importance of these small fossils in reconstructing the environment in the distant past, and understanding how the environment changes over time.

November 18, 2022

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 concerns, it was regrettably decided to not have a Banquet in 2022. Instead, we had a virtual presentation by Jennifer Chestnut, London Public Library's 2022 Environmentalist in Residence. Jennifer presented an insightful talk on *Towards Greater Civic Engagement with the Environment*, focussing on the emotional connections we have with nature and the importance of caring for our well-being as we care for nature under stress.

January 20, 2023

January's indoor meeting was a showcase of the 2022 Nature London Eco-Grant winners. During the hybrid meeting, each group gave a short 10-15 minute presentation on their work and how support from Nature London had helped their project or research. The presentations were:

1. Rebecca Launchbury from the Thames Talbot Land Trust on the initiation of a snake monitoring project within some of the TTLT properties.
2. Cathy Quinlan from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority on a savanna restoration project at Fanshawe Dam.
3. Brendon Samuels about the recent work of Bird Friendly London, including the construction of a large swallow nesting structure.
4. Greg Wilcox from the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority about their project to rehabilitate the Coldstream Conservation Authority trails from years of off-road vehicle use, and promote the trails for hiking.

February 17, 2023

February 17 was the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Following the AGM, Terrylynn "Será:sera" Brant, a retired educator, and lifelong traditional Mohawk Seedkeeper from the Six Nations of the Grand River, presented *Experiencing Nature Through Rotinonsaunee Ceremonial Calendar*. Terrylynn shared how the Haudonsaunee marked certain events and ceremonies through their association with natural cycles and seasonal changes. She captivated the audience without the aid of a slide show. Her knowledge and insights provided a unique perspective on how nature informs our sense of time. (With deep sadness, we note that Terrylynn passed away on December 3, 2023.)

March 17, 2023

Dr. Catherine Scott from the Department of Natural Resource Sciences at McGill University gave a virtual presentation entitled *Eat, Prey, Love - The Secret Lives of Spiders*. A large in-person audience at the Civic Garden Complex listened as Dr. Scott presented from Montreal, and described the fascinating and risky world of spider sex, particularly that of the black widow, in a very memorable presentation. The experiment of streaming an out-of-town speaker opened up future possibilities of hosting additional hybrid meetings with premium remote speakers.

April 21, 2023

As is tradition, the final Indoor Meeting of the season was Member's Night. This past year we had four members present engaging talks on their excursions, research, and perspectives on the natural world.

1. Jack Blocker on *Finding the Bonksie (Great Skua) in Shetland* and his other adventures in observing sea birds in the islands.
2. Cathy Quinlan on *National Parks of Utah*, focusing on some of the unique and beautiful flora.
3. Don Taves on his trip to *the Svalbard Archipelago* with many stunning photos.
4. Ric Symmes with his inspirational *Advice from 60 Years of Campaigning for Nature Protection*

Submitted by Ruth Dickau

Info@Naturelondon.ca

The Info@Naturelondon.ca mail address receives general inquiries for Nature London. Messages include questions about member benefits (“where is my password? “), nature identification (“what is this bird in my blurry picture?”), volunteer opportunities and solicitation of support and comment from various organizations and individuals. We also get some requests for coverage in the E-Newsletter. Standard answers address some questions and others involve an acknowledgment and a referral to club volunteers with specialized knowledge. Sandy Symmes monitors the email account every few days and handles all these questions. She strives to project a friendly, helpful, personal response to individuals on the Club's behalf.

The volume of inquiries is perhaps a dozen per week. We are working with the Webmaster and Cardinal staff to provide dedicated email addresses for common positions such as, “Membership”, “Volunteers”, “The Cardinal” or “Field Trip Reports”, to keep the “Info” workload manageable and delays in response to a minimum.

This process works well thanks to the support of the Website and many other volunteers who answer most of the requests for information. It is a collective effort.

Submitted by Sandy Symmes

London Environmental Network

LEN's Vision – London is known as one of the greenest and most resilient cities in Canada.

LEN's Mission – We build participation, collaboration, and capacity in our community to cocreate positive environmental change.

LEN offers its members a suite of resources. These include:

- o Shared resources; event tent and tables, Epson projector, a lending library, and more.
- o Funding support; to offer workshops or volunteer training session through the Signal Boost Initiative.
- o Networking events. Many networking events were impacted by COVID-19 and did not return in 2022-2023 so there continue to be fewer in-person networking opportunities.
- o Promotional supports; members are encouraged to post their events on LEN's monthly eNewsletters and online events calendar, to display brochures at LEN informational booths and events. Nature London's profile is on LEN's website.

Nature London's events this year have been for members only. With the return of Nature in the City. I will advertise this event on LEN's website and in their eNewsletter.

Now more than ever it is important for Nature London to be part of the London Environmental Network and to utilize its promotional support. In these troubled times, I think it is very important that organizations dedicated to the protection and improvement of nature and the environment continue to support each other. I remain impressed by the work that LEN does and by the resources, promotional support, and workshops it offers its members. I believe being a LEN member provides us with opportunities to keep our members in touch with what is going on in the environmental sector.

I recommend that Nature London continues its membership and involvement with LEN.

Submitted by Susan Price

Manual Secretary

The Manual Secretary is responsible for keeping the club manuals up to date on a yearly or as-needed basis. The format of the manuals (a series of five manuals), revised a few years ago, now make updates easier. Manual 4 was updated with new award recipients. More substantial updates to the other manuals will be made in 2023/24.

- Manual Number 1 of 5: Documents of Incorporation – Letters Patent, By-law No. 1, Constitution

- Manual Number 2 of 5: Manual of Procedures – Main document for running the corporation
- Manual Number 3 of 5: Additional Guidelines for Directors and Appointees
- Manual Number 4 of 5: Recipients of Nature London’s Awards over the Years
- Manual Number 5 of 5: Members who served as Directors and Appointees over the Years

Submitted by Cathy Quinlan

Membership Secretary & Membership Database

Membership Secretary's Report 2022-2023

Our membership for 2022/2023 was 437 memberships representing at least 749 individuals. This is a slight decline from our high-water marks of the previous year. Eight times someone chose to give the gift of a Nature London membership. 202 memberships were paid online using PayPal. 54 percent of memberships received a paper copy of *The Cardinal*.

Our “Guide to the Natural Areas of London and Region” maintained its popularity with club members as well as non-members. 27 Guides were bought during the club year of 2022/23. Thank you, Ros and Jim Moorhead, and Mike Channon.

Let us continue to enjoy the many activities of Nature London and encourage others to be part of this growing club.

Membership Database

Hugh Casbourn continued to provide support for the Membership Database. Summary reports were created as needed and some ad hoc questions about our membership were answered. A number of enhancements were made to the database to accommodate new procedures in membership.

Submitted by Gail McNeil, Membership Secretary

Ontario Nature (Federation of Ontario Naturalists)

Regional meetings of Ontario Nature’s Nature Network provide an opportunity for naturalist clubs to exchange ideas and report on the success of programs they have undertaken, discuss natural heritage issues of concern, and seek advice from the Ontario Nature (ON) staff. ON staff representatives give an update on the organization’s Nature Network, and ON’s conservation science, youth, educational, and advocacy programs. Nature London (NL) is able to keep abreast of regional and provincial natural heritage matters through these meetings. Member groups are

the “grassroots” of Ontario Nature, and the McIlwraith Ornithological Club, an earlier name of NL, was one of the FON’s founding member groups in 1931.

With the COVID-19 pandemic still fresh in mind and its subsequent viral variants still posing a threat, ON asked member clubs whether they would prefer virtual meetings by Zoom or a mixture of virtual and in-person and meetings during the year. Nature London decided on an in-person 2022 Carolinian West (CW) Fall Regional meeting and a virtual 2023 CW Spring Regional meeting. Both meetings were run by Lesley Rudy, Nature Network Organizer for ON, and chaired by CW Regional Director Mike Fisher, who was elected to his first 2-year term by the CW region at its Fall 2022 meeting. Mike is a member of Friends of Ojibway Prairie in Essex County.

At the Fall regional meeting at the Ojibway Centre in Windsor on Oct. 29th, 2022, Dr. Catherine Febria gave a guest presentation on the work of her Healthy Headwaters Lab, Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research & Dept. of Integrative Biology, University of Windsor. She discussed the Lab’s focus on scientific impact and engaging society and Indigenous partnerships, and the establishment of an Ecosphere of stakeholders, and a Farm Advisory Board. NL President Bernie VanDenBelt and NL’s Ontario Nature Representative, Anita Caveney, attended the meeting on behalf of NL. There were 13 attendees at the meeting.

At the Spring regional virtual meeting via Zoom on April 1, 2023, Ross Fraser, the Ontario Nature agent from Cade Associates, gave a guest presentation on Cyber Insurance and discussed the problems caused by cyber-attacks (malware, stealing of personal ID information, data compromise, data compromise response expenses, extortion, and copyright or trademark infringement). With so many “baddies” trolling the Internet, prevention of cyber-attacks is essential. ON’s Tharanya Ravikumaran gave a presentation on Restoration Progress at Sydenham River Nature Reserve. NL’s Vice-President, Don Taves, and Anita Caveney represented Nature London at the meeting. There were 15 attendees at the meeting.

Reports of these meetings were published in the Winter 2022 and Summer 2023 issues of *The Cardinal*.

ON’s 92nd Annual Gathering, with the theme BRINGING BACK THE WILD, was an in-person meeting at Collège Boréal in Sudbury, June 9th-11th. NL was represented by Bernie and Christine VanDenBelt, Ric and Sandy Symmes, Dave and Winifred Wake, Matthew Palarchio, and Stan and Anita Caveney. The highlight of the Awards Ceremony for NL was the awarding of the prestigious Ontario Nature Conservation and Leadership Award to Nature London’s Bernie VanDenBelt for his outstanding achievement in nature protection over more than 25 years. More details about the Gathering appeared in the Summer 2023 issue of *The Cardinal*.

Some ON highlights of the year are listed below:

- 7 youth-led events and workshops that engaged 304 participants
- 11 community science and Nature /reserve outreach events with 456 attendees
- 16 research projects on ON nature reserves
- 22 volunteer Nature Reserve steward groups

- 26 Nature Reserves
- 47 Youth Council members
- 132 species at risk identified and protected on ON's nature reserves
- At least 147 candidate protected areas identified
- 150+ Nature Network member groups, including 3 new groups
- 176 community science volunteer hours spent monitoring snakes
- 2, 515 volunteers participating in the third Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas
- At least 7,798 acres protected through the ON nature reserves system
- 33,500+ readers of *ON Nature* magazine
- 145,000 people in ON's digital community

NL—ON interactions during the year included the following:

- NL joined with ON and other organizations to oppose Bill 23, “*More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*”, because of its many faults, especially the proposed changes to environmental and planning policies that would severely threaten the future health and sustainability of the environment, both floral and faunal if Bill 23 were passed. Through proposed amendments to several Acts, Bill 23 would remove the right of landowners to be notified or to appeal; undermine the conservation efforts of Conservation authorities in Ontario; remove protections from woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat; cancel municipal green-building standards; eliminate coordinated regional planning in Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH); and impose farm-destroying sprawl on municipalities like Hamilton, Halton, and Waterloo.
- Some NL members submitted comments to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure, and Cultural Policy to oppose Bill 23, and support ON's opposition to Bill 23.
- NL's Board, and some members individually, supported ON's strong opposition to the Ontario Government's proposal to replace the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) with a new Provincial Policy Statement, viz. ERO #019-6813 Replacement of the Provincial Policy Statement and the Growth Plan for the GGH. It would allow ongoing loss of farmland and natural areas in Ontario and accelerate urban sprawl.
- Some NL members attended ON webinars on “Conservation Projects on Pelee Island” (Dec. 8, 2022); “Engaging Youth” (Feb. 15, 2023); and “Reaching Ontario's Protection Target of 30 % by 2030” (Mar. 8, 2023).

Submitted Anita Caveney, Ontario Nature Representative

Osprey Monitoring

September is that magic time when the Goldenrod yellow mingles with the royal purple of New England Asters, there is colour in the sumac and a chill in the evening air. The Osprey parents have stopped feeding their fully grown young and some have started south.

Since April, Nature London members have reported on the Osprey families nesting in the London area. 2023 has been a very different but successful season for Ospreys in London. First arrivals were a week later than normal with the first Ospreys seen at Labatt Stadium and White Oak at Dingman on April 1. However, we had 3 new nests, 15 active nests (up from 12 in 2022), and fledged 22 young Ospreys (up from 17 the previous season).

Nests at Gainsborough & Hyde Park and Millar Berry Farm tower were “Active” They were occupied by a pair of Ospreys throughout the season but did not fledge any young birds. We don’t know what happened. Both nests are very high in communication towers so monitors could not see into the nests at the earlier stages and no full-size young were visible in July. However, these two nests were exceptions, and overall, the Ospreys were productive.

Fishing must be good in the northeast section of the city as we had three new nests with young at Highbury Stoney Creek Baptist Tower, London Gospel Tower on Fanshawe Park, and Sovereign & Belle Isle. Another new Osprey couple set up housekeeping on the tall capped chimney near the South Thames bridge on Adelaide.

Osprey Nesting -- 2023 Results

Nest Location	Young	Fledged	Notes
Clarke & Fanshawe	2	Active	
Hudson Boatworks, Fanshawe	2	Active	
Airport -Huron & Dakota	2	Active	
Sovereign & Bell Isle	1+	Active	
River Rd & Gore Rd	2	Active	
Windermere & Adelaide, Soccer	1	Active	
Windermere Stoneybrook Ball	2	Active	
Windermere at Kilally	0	Goose	
Windermere & Richmond	0	Nest gone	
Western Stadium	2	Active	
Gainsborough & Hyde Park	0	Active	
Labatt Stadium	3	Active	
Greenway Park	0	No Ospreys nesting this year	
Dingman & White Oak, tower1+		Active	
Millar Berry Farm, tower	0	Active	

Fanshawe Gospel Hall tower	2	Active, NEW
Highbury, Stoneybrook tower	1	Active, NEW
Adelaide & S Thames chimney	2	Active, NEW
TOTAL	22+	15 Active

+ indicates there may have been 1 more, but only 1 is confirmed.

Ospreys are interesting and attractive birds to watch. They are at the top of their food chain and accumulate any contaminants. Since the typical Osprey diet is 95 % local fish, the health of our Ospreys and their ability to produce young is a barometer of the health of our watershed. By this measure, we have some cause for optimism.

London Osprey Nesting Over the Years

Year	Young to Fledging Age	Active Nests
2023	22+	15
2022	17+	12
2021	23	11
2020	19	10
2019	16 +	8+
2018	16	10
2017	13	8

Osprey Drama at Labatt Stadium

Once again, the Labatt Stadium Osprey family fledged three young birds, more than any of the other “Active” nests in London. This is a result of their early start (they were the first to return) and superb fishing skills of the adults. This season had some special drama. While the female was still incubating the eggs, the City of London sent in a crew to service the lights below the Osprey nest. Alarmed, the female left the nest for about half an hour. Fortunately, the Nature London members who watch over the nest noticed the disturbance and contacted the workers who withdrew soon after. We were uncertain about the consequences of the exposure but eventually, three chicks emerged from the eggs and grew to full size in a matter of weeks.

The City plans to remove the Labatt Osprey nest this winter but will not provide a new platform in hopes that the birds will occupy the existing lower platform nearby. We can hope that the platform proves acceptable and that the neighbours and visitors to the ball field will continue to enjoy the Osprey entertainment overhead.

Silly Goose Stories

In recent years, Ospreys have encountered a new challenge from Canada Geese looking for a safe nesting place. The geese have the advantage of arriving before the Ospreys to occupy existing nests, without much thought about how far the goslings must fall before they can fly. At first, we

were concerned when nests at the Airport and Kilally Park were occupied. However, in both cases, the Ospreys simply created new stick nests nearby and carried on without any apparent problem for them. The Canada Geese were gone by May.

Thanks to the Osprey Reporters

All this information is thanks to the volunteer Osprey monitors. Some provided regular checks on specific nests and others reported occasional sightings to us at info@naturelondon.ca. In turn, we combined the information from individual reports, tried to fill the gaps, and sketched this picture of Osprey activity in the London area.

Submitted by Ric and Sandy Symmes Nature London Osprey Monitoring Coordinators

Refreshments Committee

In-person meetings began again this year with the request that attendees wear a mask whenever possible. Due to this and ongoing COVID-19 concerns refreshments were not served.

Submitted by Stacey Jaczko

Saunders Library (London Public Library)

Adult Collection Titles

100 Plants to feed the birds: turn your home garden into a healthy bird habitat Erickson, Laura	4 copies @ 13.79	\$55.16
Edible Wild plants and herbs: a compendium of recipes and remedies Michael, Pamela, and Christabel King	4 copies @ \$27.00	\$108.00
A Field guide to freshwater fishes of Ontario Holm, Erling	4 copies @ \$21.59	\$86.36
Gardening for acidic soils: working with nature to create a beautiful landscape Boland, Todd and Jamie Ellison	4 copies @ \$21.80	\$87.20
Handmade houses and feeders for birds, bees, and butterflies: 35 havens for wildlife in your garden McKee-Orsini, Michel	4 copies @ \$16.79	\$67.16
Nature's blessings: connect with the Earth every day through simple activities, mantras, and meditations Riddle, Kirsten	4 copies @ \$16.79	\$67.16
Now is the time for trees: make an impact by planting the earth's most valuable resource Lambe, Dan and Lorene Edwards Forkner	4 copies @ \$14.97	\$59.88
Secret life of the city: how nature thrives in the urban wild Bjorgass Hanna and Matt Bagguley		

4 copies @ \$20.97 \$83.88

TOTAL **\$614.80**

Children's Collection Titles

Be thankful for water: how water sustains our planet
Ziefert, Harriet

4 copies @ \$17.37 \$69.48

Bompa's insect expedition
Suzuki, David

6 copies @ \$13.89 \$83.34

The Story of a butterfly: learn about the life cycle and habitat
Reed, Margaret

4 copies @ \$14.49 \$57.96

Studying birds
Howell, Izzi

5 copies @ \$24.34 \$121.70

Weird and wonderful nature: tales of more than 100 unique animals and plants
Hoare, Ben

4 copies @ \$19.71 \$78.84

TOTAL **\$411.32**

Submitted by Pat Talbott

Thames Talbot Land Trust

The idea of establishing a local land trust developed within the McIlwraith Field Naturalists (Nature London) in the late 1990s. In the year 2000, the Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) was launched as a separate entity. TTLT is a registered Canadian charity, governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

From these early beginnings to the present, Nature London and TTLT have worked together to protect ecologically significant land in the London region. The trust employs a small, hard-working staff consisting of an Executive Director, Conservation Lands Manager, Administration and Engagement Coordinator, and a Stewardship and Outreach Coordinator. Staff resources were augmented in the summer of 2023, through the employment of summer students. This year, two worked as Ecological Technicians and two were involved in various projects in Outreach and Communications.

This report for Nature London members touches on some highlights of Thames Talbot Land Trust activities during the period September 2022 to August 2023. TTLT's Financial Statements for the year ending December 31, 2022, are available at <https://www.thamestalbotlandtrust.ca/>. Click on the "About Us" tab, and then on Financial Statements. Also, under the "About Us" tab, you will find additional information in the Impact Report for 2022.

During September 2022, a celebration event took place at the Auzins Nature Sanctuary, recognizing the gift of land along Dingman Creek, donated earlier that year by Karen and Eric Auzins.

More new lands were also added to the TTLT portfolio of protected areas. Deer Haven is a 19.4-hectare parcel in Elgin County, southwest of Wardsville. Ridgeview Wetlands provides a 13-hectare addition to the protected lands in the Five Points Wetland complex near Putnam. At Hawk Cliff Woods near Port Stanley, work is underway on a 30-hectare expansion of the existing nature reserve. Much background work was undertaken on this project in 2023, leading to the campaign announcement in September, as reported in the Autumn 2023 edition of *The Cardinal*. TTLT is partnering with Long Point Basin Land Trust on this important venture.

In July 2023, TTLT was awarded a London Community Foundation Community Vitality Grant. This funding, which extends over three years, will support work by TTLT and other partners in establishing Conservation Easement Agreements (CEAs). CEAs are a tested and effective land protection tool but, in the past, few have been applied in the TTLT region. A CEA is a voluntary, legally binding agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization; it ensures that land conservation efforts are maintained in perpetuity.

The 2023 season of TTLT's Passport to Nature program commenced in early May. Passport to Nature continues to be an effective way of introducing new people to the Land Trust. Sponsorship revenue from the Passport to Nature program in 2023 exceeded \$27,000. Thanks to Nature London for supporting this venture.

Volunteers are essential to the operations of TTLT and assist in many ways. New volunteers, including Nature London members, are always welcome! Possible roles include serving on the board and committees, helping to organize and run events, and leading nature walks, as well as "hands-on" work at reserves. Workdays are scheduled from time to time for maintenance of trails and removal of invasive species such as garlic mustard, buckthorn, and autumn olive. Once the invasive plants have been eliminated, native species may recolonize the site or may be encouraged through planting. In some cases, participation in a workday may provide the opportunity to visit a reserve that is normally closed to the public. While some TTLT reserves are open to the public, many are not. Please check the website for guidance on which reserves are open to visitors.

There are several ways to keep up to date on the activities of TTLT. Members and friends of TTLT receive a newsletter, the *Tattler*. Electronic communications include regular updates through email, Facebook, Instagram, and the website. Financial contributions to support the work of TTLT are always welcome, and monthly donations are encouraged. Check the "Make a Donation" button at <https://www.thamestalbotlandtrust.ca/>.

TTLT thanks Nature London and its members for ongoing support. We look forward to working together on more projects in the future.

Submitted by Dave Wake, TTLT Liaison

Urban League of London (ULL)

Urban League's vision:

We believe that engaged and informed Londoners are the building blocks of a vital, successful, and sustainable city. We believe that strong and connected communities are critical to bringing them together. Building these connections and advocating for our members is what we do.

The ULL is an umbrella group whose members include a number of neighbourhood associations and community groups working to improve and connect our city. Individuals with an interest in urban or civic matters may also become members of the League.

Meetings are held on the last Thursday of each month except for the months of June, July, August, and December. At each meeting, there is an educational component and the opportunity for members to share information. In 2022-2023 most of the Urban League's meetings were in person. Nature London members are welcome to attend these monthly meetings.

Some of the topics covered at the meetings this year:

- Ins and Outs of London's Strategic Plan
- Ontario Injury Law and non-profit organization events
- Discrimination in London and Middlesex County

Membership benefits:

- General Liability insurance for member events and room bookings.
- Access to small internal funding opportunities when available.
- Partnering on mutually beneficial projects when possible.
- Monthly general meetings featuring special topics of interest.
- Monthly newsletter
- Listing on the Urban League Website.
- Sharing events on social media (tag UL for retweets and Facebook share).
- Connections with and guidance and support from other neighbourhood associations and community groups.
- A collective voice on a city-wide and neighbourhood-specific issue.
- Digital support with GSuite (which includes mail, Google sites and Google Drive storage)

ULL provides Nature London with opportunities to promote our programs that are open to the public. It is important for Nature London to continue to support and be involved with the Urban League. Being a member helps to keep our members in touch with what is going on at city hall and in local community organizations. It is also an organization that can help to rally support for

causes of interest to Nature London. I recommend that Nature London continue its membership and involvement with ULL.

Submitted by Susan Price

Volunteer Coordinator

Nature London is renewed annually by volunteers who make the commitment to a role and putting their own stamp on it. Along with new leaders come new ideas and new thinking in our front-line jobs. We also thank our Board members who oversee Nature London as a whole, keeping Nature London vibrant and healthy.

We are always extra grateful as an organization for people who fill the most challenging roles. In this regard, we are very pleased to have Don Taves take on the Presidency after a relatively short apprenticeship on the Board.

We have over 40 named volunteer positions and teams. With many ad hoc participants beyond that, Nature London is blessed with members with attitudes of service and commitment. Indoor programs, Nature in the City programs, outdoor hikes, our Cardinal publication, website, and birding trips all come together under the direction of the related committees and team members.

As I personally step down as Volunteer Coordinator, I want to thank our members who are unfailingly generous and helpful with their time and expertise.

Submitted by Norm Corrin

Website

The website's name for branding purposes is naturelondon.ca. It is also known as mcilwraith.ca, and naturelondon.com, its true location. The image on the header of every page is a restored version of the drawing by David D. Martin from 1987.

The website serves many functions of the club, providing an online home for:

- Events descriptions and registrations
- Announcements
- Online versions of *The Cardinal* and other publications
- Membership information and application forms (but not the membership list)

Website registration software automates confirmation, notification, and reminder emails for membership and events. It also manages waiting lists for over-subscribed events. Website membership software collects payments online for memberships, donations, and some sales.

In 2022, after six years as webmaster, Chris Baldock asked to be replaced. From November to February, he mentored his replacement, Glenn Berry. Thanks are due to Chris for supporting, growing, and finally transferring the website. You can review how much he accomplished in earlier annual reports.

The appearance of the website changes periodically. Most changes are required to react to the information to be displayed while others are required to address changes in the underlying software. Occasionally, the layout is changed in order to make it more useful or appealing.

Most apparent to visitors to the website are the new contents added every week:

- Event descriptions and registration details
- Announcements
- Publications

The number of visits to the website continues to grow slowly while the number of views increases at a much higher rate as more functions are added. For example, new webpages were created to support the Chimney Swift Monitoring Program.

In August, the website and its email forwarding service were moved to a new DreamHost account for the exclusive use of Nature London. The website had been hosted under an account owned by Sylvia White for some years. At the same time, Glenn took over the postmaster function.

The various procedures involved in maintaining and operating the website are being documented in individual files hidden on the website.

Submitted by Glenn Berry, Nature London Webmaster

YouTube Administrator Report

The Nature London YouTube Channel has been getting some great traffic and use. Primarily it's a way of sharing presentation material that is recorded during our hybrid (In-person and Zoom) events for Indoor (Friday night) Meetings and for the Birding Wing. That way, when members have a scheduling conflict with a presentation evening, the recorded presentations can be viewed anytime during the next month, at their convenience!

From September 1, 2022, to August 31, 2023, the following actions were taken:

- Uploading of videos to the Channel as follows:
 - Four member contributions**
 - Three Birding Wing Presentations*
 - Seven Indoor Meeting Presentations*
- Removal of the unlisted videos by their specified end date (*). Virtually presented content

(by Zoom) which had been made available by speakers to NL and where permission has been granted, was uploaded to the YouTube Channel in “unlisted” mode. This “unlisted” content could only be accessed by using a direct link. This link was sent out in 2 consecutive eNewsletters to permit viewing by those who were unable to attend the presentation. These unlisted videos were viewed between 16 and 57 times, by members, over the course of one month. Each presentation was then removed after one month, fulfilling our agreement with each presenter.

- Member video contributions (**) are listed publicly for the viewing pleasure of NL members and beyond. Using a term from YouTube, these contributors are called Content Creators. It is only those videos that are publicly listed that YouTube tracks for the overall success of the Channel. These publicly listed videos when submitted with keywords (identifying the content) in the title or description become searchable across YouTube. That can make this NL YouTube Channel a locally important one when used as a resource by others.

Members are strongly encouraged to submit member videos to the Nature London YouTube Channel. In doing so, please consider the following:

Guidelines

Videos should be:

- Two minutes or shorter in duration
- Nature sightings that have been recorded by you (therefore avoiding any copyright issues)
- Recorded by a current Nature London member.
- Sightings from the London area or at least of flora and fauna found within the province of Ontario.
- Limited to one favourite video a year. (I realize that this may become popular, and we want everyone to have the opportunity to share their content with our members.)
- Ready for public consumption. All our member videos are uploaded for the public to enjoy, as well as our members.
- Accompanied by a title, thumbnail, description, and your name. A thumbnail is a photo that people will see which represents your video. For example, if your video subject is about a robin on its nest, take a photo of the robin or a screen grab of the robin from your video. A description should be one or two lines that highlight the content of your video. You will be given credit for providing the video.

Tips

Avoid using/adding music tracks because the risk is that YouTube may flag them for a copyright claim. And the music track will have to be removed.

Edit your video to showcase your highlights.

Thank you to those who've offered to liaise with presenters and forward their content to me, namely Gordon Neish and Glenn Berry. Pulling together presentation nights are big team efforts. Also, a big thank-you to members (Content Creators) who have submitted their own videos to the

Channel. For those Content Creators who have their own YouTube Channel, a link to their Channel is added in the description of their video submission. This allows NL members and members of the public who are interested, another way to find more content by a Content Creator. It helps to put our members on the YouTube map! Together, may we all grow our Channels with exciting nature content!

Submitted by Kathleen Holland, videos@naturelondon.ca
[@HikingWithKathleen](#) on YouTube

AWARDS 2022-2023

CONSERVATION AWARDS

Antler River Rally
Karen & Eric Auzins

THANK YOU (SUNCATCHER) AWARD

Jane Edwards

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS

Cathy McCrae
Susan Relecom

APPOINTMENTS 2022-23

Archivists	Dave & Winifred Wake
Audio / Visual Technicians	Rick Martin, Ric Symmes, Gordon Neish
Awards Banquet Coordinators	<i>vacant</i>
Bird Friendly City Representative	Stacey Jaczko
Birding Wing Program Coordinators	Paul Roedding, Garth Casbourn, Kathy McCoy, Gail McNeil
Book Donations	Betsy Baldwin
Brochure Producer	Ray Robertson
Butterfly Count Coordinator	George Preiksaitis
Cardinal Committee	Muriel Andreae, John Berry, Mike Channon, Carrie Long
Cedarcroft Manager	Barb Kaiser
Chimney Swift Liaison	Winifred Wake
Christmas Bird Count Compiler	Pete Read
Conservation Action Committee Chair	Sandy Levin
Eco-Grants Coordinator	Susan Relecom
E-Newsletter Coordinators	Ric & Sandy Symmes
Email Coordinators	Ric & Sandy Symmes
Facebook Coordinator	Mady Hymowitz
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Giving Program Coordinator	Susan Relecom, Grace Edwards
Guide to Natural Areas Editors	Mike Channon
Image Database	John Berry

Indoor Meetings Coordinators	Ruth Dickau, Rick Martin, Glenn Berry
London Environmental Network Rep	Susan Price
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Membership Secretary	Gail McNeil
Membership Database Support	Hugh Casbourn
Nature in the City Coordinator	<i>vacant</i>
Ontario Nature Representative	Anita Caveney
Refreshments Coordinators	Jim & Linda Bristow
Sales Coordinator	Ann Henderson
Saunders Library Liaison	Pat Tripp
Thames Talbot Land Trust Liaison	David Wake
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Volunteer Coordinator	Norm Corrin
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The Nature London 2022-2023 Annual Report was compiled by Gordon Neish.