



Nature London

2024-25

Annual Report

Table of Contents

President's Report	5
Past President's Report.....	7
Reports from Directors, Appointees and Committees	8
Archives.....	8
Awards Banquet	10
Bird Friendly London	12
Birding Wing	12
Book Donations	13
Cedarcroft	14
Chimney Swift Program	16
Christmas Bird Count.....	18
Conservation Action Committee.....	19
Eco-Grants Program.....	22
E-Newsletter	24
Info@Naturelondon.ca.....	24
Facebook Report	24
Field Trips	25

Friends of the Coves	33
Guide To the Natural Areas in London and Region.....	33
Image Database	34
Indoor Meetings.....	35
London Environmental Network	37
Manual Secretary.....	39
Membership Secretary.....	40
Membership Database.....	40
Nature in the City.....	41
Ontario Nature (Federation of Ontario Naturalists)	43
Osprey Monitoring	46
Saunders Library (London Public Library).....	48
Thames Talbot Land Trust	49
Urban League of London (ULL).....	51
Volunteer Coordinator.....	52
Website	53
YouTube Administrator Report.....	54
Appointments 2024-25	56

Special Committees.....57

Board of Directors 2024-202557

President's Report

The role of president gives opportunity to witness the remarkable range of activities within the organization and the passionate volunteers that bring these activities to life.

Never has the need for preserving our natural heritage and sharing our enjoyment of nature been greater.

Nature London, along with many partner organizations and our close ally, Thames Talbot Land Trust are at the forefront in these efforts.

My deep thanks to Gordon Neish in continuing to serve as Past-President and always being available for his wise counsel. Our Treasurer, Lesley Pergau has earned a “finance medal of honour.” The Review Engagement that Nature London was required to undergo gave a full **thumbs-up** approval to our financial records. We welcome Ken Cossoy as our new Treasurer.

I am indebted to the members of the Nature London Board who not only bring their gifts of oversight, experience, and wisdom but are always available with rolled-up sleeves to do the hands-on work as required. This is truly not just a policy board but also a working board. Members for the year of this Annual Report included Darby Alderson, Gary Cruikshank, Jennifer Evans, Brienna French, Grant Hopcroft, Stacey Jaczko, Gordon Neish, Matthew Palarchio, Cathie Penalagan and Lesley Pergau.

As well as Lesley Pergau, other members, including Gordon Neish, Gary Cruikshank and Darby Alderson will be leaving the Nature London Board as of September 2025. It was a delight to work with these individuals. Nature London is indebted for all their contributions.

The Finance Committee, most ably chaired by Grant Hopcroft, serves as our fiduciary lead. They do an incredible job in developing a draft budget for the year while keeping a close eye on the funds needed for operations and opportunities for investment. With the benefit of recent bequests, we have been able to help support the Thames Talbot Land Trust in launching their “Nature Nearby” campaign and help support the educational component of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority’s “Species at Risk” program, as well as enhance our reserves for the future benefit of Nature London.

Cathie Penalagan has taken over the role of recording secretary, which is truly appreciated.

The Nature London Awards Banquet was again a great success. Thanks to Darby Alderson and the many, many volunteers who make such an event succeed.

Nature in the City, cosponsored with London Public Library and led by Kathleen Holland and her committee, served up six Tuesday evenings of informative and entertaining talks for the benefit of our wider community.

Cedarcroft, our precious nature reserve and a Nature London focus for outings has been a major focus for the board and the Cedarcroft Task Force led by Darby Alderson. Jeff Paul, our new Cedarcroft Manager, and his team have been instrumental in improving the facilities and upgrading the trails.

Field trips, so central to enjoying nature, were again led by several members. Great thanks to Cathy McCrae for her coordination and leadership in making this program such a success. There is discussion in opening more outings to non-members as we recognize both the interest and the opportunity to expose more people to the wonders of our natural world.

The Community Eco-Grants Program continues to be a favourite for Nature London. Community organizations present their environmental initiatives to the Eco-Grants committee, chaired by Jennifer Evans, in the hopes of receiving a one-time grant to fund their project. Presentations by the recipients at an evening Indoor Meeting are a highlight.

The NL Board has also struck the Modernization Task Force as we operationalize the transfer of our membership process, along with other processes, into a comprehensive and easily managed digital format.

2024-2025 was another tumultuous year for conservation. Sandy Levin and the Conservation Action Committee keep us abreast of municipal plans and regressive provincial policies that require us to be informed. Nature London has cosigned with Ontario Nature on several letters that were delivered to our provincial and national leaders. These letters serve as education for government officials and include recommendations for the long-term viability of Ontario's natural heritage.

Special thanks to our webmaster, AV technician and all-around helpful whiz-kid Glenn Berry for his enthusiastic support of Nature London and its members.

Take the time to read this report in its entirety. It is well worth the effort, and you will gain a deeper appreciation of Nature London and all the activities imbedded within.

In closing, it has been an honour to serve as president of this organization, an organization dedicated to preserving and enjoying nature and an organization that exists because of the dedication of its members.

Submitted by Don Taves

Past President's Report

Apart from the completion of the compilation of the 2023-24 Annual Report that was discussed in last year's report, I was involved in two other main initiatives in 2024-2025.

The first of these was assisting Cathy Quinlan with the major revision and update of the Procedures Manuals. Cathy did a phenomenal job in pulling together and organizing a vast amount of information, and we are grateful for the participation and contributions of the Board Members and the Appointees who enabled this magnum opus to come to fruition. The Procedures Manuals still consist of five volumes: viz.,

Manual No. 1 of 5: Documents of Incorporation – Letters Patent, Supplementary Letters Patent, Certificate of Amendment, Articles of Amendment, Bylaws

Manual No. 2 of 5: Manual of Procedures: Main document for running the corporation

Manual No. 3 of 5: Additional Guidelines for Directors and Appointees

Manual No. 4 of 5: Nature London's Awards and Recipients

Manual No. 5 of 5: Members who served as Directors and Appointees since 1962

These provide all the essential information needed to manage the diverse activities of Nature London. With his latest update, it is expected that future revisions will be relatively minor for the next five years or so, after which another major update may be required to reflect changing priorities and circumstances.

The second initiative was assisting Hugh Casbourn and Jennifer Evans in setting up the Digital Reference Site (DRS). The DRS is a compilation of Nature London documents to provide Board Members and Appointees with information that will assist them to carry out their roles more efficiently and effectively. It will include such things as detailed information on governance and operations, job descriptions, standard procedures, models for preparing reports and organizing activities, records of past decisions, and other information that will assist them with the planning and implementation of their responsibilities. The DRS is currently a work in progress and will continue to expand and change over time in response to users' requirements.

Submitted by Gordon Neish

Reports from Directors, Appointees and Committees

The following sections were prepared by the members responsible for each function.

Archives

Maintaining the Nature London Archival Fonds

The Nature London (NL) archival fonds, an independent holding, is currently housed, free of charge, in the stacks of the restricted-access area of the London Room of the Central Public Library (LPL).

Due to insufficient space at LPL, for more than a decade, additional materials (comprising approximately half of the NL fonds) have been temporarily stored in the archivists' home. During the winter of 2025, the archivists dedicated substantial blocks of time to organizing and assigning the thousands of items in their home to appropriate series. They also began integrating some of the material held in the London Room with the material in their home.

From the inception of the NL Archives in 1966, archival material has been organized chronologically, according to its date of acquisition by the archives. As the size of the fonds has grown over the years, this method of storage has become increasingly problematic for finding and retrieving items. Integration of the two sets of holdings (those in the editors' home and those in the London Room) will ensure materials of a similar nature (e.g., all minute books) are stored in the same place and assigned to the same series. Such an arrangement greatly facilitates the retrieval of material for study.

A recent change in library policy has made the work of the NL archivists more difficult. Throughout our tenure as archivists (2006 to present) we have been permitted to enter the restricted-access area of the London Room to retrieve existing items or deposit new ones. In February 2025, a new policy was introduced, restricting access to library staff only. Now NL archivists must describe the materials they wish to examine, direct a staff member to its exact location in the stacks, and ask the staff member to bring it to the reading room of the London Room. Later, when the archivists wish to have the item replaced in the secure stacks, they must ask a staff member to do so, again giving information as to the exact location in which the archivists wish the item to be placed. This revised policy greatly complicates the integration of new materials described above.

In combination, the challenges of limited space in the London Room and the new restricted-access policy suggest that it may be time to explore a new secure, climate-controlled location for the NL archives. The archivists will be working with the NL Board to find an appropriate solution.

Other Activities

Based on materials in the NL archives, the archivists contributed an article (including historic photos) to the Summer 2025 Cardinal, p 19: A 1939 Bird Banding Station in Kains Woods.

During the year, the archivists responded to a number of requests for information from club members and the general public.

For NL's Manual Secretary:

- the full names of some NL board members from the 1960s to the 1980s,
- an updated job description of the club archivists' duties.

Three requests were received from non-club members:

- The Wonnacott family owns a farm along the river near Komoka that was a frequent destination of club field trips from the 1920s to the 1970s. At the request of a family member who was writing a history of the farm, information was provided on the presence of nesting eagles at the property and the use of the farm for club and Ontario Nature (FON) picnics and field trips.
- The Ontario Butterfly Atlas sought information on the whereabouts of Winnett's Swamp, an historic site for the collection of butterflies (now part of Huron Street Woods).
- A daughter of the late Dr W.W. Judd inquired as to whether an insect had ever been named after her father; we could find no evidence that one had.

Submitted by Winifred and David Wake, Archivists for Nature London

Awards Banquet

On Friday, November 21, 2025, we celebrated the amazing accomplishments of Nature London members at the annual Awards Banquet event. Around 100 Nature London members gathered at The Royal Canadian Legion Lambeth to say hello to new and old friends, test their luck with the Bucket Raffle, indulge in a delicious, home-cooked meal by Bruinink Catering, and be enchanted by common birds thanks to guest speaker Julia Zarankin.

Three awards were celebrated at the Banquet: the Special Recognition Award, the Conservation Award, and the W.E. Saunders Award of Merit. Lesley Pergau was awarded the Special Recognition Award to honour her time and commitment as the Board Treasurer; the core Cedarcroft Committee team members (Barbara Kaiser, Daisy McCallum, Evelyn Rogers, and Herb Bax) were awarded the Conservation Award for all their tireless and enduring efforts at Cedarcroft; and the W.E. Saunders Award of Merit was awarded to Gordon Neish for all his contributions on and off the Board, recognizing his excellence in governance matters and attention to detail.

Julia Zarankin was truly inspiring as she spoke of her journey in becoming an unintentional birder. Her appreciation and advocacy for common birds, her enthusiasm for birding, and her fun facts about chickadee brains made for a lively evening with a reminder to love common birds so that they may remain common.

The evening was expertly organized by the Awards Banquet Committee, which was made up of Darby Alderson, Leslie Rockwell, Pam Fraser, Susan Price, and Suzanne Edmondson. The Committee started planning the event in the early months of 2025 and met several times to take care of as many details as possible in advance. While the Committee took care of the bigger details, many others were involved in the success of the event. A big thank you to Gail McNeil for selling tickets, keeping track of registrants, and working the registration table; Joan Taylor for assembling and selling the Bucket Raffle ticket envelopes as well as organizing the ticket selling team; Hugh Casbourn for creating the tickets and sending out the reminder email; Glenn Berry for renting, transporting, setting up, and running the audio/visual equipment; Bernie VanDenBelt for transporting and assembling the screen stage; Stacey Jaczko for helping with setup, running raffle prizes, assembling the centrepieces with the decorating team, and takedown; Garth Casbourn for assisting with setup and running the audio/visual equipment; Cathy Jenniskens for assembling the centrepieces with the decorating team; Jennifer Evans for helping with setup, takedown, and keeping us all engaged (and on time) as MC; Evelyn Rogers for working the registration table; Cathy Quinlan and Glen Winegarden for selling Bucket Raffle tickets; Kari Moreland for helping with setup, running raffle prizes, and takedown; Grant Hopcroft for helping with setup and takedown; and David Wake for capturing the evening in photos. You are all rock stars!

With the retirement of Bucket Raffle wizard, Deb Gorman-Smith, the Committee took on the role of organizing and grouping the prizes. This endeavour was quite entertaining and more complex than originally thought, thanks to all the generous donations received or retrieved by Nature London members. Luckily, Deb left us with a variety of templates and suggestions to guide us through the process. With a classy Spotify playlist in the background and tea and coffee in hand, the Committee organized 34 prizes packages for the Bucket Raffle, as well as 5 door prizes. Much gratitude to Deb Gorman-Smith, Lesley Pergau, Evelyn Rogers, Cheryl Butler, Daisy McCallum, Leslie Rockwell & Glen Winegarden, Vicki Kennedy, Suzanne Edmondson, Grant Hopcroft, Elizabeth Salm, Stan and Anita Caveney, Stacey Jaczko, Jennifer Evans, St. Thomas Field Naturalist Club, Thames Talbot Land Trust, Cathy Quinlan, David & Winnie Wake, Betsy Baldwin, Sylvie Casbourn, Kari Moreland, Ken Cossey, Elizabeth & Nick Bell, Cathie Penalagan, Diane Mically, and Julia Zarankin for donating and/or soliciting all the coveted items for the Bucket Raffle and door prize draws.

It was a truly enjoyable evening, and it was only made possible by the hard work and generosity of many Nature London members. Thank you and we'll see you next year!

Submitted by Darby Alderson

Bird Friendly London

Bird Friendly London, and specifically Brendon Samuels, continued the work of making the City of London a safer place for birds. Using Instagram, Facebook and the Bird Friendly London website, Brendon continued to raise awareness of the issues facing all birds in urban environments. Some of the events and successes are listed below.

- Participated in the Forest City Tree Festival at Western University and hosted a native plant and seed exchange
- Promoted Bird Friendly Decals at East London Community Center for the Neighbour Decision-Making program which was chosen by community vote for implementation
- Spoke at London City Hall with Brian Salt of Salthaven in favour of the city adopting bird-safe building design standard for all municipal facilities. City council later voted to adopt this for future municipal building projects
- Display Booth at EarthFest
- Collaborated with Wild Birds Unlimited for a Birdwatching hike at the Coves ESA on World Migratory Bird Day and a bird-safe windows workshop afterwards
- Updated Nature London on what is next for Bird Friendly London at the members' night Indoor Meeting in April

Submitted by Stacey Jaczko

Birding Wing

The Birding Wing committee members for this year were Alice Kirk, Leslie Baker and Stacey Jaczko. All meetings were held at the Civic Garden Complex. Glenn Berry oversaw the audiovisual equipment. Terry Kirk and Garth Casbourn provided additional help. The meeting dates, topics, and a brief description are listed below.

October 17, 2024

Photographer Brett Forsyth gave a presentation on his Human Powered Big Year. In 2022 Brett undertook an Ontario Big Year attempting to see as many species of birds as possible powered by human power alone. He shared his amazing videos and photographs taken along the way as well as stories about his travels which included bicycling up to 300 km in a single day.

February 28, 2025

A presentation on How do Small Birds Survive Harsh Winters was given by Dr. Carrie Branch. Dr. Branch is a researcher and assistant professor at the University of Western Ontario. Her presentation was based on a long-term research project in the Sierra Nevada showing how natural selection acts on the special cognitive abilities of mountain chickadees. It was a very entertaining and educational presentation.

March 28, 2025

Kelly-Sue O'Connor presented on Exploring the Connection between Birding and Mental Health. Kelly-Sue explained how she found birding as a way to practice self-care, grounding, meditation and mindfulness after being diagnosed with physical and mental health issues. She shared tips on how to use birding to improve your own physical and mental health.

Submitted by Stacey Jaczko

Book Donations

Nature London received donations of used nature books from eight donors in 2023/2024. Other nature-related items, such as art (reproductions of paintings), puzzles, games, and nature magazines, were donated along with some of the books or as separate donations. Some donations were made directly to me as the coordinator, and others at Nature London meetings. Notices in each edition of *The Cardinal* provided contact information for arranging donations and/or purchases directly with me.

Books and other items were sold at Nature London meetings, and a few sales were made directly, outside of meetings. A few special books and puzzles were bucket raffle prizes at the annual Nature London banquet. Some books and other items were donated to the public at events where Nature London was represented.

Total revenue collected from sales of used books and other nature-related items was \$210.50.

Submitted by Betsy Baldwin

The Cardinal

The Cardinal, as usual, was published four times in the year (issues number 277, 278, 279, 280) with a total of 128 pages. *The Cardinal* continues to be available online on the Nature London website (accessed using the members' password). 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 generates some printing and postage savings (unfortunately, in a tight race with rising printing and postage rates).

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

During the year, Ellen Mamandras resigned from the *Cardinal* committee, and her service is gratefully acknowledged. The committee welcomed new member Colleen Kelly who joins the continuing members: John Berry, Susan Berry, (John and Susan are unrelated despite sharing a common surname!), Mike Channon, 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

For the fiscal year starting in September 2024, Cedarcroft was facing some challenges. Over the summer and fall of 2024, the Managers and the Board identified several areas of concern regarding liability, maintenance requirements and non-member use. The Managers chose to step down, leaving Cedarcroft without regular oversight. The issues were considered by the Board. It decided to form a Task Force to study and resolve the issues raised and to temporarily close Cedarcroft.

The Task Force was formed in the fall of 2024 and immediately started tackling the list of issues. The group interviewed and selected Jeff Paul to take over the role of Cedarcroft Manager in November 2024. In conjunction with the new Cedarcroft Manager, the Task Force was able to address the non-member use concerns. Insurance coverage was reviewed, and the liability concerns were mitigated; however, there remained concern with the Northern Trail, so that trail remained closed for most of 2025. In January of 2025, the Task Force announced their findings, and Cedarcroft was reopened to members.

The Cedarcroft Committee met several times through the course of late 2024 and 2025, and a variety of plans were set forth for the coming year. One of the projects that the Committee felt needed to be prioritized was the replacement of the existing outhouse. The existing facility was rotting out and had been closed since early 2024. The group determined that the existing structure was beyond salvage and a new structure would need to be built or purchased. Angus Sheds in North London was contracted to build the new facility, and several Cedarcroft volunteers assisted in transporting the structure to the site and placing it in its new location. The operation came with a unique set of challenges, given the structure weighed in the range of 800 pounds, but the determined group of volunteers found a way, and the new structure is now in service.

Guided hikes are a mainstay at Cedarcroft, and this year Evelyn Rogers and Daisy McCallum led a total of six hikes through the course of the year which were attended by approximately 50 Nature London members. Hike themes ranged from an introductory hike to nature appreciation, to filling of bird feeders in the fall. Jennifer Evans also led a bird appreciation hike in the summer which was attended by approximately 10 members.

Underuse of Cedarcroft is an issue as we struggle is to encourage more use by our members. Promotion of Cedarcroft was set as a key goal this year. Webmaster Glenn Berry suggested a reformatting of the home page of the Nature London website, which gives Cedarcroft a very prominent position on the home page with links to more information on the Cedarcroft web page. As a result, we were able to post photos of Cedarcroft through various stages of the year to highlight items like the hepatica blooming in the spring, our resident turtle in the pond and the leaves changing colour in the fall.

Another key project for Cedarcroft is the continued eradication of invasive species. Buckthorn, periwinkle and garlic mustard have been noted in various areas, largely near the cabin. In previous years, hand pulling of the garlic mustard has significantly reduced its spread, and this year, Evelyn Rogers and Daisy McCallum rooted out some remaining areas and noted that it has been significantly reduced. Periwinkle is the most invasive plant in Cedarcroft, and herbicide application efforts in 2018 and 2019 have had a significant positive impact in the areas north of the cabin, allowing the native species to reestablish and thrive. This year, additional herbicide application was undertaken in October to further eradicate the periwinkle south of the cabin and near the entrance gate in the hopes to continue to see further positive results.

Our lovely wooden sign at the front gate was looking a little faded, so Dave Daugherty, the original builder of the sign, stepped in and removed and refurbished the sign and has it now in top shape for many more years to come

The Northern Trail remained closed through most of the year as the Task Force, Committee, and Manager

considered how to proceed. In January, the Cedarcroft Manager put forward a plan to remediate four sections of the trail to reduce the grades and alleviate the ongoing concerns. These sections were generally the steeper sections of trail leading to and from the bridges. The plan consisted of several phases, which started with staking out a new trail alignment for several trail sections, the purchase of specialized trail building tools and experimentation with trail building techniques. With success on the planning phases, several work sessions were conducted with volunteers, and a new trail was cut into the banks of the ravines. The new trail sections are flatter and easier to traverse than the previous trail. The new trail sections totaled approximately 300m in length of trail and linked back into the existing trail between bridges #2 and #3. With the work completed in November of 2025, the Northern Trail was finally reopened for use.

The year ahead will continue to be quite busy for Cedarcroft. Plans include further minor improvements to the trails to further improve safety, improved signage and wayfinding, and removal of the old aluminum shed north of the cabin. Watch for lots of guided hikes throughout the year and lots more promotion of Cedarcroft as a space to hike and to bring your friends and family. The big event for next year is the planned Family Day event on Feb 16, 2026. Past events have been very well received and we expect a great turnout this coming year.

Volunteers remain the backbone of Cedarcroft, and this year those volunteers answered the call in a variety of forms with significant contributions from the Cedarcroft Task Force, the Cedarcroft Committee and many other volunteers. Cedarcroft started the year in a troubled place but with their dedication and time, we were able to put that phase behind us and establish a very bright future.

Submitted by Jeff Paul

Chimney Swift Program

This account covers the 12 months from November 1, 2024, to October 31, 2025, a period that includes the 2025 swift season and the subsequent wrap-up period. In 2024/2025, the Nature London (NL) program was overseen by Glenn and Susan Berry. They continued to coordinate the established program on a reduced number of monitoring dates, approximately twice a month.

Pre-season activities

Before Winifred Wake's talk about "London's Amazing Chimney Swifts" at Nature in the City on February 25, Glenn and Susan arranged to have table space in the lobby of the auditorium to provide information to potential volunteers for the monitoring program. On February 25, Winnie encouraged audience members to join Nature London's monitoring program. Susan and Glenn were joined by Ric and Sandy Symmes and Ruth Dickau to field questions and sign up those who wished to receive more detailed information about what participation as a monitor would involve. Seventeen people signed up to receive more information. Susan and Glenn sent detailed information to each person, and about half joined the program as monitors. Ric and Sandy Symmes assisted in a training session for the new monitors who were subsequently paired with experienced monitors.

Prior to beginning to monitor in the spring of 2025, Glenn updated the instructions for monitors and chimney descriptions on the website. The chimney descriptions include parking tips and where to sit while monitoring. Several monitors confirmed the updated chimney descriptions. On March 8, 2025, all monitors were provided with the monitoring dates for the season and asked to confirm their availability for those dates. Based on the replies, monitoring schedules were drafted for each date, and then revised as necessary in response to volunteers' requests

2025 Monitoring Results

Monitoring began on May 6 and ended on September 23. We are grateful for the support of the more than 40 volunteers who provided observations and sometimes stepped up on short notice to fill last-minute cancellations. Some volunteers monitored regularly, and others less frequently. The new monitors were paired with experienced monitors who provided mentoring. All made valuable contributions in counting swifts and reporting observations of swift behaviour.

Between 1 and 18 chimneys were monitored on each occasion. Although our goal was to monitor 17 chimneys on scheduled monitoring nights, one chimney that we discontinued monitoring in 2024 out of caution for monitor safety was monitored by willing volunteers to capture data for the spring blitz. As chimneys began to empty late in the season, fewer chimneys were monitored on each occasion.

Organized monitoring resulted in 227 visits carried out on 14 evenings. Throughout the season, the number of swifts counted ranged from 0 to 1336. After each monitoring date, a summary of the results and observations of the swifts' behaviour was posted on the Nature London website, and monitors were emailed a summary report and reminder of the next monitoring date.

Additional Activities

Education/Outreach

A separate role, Outreach Coordinator, was created by NL's board to continue the advocacy, education and outreach work contributed by Winifred Wake. This position was filled by Jill Crosthwaite.

Some limited education/outreach efforts carried out by the Chimney Swift Monitoring Program, including the revised monitoring and reporting information on the password-protected web page for monitors, the provision of business cards for monitors to distribute to community members who show interest in our monitoring activities, and several articles in *The Cardinal* (see the following list of publications).

Publications

- Adventures in Atlassing for Chimney Swifts. Winifred and David Wake, *The Cardinal* 279, Spring 2025, pp 28-31.
- Chimney Swift Releases: A Race Against Time. Susan Berry, *The Cardinal* 281, Autumn 2025, pp 16-17.

Conservation/Advocacy

- Nature London's Chimney Swift Monitoring Program is the only one in Ontario that regularly monitors swift roosts through late summer until the end of migration. As such, it can provide information about the location of roosts large enough for the release of orphaned swifts. This season, one young swift from Destined to Fly in Harrowsmith, Ontario, was released on August 21, and ten swifts from Le Nichoir in Hudson, Quebec, were released on August 26.
- Nature London's Chimney Swift Monitoring Program monitored on the four dates of the National Chimney Swift Roost Survey. The survey was established by Environment and Climate Change Canada to help assess population trends and better guide conservation efforts for Chimney Swifts as a threatened species in Canada under the Species at Risk Act.
- Glenn provided complete data for the 227 chimney visits to Birds Canada's Ontario SwiftWatch program, adding significantly to their data collection.
- Glenn provided complete data for the 227 chimney visits to researchers at Western University to complement the 20 years of data already provided.

Submitted by Glenn and Susan Berry, Chimney Swift Monitoring Program Coordinators

Christmas Bird Count

The 115th Annual Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 14, 2024. The weather was cold to start, at -12 C, but “warmed” to -2 C, though the wind became rather brisk by the afternoon. There was little snow on the ground.

Our total species count was 80. The 27,372 individual birds counted were above average, mostly due to the number of waterfowl. We had 53 routes this year, tied for the highest number with last year, with 129 participants and 48 watching feeders. Many of the latter were also occupied by a field group for an aggregate of 137, which is fewer than usual.

A few of the groups consisted of multiple generations, such as the Verbooms and the Reads. By encouraging our kids and associates to join in the fun, the Count will continue to be successful.

The waterfowl put on a great show, with higher-than-usual numbers of an assortment of species. Other highlights are well-described in The Cardinal. They included our second sighting of Pipits (50), Common Raven, Orange-crowned Warbler, and others. A good number of species (8) were found during Count Week, including gulls such as Iceland, Lesser Black-backed and waterfowl such as Greater White-fronted Goose. And it was a new record high for wintering Bald Eagle, with 102 being the estimate.

All the participants must be thanked for their efforts, beating about the bushes and intently watching their feeders. Thanks to Glenn Berry for helping to collect and organize our submissions accurately and quickly. Finally, great thanks to Hugh Casbourn for creating the summary spreadsheet as well as the formulated spreadsheet for comparisons with previous years. Thanks, everyone.

Submitted by Pete Read

Conservation Action Committee

Abbreviations used in this report

CAC - Conservation Action Committee
CMP - Conservation Master Plan
EEPAC - Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee
ECAC - Ecological Community Advisory Committee
EMG - Environmental Management Guidelines
ERG - Ecological Reference Group
ESA - Environmentally Significant Area
MMP - Master Mobility Plan
NHS - Natural Heritage System
PEC - Planning and Environmental Committee
NL - Nature London
SPPC - Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee
UGB - Urban Growth Boundary
UTRCA - Upper Thames Conservation Authority

City Budget

Mayor Josh Morgan wanted to reduce city taxes by \$13 million for 2026. He asked all civic departments and the boards and commissions (including the local conservation authorities) to find permanent budget cuts of 1.5%. A meeting of the City's Budget committee was held in May. The UTRCA was one of the few boards and commissions that met the Mayor's target.

Conservation Master Plans for Four Environmentally Significant Areas

The City retained SLR Consulting from Guelph to undertake Phase 1 of the CMP process for Kains Woods, Lower Dingman, Pottersburg Valley and Warbler Woods ESAs. This would include Life Science Inventory, Boundary Delineation, Management Zone Application and Existing Trail Review, and Identification of Management Issues for each ESA. A draft report for each was to be made available for public comment and review sometime in 2025. A final draft would be part of a report to City Council's PEC asking for approval of Phase 1. Phase 2 will consist of implementing recommendations of the CMP.

The City of London is developing CMPs for Kelly Stanton ESA and Kilally Meadows ESA. (The Restoration Plan for Kilally Meadows was published in April 2019, and the plan for Kelly Stanton was completed in 2020.) Drafts were presented at a public meeting that members of the CAC attended.

Ecological Community Advisory Committee

City Council replaced the ECAC (formerly called the EEPAC) with a "Reference Group" to work on policy matters. This was one of recent governance changes by Council's Governance Committee. The various advisory committees were refused time to voice their opinions. This raises the question, "Who will provide outside peer reviews of Environmental Impact Studies in future?"

Ecological Reference Group

City Council dissolved the ECAC in March 2025. That council resolution provided for the establishment of an Ecological Reference Group (ERG), which held its first meeting on June 18, 2025. CAC members Sandy Levin and Dave Wake represented NL. The group will work with City staff and the development community and may review and provide advice on matters relating to the Official Plan Review of the London Plan, Secondary Plans, Conservation Master Plans, Environmental Management Guidelines and Planning and Design Standards for Trails in Environmentally Significant Areas.

Environmental Management Guidelines Review

The review of the EMGs began in 2023, with City staff consulting with the development industry and resource groups. These included representatives from the City's ECAC, UTRCA, LTVCA and NL. Sandy Levin, Dave Wake and Susan Hall participated in an advisory group reviewing of the EMGs. City staff presented a final draft of the revised EMGs to a working group of interested parties in April 2025. The revised guidelines were adopted by City Council. The guidelines are used when development is proposed to occur adjacent to a part of the Natural Heritage System (NHS) (woodland, wetland, ESA, valley lands, water courses). Reviews of the EMGs will be reduced from every two years to one per council term. Sandy Levin noted that the revised EMGs were somewhat more weighted in favour of the development industry. For example, the minimum buffer for Significant Woodlands was reduced from 30 metres to 20 metres, which could increase the risk of human disturbance.

Expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary

Based on projected requirements from the Province for land for development, and new population estimates from the Province that all municipalities in Ontario are required to use, City staff have projected that London needs to add 1476 hectares (far above the City's needs for even 30 years) to its UGB, which was established in the 1990s through a full and transparent process. The CAC will be following this process to determine how much protection will be provided for parts of the NHS that will be incorporated into the new growth areas. Will the new boundary lines include a buffer zone? The CAC hopes to see the City retain its existing excellent NHS protection policies as stated in the EMGs.

Meadowlily Woods ESA

Fortune Homes, the owner of 168 Meadowlily Road South, applied for a large mixed residential development. On the east side of the site is a healthy Butternut tree. The City is working with the Forest Gene Conservation Association and the landowner to archive the tree before development takes place, an amicable approach. The CAC submitted comments to the City of London Planning and Development Department regarding the Draft Plan of Subdivision for this site. The CAC commented on the requirement for the removal of two healthy Butternut trees and their compensation and suggested that six or more replacement butternut seedlings be planted in the open area of Park Farm on ESA property. The CAC also provided recommendations on five other matters relating to the development.

An Ontario Land Tribunal decision regarding an appeal by the landowner at 179 Meadowlily Road South against the City's decision as to where the ESA line should be resulted in a change in the boundary in favour of the landowner. This was an outstanding appeal against the City's passing of the CMP for this ESA. The decision will relate to how the City applies its EMGs.

There is a potential threat to a Species At Risk due to a proposed development along Commissioners Road East adjacent to the Meadowlily Woods ESA. It is unclear at this time how the Province's diminishment of protection for Species at Risk and their habitats will affect this species.

Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA

City Council approved the change to the trail that enters the Medway Valley from Gloucester Road at the west end of Windermere Road. City staff have been implementing a deferred recommendation from the CMP for this ESA. It involves the trails below Gloucester Road. A section of the trail near the sensitive area below Gloucester Road would be closed, and the CAC will work with City staff and the UTRCA's ESA Team on the realignment.

City Council approved having the City's Parks and Forestry group consider the establishment of a trail on an unopened road allowance. This would enable access to the valley while bypassing the section of the ESA that contains the largest Canadian population of a Species-At-Risk plant. An unauthorized trail through this section of the ESA was recommended for closure when the original Master Plan for this ESA was prepared in the 1990s. The CAC advised NL members to keep an eye out for an Action Alert if any information sessions or meetings were scheduled for this matter. So far, this matter seems to have been put on "the bottom of the pile" for the City.

Storm sewer maintenance work between Gainsborough Road and Doncaster Gate in the Medway Valley will be completed in 2025. Native plantings were to take place in 2025 on both sides of the sewer right-of-way, but a firm date was not yet known. The works resulted in wider access to stormwater infrastructure.

City Council also upended the Conservation Master Plan for this ESA by deleting the paved path that was to be designed and constructed from the Museum of Archaeology and the paved path at the north end of Attawandaron Road. How this will affect the rest of the CMP is unclear at this time as CMPs are part of London's Official Plan and changes require amendments which can only be done through a public process.

Mobility Master Plan (City's Transportation Plan)

In March 2025, there was a discussion about the MMP at the SPPC in March. There was a staff proposal for a pedestrian/bike bridge across the Medway Valley between Gainsborough Road and Doncaster Gate, requiring a minimum 500-metre span across the valley. The impacts on the ESA were likely to be negative, so the project was deleted from the MMP by a City Council vote of 14-1.

CAC members and meetings

CAC members in the 2024-2025 year were Sandy Levin (Chair), Anita Caveney, Margo Does, Susan Hall, Bill Maddeford, Kendra Duke and David Wake. The CAC met in person at Sandy's home in August 2024, at Anita's home and at City Hall in June 2025, and at a PEC meeting at City Hall in August 2025.

Submitted by Sandy Levin and Anita Caveney

Eco-Grants Program

Eco-Grants Committee Members for 2024-25: Jennifer Evans (Chair), Lesley Pergau, Lora Yurdakul, Garry Cruickshank, and Carol Agocs.

We welcomed Lora Yurdakul onto the committee this year.

The 2025 Eco-Grants committee received 11 applications for consideration. Using our newly revised evaluation form and scoring, we awarded 5 applicants with Full or Partial funding as shown in the table below.

All awarded projects below had complete applications, are qualifying organizations and have agreed to present at our indoor meeting in January 2025:

Applied for:	Amount Suggested to give based on budget
ALUS \$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
LOLA Bees \$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
LEN \$2,045.00	\$2,045.00
ONE \$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
TTLT \$4,000.00	\$3,455.00
Total \$20,545.00	\$20,000.00

1) ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services) Middlesex

The project will convert one acre of agricultural fallow land into native grassland through several public planting events. A living demonstration site will showcase how farmers can integrate habitat restoration on their land.

2) Lola Bees

Lola Bees proposes funding their Forest Friends program at the Museum of Archaeology, featuring two six-week school pilot programs in fall 2025. Each program includes a full-day, six-hour field experience for thirteen children aged five to nine.

3) London Environmental Network (LEN)

LEN plans to transform a schoolyard into an outdoor classroom by partnering with a Thames Valley District School Board school. The space will include a rock seating garden, a pollinator garden with native trees, and outdoor chalkboards.

4) ONE (Old North East) Neighbourhood Association

The association aims to improve environmental equity by hosting three planting events and providing plants and materials to private landowners. Old Northeast will be divided into six sub-neighbourhoods, with youth representatives ensuring fair distribution of trees and native plants.

5) Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT)

TTLT requests funding to repair 15 feet of boardwalk at Joany's Woods.

After providing the groups with notice of their award, 2 applicants did not accept the monies. LEN did not secure the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant that was slated to cover the majority of the costs and therefore was not provided the Eco-Grant. TTLT was able to rehabilitate the boardwalk with only targeted repairs instead of a complete overhaul that was expected.

Submitted by Jennifer Evans

E-Newsletter

The Nature London E-Newsletter for subscribing members is a concise list of Nature London announcements and events, primarily those happening within the following 3 weeks. Because of our nature-loving audience, the E-Newsletter receives many requests to publish events, services, and products from other organizations. We try to keep the document to two- maximum three pages to hold onto our audience. There is usually a small amount of space for offers to members or “other events that may be of interest”. Priority for the “other events” space is given to nature-related organizations associated, sponsored or supported by Nature London.

The E-Newsletter is distributed by an email service that maintains our mailing list, ensures compliance with Anti-Spam legislation and is accepted by email servers. Our mailing list of member subscribers continues to grow, reaching 689 in August 2025, up from 615 in August of the previous year.

The E-Newsletter alerts members to activities such as meetings and field trips as well as Board announcements. It provides links to registration, articles and information on the Nature London Website and in The Cardinal. The E-Newsletter benefits from close cooperation with the website and printed material in The Cardinal. Mailing list updates are thanks to the support of the Club Membership Secretary and the Club Database Manager.

Submitted by Ric and Sandy Symmes

Info@Naturelondon.ca

Info@Naturelondon.ca is the club’s email address. It is used for inquiries by club members and the public. We respond to several questions each week from stock replies or by referring them to the appropriate club volunteers. Some inquiries are computer-generated or SPAM messages. Most personal inquirers are very pleased to have a human response from Nature London.

Submitted by Ric and Sandy Symmes

Facebook Report

As of December 2025, the Nature London Facebook page had approximately 1,100 followers. NL's Facebook presence is integrated with other communications, including the website, The Cardinal, YouTube channel, and the email newsletter. Occasionally, we also share items which may be of interest to NL members from organizations, including Ontario Nature and Thames Talbot Land Trust.

Submitted by Mady Hymowitz

Field Trips

Date	09/05/2024
Leader(s)	Stacey Jaczko
Location	The Coves
Participants	10
Conditions	Sunny and warm
Observations:	<p>It was a quiet day for birding with mostly resident birds seen. Leaf cover was still high and many birds were heard not seen. Highlights were Great blue herons, two Great egrets and numerous birds feeding in a huge Hackberry tree loaded with berries. A total of 15 bird species were seen or heard.</p>

Date	09/07/2024
Leader(s)	Carrie Long
Location	Cedarcroft
Participants	4
Conditions	Rain and cool temps
Observations:	<p>We introduced the concept of Nature Journaling and we studied 2 species of Goldenrod to make comparisons and record our findings in individual notebooks.</p>

Date	09/22/2024
Leader(s)	Dave Jolly
Location	Cedarcroft
Participants	10
Conditions	Partly sunny, 25 degrees
Observations:	<p>Identifying goldenrod and aster using colour, flower head arrangement, habitat, leaf shape, leaf width Asters- panicle, calico, heart-leaved, New England; Goldenrods - late, zig-zag, Canada, blue-stemmed, (including a hybrid with Canada); Annual daisy fleabane</p>

Date	09/29/2024
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	Hawk Cliff and Port Stanley
Participants	12
Conditions	Cloudy, 21 degrees
Observations:	<p>Over 35 bird species including Golden-crowned kinglet, Black-throated green warbler, Red-eyed vireo, Northern harrier, Osprey, Bald eagle, Merlin, Ruddy duck, American coot, Tree swallow</p>

Date	10/05/2024
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	Komoka PP and Delaware Sportsmen Pond
Participants	8
Conditions	Sunny, 20 degrees
Observations:	

20 bird species total including Bald eagle, White-throated sparrow, Ruby-crowned kinglet, Northern harrier, Virginia rail, Belted kingfisher, Green-winged teal
Butterflies - Cabbage white, Clouded sulphur, Northern crescent

Date	10/14/2024
Leader(s)	Lissette Verbeem
Location	Morrison Dam, Exeter
Participants	12
Conditions	5 to 10 C, sunny
Observations:	Canada geese, Mallard, Pied-billed grebe, Green-winged teal, Black-capped chickadee, American robin, Blue jay, American crow, Song sparrow, White-throated sparrow, Ruby- & Golden- crowned kinglets, Brown creeper, White-breasted nuthatch, Swainson's thrush, Turkey vulture- 16 species total White squirrel safely crossed the road for all to see. Lots of beaver handywork and old tree stumps.

Date	10/20/2024
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	Westminster Ponds ESA
Participants	8
Conditions	Sunny, 23 degrees
Observations:	White roof mushroom on Beech trees, 3 types of butterflies, 8 bird species including Killdeer, Ring-necked duck, Cooper's hawk

Date	11/03/2024
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	Strathroy SL, Forest SL, Kettle Point area
Participants	5
Conditions	Partly sunny, 15 degrees
Observations:	50 bird species including Pied-billed grebe, Greater yellowlegs, Dunlin, Bonaparte's gull, American coot, Northern pintail, Green- and Blue-winged teal, Trumpeter swan, Hermit thrush

Date	11/08/2024
Leader(s)	Kathleen Holland
Location	Medway Heritage Forest
Participants	12
Conditions	Overcast to sunny, 9 C
Observations:	Signs of White-tailed Deer as that was our focus. Sighted and discussed a dead opossum.

Date	11/11/2024
Leader(s)	Lissette Verbeem
Location	Coldstream CA
Participants	7
Conditions	mostly overcast, bit of sun, light rain at end
Observations:	

Canada geese, Northern Cardinal, Black-capped chickadee, White-breasted nuthatch, American goldfinch, Red-tailed hawk, American crow, Blue jay, Muskrat, cedar swamp roots
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Date	11/24/2024
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	The Coves ESA
Participants	19
Conditions	partly sunny, breezy, 5 degrees
Observations:	19 bird species including Brown creeper, Cedar waxwing, Hooded merganser, Belted kingfisher, Hairy woodpecker; lots of bittersweet vines

Date	12/07/2024
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae, Lissette Verbeem, Evelyn Rogers, Diane Calzonetti
Location	Springbank Park
Participants	19
Conditions	Overcast, -1 degree
Observations:	Christmas Bird Count for Kids: 761 individual birds of 25 species, including 2 Bald eagles, 479 Canada Geese, 121 mallards, 8 Bufflehead, 5 Common goldeneye, 2 Hooded and 9 Common mergansers, 1 Belted kingfisher

Date	01/01/2025
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	Greenway Park
Participants	20
Conditions	snow, mist, some sun, 2 degrees
Observations:	23 species including 4 Bald eagles, Pied-billed grebe, Ring-necked duck, Brown creeper, Golden-crowned kinglet, woodpeckers: Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied, Northern flicker

Date	01/09/2025
Leader(s)	Kathleen Holland
Location	Pinery Provincial Park
Participants	14
Conditions	Clear, -8 C
Observations:	Tufted Titmice, Black-capped Chickadees, Downy Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Bald Eagle, White-breasted Nuthatches

Date	01/25/2025
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	Sarnia area
Participants	11
Conditions	-7 to 1 degree, strong west wind
Observations:	

36 bird species identified including Bald eagle, Horned lark, Snow bunting, Snowy owl, Northern flicker, Carolina wren, Northern shrike, Northern harrier, Rough-legged hawk	
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Date	02/15/2025
Leader(s)	Jennifer Evans
Location	Greenway Park
Participants	9
Conditions	Very snowy, Severe Weather Advisory
Observations: The 9 of us braved the cold and snowy conditions and walked from Springbank Park to Greenway Park and back. Over the 2 hours walk we saw 24 different bird species and the chilly weather did not keep exciting species away. We were impressed with a tree full of Bald eagles (9 in total), the river filled with Canada geese (100+), Green-winged teal (3), Common goldeneyes (26), and one very loud Domestic goose. In the forest path, we saw several Downy and Red-bellied woodpeckers (5 and 2 respectively). Overall, the hike was a success and showed how bird life continues to thrive even when the City shut down with the snow!	

Date	02/23/2025
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	Fanshawe CA
Participants	10
Conditions	0 degrees, overcast
Observations: 15 bird species including Redhead, Common merganser, American tree sparrow, White-throated sparrow, both nuthatches . Red squirrel . Handfed birds at several locations.	

Date	03/06/2025
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	Gibbons Park
Participants	10
Conditions	-2 degrees, windy, some snow
Observations: 16 bird species including Great horned owl, Bald eagle, Brown creeper, White-breasted nuthatch, Red-bellied and Downy woodpecker, Common merganser	

Date	03/16/2025
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	Aylmer Management Wildlife Area and Sewage Lagoons
Participants	9
Conditions	15 degrees, windy, mostly overcast
Observations: 29 bird species: several large groups of Tundra swans, Killdeers, Song sparrow, Common and Hooded mergansers, Ring-necked duck, American wigeon, American black duck, Lesser scaup, Bufflehead, Common goldeneye, Northern shoveler, Red-tailed hawk, Brown-headed cowbird, Turkey vulture	

Date	04/03/2025
Leader(s)	Jennifer Evans

Location	Woodcock Street, London
Participants	16
Conditions	Dry, Cloudy, around 13 degrees
Observations:	
The woodcock walk was a success! We started with a short walk around the stormwater management pond, with 6 Ring-necked ducks and 4 Mallards. Then headed back to the aptly named Woodcock Street to wait for the American woodcock's spectacular mating show. While we waited, we enjoyed a beautiful colorful sunset and then the sounds started! 1...2....3.... different male woodcocks calling "PEEENT" from the scrubby bush in the distance. The determined group stayed until past dark listening to the calls and the sounds of the Woodcock's flight dance in the sky.	

Date	04/09/2025
Leader(s)	Evelyn Rogers and Daisy McCallum
Location	Cedarcroft
Participants	8
Conditions	Cold, plus 2 with wind chill of -7 and sunny conditions
Observations:	
Sharp-lobed hepatica in bloom and many more Spring flowers coming up. Black-capped chickadee, Red-breasted nuthatch, Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, and a Dark-eyed junco. A Pileated woodpecker called and did a flyby. Before everyone got there the Eastern phoebe, Tufted titmouse, American robin, Brown-headed cowbird, and Red-winged blackbird.	

Date	04/13/2025
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	Hullett Provincial Wildlife Area
Participants	10
Conditions	Mostly sunny and mild
Observations:	
53 bird species identified including Green- and Blue-winged teal, Northern pintail, Northern shoveler, Hooded and Common merganser, Sandhill crane, Yellow-bellied sapsucker, Eastern phoebe, Tree swallow, Eastern bluebird, Yellow-rumped warbler, Eastern towhee, Chipping and Savannah sparrow. Also, deer, beaver, groundhog, Eastern comma butterfly.	

Date	04/22/2025
Leader(s)	Stacey Jaczko
Location	Komoka Park North - the ponds
Participants	12
Conditions	Sunny but cool and windy
Observations:	
We were mostly looking for birds. We saw lots of Tree swallows and had good looks at Eastern meadowlark, Eastern bluebirds and Field sparrow. Also were able to observe a Brown thrasher and American kestrel. A few Ring-necked ducks were seen on the ponds along with Mallards, Mute Swans, and Canada Geese. One lone Chimney swift was flying overhead.	

Date	04/23/2025
Leader(s)	Evelyn Rogers and Daisy McCallum
Location	Cedarcroft

Participants	4
Conditions	Sunny and 12°C
Observations:	
Wildflowers: Spring Beauty, Wild Ginger, Sharp-lobed Hepatica, Bloodroot, Trout Lily, Wild Leek. Birds: House and Gold Finches, Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers and Chipping sparrows. Also, 2 snakes were observed sunning themselves.	

Date	04/30/2025 Westminster Ponds
Leader(s)	Kathleen Holland
Location	Westminster Ponds ESA
Participants	9
Conditions	Clear, -2 C at start, 10 C at end
Observations:	
American goldfinch, Red-winged blackbirds, Red-bellied woodpecker, Downy woodpecker, White-tailed deer, Wild turkey, Canada geese, Northern cardinal, Chipping sparrow, Tree swallows, Barn swallows.	

Date	05/03/2025
Leader(s)	Jim Jarrett
Location	MacNaughton Trail
Participants	13
Conditions	Fair and 10°C
Observations:	
Various spring migrant birds, spring flowers etc. see more detail in report to the Cardinal	

Date	05/06/2025
Leader(s)	Stacey Jackzo
Location	Lower Dingman ESA
Participants	9
Conditions	Overcast and slightly cool
Observations:	
This walk was split into two parts in order to keep the numbers a bit lower. We seemed to hit two pockets with lots of birds moving through the trees. Highlights included three species of warblers: Black-and-White, Northern parula and Black-throated green Warbler. Probably the best bird which was seen by most people was a beautiful male Scarlet tanager. On the second part of the walk an Ovenbird was seen with some difficulty as well as Black-throated blue warblers. We also observed a good selection of native woodland plants, including Trout Lily, Early Meadow Rue and Bloodroot.	

Date	05/10/2025
Leader(s)	Cathy Quinlan
Location	Cade Tract, South Perth
Participants	9
Conditions	Sunny and warm (20°C), light winds
Observations:	
Marion and Carl Hearn kept the bird list. Some 28 species were seen or heard including many Baltimore orioles, Rose-breasted grosbeaks, Red-winged blackbirds, and Common yellowthroat.	

Warblers included Cape May, Black-throated green, Yellow, and Northern parula. Killdeer were in the newly created wetlands along with a Spotted sandpiper. The Merlin app picked up an Eastern meadowlark. Also observed were Veery, Least flycatcher, Warbling vireo, and Gray catbird. Plants in bloom included Starry False Solomon's Seal, toothwort, Yellow Trout Lily, Twinleaf (finished blooming), Wild Geraniums, Early Meadow Rue. Near the creek there were colourful displays of Marsh Marigolds and Skunk cabbage. Trees in 'bloom' included willows and poplars and apple trees. Animals seen included a female garter snake, a raccoon sleeping in a tree, American toad, and red squirrel. The clean bones of a young deer were also observed.

Date	05/13/2025
Leader(s)	Stacey Jackzo
Location	Killaly Meadows 868 Windemere Road
Participants	12
Conditions	Cloudy and warm
Observations:	<p>The timing was right for peak, but birds had other ideas. We saw lots of Yellow warblers, a few American redstarts and one Blackburnian warbler high in the tree. Some of our resident species made up for it with great looks: an Osprey eating a fish, a Great crested flycatcher calling from a dead tree, and both Red-bellied woodpeckers and Northern flickers in their nest holes. The highlight was at the end of the hike when crows were mobbing and calling; a Great horned owl burst from the trees and was chased down the river by the crows.</p>

Date	05/16/2025 to 05/19/2025
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	Bruce Peninsula, based in Tobermory
Participants	17
Conditions	a little light rain, mostly cloudy, cold wind
Observations:	<p>Summary: total 113 bird species identified by the group. Highlights: Common nighthawk, Eastern Whip-poor-will, American woodcock, Pileated woodpecker, 17 warbler species, Sandhill crane, Red-headed woodpecker, Sora, Virginia rail, Bobolink, Eastern meadowlark, American white pelican, Black tern, Scarlet tanager, American bittern.</p>

Date	05/24/2025
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	Port Stanley
Participants	6
Conditions	Mostly cloudy, breezy
Observations:	<p>34 bird species including group of 20 Whimbrel, Ruddy duck, Bank swallow, Bald eagle, Osprey, Eastern Bluebird, American coot, Wood duck, Spotted sandpiper</p>

Date	06/04/2025
Leader(s)	ALUS Middlesex
Location	The Crump Family Farm, 5372 Egremont Drive, Ilderton, ON, N0M 2A0
Participants	80

Conditions	Sunny and hot!
Observations:	
Nature London's eco-grant program supported the ALUS Middlesex with funding for restoration on the Crump Family Farm in Ilderton, Ontario. Jennifer Evans was present to recognize Nature London's contribution. After introductions, participants helped plant native meadow plugs to convert the agricultural land into a wet meadow environment. The day was hot and staff from St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, students from Strathroy District Collegiate Institute and representatives from ALUS Canada, all joined together to dig through the bare ground. In a few months this area will be a green meadow ripe for pollinators and birds. All while the Crump Family is compensated by the Eco-Grant Nature London provided to ALUS.	

Date	08/16/2025
Leader(s)	Cathy McCrae
Location	North London Athletic Fields and Huron Meadows
Participants	6
Conditions	Sunny, warm, 20 to 28 degrees
Observations:	
22 bird species including Merlin, Barn swallow, Eastern phoebe, Red-eyed vireo, Northern yellow warbler, Carolina wren, Great crested flycatcher. 9 tree species including Kentucky coffee, Hackberry and Catalpa. 20 plant species including Saint John's wort, Moth mullein, Yellow-centered coneflower, and Showy tick-trefoil	

Date	08/18/2025
Leader(s)	Kathleen Holland
Location	Kains Woods Trail
Participants	11
Conditions	Sunny, 22 C
Observations:	
Green Heron, Eastern Kingbirds, American Goldfinches, Monarchs, Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtles, Map Turtles, Turkey Vulture, Gray Catbird	

Submitted by Cathy McCrae

Friends of the Coves

The Coves Environmentally Significant Area is a great asset for those who wish to hike and observe nature.

This update is based on discussions with Thom McClanahan, President of the FOTC.

There has been no movement on the realignment of the upper Silver Creek to prevent erosion in the park itself, erosion in the main creek ravine downstream, and further deposition of silt into the West Cove.

Nothing is happening in the construction of the proposed pedestrian bridge from Euston Park over Silver Creek to the school and subdivision to the west. This bridge is to prevent further erosion by people making their own crossings on logs.

The plans for both projects are completed and paid for. We await the next step.

Rumour has it that the East Cove property adjacent to Cove Road (across from the German Canadian Club and forming the adjacent pond bank) is still for sale at a reduced (still high) price. We know of no bids from the city. It has a great habitat.

Submitted by Bill Maddeford

Guide To the Natural Areas in London and Region

The inventory of guides is stored in the boxes from the printers, each box containing 20 guides. As of September 2024, nine boxes are on hand. During the year 2024-2025, six boxes went out on consignment. Three boxes remain in stock.

Thanks to the volunteers who stock the retail outlets: Ros and Jim Moorhead, Bernie VanDenBelt, Norm Corrin and Gail McNeil (distribution to email orders) and Ann Henderson (sales at Nature London indoor meetings).

Submitted by Mike Channon

Image Database

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

Members continue to contribute photographs of their nature observations, and as recorders of club meetings and field trips. During the past year, over 300 new photographs have been contributed.

Bird images predominate, but we would also welcome more images of wildflowers, insects, mammals and other nature items. 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 17,000 images. These include:

- Nature specimen photographs (Approximately 13,100 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. These images are used by the *Cardinal* editors as needed to illustrate the various articles and news in *The Cardinal*. We feature the best recent images contributed by Nature London's members on the back page (in colour) of *the Cardinal*.

Submitted by John Berry

Indoor Meetings

During the 2024/2025 season, Nature London indoor meetings continued to be held at the Civic Garden Complex. Meetings were also live-streamed on Zoom and recorded (with permission) to be made available on the Nature London YouTube channel. The indoor meetings included a coffee-and-cookies break thanks to Linda Bristow and Gail Dimson and their teams, and the sale of books by Betsy Baldwin and Ann Henderson.

September 6, 2024

Dave Joly

Photo Field Guide to Asters and Goldenrods of Ontario

David Joly, a senior ecologist and botanist, presented on his development of a photo field guide to (sometimes confusing) asters and goldenrods of Ontario. The field guide is the result of over 10 years of fieldwork and research. He highlighted several of the 34 species native to Ontario and demonstrated how to identify and differentiate species using straightforward criteria. He brought copies of his book along for purchase or perusal.

October 10, 2024

Teagan Netten

Ontario Reptile and Amphibians Atlas - Story and Findings

Teagan Netten, Conservation Science Coordinator at Ontario Nature, presented on the development of the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas and some of the key findings of the 10-year community science project. Over 75% of reptiles and 35% of amphibians are listed nationally or provincially at risk. Initiatives such as the Atlas are key to understanding trends and help formulate conservation goals.

November 22, 2024 (Awards Banquet)

Sue and Jim Waddington

In the Footsteps of the Group of Seven

Authors and naturalists Sue and Jim Waddington joined us for our annual awards banquet and presented a beautifully illustrated talk on their book. They shared stories of the detective work in identifying the locations of many of the Group of Seven paintings, and the outdoor adventures they had trekking to the spots to photograph and confirm the locations.

January 10, 2025

Eco-Grant Winner Presentations

The winners of the 2024 Nature London Eco-Grants gave short presentations on their work, showcasing the positive impacts Nature London's support has on nature-related activities and education programs within the local region. This year's winners and presentations were:

- *Elmwood Avenue Presbyterian Church Pollinator Garden*, presented by Andrew McClenaghan, Elmwood Avenue Church
- *Native Seeds for Restoration*, presented by Payton Landsborough, Thames Talbot Land Trust
- *Classroom to Canopy: Reforest London's Schoolyard Planting Program*, presented by Rachael Jensen, Reforest London
- *Tiny Forest*, presented by Joanna MacLeod, London Environmental Network
- *Growing a Community Food Forest*, presented by Ilana Guslits, Growing Chefs (presented on March 14)

In addition, we had a special presentation by Dr. Yolanda Morbey on behalf of one of her students, Mackenzie Amlin, from Western University's Biology Department, on the analysis of 20 years of chimney swift roosting data collected by Nature London.

February 14, 2025

Lorraine Roy
Textile Art and Nature

Textile artist Lorraine Roy presented on her artistic journey and how, in her words, "trees wove their way into her art and her heart." She described how nature influences her creative process and the variety of non-traditional fabric and thread techniques that she uses in her art. Along with photos, she also brought along several current pieces to show.

March 14, 2025

Campbell McKay
Milkweed Species and Monarch Migration

Campbell McKay, a graduate student at Western University and a Species at Risk Technician with the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, presented on his research studying how variation in milkweed quality may impact the migration of the monarch butterfly.

April 11, 2025

Nature London Members
Member's Night

April's Indoor Meeting is traditionally reserved for Nature London members to present on topics of interest to them. This past year, we had five engaging presentations:

- Matthew Palachio presented on conservation corridors in the Carolinian life zone in southwestern Ontario
- Dave and Winnie Wake on Shorebirds on the Bay of Fundy
- Diane Mically presented on Bird Names in French
- Don Taves presented on Ontario Birds
- Brendon Samuels presented on the accomplishments and future directions of Bird Friendly London

The Indoor Meetings Committee members for this year were Glenn Berry, Rick Martin, and Ruth Dickau.

Submitted by Ruth Dickau

London Environmental Network

The London Environmental Network (LEN) is an environmental charitable organization based in London. Its membership is made up of 47 community groups and nonprofits working in London's environmental sector. LEN helps to protect our environment and build a more sustainable city by offering environmental programs and climate action opportunities for all residents.

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 co-create positive environmental change.

LEN supports member organizations with shared resources, training, outreach and collaboration opportunities so they can become stronger and work more effectively together. It also connects groups to the London community, recruits volunteers, and promotes environmental events, initiatives and successes. Members can book a speaker from LEN to speak at events; email events to be added to LEN's website and monthly newsletters; receive graphic design support; borrow equipment, such as recording tripods, tables, or projectors; share promotional materials at member's outreach booths and access grant information and support, including sending grant opportunities to members via email and newsletters, as well as writing letters of support for funding applications.

LEN's Programs and Annual Events

- Environmental Action Incubator
- Deshkan Ziibiing Resiliency Project for Sustainable Reconciliation
- Green Economy London
- Greener Homes London Consultation Service
- Thriving Communities
- Nonprofit Resiliency Projects
- Green in the City
- Green Leaders Awards

For more details on what the Network achieved in 2024, please refer to LEN's 2024 impact report
https://www.londonenvironment.net/annual_reports

This year, LEN helped promote Nature in the City and our Eco-Grants program. In addition, Nature London's Call to Action: Multi-year Budget was posted on the Advocacy page in the "Get Involved" section of LEN's website.

New This Year

This year, LEN offered a new member resource: LEN's Slack account. Members can join the account and use it as a way to stay connected, share updates with other members, offer support, ask questions or seek help about anything members have going on. The benefit of using Slack is to speed up team communication and collaboration. Slack is said to make it easier to have quick chats, share files instantly, and keep conversations organized by topic or project. It cuts down on long email threads and reduces the back-and-forth phone calls. Nature London does not currently use this account.

LEN's mission and vision clearly align with Nature London's. Being a member of LEN increases Nature London's

exposure and outreach. LEN provides great opportunities to connect with other environmental organizations. The advocacy page in the “Get Involved” section of LEN’s website has a collection of resources for environmentalists and activist to use such as How to Write a letter to your Councilor. LEN will be posting information on advocacy opportunities, petitions, email writing campaigns and more on this page in the future. Together when we advocate for the environment, our voices are louder.

LEN membership provides a ‘portal of environmentally minded Londoners’. The Network continues to grow and evolve adding new initiatives as it does.

Submitted by Susan Price

Manual Secretary

The Manual Secretary is responsible for keeping the club's Manual of Procedures (broken into five manuals) up to date on a yearly or as-needed basis. Substantial updates were made to all five of the manuals in 2025, as there had been a lag of a few years since the last major update. All manuals were updated to Aptos font size 12 for improved readability. The titles of the manuals were also given minor updates as needed.

Manual 1 of 5: Documents of Incorporation – Letters Patent, Supplementary Letters Patent, Certificate of Amendment, Articles of Amendment, Bylaws. The update to this manual was made largely by Past President Gordon Neish in 2024 in response to new requirements under the Ontario Not-For-Profit Corporations Act.

Manual 2 of 5: Main Document for Running the Corporation. This is the largest manual and includes descriptions of all of the board and appointee positions. The older version of each job description was sent to the appropriate person by email, requesting text updates to reflect how the position is being run currently. Since the pandemic, many duties have shifted. Thanks to all the club members who took the time to submit their updates. Some positions had been retired, and new positions were added, so updates to the structure of the document were required.

Manual 3 of 5: Additional Guidelines for Directors and Appointees. This manual provides additional details for certain board and appointee positions. Again, the older text version of each description was sent to the appropriate person by email. Updates were emailed back to me. A few last updates are yet to come, but the document is largely completed.

Manual 4 of 5: Nature London's Awards & Recipients. The names of the newest award recipients were added to the tables in this manual. *The Cardinal* is a great source of information for this section.

Manual 5 of 5: Members who served as Directors and Appointees since 1962. In addition to the usual updates of adding the names and titles of the most current volunteers, the tables were re-formatted to make them easier to follow and update. Some updates to the historical information were made, including adding the first names of members formerly recorded only by initials (as was the practice in the 1960s and 1970s). Thank you to our archivist, David Wake, for looking up these names.

The update of the manuals was a large undertaking, but they are now in great shape and should be easier to update going forward. Thanks to Gordon Neish for helping me piece it all together, given his knowledge of the club, the board, and all things in between. The manuals are stored on the club's SYNC site, accessible to all board members and appointees.

Submitted by Cathy Quinlan

Membership Secretary

Our membership for 2024/2025 dropped from last year's high of 450 memberships, representing at least 803 individual members. A drop, but still a very good number and continues the streak of more than 400 memberships. Ten times someone chose to give the gift of a Nature London membership. 212 memberships were paid online using PayPal. 259 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. 31 Guides were bought through membership during the club year of 2024/25. Thank you, Mike Channon, Ros and Jim Moorhead.

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

Submitted by Gail McNeil, Membership Secretary

Membership Database

Consideration is being given to putting membership online. If that route is taken, the Membership Database will be retired after 30 or more years of operation in its various incarnations. However, we will be using the database until the NL year of 2026/27. As usual, summary reports were created as needed, and some ad hoc questions about our membership were answered.

Submitted by Hugh Casbourn, Membership Database

Nature in the City

Nature in the City is an exciting and informative speaker series that began in 2006 as a joint venture between the London Public Library (LPL) and Nature London (NL). The magic formula created back then is followed to this day. Over six consecutive Tuesday evenings in January and February, experts presented on nature-themed topics that are relevant to Londoners at The Wolf Performance Hall in the Central Library. This free event has been very well-received by Nature London members as well as the general public. Following the scheduled presentations in January and February 2020, the program went on a 3-year hiatus, initially due to the shutdown of public gatherings through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each year, our committee changes a bit. The 2025 committee consisted of Alannah Vanderburgh-Oakley and Michaela Bouzkova (LPL liaisons), Cathie Penalagan, Lissette Verbeem, Dianne Bellchamber and Kathleen Holland, Chair. Our attendance has ranged from 113 to 197 in 2025, compared with last year's attendance of 90 to 133. People have embraced its return for a second year, as word continued to spread, and regulars returned week after week.

The date and presentation details from 2025 may be found below:

January 21 – The Universe from Your Backyard, Ryan Fraser: The night sky has existed for billions of years, filled with wonder long before humans walked the earth. Today, many of us have forgotten, or never had the opportunity to look into space from our own backyards. Ryan will show us what can be seen from our backyards within the city and talk about the importance of controlling light pollution to protect our skies for future generations.

January 28 – Found an Animal, Brian Salt: Wildlife plays a pivotal role in sustaining healthy ecosystems, serving purposes from pollinating plants to seed dispersal and pest control, and contributes to the ecological balance that sustains life. Beyond ecological significance, wildlife holds a place of deep cultural, recreational, and economic importance for all.

February 4 - Exploring Environmental Law and Land Use Regulation Jacob Damstra: Jacob will provide a survey of topics of interest in environmental law and land use regulation affecting the way we interact with our natural environment in the City of London and how properties, public spaces, and the environment are regulated by government authorities.

February 11 - Climate Action Superhero, Daria Koscinski: Mother Nature needs all of us to take climate action to keep our planet healthy and thriving. Besides reducing carbon pollution, we can also take steps to nurture nature - our big ally in climate action and in adapting to the impacts of climate change. This talk will focus on nature-based climate solutions we can support as part of our personal climate action commitments.

February 18 - The Wild Side of London, Kathleen from Hiking With Kathleen (on YouTube and Rogers TV): Ever hike a trail along the Thames River only to see the flowing River and honking Canada Geese?? When Kathleen hikes the trails around the Forest City she typically sees White-tailed Deer, Coyotes, Pileated Woodpeckers, Hognose Snakes, and so much more! Learn how she gets so "lucky" with all of these wildlife sightings so that you, too, can see what's hidden along the wilder parts of London's extensive trail network.

February 25 - London's Amazing Chimney Swifts, Winnie Wake: Chimney Swifts are most visible when large flocks make spectacular dives into chimneys at dusk. Swifts fly fast and high, dine on insects, and build tiny nests in old brick chimneys. Learn details of their fascinating life story, Nature London's 20-year swift program, and why these charismatic little birds are in trouble.

Video recordings were made of each presentation and uploaded to the Nature London YouTube Channel. Direct links were shared for each presentation in the E-Newsletter as well as in the article that appeared in the Spring Edition of The Cardinal, permitting Nature London members, and not the general public, to access the recordings. Those links are still live and may be found using this URL, entering your password and scrolling to page 24: [2025-spring-Cardinal-online.pdf](#). Viewership for these recorded sessions may be found in the YouTube Administrator Report.

Submitted by Kathleen Holland, Committee Chair, Nature in the City

Ontario Nature (Federation of Ontario Naturalists)

West Elgin Nature Club (WENC) hosted the Fall Carolinian West (CW) Regional meeting at the Staddon Hall in Eagle on October 26th, 2024. There were 17 attendees from nine nature clubs and one from Ontario Nature (ON). Nature London (NL) was represented by NL's former ON Rep. Anita Caveney and Vice-President Jennifer Evans. The clubs in attendance were Nature London, West Elgin Nature Club, Sarnia Environmental Advisory Committee, Friends of Ojibway Prairie, Lambton Wildlife, Essex County Nature, St. Thomas Field Naturalists and Ingersoll District Nature Club. A catered lunch was provided by WENC. CW Regional Councilor, Mike Fisher, welcomed everyone and gave a land acknowledgement for the area.

Lesley Rudy, ON's Nature Network (NN) Organizer, presented a talk on behalf of ON's Conservation Policy and Campaign Director, Tony Morris, titled "Federal Nature Strategy and Accountability Bill and the Alliance for a Livable Ontario's 5 Way Home campaign". She later shared Tony's slides and email address with the attendees for any questions they might have.

Lesley Rudy presented a 16-item list of ON Nature Program updates to the attendees covering:

- Common Ground Garden and Grey Bruce Native Seed Bank joining the NN;
- 2,800 postings on ON's Volunteer List for volunteer assistance for NN groups;
- 90+ people attended the Annual Gathering at Evergreen Resort on the Bruce Peninsula, May 31st to June 2nd;
- *ON Nature* article regarding NN groups' efforts to protect a local wetland;
- ON continued support of local groups engaged in wetland conservation efforts;
- ON and other organizations urged the provincial government to restore wetland protections;
- The Municipal Protected Areas Program completed six assessments totaling 3,819 hectares for two municipalities, three conservation authorities and a land trust since spring;
- The Forest Stewardship Council Project continued to advocate for protected areas-in-waiting;
- ON met with local First Nations community groups and the forestry industry for Wabigoon Forest near Dryden to identify conservation priorities;
- ON issued Action Alerts calling for Implementation of Expert Recommendations of the Protected Areas Working Group, and Protection of Wolf Lake's Old Growth Red Pine Forest;
- ON submitted a joint sign-on letter with 29 NN groups urging the expansion of Ontario's Protected Areas network;
- ON issued an Action Alert about restoring the integrity of Ontario's *Endangered Species Act*;
- ON updated the "Stop Highway 413" Action Alert to encourage the Federal Government to re-designate Highway 413 for an environmental assessment;
- ON added 58 acres to its Gananoque Lake Nature Reserve;
- The Youth Summit for Mother Earth was held September 13th to 15th, 2024. 27 NN groups sponsored youth to attend; and

- A new board and council structure was approved at the virtual reps' AGM on June 19th. All regions elect a Regional Councilor to the Regional Council. The Regional Council elects four to six of its members to serve as Nature Network Directors on ON's Board of Directors.

Group Activity Reports

All club representatives in attendance presented updates on their clubs' activities over the months since the Spring 2024 regional meeting. Details about these activity updates appear on pp. 28-30 of *The Cardinal*, No. 278 Winter 2025. Among NL's updates was the following item pertaining to a joint action on the part of ON and NL: "Nature London co-signed an Ontario Nature letter that was sent to the Environmental Registry of Ontario regarding the proposed new regulation under the *Conservation Authorities Act*."

Following the meeting, WENC led a hike at Warwick Conservation Area along the Lake Erie Shoreline, with most meeting attendees present on the hike.

Submitted by Anita Caveney.

Carol Agocs took over the role of Nature London representative to Ontario Nature in the spring of 2025. She attended both the spring and fall meetings of clubs belonging to the Carolinian West region of Ontario Nature, as well as the 94th Annual General Meeting of Ontario Nature's regional groups held June 18, 2025.

Ontario Nature: Carolinian West Region Meeting, April 14, 2025

The spring virtual meeting was convened by Lesley Rudy, the Nature Network Organizer for Ontario Nature. Nature London President Don Taves and Carol attended the meeting. The Carolinian West Region of the Ontario Nature organization is one of seven regional groups. Carolinian West includes 15 nature clubs and other organized groups located in southwestern Ontario, from Sarnia and Windsor east to Port Burwell and Ingersoll.

After a welcome and land acknowledgement by Mike Fisher, Regional Councilor, there was a quick roundtable of updates by the groups in attendance. Sarah Hasenack from Ontario Nature then addressed the group about new tools and support for wetland conservation. She informed us that since 2023, new provincial regulations have weakened the system for identifying and protecting significant wetlands and expanded ministerial powers to fast-track development approvals, which can override provincial environmental protections.

Conservation authorities have also been weakened, and linkages between them and municipalities have been attenuated. Sarah emphasized that collaborative actions among local counties, municipalities, conservation authorities, local nature clubs and land trusts are key to protecting Ontario's vulnerable wetlands. She and an Ontario Nature colleague have approached the City of London to encourage municipal action to protect wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts of development in its jurisdiction. This is an issue that Nature London members and NL's Conservation Action Committee may want to monitor.

Lesley Rudy updated the meeting about services and benefits available to member clubs. Ontario Nature's website (ontarionature.org) provides current information about volunteer opportunities and action alerts on issues, nature network news, resources on advocacy and protection of areas of

ecological importance, as well as *Ontario Nature* magazine available free of charge. Ontario Nature's activities include community science initiatives such as the breeding bird atlas and monitoring of Ontario snakes. Ontario Nature provides stewardship for 26 nature reserves across the province as well as a youth program, Nature Guardians, for participants aged 14-20. Sponsorships by local clubs to support youth participation are welcomed.

Group activity reports were presented by the 10 clubs represented at the meeting. Exchanges of requests for information and contacts as well as sharing of fundraising ideas took place, and Lesley circulated a list of these, as well as a list of speakers used by participating groups.

94th Annual General Meeting of Ontario Nature's Regional Groups, June 18, 2025

The AGM was a virtual business meeting, but its highlight was the introduction of Ontario's new executive director, Andrés Jiménez Monge, a biologist, who recently replaced Caroline Schultz following her retirement. Andrés' informative illustrated presentation set out Ontario Nature's purpose -- "We are the voice for nature in Ontario" -- and reported on Ontario Nature's accomplishments over the past year. These included expansion and restoration of nature reserves and protected areas, protection of wild species and wild spaces, fieldwork and getting people out on the land, collaboration with First Nations, involvement in provincial and federal elections to advocate for nature, engaging more people (especially youth), strengthening Ontario Nature's organizational capacity by growing its membership, and funding and strategic investments in programs and protected lands. Andrés explained his commitment to bold science-based conservation action to protect Ontario's precious diversity. Participants then heard and voted on the Treasurer's Report and participated in a question-and-answer exchange with Andrés.

Ontario Nature: Carolinian West Regional Meeting, October 18, 2025

The in-person fall regional meeting took place in Windsor at the Ojibway Prairie Nature Centre, an interesting resource centre and natural area with exhibits and activities for families. A large window onto a pond and forest gave us a view of a Cooper's Hawk and a Tufted Titmouse.

The meeting was organized by Lesley Rudy. Regional Councilor Mike Fisher welcomed the group, followed by introductions by those attending. A briefing on a recent Nature Day at Queen's Park, in which representatives of Nature London participated, was mentioned along with other advocacy work. Representatives of the groups present then described some of their activities, accomplishments and challenges. Groups represented included the Ojibway Prairie protected area, Lambton Wildlife (a club and land trust), Sydenham nature reserve, St Thomas Field Naturalists, Essex County Land Trust, Carolinian Canada, Windsor Field Naturalists, and Nature London. This exchange provided interesting suggestions for activities and advocacy to support learning and action on conservation. Projects included an effort to gain recognition as an urban provincial or national park, a proposal to link patches of green space and protect wetlands, a nature photography contest, bat monitoring, nature walks for children, propagation of native plants, and the Hawk Cliff weekend, enjoyed by many members of Nature London.

The meeting was followed by lunch and a walk at the Ojibway Shores natural area.

Submitted by Carol Agocs, Nature London's current representative to Ontario Nature

Osprey Monitoring

Ospreys in London fledged 19 young in 2025, down from 23 in the record set the previous year. The number of young fledged per active nest worked out to 1.27 vs 1.53 in the previous two years. We had more nests fledge a single young bird, and four active nests failed to produce any young Osprey. Despite the adversity, London Ospreys delivered a healthy crop of young birds to migrate south at the end of the season. The results are summarized in the table below.

Communications towers continue as the preferred nest location, and tower operators removed 4 Osprey nests during the 2024/25 winter season. However, the nests were rebuilt by Ospreys or replaced at new locations. One Osprey died (probably in a traffic collision on Hyde Park Rd), and weather may have been a factor in nest productivity. We had some cold weather in the spring during incubation and hatching days, and then there were two unusual torrential downpours in July that may have been harmful.

One of the new nest sites was on a cell phone tower at Sunningdale and Adelaide in the north edge of the city. It fledged three young, the best result in London. The new nest on a communications tower at Wonderland and Wharncliffe produced 2 young. We had new nests at Hoskins Mill in Komoka and a silo on Clarke Road near Kilally Road. They did not fledge any young this season, but we can hope for success next year.

Many thanks are due to all the Osprey monitors who submitted observations. Some provided regular reports on a favourite nest, and others sent occasional (but very welcome) updates from the field, including the discovery of new nests at Sunningdale at Adelaide and another at Wharncliffe & Wonderland. Osprey updates should be sent to Info@naturelondon.ca.

London Osprey Nesting - 2025 Results

Nest Location	Young Fledged	Notes
Sunningdale & Adelaide	3	Tower, New Nest
River Rd & Gore Rd	2	Tower
Wonderland and Wharncliffe	2	Tower, New Nest
Fanshawe Pk, near Highbury	1	Tower
Fanshawe & Clarke	1	Platform
Clarke & Kilally Silo	0	Silo, New Nest
Rotary Trail, Hyde Park	0	Platform, Abandoned
Hoskins Mill, Komoka	0	Structure, New,
Labatt Stadium	0	Lights
Western Stadium	1	Lights
Adelaide & S Thames R	2	Chimney
Greenway Treatment	2	Platform
Windermere Soccer Field	2	Lights
Windermere Baseball	2	Lights
Hudson Boatworks	1	Lights
TOTAL 2025	19	Last Year: 23
“Active” Nests	15	Last Year 15
Young Fledged per Active Nest	1.27	Last Year 1.53

London Osprey Nesting – Over the Years

Year	Young to Fledging Age	Active Nests
2025	19	15
2024	23 +	15
2023	23+	15
2022	17+	12
2021	23	11
2020	19	10
2019	16 +	8+
2018	16	10
2017	13	8

These figures highlight the ongoing fluctuations in fledgling success from year to year, often reflecting changes in weather, food availability, and broader environmental conditions. The stability in the number of active nests since 2023 suggests that London's osprey population has established a consistent breeding footprint, with occasional spikes in young reaching fledgling age. Notably, the years marked with a plus sign indicate instances of late-season fledglings or unconfirmed counts. Overall, the data shows a resilient nesting community, adapting to challenges and contributing to the city's urban biodiversity.

Submitted by Ric & Sandy Symmes, Nature London Osprey Monitoring Coordinators

Saunders Library (London Public Library)

For many years, Nature London has been making a donation to the London Public Library to buy books for the Saunders Library.

The following is a list outlining the library's purchases, usually multiple copies of each title, for the period September 2024 to August 2025.

Adult titles

Bird lore: the myths, magic and folklore of birds, by Sally Coulthard
Dare to bird: exploring the joy and power of birds, by Melissa Hafting
Eavesdropping on animals: what we can learn from wildlife conversations, by George Bumann
The Everyday Naturalist: How to Identify Animals, Plants, and Fungi Wherever You Go, by Rebecca Lexa
Everyday wild: an illustrated guide for mindfulness in nature, by Kathryn Hunter
Journeys to the nearby: a gardener discovers the gentle art of untravelling, by Elspeth Bradbury
A northern gardener's guide to native plants and pollinators, by Lorraine Johnson
Revered roots: ancestral teachings and wisdom of wild, edible and medicinal plants, by LoriAnn Bird

Children's titles

Birds life size: up close and personal with 47 bird species, by Chris Earley
The Buzz on Wild Bees: The Little-Known Pollinators that Keep Our Planet Humming, by Kira Vermond
Composting for community, by Michael Martinez
Conservation success: protecting wild spaces and species, by Laura Perdew
Once in a blue moon: nature's rarest events and best-kept secrets, by Emily Hawkins

Submitted by Pat Tripp

Thames Talbot Land Trust

The year 2025 is the 25th anniversary of the founding of Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT). In this anniversary year, it is important to remember that the idea of establishing a local land trust developed within the McIlwraith Field Naturalists (Nature London) in the late 1990s. These efforts culminated in the launch, in 2000, of Thames Talbot Land Trust 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 under the leadership of Executive Director Daria Koscinski. Staff positions include Conservation Director, Operations and Engagement Coordinator, Stewardship and Outreach Coordinator, Land Stewardship Assistant, Volunteer Coordinator, Communications Specialist and Fund Development Assistant. Staff resources were augmented seasonally in 2024-2025 through the employment of students and interns.

This report for Nature London members touches on some highlights of Thames Talbot Land Trust activities during the period September 2024 to August 2025. TTLT's Financial Statements for the year ending December 31, 2024, are available at <https://www.thamestalbotlandtrust.ca/>. Click on the "About Us" tab, and then on Financial Statements.

Early in 2025, TTLT received certification under the Conservation Excellence Certification Program. This program from the Centre for Land Conservation (CLC) assessed TTLT's performance through a rigorous, independent peer review process. The CLC is dedicated to improving land conservation outcomes across Canada. This recognition affirms TTLT's commitment to excellence and ethical practices.

During the past year, new lands were added to the TTLT portfolio, bringing the total extent of land under protection to 2300 acres. TTLT expanded Lakeview Wetlands on the Lake Erie shore in the Municipality of West Elgin through purchase of two adjacent properties. In Oxford County, the Birch Hollow property was added to TTLT holdings in Five Points Forest. A major achievement this year was acquisition of the 30-hectare (74-acre) extension to Hawk Cliff Woods near Port Stanley. At a celebration event on July 26, 2025, visitors were able to see the early stages of meadow regeneration in progress.

As reported previously, in July 2023, TTLT was awarded a London Community Foundation Community Vitality Grant. This funding, which extends over three years, supports work by TTLT and other partners in establishing Conservation Easement Agreements (CEAs). A CEA is a voluntary, legally binding agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization that ensures conservation features are maintained in perpetuity. On May 4, 2025, at the Livingstone Farm near Komoka, a celebration took place for TTLT's first CEA in Middlesex County. The Livingstone Conservation Easement Agreement protects a 40-hectare (100-acre) property. Other CEAs are under discussion, and TTLT continues outreach efforts to encourage even more participation in this valuable program.

TTLT's Passport to Nature program starts up each spring and continues through the following winter. Through this initiative, TTLT introduces new participants to its nature reserves and demonstrates the importance of TTLT's work. Sponsorship revenue from Passport to Nature in 2025 was more than \$33,000. Thanks to Nature London for supporting this venture.

As noted above, TTLT is marking its 25th anniversary in 2025. Looking to the future, TTLT staff and board members have been working towards the launch of a major fundraising campaign. A very special Thank You

to Nature London for providing financial support as a Campaign Catalyst. This support, combined with support from other donors was essential in getting the campaign up and running.

Volunteers continue to play important roles in the operations of TTLT and are especially helpful with outreach and stewardship activities. In 2025, more than 175 volunteers were active through the year.

Management of invasive species and/or habitat creation work continued at TTLT nature reserves again this year. Collecting seed from native plants helps with future restoration efforts.

Did you know that TTLT lands are home to at least 72 species at risk? One area of special interest is the turtle monitoring program. Staff and volunteers monitor the status of resident turtles to help maintain and grow at-risk turtle populations, and to help educate community members about the importance of turtles to our ecosystems. Snakes are also being monitored in order to help with future management and protection.

You can sign up for regular updates on the activities of the Trust. 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/>. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for TTLT, take a look at the “Get Involved” button on the website.

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

Submitted by Dave Wake, TTLT Liaison

Urban League of London (ULL)

The Urban League 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. The League's main focus is Community Engagement, Community Projects, Municipal Advocacy and Citizen Education. It's what they have been doing since 1969.

Some of the League's Membership benefits:

- General Liability insurance for member events and room bookings.
- Access to small internal funding opportunities when available.
- Monthly meetings (except for June, July, August and December) featuring an educational component followed by a League business portion.
- Sharing of members' event details in the monthly newsletter, and on the League's website and Facebook page.
- A collective voice on city-wide and neighbourhood-specific issues.

Meeting topics this year:

- London's Family-Centred Service Systems. Guest Speakers from City of London's Child Care & Early Years Division.
- Understanding Where We Fit in the Big Picture. Presentation by Pillar Non-profit Network on community challenges and opportunities.
- Getting Involved in Municipal Politics. Guest Speakers: current Councilors Elizabeth Peloza and David Ferreira, and Former Councilor Maureen Cassidy.
- Black Brilliance: Celebrating the Minds That Shaped Our Future. Presentation on notable Black inventors who have contributed to various fields. Facilitated by W.E.A.N. community centre. An organization that supports the black community.
- Glaucoma: A Public Health & Equity Issue. Guest speaker Tapiwa Musewe of Draga Vision Care.
- Mental Health & Housing. Panel of guest speakers Julie Ryan, Indwell; Paresh Soni, Hindu Legacy; Dr. Jedrin Ngungu, Victoria Hospital, Western University - Schulich School of Medicine; and Imam Abd Alfatah Twakkal, ILM.

This past year, I asked to have Urban League information, which I thought would be of particular interest to Nature London members, highlighted on the Nature London website and added to the Nature London e-newsletter. This included information on Urban League's meeting on Getting Involved in Municipal Politics, as well as Urban League's Green Awards nomination and Small Grants application processes and deadlines. In turn, Urban League included information on the Nature in the City series as well as Nature London's Eco Grant program in its e-newsletter.

This past year Urban League cancelled 2 of its monthly meetings, and the November meeting was over Zoom. It was an abbreviated meeting focused on League business and didn't include an educational component. The monthly meetings on the whole weren't well attended, and the educational components of the monthly meetings didn't relate to Nature London's mission and organizational objectives. I believe it may be time for a discussion on the relevance of continuing membership in the Urban League.

Submitted by Susan Price

Volunteer Coordinator

The Volunteer Coordinator seeks to link interested individuals with compatible volunteer opportunities within Nature London. Some volunteer positions are appointed positions to which individuals make at least a one-year commitment, while other opportunities involve a single event, such as staffing our display at a public event or participating in the Christmas Bird Count.

In 2024-25, in addition to the board of directors, there were 44 appointed positions. Thirty-five (35) of these were to positions overseen by one or two individuals, while an additional nine (9) were standing committees involving multiple volunteers. While many club members hold multiple volunteer positions, approximately 60 unique individuals volunteered in a formal (appointed) capacity, with dozens more assisting with tasks such as bird and butterfly counts/monitoring.

Although many of our volunteers have held their positions for multiple years, there is always some degree of turnover and, as such, we are always looking for new volunteers to bring their energy and fresh perspective to our many areas of activity. The goal is always to match people with positions that correspond to their interests and talents and which they will find enjoyable and enriching, a win-win situation for both the club and our volunteers.

I wish to offer my sincere thanks to all those who offered their services to the club in any capacity during the preceding year. As a strictly volunteer-run organization, Nature London literally depends on your contributions of time and talent to accomplish all that we do, which is considerable.

Those wishing to join our team of volunteers can do so via the Nature London website or at the time of your membership renewal.

Submitted by Bernie VanDenBelt

Website

The webmaster is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the website. This includes the appearance, usefulness, performance, availability, and security of the website. Usually, the most time-consuming duties are clerical – managing the online events, announcements, and new reports.

Website activity reports indicate the importance of online information, the online membership form, and online event registrations. Hundreds of members access each issue of The Cardinal online. Each year, hundreds of members join or renew their membership online. The website also provides an online source of information about the club and its activities.

Website usage increases by about 10% annually as the club expands and more functions are added to the website.

The website generates hundreds of emails per month. The event registration software generates confirmation and reminder emails. The online membership form generates acknowledgement and notification emails. (The E-Newsletter is not part of the website.)

The club's email forwarding service uses the same Internet addresses (naturelondon.com and naturelondon.ca) as the website, but they are not otherwise related.

The same website software used for the online membership form is used to collect field data for the Christmas Bird Count and the Chimney Swift Monitoring Program.

This summer, the webmaster investigated alternatives to replace the membership database, website, and MailChimp (used for the E-Newsletter and CAA emails) with a fully supported, integrated and simpler solution. The alternatives were all commercial solutions that would save volunteer time and reduce the need for skilled technical resources.

Submitted by Glenn Berry, 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. And new for this past year, it was a way for members to access Nature in the City presentations. That way, when members have a scheduling conflict with a presentation evening, the recorded presentations can be viewed anytime, using links provided in the E-Newsletter, at their convenience!

From September 1, 2024, to August 31, 2025, the following videos were added:

- One promotional video about Nature London* - 110 views
- One member contribution – NL Hike at Pinery - 54 views
- Two Birding Wing Presentations - views ranged from 24 - 30
- Six Indoor Meeting Presentations - views ranged from 15 - 69
- Six Nature in the City Presentations - views ranged from 8 – 36, the average time each one-hour presentation was viewed by all viewers was 3.4 hours per presentation. ** On average, each viewer watched 11.3% of each video presentation.

*This short video is available for use by members to show before events or at booths, to promote the activities and accomplishments of Nature London.

**Video recordings were made for each presentation in Nature in the City for the first time ever, in 2024 and then again in 2025, courtesy of the London Public Library. Three cameras are used to produce each recording. The video editing was performed by YouTube Administrator (Kathleen Holland). Given that video editing for each presentation requires about 20 hours, including the time required to save edited videos followed by the uploading of each one to YouTube, this service will no longer be available. However, going forward, members will be encouraged to enjoy the various presentations in person, on the evening it is delivered.

- All recorded presentations are kept on the YouTube Channel in perpetuity. Rather they are kept in "unlisted" mode which prevents the public from accessing the video content without a direct link. A direct link and presentation description are available in E-Newsletter for two cycles to ensure folks have a chance to view presentation topics. Additionally, they are available in a password-protected area of the NL website.
- 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 which are publicly listed that YouTube tracks for the overall success of the Channel. These publicly listed videos when submitted with key words (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.
- 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 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

Appointments 2024-25

PRESIDENT'S REPORT	Don Taves
PAST PRESIDENT'S REPORT	Gordon Neish
ARCHIVES	Winifred and David Wake
AWARDS BANQUET	Darby Alderson
BIRD FRIENDLY LONDON	Stacey Jaczko
BIRDING WING	Stacey Jaczko
BOOK DONATIONS	Betsy Baldwin
THE CARDINAL	John Berry
CEDARCROFT	Jeff Paul
CHIMNEY SWIFT PROGRAM	Susan and Glenn Berry
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT	Pete Read
CONSERVATION ACTION COMMITTEE	Sandy Levin
ECO-GRANTS PROGRAM	Jennifer Evans
E-NEWSLETTER	Sandy and Ric Symmes
INFO@NATURELONDON.CA	Sandy and Ric Symmes
FACEBOOK REPORT	Mady Hymowitz
FIELD TRIPS	Cathy McCrae
GUIDE TO THE NATURAL AREAS IN LONDON AND REGION	Mike Channon
IMAGE DATABASE	John Berry
INDOOR MEETINGS	Ruth Dickau
LONDON ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK	Susan Price
MANUAL SECRETARY	Cathy Quinlan
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY & MEMBERSHIP DATABASE	Gail McNeil & Hugh Casbourn
NATURE IN THE CITY	Kathleen Holland
ONTARIO NATURE (FEDERATION OF ONTARIO NATURALISTS)	Anita Caveney & Carol Agocs
OSPREY MONITORING	Sandy and Ric Symmes
REFRESHMENTS COMMITTEE	Linda Bristow
SAUNDERS LIBRARY (LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARY)	Pat Tripp
THAMES TALBOT LAND TRUST	David Wake
URBAN LEAGUE OF LONDON (ULL)	Susan Price
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR	Jennifer Evans
WEBSITE	Glenn Berry
YOUTUBE ADMINISTRATOR	Kathleen Holland
FRIENDS OF THE COVES	Bill Maddeford
BUTTERFLY COUNT	George Prieksaitis
SALES	Sue Henderson

Special Committees

Awards Committee

Gordon Neish (chair), Anita Caveney, Stacey Jaczko

Eco-Grants Committee

Carol Agocs, Garry Cruickshank, Jennifer Evans, Susan Hall, Sandy Levin, Lesley Pergau, Bernie VanDenBelt

Finance Committee

Grant Hopcroft (Chair), Sandy Levin, Lesley Pergau, Bernie VanDenBelt, Garry Cruickshank, Jennifer Evans

Board of Directors 2024-2025

President	Donald Taves
Past President	Gordon Neish
Vice President	Jennifer Evans
2 nd Vice President	Brienna French
Treasurer	Lesley Pergau
Recording Secretary	Cathie Penalagan
Director at Large	Darby Alderson
Director at Large	Garry Cruickshank
Director at Large	Grant Hopcroft
Director at Large	Stacey Jaczko
Director at Large	Matthew Palarchio

The Nature London 2024-2025 Annual Report was compiled by Donald Taves with the editorial assistance of Glenn Berry.