

Committee: **Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee**

Organization/Sector represented:

Name: **Matthew Watson**

Address:

**565 Proudfoot lane, unit 415
London, Ontario
N6H 0A1**

Occupation: **Graduate Student**

Work experience: **Research Assistant (2014) - I conducted synoptic surveys of reclaimed wetlands in the Alberta oil sands, in addition I lead a team conducting avian point counts. My work helped contribute to a better understanding of wetland health after the disturbance of oil extraction and future steps that should be taken to improve the health of reintroduced wetlands. Research student (2012-2014) - I assisted in multiple research projects pertaining to bird migration and behaviour. I worked on projects focusing on monitoring migration patterns of birds as well as assessing health of birds at stopover locations during their migration. My research lead me to conduct a study on the effects of human light sources on the behaviour of migrating birds. Resource Conservation Technician (2010-2011) - I worked for Point Pelee National Park and assisted on a variety of projects. I assisted on monitoring programs of Lake Erie water snakes and Five-lined skinks, I monitored breeding and migrating birds throughout the park using automated and manual recording technology, and aided in turtle nest protection. During my time at Point Pelee I was in charge of developing and implementing a protocol for the removal of invasive plant species. The protocol lead to the removal of three highly invasive species during my time at Point Pelee.**

Education: **BSc. Biology Honours with Thesis (2010 - 2014) - University of Windsor**

(graduated with distinction) MSc. Biology (2014 - Present) - University of Western Ontario

Skills: **I have gained a wide range of knowledge on taxonomy, local wildlife, practical skills and environmental regulations and concerns. During my education at the University of Windsor I gained extensive knowledge on North American bird species working for Dr. Dan Mennill. I have gained practical skills including: mist netting and bird banding, programming automated recording technology, and how to use sound analysis software (Raven, Syrinx). In addition to my practical skills, I have an extensive knowledge of North American avian taxonomy, as well i took many courses that covered a wide range to taxonomic groups including fish, reptiles, and amphibians. While conducting my undergraduate degree at the University of Windsor I also took many course on environmental concerns as well as resource management practices in Canada and throughout the world. My work at Point Pelee helped me gain a wide range of practical skills. I assisted and learned how to pit tag snakes, identify a wide variety of invasive and non-invasive plant species, develop and implement new protocols, present ideas and plans to fellow employees and supervisors, working with public education and involvement in environmental programs, reviewing and editing reports, and live trapping and monitoring procedures for reintroduced species (Flying Squirrel). Working in the Alberta oil sands equipped me with many new skills to compliment my already existing skills and knowledge. I gained experience analyzing water and soil chemistry, and analyzing phytoplankton and zooplankton communities in wetlands. Conducting point counts requires a number of skills including being able to identify birds by sight or sound, usually of many species simultaneously. Being in charge of a team helped me as well as the demands of conducting point counts taught me how to manage and delegate responsibilities amongst a team. My wide range of work experience has taught me many valuable skills, as well as my specialized knowledge of local and North American bird species. I believe both my knowledge and skills would be highly beneficial to this Committee.**

Interest reason: **I would like to serve the City of London because I would like to put my experience and knowledge to use in helping make informed decisions regarding the environment and future development plans. I moved to the City of London over a year ago and was impressed by the the amount of green space and care taken to preserve the environment and heritage of the city. Being a citizen of London coupled with my knowledge and interest in the environment is why I would be excited to serve the City of London.**

Contributions: My education has provided me with knowledge on resource management protocols and procedures and specifically an extensive knowledge of avian taxonomy and biology. I believe my knowledge on avian biology can help to make informed planning decisions with regards to species at risk in the London area. My work in Alberta has provided me with knowledge on how to properly assess, protect and mitigate potential effects of development projects around wetlands.

Past contributions: I have provided resources to the City of London for their teaching tool kit. I compiled information about local species of birds and ecological concerns facing species at risk, specifically the chimney swift. I developed and implemented an invasive species removal plan for Point Pelee National Park during my employment there.

Interpersonal: Working at multiple universities has helped me learn how to properly express and support up my views and opinions effectively while maintaining respect for others views that may conflict with my own. I have been a part of journal and article review groups where opinions and critiques of members articles were shared and discussed. I also have experience with teaching and discussing topics and ideas to students. Some courses that I have been a teaching assistant for at the University of Western Ontario include: Animal Behaviour, Statistics and Wildlife Management. I was in charge of running labs and educating students on statistics, local wildlife and proper scientific writing. It is these experiences that have helped me learn how to express my views while respecting others.

Interview interest: Yes