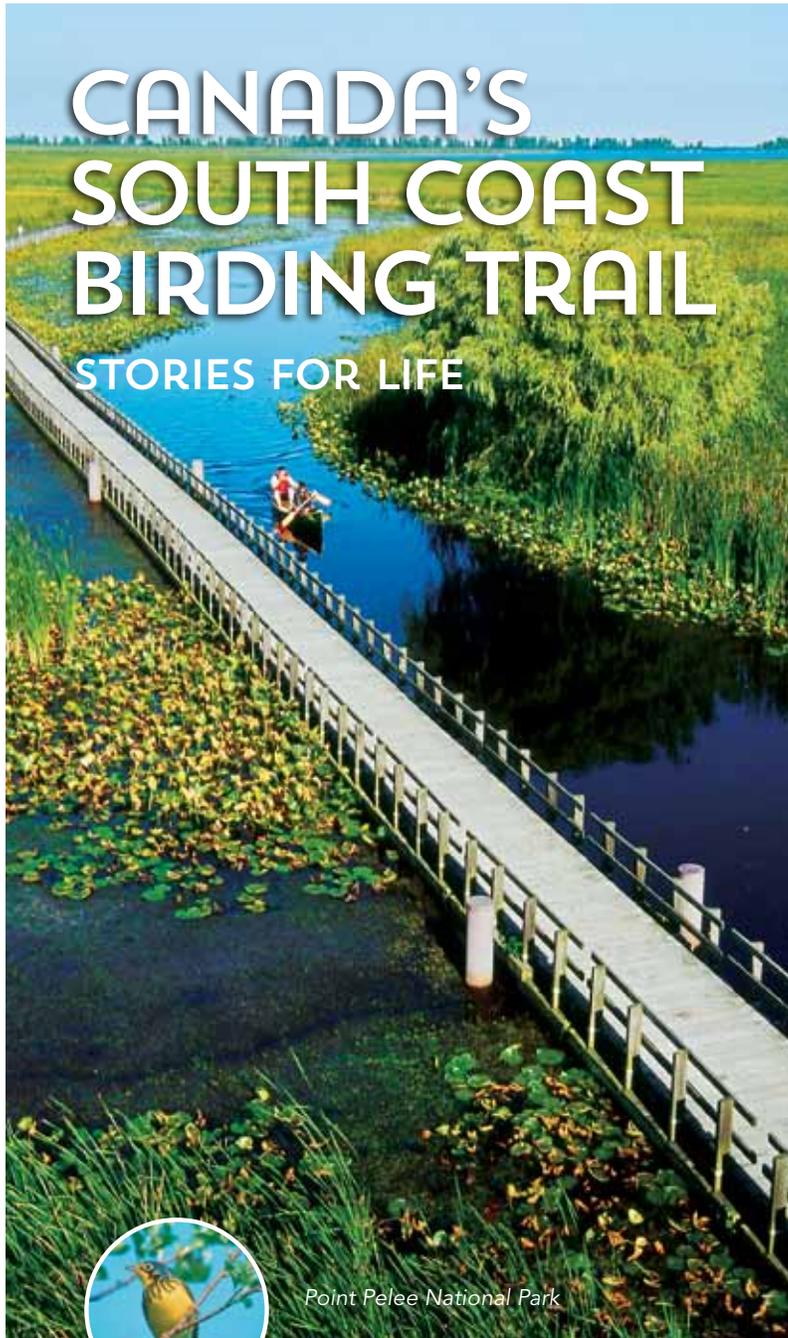


CANADA'S SOUTH COAST BIRDING TRAIL

STORIES FOR LIFE



Long Point

CANADA'S SOUTH COAST BIRDING TRAIL IS FOR THOSE WITH A PASSION FOR TRUE ADVENTURE.

To get up with the sun and marvel at hundreds of birds as they fly in unison above a perfect body of water.

To follow the back roads to a place of pristine beauty where all you hear is a **songbird** breaking an otherwise brilliant silence.



Point Pelee National Park



Boardwalk, Point Pelee

To paddle crystal clear waters and smell nothing but clean, fresh air as you journey along fascinating forests and grasslands.

To leisurely hike a natural habitat filled with wonder around every turn. To surround yourself with the best of friends and stories that will last a lifetime.

Ontario's **South West**
Shaped by nature

ONTARIO
Yours to discover



WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT

Canada's **South Coast Birding Trail** is one of the premiere birding destinations in North America including **Point Pelee National Park**, renowned as a birding hotspot around the world. What makes it so special and so different is its location as a major stop-over for over 300 species of birds together with its rich **Carolinian** ecosystem that provides a wonderful variety of flora and fauna not only ideal for birding but hiking, wildflower identification, butterfly and dragonfly watching, paddling and other nature-related interests.



The trail itself is not a physical trail but more like a wine route or culinary trail where people may move around freely to different locations to see various birds and explore exciting outdoor pursuits. It is excellently positioned within **Ontario's Southwest** in the most southerly part of Canada where the winters are relatively mild, spring arrives earlier and autumn lasts longer than in the rest of Canada.

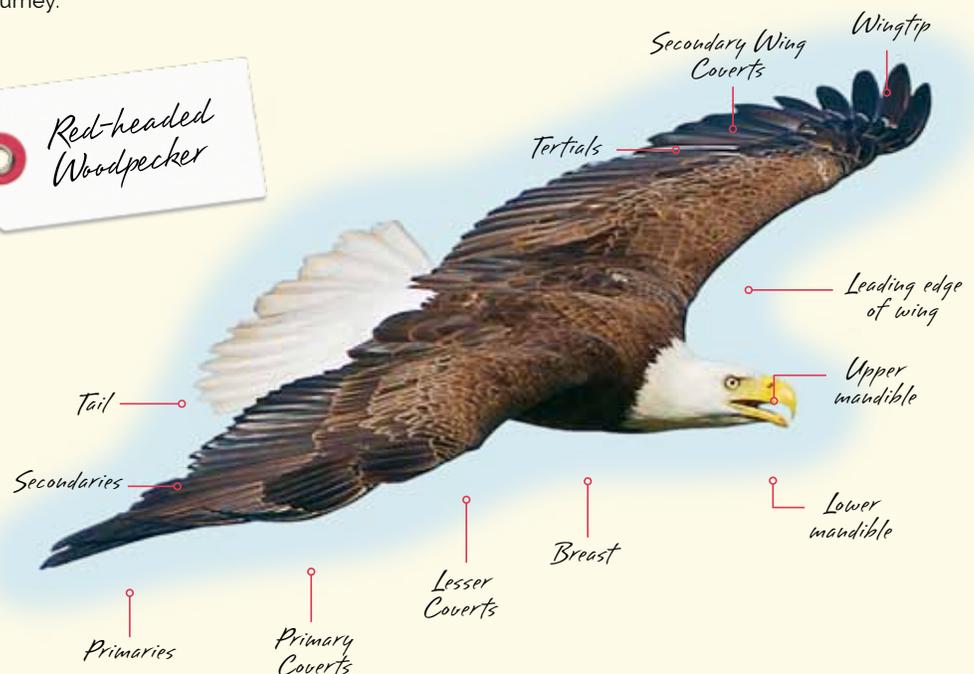
People can drive, cycle, hike and walk their way along the Lake Erie coast amidst awe-inspiring habitats for **waterfowl, songbirds, raptors** and other special species. An extensive system of walking and hiking paths criss-crosses dunes, marshes, tall-grass prairies, savannahs, conservation areas and pristine parks like **Rondeau, Port Burwell, Long Point and Rock Point** with their abundant wildlife and stunning beauty. Bird observatories and banding stations dot the region and offer facilities that typically include towers, nature gift shops, site guides, maps and other amenities.

Wherever you are on the trail, you'll be overwhelmed by that feeling of truly breaking away and replenished by all that clean, fresh air. But you're never isolated. There are loops that go inland to where you can go cycling, boating and visit the burgeoning wineries and farm-fresh culinary treats of **Ontario's Southwest**.

On a latitudinal par with California, the region has some of the richest farmland in Canada perfect for vineyards and fresh, local produce. And you're also close to **Windsor, Sarnia, Chatham, London** and many charming towns and hamlets for theatre, shopping and city experiences should you wish a change of pace to your journey.



Red-headed Woodpecker



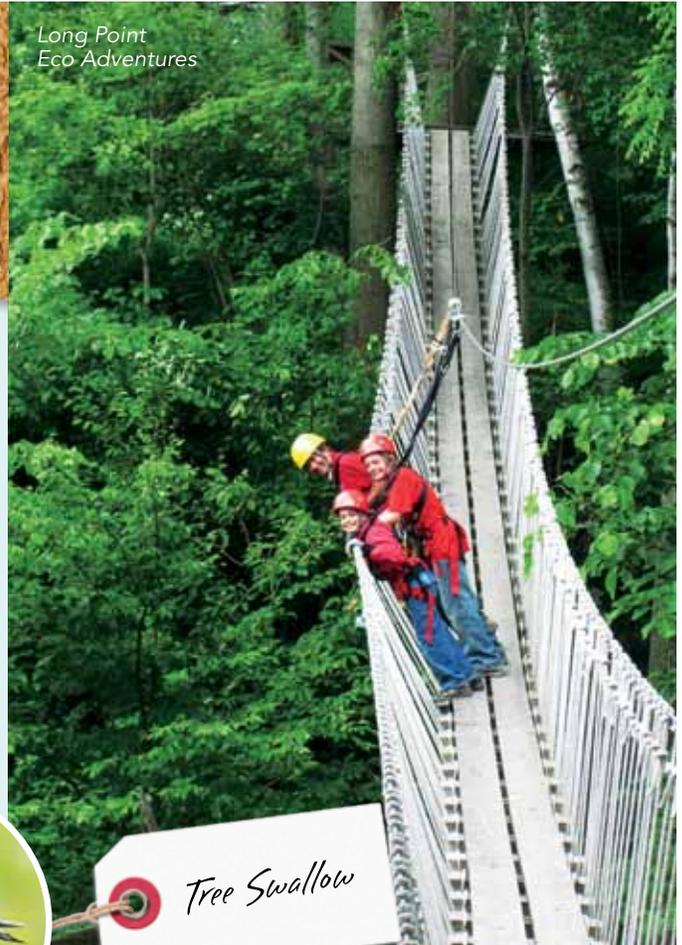
WHEN TO SEE DIFFERENT SPECIES

There's something special to see and do year-round on **Canada's South Coast Birding Trail** and to help you decide we've organized it by season and specific migration patterns.

SPRING

As temperatures warm up and larger bodies of water begin to thaw, early migrants return to the area. Among the first of these are **Tundra Swan** and rafts of **ducks** including **American Wigeon**, **Blue-winged Teal**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Northern Pintail**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Canvasback**, **Redhead**, **Ring-necked Duck** and **Ruddy Duck**. **Red-necked Grebe**, **Eared and Horned Grebe** also return but can be more difficult to find.

Shorebird migration begins with the arrival of **Killdeer** in March, followed in April and May by a variety of species such as **Spotted and Solitary Sandpiper**, **Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Sanderling**, **Semi-palmated Least**, **White-rumped and Pectoral Sandpipers**, **Short-billed and Long-billed Dowitcher**, and **Dunlin**. **Osprey**, **Caspian and Common Tern**, and most **swallows** arrive in April.



Other species returning to the area include **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**, **House Wren**, **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**, **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, and **Red-headed Woodpecker**, a provincially-designated species of special concern and a nationally-threatened species. Peak **songbird** migration occurs in May as neo-tropical migrants such as **flycatchers**, **vireos**, and **warblers** return to Ontario to breed.



WHEN TO SEE DIFFERENT SPECIES



Wood Duck

SUMMER

In June, most **songbirds** are sitting on nests and incubating eggs. Many young birds will leave the nest and learn to fly in July. On hot days in July and August, **songbirds** will fall silent but there are still a lot of other species to be seen and heard. Marsh birds such as **American Bittern, Sora and Pied-billed Grebe** are secretive but can be quite vocal. Look for **Great Blue Heron, Common Tern and Bonaparte's Gull** in the marshes and nearby wetlands. **Forster's Tern** and **Black Tern**, both considered rare in Ontario, may be observed during the breeding and migration seasons. The **Ruby-throated Hummingbird, House Wren, Baltimore Oriole, Blue Jay, and Northern Cardinal** can be spotted with their young in most backyards.



American Kestrel

FALL

During fall migration, which for some species begins in August, there can be a higher diversity of bird species and birds tend to be more abundant due to the number of young birds that hatched during the summer. It's a great time to see a **shorebird, duck, warbler and hawk**. Large, southward movements of **raptors** are evident at this time of year and fall is a good



Pinery Provincial Park

time to see both the **White-breasted** and **Red-breasted Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, Ruby-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, and Hermit Thrush**. Look for large flocks of **Sandhill Crane** in farm fields. The **Bald Eagle** and many **waterfowl** species start to re-appear in November.

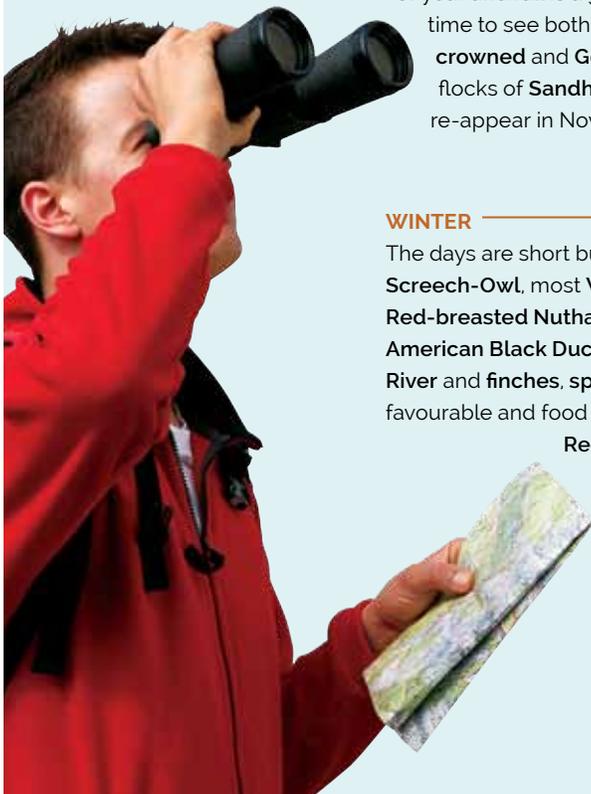
WINTER

The days are short but faithful birders will find residents like the **Great Horned** and **Eastern Screech-Owl**, most **Woodpeckers (Downy, Hairy Red-breasted, and Pileated), White-breasted** and **Red-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Mockingbird** and **Northern Cardinal**. **Canada Goose, Mallard, American Black Duck** and **Common Goldeneye** concentrate on ice-free sections of the **Grand River** and **finches, sparrows and raptors** tend to concentrate in areas where habitat conditions are favourable and food sources are reliable. On a cold, sunny day, you can find a **Bald Eagle** and/or **Red-tailed Hawk** soaring or hunting over open water and farm fields.

For up-to-date bird sightings, visit eBird.ca



Black-crowned Night Heron



SPECIAL EVENTS NOT TO MISS



SPRING

Wings of Spring

Rondeau Park, Chatham-Kent, March

Return of the Swans Festival

Old Thedford Bog/Sarnia Lambton, March

Festival of Birds

Point Pelee National Park, Essex County, May

Springsong Celebration

Pelee Island Heritage Centre, Pelee Island, May

Shore and Songbird Celebration

Hillman Marsh Conservation Area, Essex County, May

Festival of Flight

Rondeau Park, Chatham-Kent, May

World Migratory Bird Day

Long Point Bird Observatory, Norfolk, May

FALL

Festival of Hawks

Holiday Beach Conservation Area, Essex County, September

Ruthven Park Birding Festival

Ruthven Park, Haldimand County, September

Hawk Cliff Weekend

Port Stanley, Elgin County, September

Butterfly Migration Festival

Rondeau Park, Chatham-Kent, September

Kingsville Migration Festival

Jack Miner's Bird Sanctuary, Essex County, October

For specific dates and details, visit

Ontariosouthwest.com



*Eastern
Meadowlark*

Lower Grand River

WHERE TO STAY



Cerulean Warbler



Scarlet Tanager



Wood Thrush



White-breasted Nuthatch

You'll never have to worry about that good night's sleep after a day of learning and adventure as there are ample accommodations to suit whatever your preference. Hotels, motels, B&Bs, seasonal cottages and campgrounds are well located close to the hubs and best birding areas. A wider selection is also available in our cities and towns if you want a change of environment.

Visit Ontariosouthwest.com and plan ahead to ensure your booking during peak birding periods and festivals.

Key to printable map:





BIRDING HUBS



Redhead

Prime birding locations that also offer visitor services, interpretation centres and essential amenities. They are an ideal place to start on the trail and use as centres as you plan your adventure.

1 Point Pelee National Park

World-renowned birding hotspot in the southern most point of Canada draws 275,000 visitors a year and has recorded more than 390 species. The Visitor Centre features exhibits and a theatre as well as a shuttle service to the **Tip of Canada**. Extensive trails tour through forests, savannahs, including a boardwalk with an observation tower at the marsh. "**The Warbler Capital of Canada**" is also the temporary home to many other migrants, from **waterfowl** to **shorebirds** and **songbirds** to **birds of prey**. Open year-round it's a great place to start.

2 Pelee Island Heritage Centre

Some 310 species have been spotted in Canada's southernmost community. **Lighthouse Point Nature Reserve** is a jumping off point for migrants heading to the mainland. **Fish Point Nature Reserve** is a miniature **Point Pelee** in form and vegetation and **Stone Road Alvar** hosts southern breeding birds like the **Yellow-breasted Chat** and **Orchard Oriole**.

3 Ojibway Prairie Complex

Over 15 km of woodland and prairie hiking trails close to Windsor and Detroit with 247 recorded species and largest protected tall-grass prairie and oak savannah in Ontario. State-of-the-art nature centre staffed by wildlife experts, feeders, wildlife exhibits and interactive programs. Notable species include **Titmice**, **Chickadees**, **Nuthatches**, **Cardinals**, **Goldfinches** and **Jays** year-round.

4 St. Clair National Wildlife Area

Within an extensive marsh 19 km west of **Chatham** along the southeast shore of **Lake St. Clair**, the area is dominated by wetland habitat with patches of tall-grass prairie. Where permitted, visitors can view a wide range of wildlife from an observation tower and walking trails and see residents like **Herons** and **Bitterns**, **Puddle Ducks**, **Geese** as well as some 20 species of birds, mammals, reptiles and fish at risk.

5 Rondeau Provincial Park

Ontario's second-oldest provincial park 45 minutes from Chatham has 11 km of sandy beaches and boasts excellent hiking, fishing, boating, biking and rollerblading to go with premiere birding and its famous "**Festival of Flight**" and other events. The park boasts 335 species including the endangered **Prothonotary Warbler** and rarities like **Townsend's Solitaire**, **Yellow-throated Warbler** and **Painted Bunting**.

6 Pinafore Park

Pinafore Park, just 28 km south of London, boasts unique finds such as a wildlife sanctuary with a mated pair of Trumpeter Swans and a lake that provides access to open water year-round no matter the weather. Roam the hiking trails amidst a 25-acre remnant Carolinian woodlot and enjoy many other recreational activities. Notable birds to find are the **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, **Eastern Screech-Owl**, **Great Horned** and **Long-eared Owl** as well as many warblers.

7 Port Burwell Provincial Park

In a mature Carolinian forest an hour southeast of **London** between renowned birding areas of **Long Point** and **Point Pelee**, the park is one of the best locations to see **hawks**, **vultures** and **eagles** in spring and fall migration and **Monarch Butterflies**, **Blue Jays** and **Dragonflies** among its 232 recorded species.

8 Bird Studies Canada National Headquarters

This not-for-profit organization dedicated to bird conservation provides habitat for a number of species from its sheltered corner of **Long Point's Inner Bay** 37 km from **Simcoe**. Its 32 acres include walking trails, observation deck, interpretive display and events such as fall migration, owl banding and **Baillie Birdathon**. Of some 388 recorded species are **Semi-palmated Plover** and **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs**.



BIRDING HUBS

9 Long Point Bird Observatory, Old Cut Research Station

The epicentre for birding in Long Point with some 325 recorded species is located 45 km from Simcoe. A woodlot with **Scots Pine, White Spruce and Cottonwood** attracts rarities like **Bewick's Wren, Varied Thrush and Western Tanager** and **Skulkers** like **Ovenbirds** and **Waterthrushes**. Paths take visitors to a number of mist nets, a visitor centre and banding lab.

10 Rock Point Provincial Park

On **Lake Erie** at the mouth of the **Grand River** just an hour from **Niagara Falls** are walking trails through wooded areas, marshes and beaches ideal to view **shorebirds** and **warblers** and 260 recorded species. A banding station and platform above sand dunes also offer special viewing opportunities.

11 Ruthven Park

Located along an inland river corridor and set in the **Carolinian forests**. Over 10 stations throughout the property have mist nets and there's a special banding lab that provides the opportunity to see birds up close and join expert banders as they extract the birds and record the data for each of them.

12 Pittock Conservation Area

An 850-hectare park directly north of Woodstock offers fabulous camping, hiking, biking and paddling to go with seeing a variety of birds and ducks like the **American Black Duck, Mallard** and **Common Merganser**. A 5 km trail goes through intriguing plantations, forests, meadows and shoreline.

13 Wildwood Conservation Area

A 3,500 acre park perfect for camping, hiking, biking, kayaking, canoeing including 30 kms of trails amidst rare flora and fauna of the region. Here you'll find **shorebirds** like **Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper**, and **warblers** such as the **Yellow Warbler** and **Pine Warbler**.

14 Fanshawe Conservation Area

This 3,000-acre outdoor playground in northeast London provides camping, boating, canoe rentals, hiking, picnicking, mountain biking, fishing and excellent birding. The lake invites **waterfowl, kingfishers, herons** and other species. The area also has 28 km of trails that cut through awe-inspiring habitats.

15 Komoka Provincial Park

Located minutes outside of London, the park provides low-intensity, self-interpretive, day-use recreational opportunities for visitors including hiking and nature appreciation, wildlife viewing and photography. Great spots to view **eagles, hawks** and the **Eastern Blue Bird**.

16 Pinery Provincial Park

Minutes from **Grand Bend** you'll find 10 km of sandy beach, fragile oak savannah and coastal dune ecosystems, over 800 vascular plants and 319 species of birds, 124 of which have nested in the park. Outdoor recreation opportunities include a bird walk with a Park Naturalist, canoeing, kayaking, cycling and seeing sunsets ranked by **National Geographic** as among the "**Top 10 Best in the World**".

17 Canatara Park

Sarnia's park provides an excellent place to spot **warblers, sandpipers, ducks** and **falcons** as you stroll through the woods and along 3,000 feet of Lake Huron sandy beach. The 200 acre park provides nature trails for walking, hiking, cycling, beaches for swimming and boating, and a petting farm for the kids.



PRIMARY SITES



Excellent birding locations though without some of the services and amenities of the hubs. They are an integral part of the experience and should be included around the hubs as you map out your route. Please visit Ontariosouthwest.com and eBird.ca for more information.

MAP 1

YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE

Canada's South Coast Birding Trail

Use this map to plan your getaway whether it's a weekend or longer or even less if you simply don't have the time. It's designed so you can map out your own route and be the author of your own unique birding stories. Look upon it as the Route 66 of birding.

To help you get going, we've highlighted 17 major hubs as points of entry to the trail which you can use as a base to plan your adventures to see one-of-a-kind birds, unique flora and fauna, special wildlife and maybe pursue some hiking, cycling, paddling and other fascinating outdoor experiences along the way.

The hubs show the best birding hotspots, most interesting natural wonders, archeological formations, recreational facilities and, of course, those essential amenities to ensure you get the comforts you need while on the back roads. They are also close to many of our charming towns and villages.

As well as the hubs, we've highlighted primary sites with even more birding opportunities along with sites with tourism information centres to welcome you and ensure you get whatever you need for a top-notch experience. To get more information on the primary sites and anything else to make your trip more memorable, please visit Ontariosouthwest.com and eBird.ca



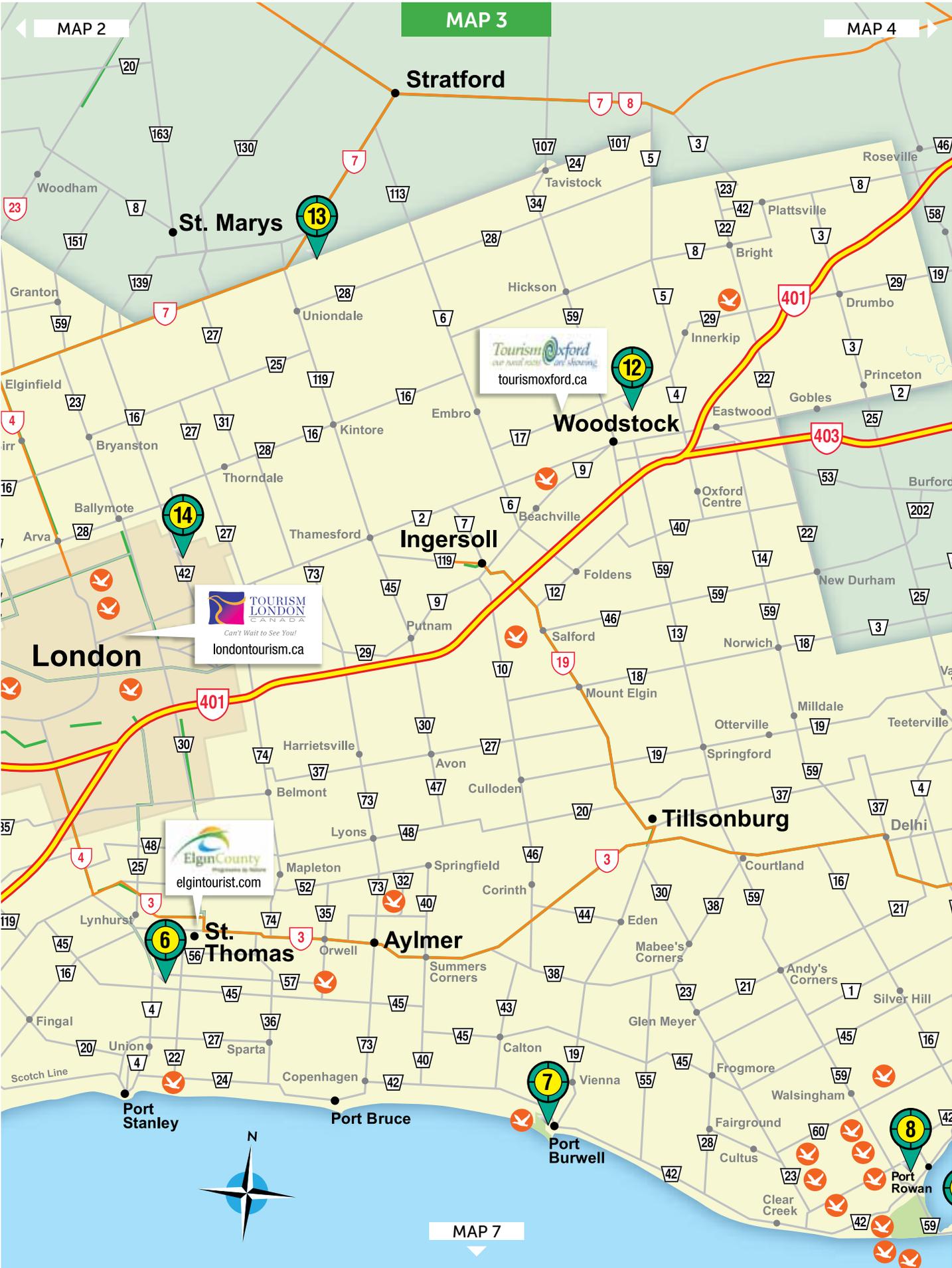
MAP 2



Visit Ontariosouthwest.com

MAP 5





MAP 3

MAP 4



Norfolk
COUNTY
norfolktourism.ca

HALDIMAND
COUNTY
tourismhaldimand.ca

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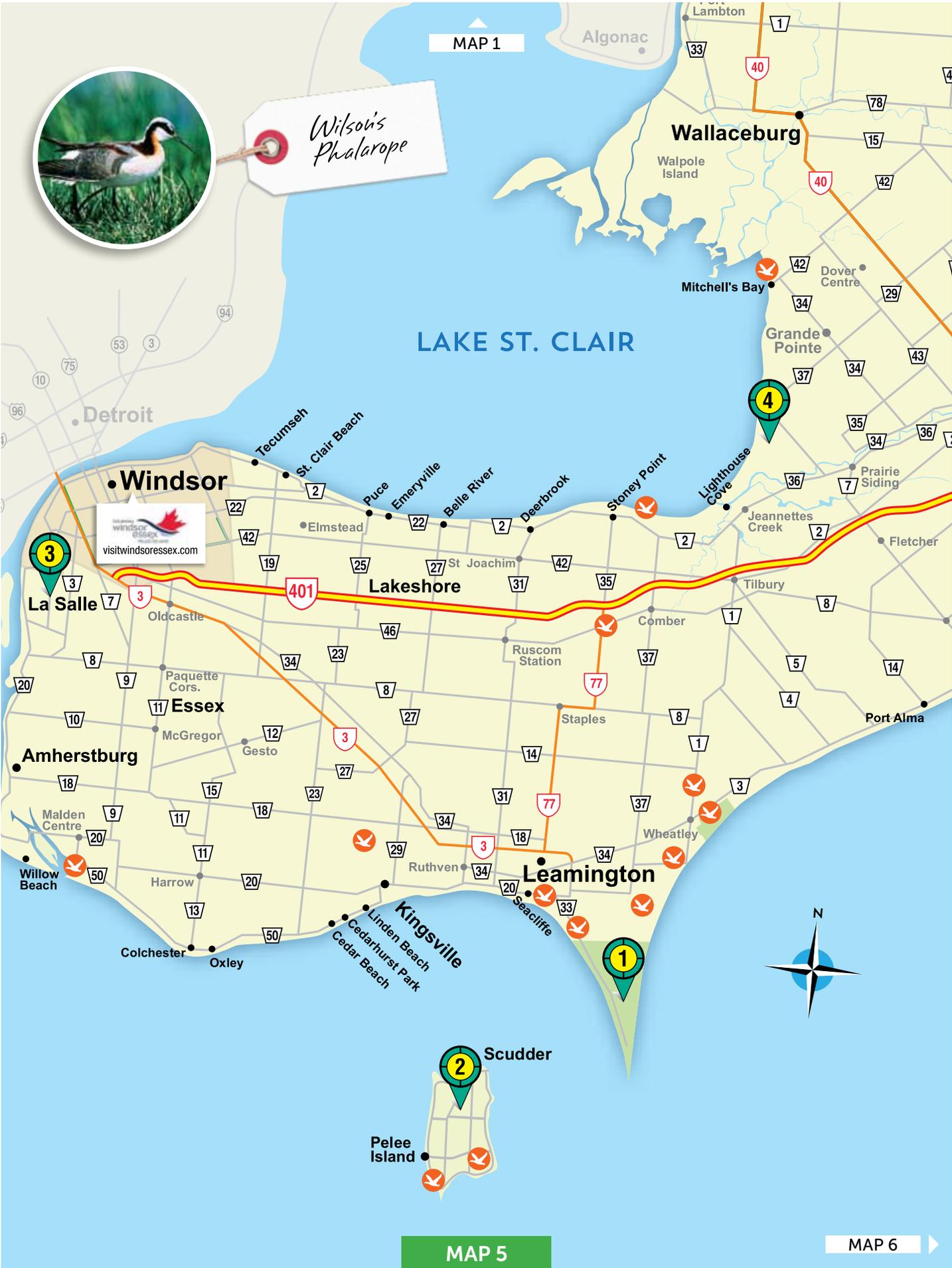
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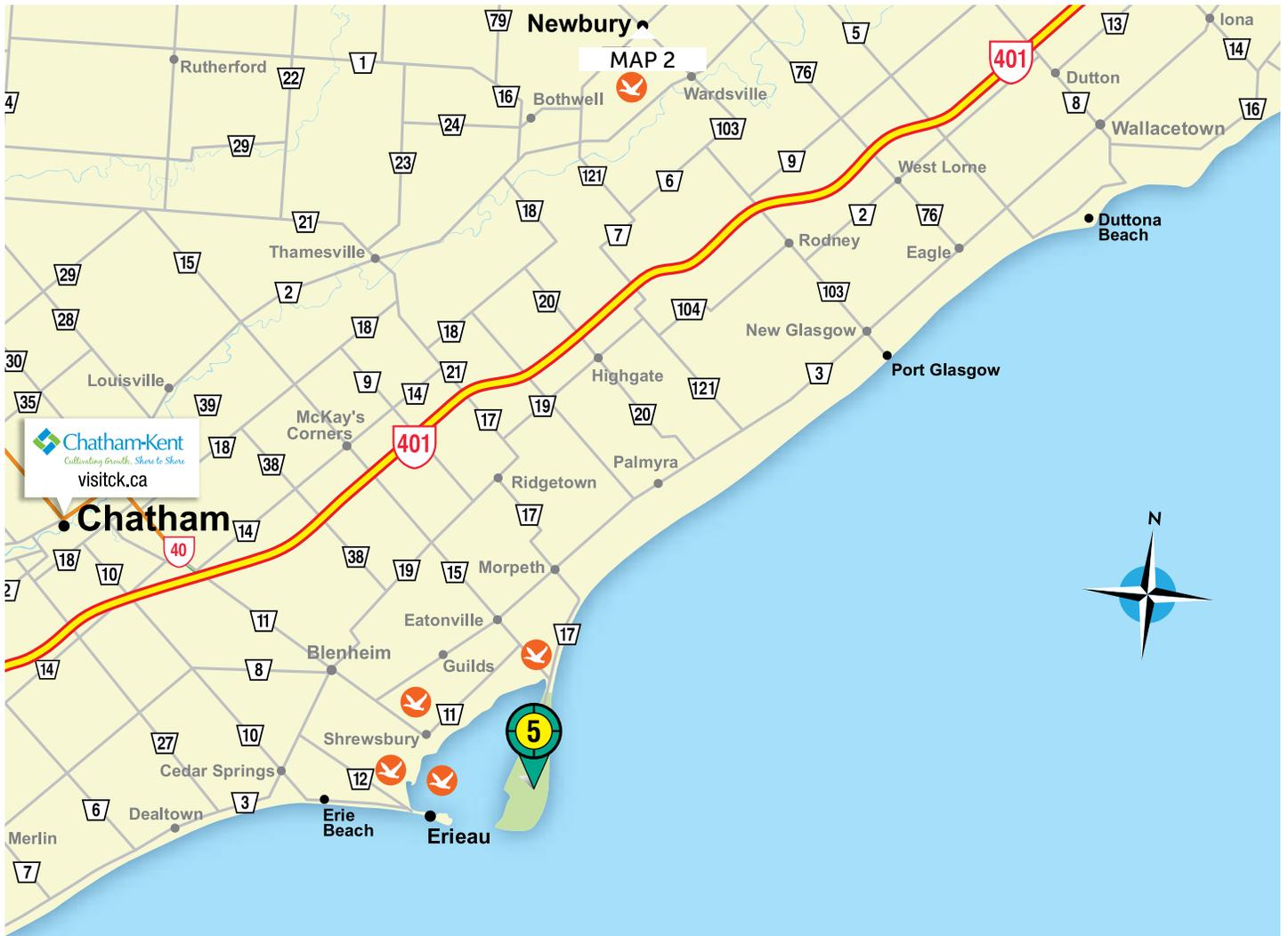
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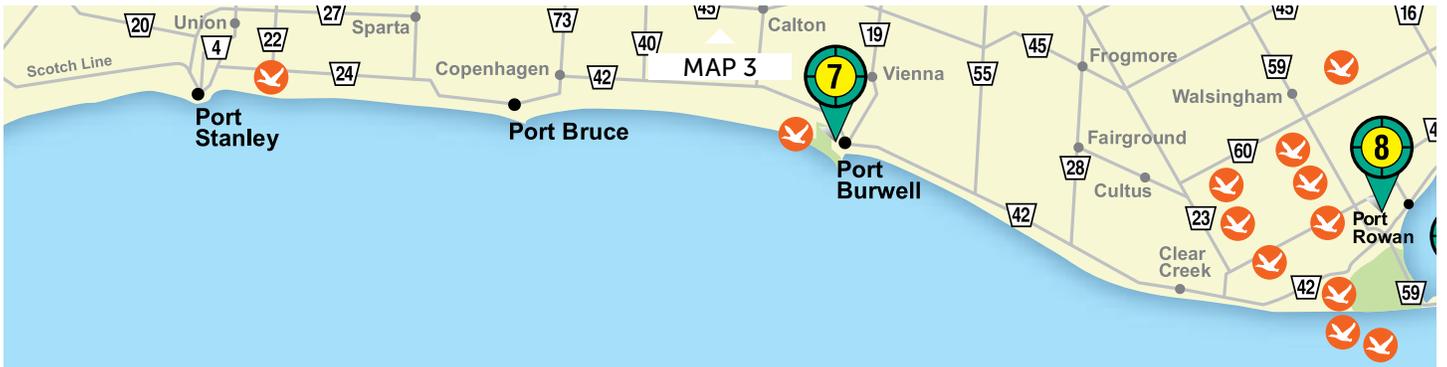
MAP 8



Wilson's Phalarope







LAKE ERIE



*Prothonotary
Warbler*



*Baltimore
Oriole*



MAP 4



Ontario's
Southwest
 Shaped by nature

Acknowledgements: This map was developed under the guidance of the Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation (SWOTC), Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island and a special Birding Project Team. Additional leadership and support was contributed by Sarah Rupert, Kris Racine, Lionel Kernerman, Meredith Maywood, Lori Waldbrook and Stu Mackenzie. Special recognition is given to Bird Studies Canada who provided birding points of interest and Propeller Advertising who designed and produced it. Personal photography was provided by Stu Mackenzie and Jim Flynn and Illustrations by Peter Burke. Further, it would not have been possible without support and encouragement from Ontario's Southwest Destination Marketing Organizations: Chatham-Kent, Elgin, Haldimand, London, Middlesex, Norfolk, Oxford, Sarnia-Lambton and Windsor- Essex-Pelee Island.

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Port Burwell

Point Pelee National Park

MAP 7

MAP 8