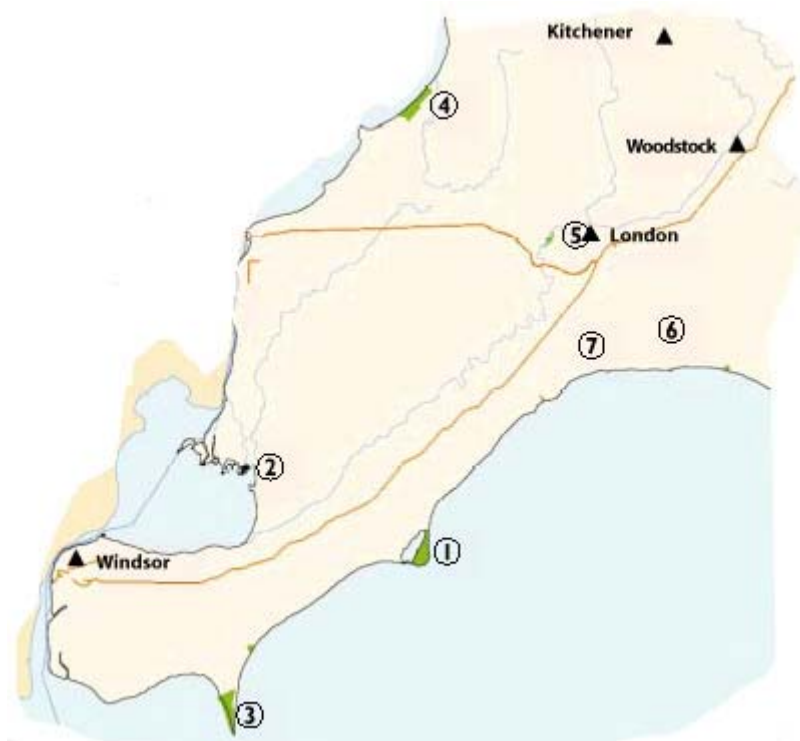


Carolinian West

http://www.ontarionature.org/network/as_cw2.html

Special Places and Species

There are many exciting and accessible natural places to explore within the Carolinian West region



1. Explore Ontario's second-oldest and the largest provincial park in southwestern Ontario – Rondeau Provincial Park. The park's west side cradles rich marshes while its interior forests are a great place to see Carolinian flower and tree species. Rondeau is a terrific place to observe songbirds in the spring and the migration of monarch butterflies in the fall.
2. Visit the St. Clair National Wildlife Area, a rehabilitated wetland that is home to waterfowl such as redhead and canvasbacks, and healthy populations of amphibians and reptiles including eastern fox snake, northern water snake and Blanding's turtle. From Paincourt go 8 km on County Road 35 to West Townline. Turn north and go 2.5 km to wildlife area on left.

3. Take a trip to the southern tip of the Canadian mainland at Point Pelee. This renowned birding hotspot is also a great place to see unusual plant and animal species, from hop trees to opossums. Pelee is not just a destination point for the spring – its trails and marshes are worth exploring at any time of year.
4. Beaches and dunes line the shores of the Pinery Provincial Park on Lake Huron. This provincial park contains probably the best examples of oak savanna remaining in Ontario. Climb to the top of one of the old beach ridges and look out over the park's southern forests and the lake or admire the tenacity of the red cedars that eke out an existence behind the dunes.
5. A number of kettle ponds – water pockets left by the last glaciers – are known locally as the Westminster Ponds in London. This 300-hectare area contains an interesting mix of southern and northern species. Spring walkers can admire the flowering dogwood and enjoy plenty of bird sightings. Enter behind the tourist information booth on the east side of Wellington Road.
6. Big trees are what the Springwater Conservation Area is all about for nature lovers. Take a stroll through the shady woods beneath a soaring canopy of beech, red and white oak, sugar maple and black cherry trees. Look at the ramrod straight tulip trees toward the south end of the nature trails. A spring-fed pond in the north end of the property is a good place to rest and watch for wood ducks or turtles. Head 5 km west from Aylmer on Hwy. 3 to Orwell, then proceed 3 km on County Road 35.
7. Lawson Trust Land - Federation nature reserve.
8. Stone Road Alvar - Federation nature reserve.

For more areas to visit, see A Nature Guide to Ontario, available from Ontario Nature.