

Local

Close encounters of the bird, furred and undeterred kind

JOURNAL STAFF

A pelican is not something normally seen in Sarnia. So local nature photographer Ronny D'Haene was understandably shocked when

he look across Lake Chipican on June 16 and spotted a pair of American white pelicans bobbing on the murky water.

"It was so cool to see. They're not supposed to be here," D'Haene said to the visitors, which were far from their normal migratory route.

Pelicans are huge waterbirds more often associated with the Gulf of Mexico. They weigh up to 20 pounds (9 kilos), have a wingspan up to 10 feet (3 metres), and use an enormous orange-yellow bill and pouch to scoop up fish.

The birds, which hung

around for two days, sparked a buzz in the birding world and brought a surge of binoculars to Chipican's shores.

But pelicans aren't D'Haene's only unusual sighting in Canatara recently.

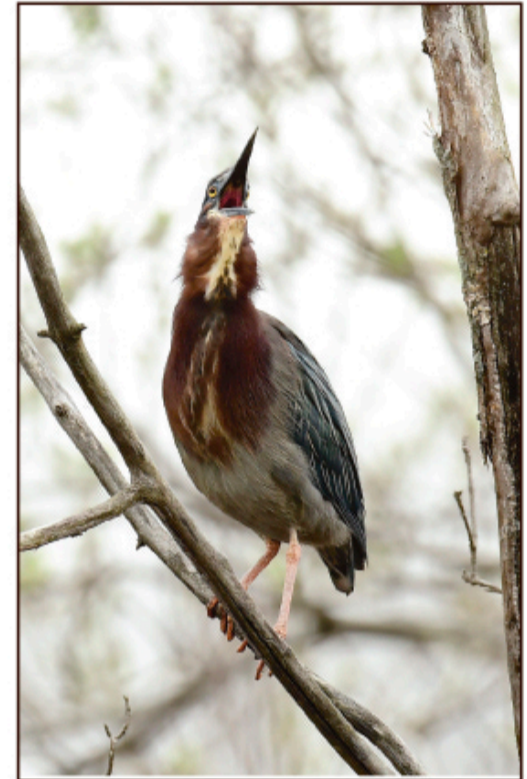
The park is one of his favourite stomping grounds, and

it helped produced a photo spread in The Journal earlier this year.

So today we present more of his close encounters of the bird, the furred and undeterred kind.



THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON RETURNS! Actually, these impressive claws belong to a massive female snapping turtle attempting to mate with a reluctant male in Lake Chipican on June 9. Photographer Ronny D'Haene said the dinosaur-like creature, which he first spotted last years and nicknamed Behemoth, pursued and grabbed at the smaller male until it finally agreed to co-operate. A biologist who has studied photos of Behemoth said she could be as old as 100 years.



A GREEN HERON calls for a mate from the east island of Lake Chipican.



A FEMALE MALLARD leads a brood of 10 ducklings across Lake Chipican

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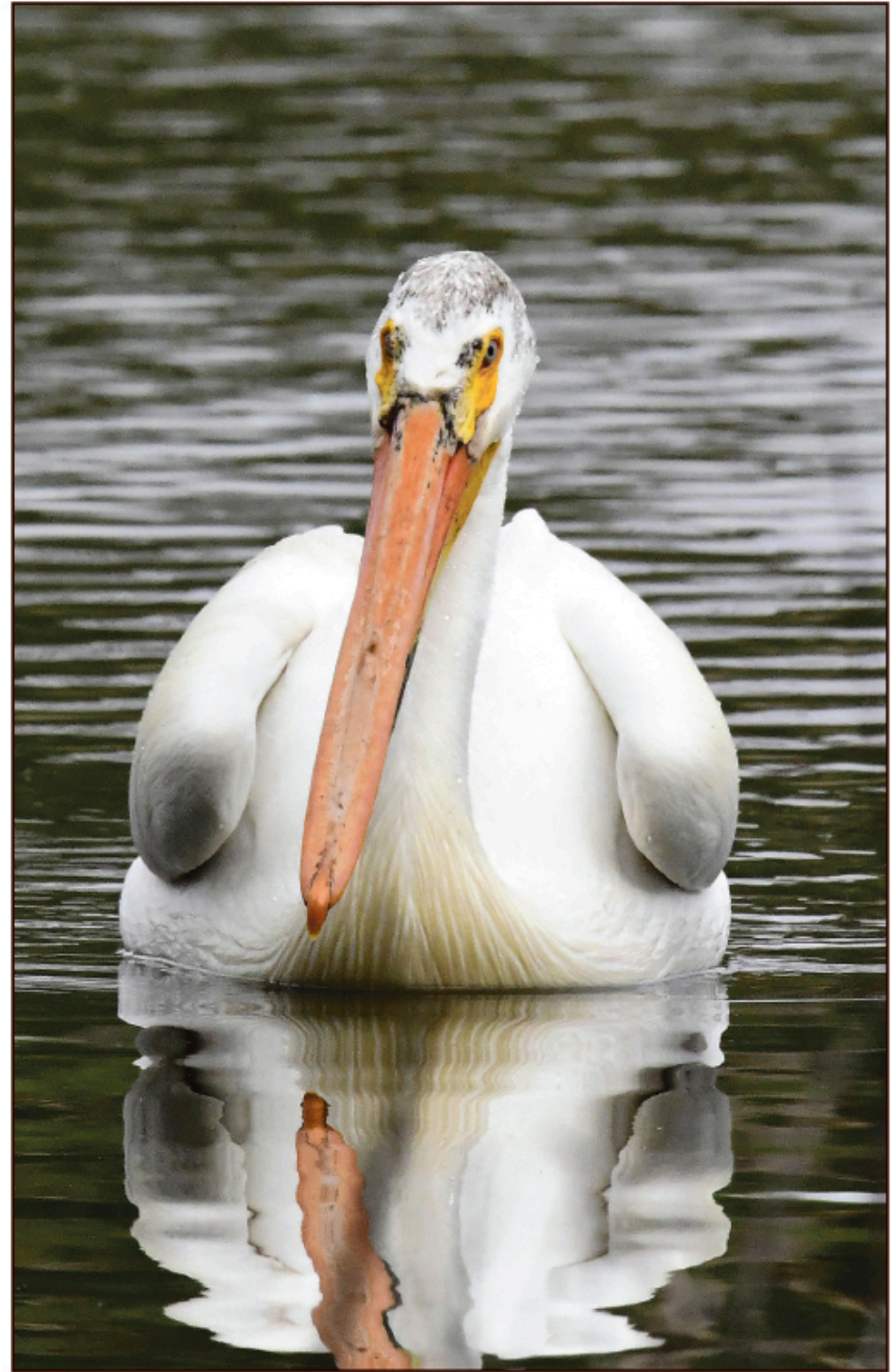
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Local



WHAT HAVE WE HERE? After crawling along a branch, an inchworm caterpillar stands up and appears to engage in a stare-down with a chipmunk in Canatara Park last week. Bad move. The caterpillar moments later became a quick snack.



A HEAD-ON VIEW of a pelican that visited Lake Chipican for a few days last month.



A WILD TURKEY goes for a stroll around the southeast corner of Lake Chipican. The last native wild turkey in Ontario was recorded in 1902, but a reintroduction of the birds in the 1980s has been wildly successful.

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