



# January

## Geoff Peach Memorial Scholarship

Two grants of up to \$1,500 are available to students conducting research along the Lake Huron coast.



The Geoff Peach Memorial Scholarship Fund was created to continue Geoff's work and that of Lake Huron Coastal Centre. It is available to university graduate students (Masters and PhD) with conservation and environmental research interests.

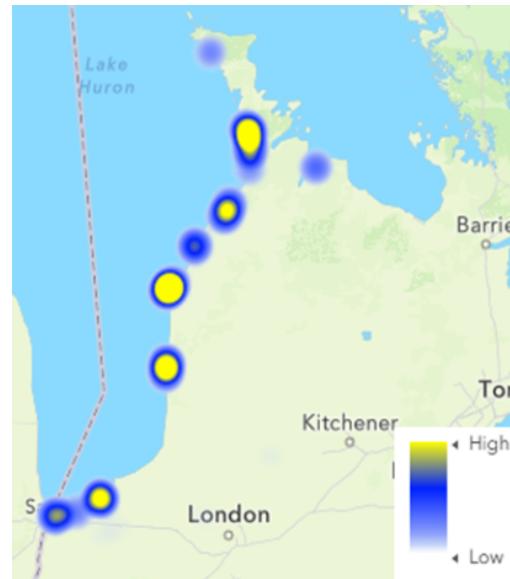
Applications for Great Lakes research will be considered, however preference is given to Lake Huron research projects. Applicable research topics include: Biodiversity, Coastal Processes, Dune Conservation, Water Quality, or Plastic Pollution.

**The deadline to apply: February, 14th 2026**

## Coast Watchers Data Update

Check out the full report on [our website!](#)

2025 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> year of our Coast Watchers Community Science program! Once again, Coast Watchers collected data from May to October on atmospheric conditions, wildlife, algae washups, plastic pollution, human activities, and storm damage. We received 817 reports, from volunteers monitoring the Canadian Lake Huron shoreline, all the way from Sarnia, to the Bruce Peninsula. This data will be shared with partners, including researchers, government bodies, private companies, and other non-profit organizations, to dive deeper on issues facing Lake Huron.



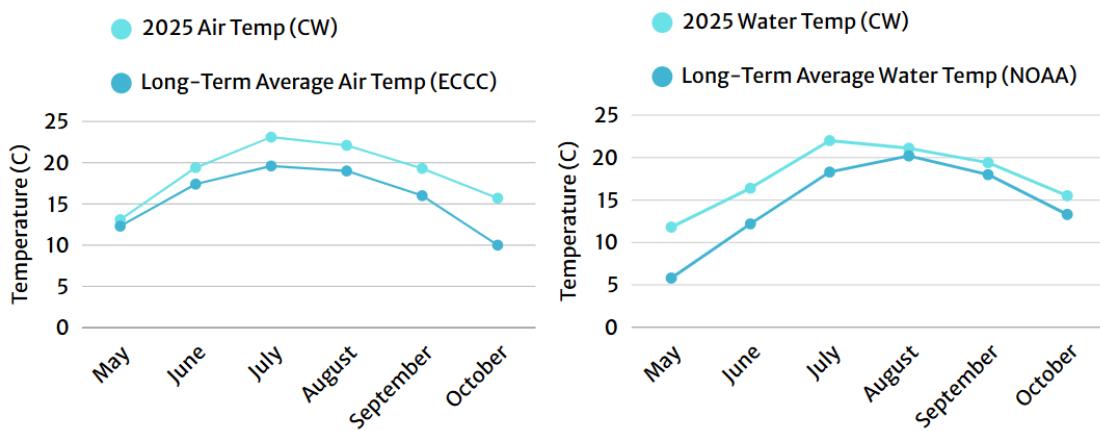
### Here's some of what we learned!

#### Our Coast Watchers are reporting from ALMOST all over.

On the top right, we have a heat map showing the frequency of reports made by Coast Watchers this season. As we can see, most of the shoreline was covered, but there is a gap from Goderich to Forest. If you live in Bayfield, Grand Bend, Port Franks, or Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, or frequent these areas of the shoreline, we need your help! Sign up to be a Coast Watcher for the 2026 season by emailing us at [coastwatchers@lakehuron.ca](mailto:coastwatchers@lakehuron.ca).

#### It's been a hot year!

We certainly felt the heat along the Lake Huron shoreline this summer, and our Coast Watchers were right there tracking it. We compared Coast Watchers temperature data to Lake Huron Climate Normals, generated by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and United States National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Climate Normals are developed through averaging of long-term data (>15 years) to describe the average conditions of climate in a specific location. By comparing our 2025 values to the long-term averages, we can see that both air and water temperatures were warmer than the historical average. Due to the known effects of climate change, it is likely that we will continue to see summers with higher temperatures like what was observed in 2025. Increased temperatures may decrease air quality, increase drought potential, reduce survival rate of newly restored shoreline environments, and affect water quality, with warmer waters providing optimal conditions for algal blooms and waterborne pathogens in Lake Huron.



### **Lots of critters were spotted on the beach!**

Both plants and animals are integral parts of our Lake Huron ecosystem. Coast Watchers report on wildlife observed on the beach, both living and deceased. These reports can help record the presence of at-risk species or the occurrence of wildlife die-off events. This year, the most common animal observed was a gull, followed by Canadian geese. Also observed were swans, buffleheads, gizzard shad fish, mergansers, turkey vultures, monarch butterflies, cormorants, egrets, minnows, and potentially a piping plover – an endangered species!

### **There were no shortage of beachgoers!**

Coast Watchers monitor the shoreline for human activity, tracking the number of people, cars, and pets on the beach or in the lake through the season. While we are fortunate to enjoy our Lake Huron beaches for recreation, too much use can negatively impact the coastal environment. Our busiest beach this year was Saugeen (formerly Sauble) Beach, and the busiest time was July. 71 vehicles were observed on the beach this year, and interestingly, a whopping 66% of these observations were made at Oliphant Beach. Oliphant has a unique, gently sloping beach, in which large areas of the lakebed are exposed during low water levels. Driving along the beach to access the Fishing Islands or waterfront is common, although it can damage native wildlife habitats and increase vulnerability to invasive species such as the Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*).

**Thank you to our volunteers, funders, and sponsors for supporting the 20th year of our Coast Watchers program.**

*We are actively recruiting volunteers for the 2026 season. This is a low commitment role that requires no experience and makes real world impact.*

*Please email [coastwatchers@lakehuron.ca](mailto:coastwatchers@lakehuron.ca) if you are interested.*

*We are also actively seeking more data sharing partners. If you are a researcher or stakeholder who is interested in accessing our Coast Watchers data set, please get in touch via [coastwatchers@lakehuron.ca](mailto:coastwatchers@lakehuron.ca).*



Read the full report [HERE!](#)

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Donations directly support Lake Huron Coastal Centre's conservation programs. These programs help provide shoreline communities with unique ways to connect with nature while working to protect the health of Lake Huron.

To support our work, click the button below.

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