

Calling contest a huge draw at bird sanctuary

STORY & PHOTO BY STEVE I'ANSON

The Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary hadn't seen crowds like it in years, as hundreds of people flocked to the first annual Jack Miner Calling Contest.

For the first time ever, the Sanctuary grounds opened on a Sunday. April 10 marked exactly 146 years since the great Jack Miner was born in Dover Center, Ohio. It also celebrated the kick-off to National Wildlife Week in Canada.

Organizers Scott and Danielle Russell were thrilled with the turnout. Cars lined both sides of Road 3 stretching east and west of the Sanctuary for most of the day.

For some callers, it was a prestigious event to add to a long list of competitions. For other, it represented an opportunity to be part

of something special at a young age.

Austin Edelmayer travelled from Grand Haven, Michigan to take part in the event.

"To take part in the first annual Jack Miner Calling Contest is awesome," said Austin, well versed in the history of Jack Miner.

This was only Austin's second calling event and after scratching in his first, he was thrilled to take second place in the Youth Goose category.

"I'm really glad to have finished second," he said after finishing behind Kingsville's own Brandon Wood.

From a judging perspective, there was plenty of quality on the day.

"I thought it was real high calibre," said Canadian champion and Kingsville resident Craig MacDonald. "There were a couple of world class callers in the goose and duck classes. Some of the Junior and Novice callers were also excellent."

As for what the judges were looking for, Craig stated that callers generally need to start with a long hail call to call the birds from a distance.

"As they come towards you, a caller needs to use more excited calls to keep them coming and tone it down as they get closer," he said. "We look for clarity and sound in the call."

Final results were unavailable at press time, but a full list should appear next week.



The first annual Jack Miner Calling Contest was a huge draw at the Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary on Sunday. Hundreds of people came from across Canada and the U.S. to participate and enjoy the event. The level of calling was outstanding, while groups such as the Essex Hunting Retriever Club put on great demonstrations. Pictured above, Tyler Giraud of Deckerville, Michigan calls his way to a third place finish in the Youth Goose division. For more highlights, turn to Page Eleven.