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# NATURE SASKATCHEWAN NEWS

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Every year, Nature Saskatchewan acknowledges the invaluable contributions of volunteers, to the society and to conservation. Nature Saskatchewan had the privilege to present the following awards at the Fall Meet, September 19-21, 2003 at Last Mountain Lake Regional Park.

The **Natural History Scholarship**, awarded to a student enrolled in graduate studies, was presented to Malin Hansen for her graduate research on the control of non-native species (specifically crested wheatgrass) that are spreading into native prairie in Grasslands National Park. Malin has a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from Uppsala University in Sweden and is currently enrolled in a PhD program in Plant Ecology at the University of Regina.

The **Larry Morgotch Award**, presented at the slide show on Friday evening for the most interesting slides and story to go with

them, was given to Frank Roy for his slide show about the hills and valleys of southern Saskatchewan, entitled "Not Horizontal Land."

The **Cliff Shaw Award** recognizes an outstanding article in the last four issues of *Blue Jay*, and gives special consideration to new contributors. David J. Larson received the award for his September 2003 article on the Rose Stem Girdler in southwestern Saskatchewan, an article that would have pleased Cliff Shaw. Cliff was an all-around naturalist, whose interests encompassed photography, botany, horticulture, archaeology, entomology in particular and natural history in general. As a professional newspaperman, his articles were factual and well-written.

The **Conservation Award** is presented to an individual whose total contribution to conservation is outstanding, and may be



*Education Director, Deanna Trowsdale-Mutafov (left), presenting Natural History Scholarship to Malin Hansen*

*Margaret Skeel*

presented for a specific project or conservation work over a period of years. This year, the recipient of the award is Mary Houston, a long-time member, and former Vice President and Conservation Director of the society, who has made a very significant contribution to bird studies in Saskatchewan.

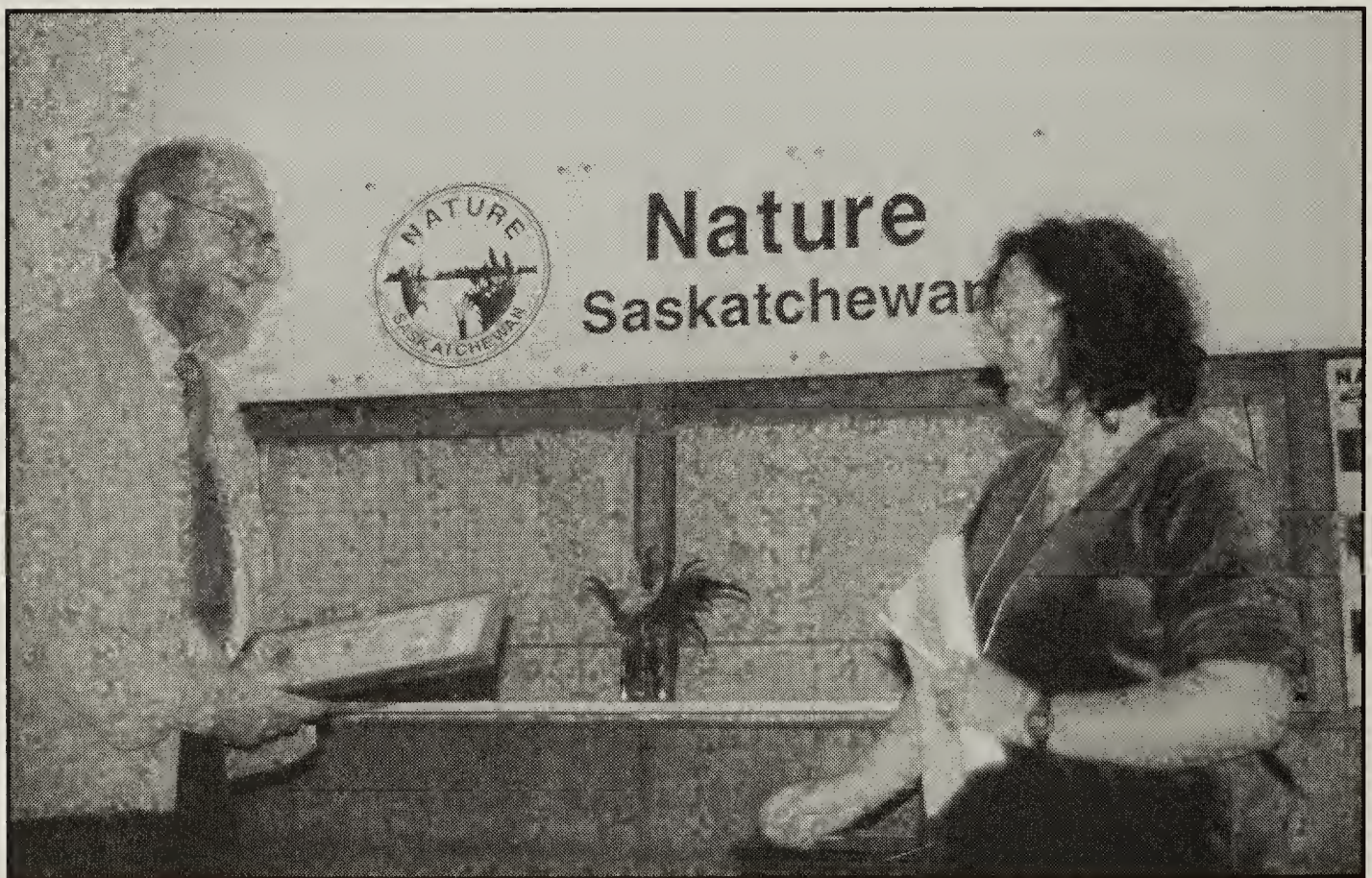
Many of you will be familiar with much of Mary's work and accomplishments. She has published nearly eighty papers in various journals; for about thirty years, she compiled the Annual Saskatchewan Christmas Bird Count (the results were published in the *Blue Jay*). More recently, she wrote 18 species accounts for the *Birds of the Saskatoon Area*, and, with her husband and T.M. Ball, she wrote a book entitled *Eighteenth Century Naturalists of Hudson Bay*. She also contributed to a *Biographical Dictionary of American and Canadian Naturalists* (1997), and to *A Guide to Nature Viewing Sites in and around Saskatoon*.

Mary's banding activities began more than fifty years ago. Since then, during spring and fall migration, and in her backyard in winter,

she has personally applied bands to many, many thousands of birds: pelicans, cormorants, gulls, bluebirds, tree swallows, redpolls, grosbeaks, bohemian waxwings, juncos and other species.

Since 1987, the society has designated members who have made a long and outstanding contribution as **Fellows of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society**. To date, 50 Nature Saskatchewan members have been awarded with this distinction. This year, George Tosh and Michael Williams became "Fellows."

George's photographs are familiar to all Nature Saskatchewan members as he is a frequent contributor of *Blue Jay* covers, the most recent being the Tundra Swans on the front and back covers of the June issue. His colour images of landscapes are a major part of the recently published *Birds of the Saskatoon Area* and a stunning addition to the book. The quality of George's work, his fidelity to the Society and his generosity with his time and materials, are all part of his contribution to Nature Saskatchewan.



*George Tosh receiving the "Fellows" award from Society President Michele Williamson*

*Margaret Skeel*

George, now a resident of Saskatoon, is from Harris, SK where he spent most of his life farming and teaching music in local schools.

Michael Williams became seriously interested in birds after joining the Saskatoon Nature Society in 1985 and attending his first Provincial Summer meet at Val Marie. Since that time he has served in several capacities at both the local and provincial level. He was member-at-large on the provincial executive in 1990-91 and president of the Saskatoon Society in 1992 and 1993. One of the stewards of the Turtle Lake Sanctuary, he helps maintain trails and identify plants and birds within its boundaries. Locally, he has been chairman of the Resource Committee and for many years has served on the Field Trip Committee. He participates in the annual frog survey, conducts an annual BBS at Edam, and continues to be a frequent trip leader at Summer and Fall meetings of Nature Saskatchewan. For nearly a decade he has organized three major Christmas bird counts: Saskatoon, Clark's Crossing and Elbow, as well as participating in a fourth count at Pike Lake. Interested in birds, botany, astronomy,

butterflies and photography, Michael is an all-round naturalist whose many contributions deserve the recognition he has received.

The **Long-term Service Award** recognizes individuals who have made an ongoing contribution to the society, through their volunteerism and their energy. Jim Elliot, who has worked tirelessly for Nature Saskatchewan events, programs and displays, is the recipient this year.

The **Volunteer of the Year Award** acknowledges individuals who have demonstrated an especially strong commitment to the society and the award goes to three people this year: our president, Michele Williamson; former Administration director, Treasurer and Bookshop manager, Diane Secoy; and steward-in-residence at the Turtle Lake sanctuary, Muriel Carlson.

- Compiled by Anna Leighton from text contributed by Michele Williamson, Attila Chanady, Frank Roy and Deanna Trowsdale-Mutafov.



*The after-dinner crowd at the September 2003 Fall Meet listens to a Sandhill Crane study update by Phil Taylor* *Margaret Skeel*