



SUMMER 2024 VOLUME 82.2

# BLUE JAY







5 In September 2023, Robert Berger and Alex McIlraith observed and made audio recordings of Snowy Tree Crickets near Petersfield, MB. To the best of their knowledge, this species had been previously recorded only once before in Manitoba.



8 The results of the 82nd annual Saskatchewan Christmas Bird Count are in! The 2023 count resulted in three new species being added to the all-time list.



21 Of the 83 Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) conducted last winter, almost all were accompanied by a Mammal Count — an increase of two over last year. Only 2,884 mammals were counted, however, compared to the previous winter's 4,937.



26 In November 2023, a Pygmy Nuthatch was observed by Daniel Sawatzky in his yard in Regina. While there had been two hypothetical records of this species in Saskatchewan, this bird marked the province's first confirmed record of this species.



28 As part of our 75th Anniversary celebrations, we are highlighting members who have had a significant impact on Nature Saskatchewan. Learn more about former employee and long-time member Margaret A. Skeel.



42 Learn about long-time member Don Weidl, including his thoughts on Nature Saskatchewan's major accomplishments and the challenges all naturalists face.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

- 5 **Snowy Tree Crickets in Manitoba**  
Robert Berger  
Alexander McIlraith
- 8 **82nd Annual Saskatchewan Christmas Bird Count - 2023**  
Alan R. Smith
- 21 **51st Annual Saskatchewan Christmas Mammal Count - 2023**  
Alan R. Smith
- 26 **First Confirmed Record of Pygmy Nuthatch in Saskatchewan**  
Daniel Sawatzky
- 28 **Nature Saskatchewan Member Spotlight: A Q&A with Margaret A. Skeel**
- 30 **Book Review: Protecting the Prairies: Lorne Scott and the Politics of Conservation**  
Joel Cherry
- 31 **Canadian Prairie Piping Plover Census**  
Ashley Vass
- 32 **Nature Saskatchewan Spring Meet - Agenda, Details and Registration**
- 35 **Book Review: Trees Against the Wind: The Birth of Prairie Shelterbelts**  
Rob Warnock
- 38 **Nature Saskatchewan Awards: Call for Nominations**
- 36 **When the Meadowlark Sings**  
Lorne Fitch
- 40 **Stewards of Saskatchewan Programs Welcome Summer Staff for 2024**
- 42 **Nature Saskatchewan Member Spotlight: Don Weidl**  
Ron Jensen
- 43 **Human Nature: Prairie Saskatchewan's Deceptive Reputation**  
Grace Pidborchynski
- 43 **Mystery Photo**



# FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Lorne Scott**

President, Nature Saskatchewan

With most of the developed world now taking long term, responsible measures to manage our precious water resources, it is disconcerting and shameful that the Province of Saskatchewan is regressing on developing a responsible wetland management policy.

Every other jurisdiction in Canada has a wetland conservation policy. Concerns such as safe drinking water, recreational opportunities, flood and drought control, down stream impacts, nutrient loads, soil erosion, and biodiversity are all identified, and best management practices are implemented to reduce and minimize impacts and safeguard what wetlands remain.

Since the Saskatchewan Water Security Agency (WSA) was created in 2013, it has been dragging its heels on producing a responsible and inclusive policy. Despite years of engagement between the WSA

and various interest groups, we are now further away from a wetland policy than when the WSA was created.

For the last two years, we were promised a policy that would mitigate the impacts of drainage and set limits for maintaining biodiversity, habitat, and water quantity and quality. Now we are being told that the province is not proceeding with a wetland policy as there is no need for one!

The WSA is telling us that wetland drainage isn't a big concern and that we have to drain more wetlands in Saskatchewan to grow our economy. What about all the conservation commitments government has made? What about those being flooded or having their lake turn green with toxic algae blooms by an upstream drainer? What about the billions of birds gone since the 1970s?

Meanwhile, the WSA is saying it has no time to drive around and look for illegal drainage and, to make matters worse, it is now charging \$1,000 to file a drainage complaint. Instead of protecting wetlands, the WSA is focused on issuing more licenses to drain them.

For years, Ducks Unlimited Canada and other ENGOs (land managers) have stated we've lost about half of our wetlands, and the WSA's own estimates confirm this. It's estimated that tens of thousands of acres are lost each year, most of which happens illegally. In just the past few years alone, the WSA has licensed the drainage of an area 15 times the size of the city of Regina, and more is planned.

The WSA is also running ads promoting that drainage is responsible, telling us not to worry because farmers are the best stewards of the land because, according to the WSA, 86 per cent of Saskatchewan's wetland area is still intact. However, this figure was attained by including lakes, reservoirs and rivers as wetlands. We have never heard of any jurisdiction categorizing permanent water bodies as wetlands.

This summer, the WSA will be licensing new drainage projects and test driving its proposed Drainage Stewardship policy across Saskatchewan. The policy, if adopted in 2025, will allow farmers to drain up to 80 per cent of the wetland



Lorne Scott

area. That amounts to two million acres of wetlands, not including all the remnant native prairie grasslands and aspen parklands that will be cleared in the process.

Sadly, no longer is water seen as a public resource to be protected for the public good. Instead, it is treated as an economic commodity to be exploited. And who will help pay for these drainage projects and pay to clean up lakes when they turn green with algae? Taxpayers. At the end of the day, it seems that a handful of pro-drainage lobbyists should have the right to drain water that belongs to the public off their land to enhance their own economic wellbeing. Down stream, social, economic, water quality, infrastructure, biodiversity costs and losses don't matter.

The silent and responsible vast majority of producers do not endorse or condone intimidation and political manoeuvring. The non-farming community must be more visible and active. Drainage affects everyone.

With an all-out assault on our wetlands, it is imperative that rural and urban residents alike contact Premier Scott Moe. Let him know that wetlands belong to all of us. Briefly tell him why wetlands matter. Ask him why is it that Saskatchewan is the only jurisdiction in Canada without a wetland management policy.

For 75 years Nature Saskatchewan has been a voice for nature, and we will continue to be a strong voice. As Theodore Roosevelt said more than 100 years ago, "The wildlife and its habitat can not speak, so we must and we will." Wetlands belong to all of us. Thank you for caring. 🦅



## ON THE FRONT COVER

Saskatchewan's first confirmed record of Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*), first observed by Daniel Sawatzky at his home in Regina. Photo credit: Annie McLeod.



## ON THE BACK COVER

Northern Hawk Owls (*Surnia ulula*) normally inhabit open boreal forests and spruce bogs, but in winter sometimes leave their preferred habitat to hunt for small mammals and birds. Photo credit: Larry de March.



# BLUE JAY

Blue Jay, founded in 1942 by Isabel M. Priestly, is a journal of natural history and conservation for Saskatchewan and adjacent regions. It is published quarterly by Nature Saskatchewan.

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# SNOWY TREE CRICKETS IN MANITOBA

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The 11 species of true crickets (Insecta: Orthoptera: Gryllidae) from Manitoba are easily recognized when males communicate (sing) to attract mates, to promote copulation, and to aggressively interact with other male crickets.<sup>1</sup> The songs of different species are distinguished by both sound frequency and the rhythm in which individual chirps are produced.<sup>1</sup>

On the evening of 1 September 2023, the authors were listening to the sounds of crickets in a rural area near Petersfield, Manitoba when a debate ensued regarding the species singing that night. After listening to numerous recordings of cricket species found in Manitoba, which soon extended to other species found elsewhere in North America, a consensus was reached that numerous crickets singing that night were Snowy Tree Crickets (*Oecanthus fultoni*). Although the primary author noted that these cricket songs had been present since he moved to the property in 2014, little evidence was found of this species in Manitoba.

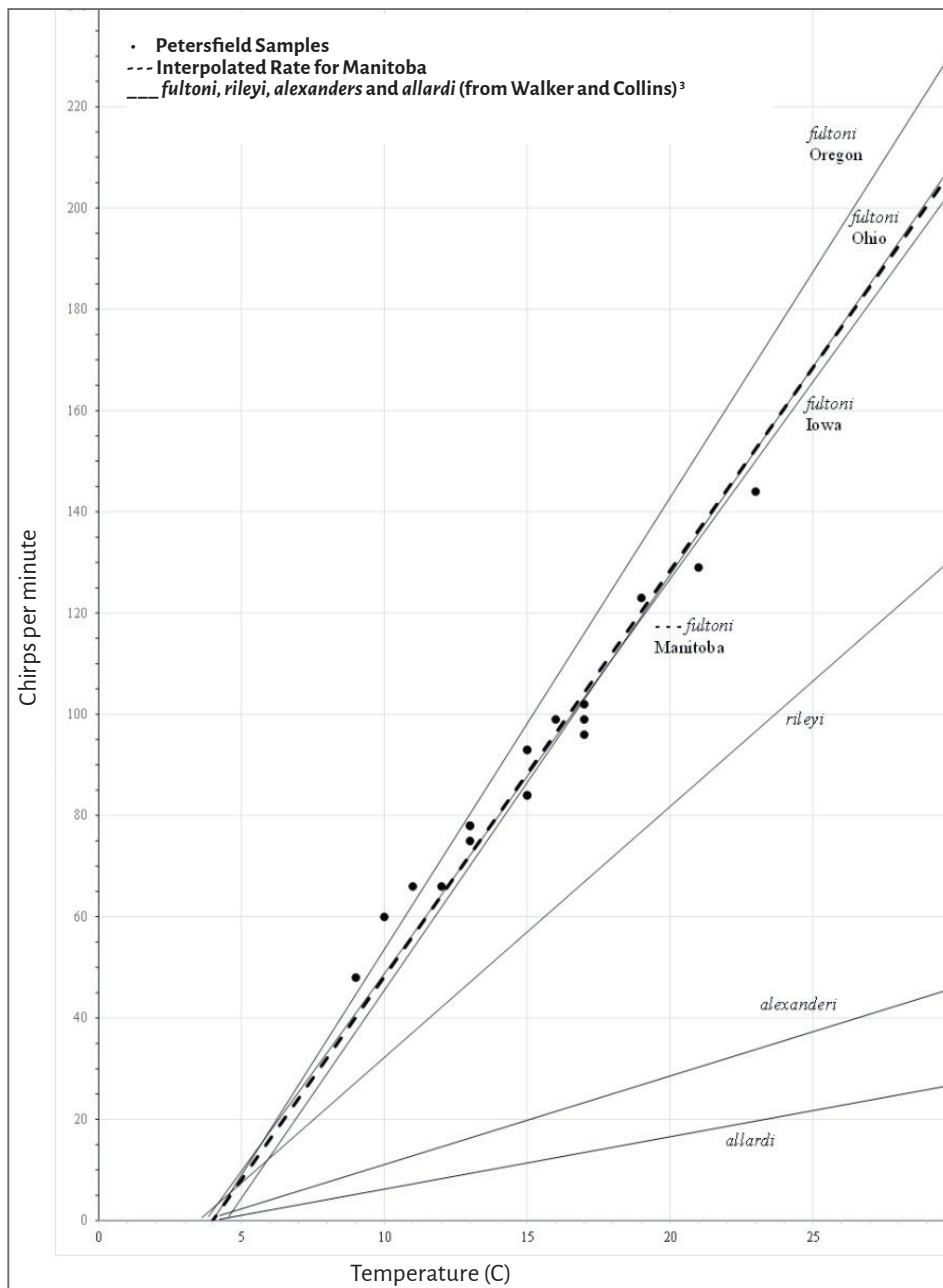
To further explore the distribution of these Snowy Tree Crickets, audio recordings of crickets were collected on the property and elsewhere using ASR (Another Sound Recorder) recording application for Android phones. A minimum of 10 seconds was used for all recordings. Temperature measurements were taken from an AcuRite Iris® weather station located 3 m above ground level (agl). Although the accuracy of recording temperature would have been improved with a portable thermometer, the fixed weather station located near most sample points, was selected for convenience.

Initial audio recordings of Snowy Tree Crickets were collected and submitted to iNaturalist for corroboration.<sup>2</sup> Cricket

expert N. Collins responded and verified that the species we recorded on a property near Petersfield, Manitoba was *O. fultoni*. After exploring iNaturalist further, we recognized that we were not the first community scientists to record Snowy Tree Crickets in Manitoba. There is one recording of Snowy Tree Cricket by M. Krieger, who recorded the first Snowy Tree Cricket in Bird's Hill Park, Manitoba on 28 September 2022. To further validate species identification, we collected additional audio recordings of a few individual crickets from 1 to 29

September 2023.

Other tree crickets (in the *rileyi* group) are also known as thermometer crickets because their chirp rates generally follow a linear relationship with temperature (i.e., chirp rates increase as the air temperature increases).<sup>3</sup> Chirp rates were plotted against temperature (Figure 1). The linear trendline was interpolated with the intercept set to zero<sup>3</sup> at 4°C with an  $R^2 = 0.9756$ . As the chirp rate points and trend line suggest, the crickets recorded in Petersfield followed the same pattern as the Snowy Tree Crickets



**FIGURE 1.** Comparison of new world thermometer cricket chirp rates to the Snowy Tree Cricket chirp rate recorded near Petersfield, Manitoba.



published elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> The spectrogram and of a representative song and chirp rate of a Petersfield individual was plotted (Figure 2) using Raven Lite.

*O. fultoni* is part of a group of closely related species (*rileyi* group) which includes a western species *O. rileyi* found in Canada.<sup>4</sup> Although the range of *O. rileyi* includes southern British Columbia (BC), it seems not to have been recorded east of BC. Its song is very similar to that of the Snowy Tree Cricket. We distinguished our crickets from *O. rileyi* based on song characteristics in Figure 1 and on the 2-3-3 cadence of the eight pulses within a chirp visible in Figure 2.<sup>4</sup> Interested readers can listen to tree cricket recordings on The Orthopterists' Society website.<sup>5</sup>

On 14 September 2023, a survey was done of Snowy Tree Crickets where calling males were approached with a flashlight with the goal of capturing a specimen. Searching intensively for one individual proved frustrating; moving between individuals after about one minute of searching quickly resulted in finding an individual, which was captured and photographed (Figure 3). Because we were uncertain of how abundant this species was at the time of collection, we released the individual. After contacting the curator at University of Manitoba's J. B. Wallis / R. E. Roughley Museum of Entomology collection<sup>6</sup>, we were advised to collect and submit an individual for morphological verification. At the time of submission, we were not successful in capturing another Snowy Tree Cricket.

Audio reconnaissance surveys were used to identify about a dozen crickets that were living inside forested areas of the property. These crickets appeared to sing from plants at a height ranging from 0.5 to 1.5 metres agl. The habitat on the area searched is dominated by trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) forest cover, with occasional secondary tree species of bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) and balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*). The shrub layer has many species of fruiting shrubs such as American plum (*Prunus americana*), saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), hazel (*Corylus* sp.), hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.) and chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*). This corresponds well to Walker's habitat description for the Snowy Tree Cricket.<sup>4</sup>

Audio reconnaissance surveys were used to map the local distribution of Snowy Tree Crickets in the wider Petersfield area. Roadside point samples were performed by driving, stopping, and listening for crickets at selected forest patches within 8 km of the area where they were initially detected. Positive Snowy Tree Cricket detections were mapped (Figure 4). One set of samples was taken on a line south of Lake Winnipeg, about half-way between Bird's Hill Park and Petersfield, Manitoba, to try and determine if the known population between these areas was somewhat widespread; no Snowy Tree Crickets were detected. None were detected in a survey carried out in south Winnipeg. One other species, the four-spotted tree cricket (*Oecanthus quadripunctatus*) appeared to

be common in audio surveys.

One genus and four species of tree crickets (Oecanthinae) were found to be in the University of Manitoba's J. B. Wallis / R. E. Roughley Museum of Entomology collection.<sup>6</sup> Specimens from Manitoba included Prairie Tree Cricket (*Oecanthus argentinus*), Black-horned Tree Cricket (*O. nigricornis*), Narrow-winged Tree Cricket (*O. niveus*) and Four-spotted Tree Cricket (*O. quadripunctatus*) but excludes Snowy Tree Cricket (*O. fultoni*). Orthoptera of Manitoba lists Forbes's Tree Cricket (*O. forbesi*) but excludes *O. niveus* and *O. fultoni*.<sup>7</sup>

In North America, Snowy Tree Cricket range includes Mexico and the contiguous United States, except Montana, Florida and Mississippi. The Canadian portion of its range includes southern Quebec, southern Ontario, and southwestern British Columbia. The first Snowy Tree Cricket observation in Bird's Hill Park, Manitoba (M. Krieger in 2022) extends its range about 375 km northward into Manitoba from Minnesota. The population found near Petersfield Manitoba would further extend the range of Snowy Tree Crickets northward into the prairie provinces by 30 km.

Based on the evidence provided, the Snowy Tree Cricket should be added to the list of tree cricket species found in Manitoba. We did not find it in small, isolated forest stands we sampled; it did, however, occur in the relatively large contiguous area of forest near Petersfield in our study, and in Bird's Hill Park, where M. Krieger recorded a song in 2022. More work is needed to determine the

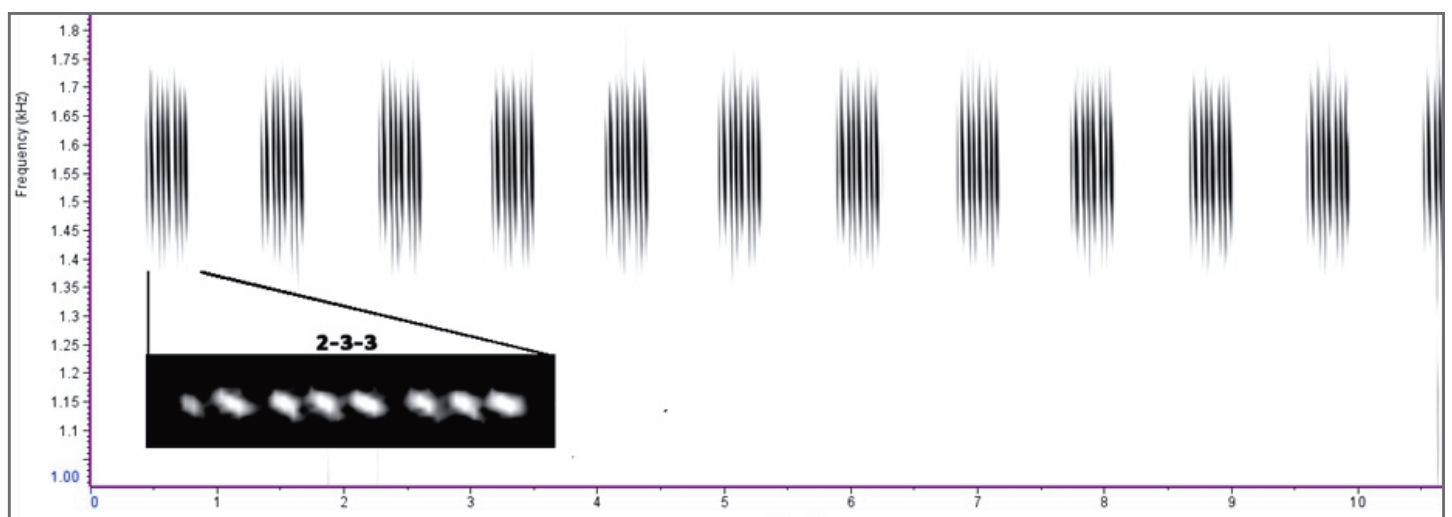
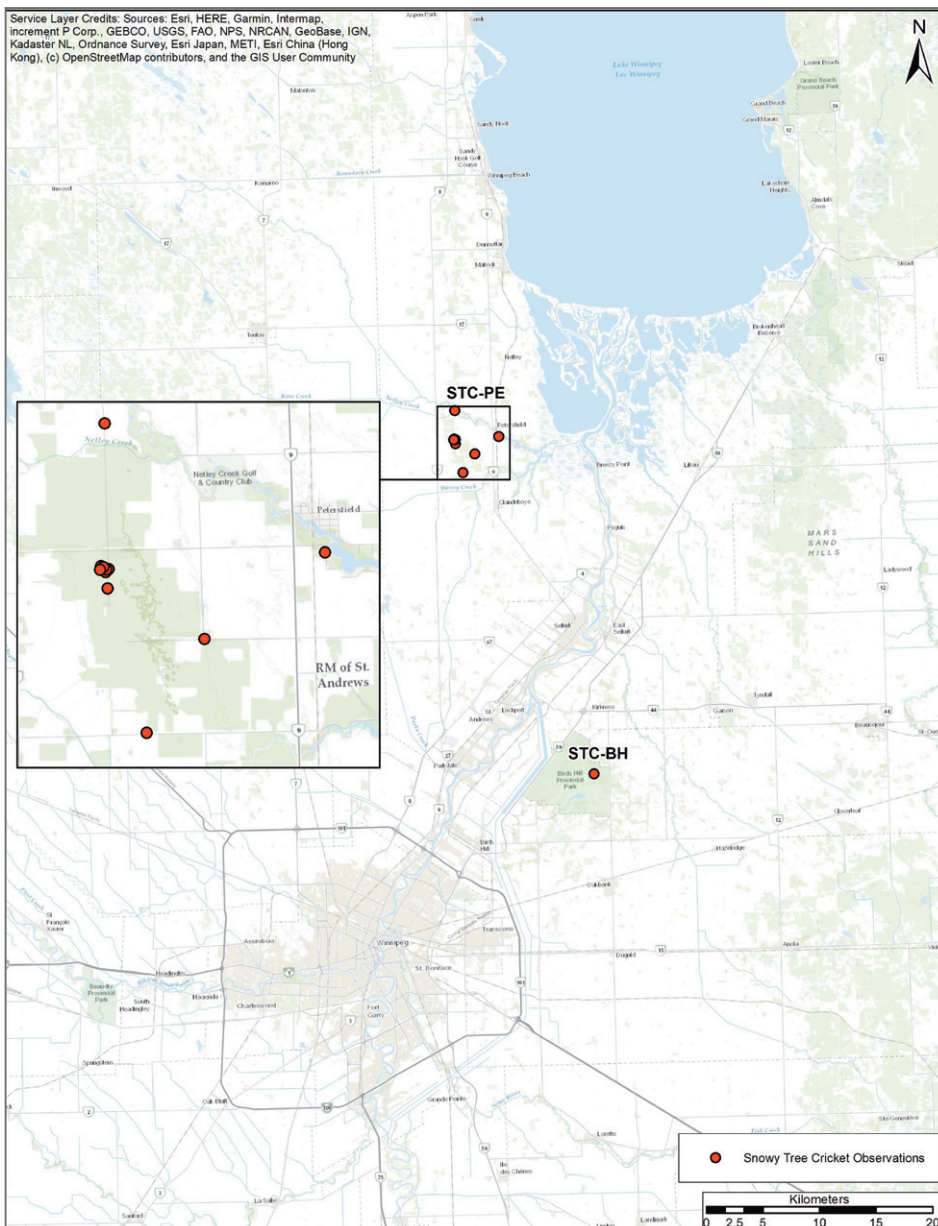


FIGURE 2. Spectrogram of the calling song of Snowy Tree Cricket at 12°C. Note that there are 11 chirps in 10 seconds with each chirp containing 8 pulses, generally in a 2-3-3 pattern.





**FIGURE 3.** Male Snowy Tree Cricket shown (left) in the position in which it was singing, and (right) in detail. Photos by A. McIlraith.



**FIGURE 4.** Locations of Snowy Tree Cricket north of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. STC-PE is location near Petersfield, STC-BH is location in Bird's Hill Park. Inset shows detail of locations at STC-PE.

distribution, dispersion, and range of Snowy Tree Crickets in Manitoba and elsewhere in western Canada. We would like to encourage community scientists to post their observations on iNaturalist.

### Acknowledgements

We thank Nancy Collins, Jim Duncan and the anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments, and Mark Baschuk for producing the cricket distribution map.

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# 82ND ANNUAL SASKATCHEWAN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - 2023

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## The Counts

The same number of counts, 83, were conducted this past winter as in the previous winter. As we shall see, the similarity pretty much ends there.

## The Weather

Average minimum and maximum temperatures for the count period (with 2022-23 records in brackets) were -7 to -1 °C (-17 to -13 °C), wind speeds 7 to 14 km/h (8 to 17 km/h), and snow depths 1 to 5 cm (18 to 39 cm).

Weather conditions were thus on average much warmer and slightly calmer compared to the previous winter. Snow depths were way down; indeed, 20 counts reported no snow at all. The warm weather and lack of snow had a significant impact on the numbers and variety of birds, and mammals, recorded.

## The Birds

The 167,411 birds counted was higher than the century average of around 127,000, and much higher than the previous winter's 98,499. Half of the 2023-24 total, almost 83,000 birds, were Canada Geese.

The total number of species at 106, and number of species per count at 19.3, was the second highest ever. Comparable numbers from the previous winter were 86 and 17.7.

Gardiner Dam had the most species on count day with 50, one short of the all-time record from Fort Walsh with 51 in 2001.

## Population Trends

Waterfowl were generally found in higher than average numbers and variety, due to the warmer weather at

more locations. Lack of snow allowed for excellent field foraging for Canada and Cackling geese, and Mallard.

In contrast was the "apparent" decline in the number of upland game birds: Gray Partridge dropped from 6,903 in winter of 2022-23 to 2,014 this last winter, Ring-necked Pheasant from 605 to 291, and Sharp-tailed Grouse from 2,731 to 1,600 (Table 3). These changes are likely due the lack of snow, which did not force birds to roadsides and farmsteads to feed as opposed to a real decrease in numbers.

Numbers of a couple of diurnal raptors showed marked increase. Forty-seven Rough-legged Hawk were recorded on 22 counts compared to a "more normal" three birds on three counts in 2022-23. For Sharp-shinned Hawks, results were 15 seen on eight counts versus six birds on three counts the previous winter.

For the second straight winter, Boreal Forest Owls were nearly absent from the forest fringe with only two Northern Hawk Owls on two counts; only one Barred Owl and no Great Gray Owls.

Five Eurasian Collared-Dove showed up in Nipawin, a northward expansion of about 50 km. On the other hand, expansion of the introduced House Finch appears to have stalled with no appreciable change in the range or numbers.

Results for the other finches were mixed. Numbers of the Common Redpoll increased to 6,576 from just 350 the previous winter. Pine Grosbeaks moved farther south than most winters with 1,274 birds on 52 counts compared with 371 birds on 20 counts in 2022-23. Red Crossbills were scarce with only 35 birds in four localities, while White-winged Crossbills were almost totally absent with only three birds on two counts (Table 4).

## New Species

Three new species were recorded on the count. These were a Baird's Sandpiper on the Gardiner Dam count, a Black-legged Kittiwake on the Qu'Appelle Valley Dam count, and a Pygmy Nuthatch on the Regina Count. These bring the all-time list of species recorded on the Christmas Bird Count to a remarkable 198.

## Other Rarities

Several other rarities included two Eared Grebes on the Maple Creek count; the first since two on the Regina count in 1962. An immature Red-headed Woodpecker on the Regina count was only the second provincial CBC record. Rare songbirds included second records of Swamp Sparrow on the Regina Count and Pine Warbler on the Carlyle Count.

## Note

For purposes of Saskatchewan Counts, as published herein, the count period extends from 14 December to 5 January; Audubon counts include only those species recorded three days prior to and after the count day.

## Count Areas and Participants

(names of compilers are in italics)

1. ARCHERWILL. Sharron Carlson, Gerald Hiron, Susan Hiron, Audrey Hnetka, Perry Hnetka, *Elaine Hughes*, Dorothy Klettberg, Willie Klettberg, Annette Kozak, Arryl Quaal, Sharon Quaal, Judy Revoy.
2. ASSINIBOIA. Randi Edmonds, *Alan Smith*.
3. AVONLEA. Randi Edmonds, Dave Holland, Michelle Howse (count period), *Alan Smith*, Tanner Stevens.
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9. CARLYLE. *Kathy Hedegard*, Gordon Pauley.
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11. CORONACH. Randi Edmonds, Vicki St. Germaine (count period), *Alan Smith*.
12. CRAVEN. Hiroyuki Aoki, Tracey Bakkeli, Levi Bellisle, Joel Cherry, Jared Clarke, Stephen Davis, Ian Fallas, Ryan Fisher, Rick Gamble, Tammie Gamble, Keri Irving, Lauretta Lane, Jaret McDonald, Annie McLeod, Janet Ng, Dave Phillips, *Brett Quiring*, Dan Sawatzky, Robb Taylor, Jeannette Taylor, Rand Teed.
13. CROOKED LAKE. Ralph Beattie, Wes Kemp, Barb Weidl, *Don Weidl*.
14. CROOKED RIVER. Marie Harpham, Sharon Kapeller, *Margaret Mehler*.
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21. ESTEVAN. Glen Barton, Barry Dies, Marilyn Dies, Kathy Hedegard, Kathy Kazakoff, Gary Leslie, Craig Palmer, Kevin Perkins, Larry Preddy, *Guy Wapple* (non-participating compiler).
22. ESTUARY NORTH. Cathy Cocks, *Dean Francis*, Fran Francis.
23. FENTON. *Vicki St. Germaine*, Warren St. Germaine.
24. FLORAL. Ron Jensen, Scott Mitchell, *Guy Wapple*.
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34. KENOSEE LAKE. *Blain Hjertaas*, Dale Hjertaas, Kai Hjertaas, Naomi Hjertaas, Thyra Hjertaas.
35. KETCHEN NORTH. *Dallas Fairburn*.
36. KINLOCH. Andy Arnold, *Don Forbes*, Tom Frennette, Roy Hale, Jim Stocks, Darci Swider, Doreen Wickstrom.
37. KYLE. Dieter Gillanders, David Lewis, Debbie Peterson, Marten Stoffel, Ken Waldner, *Dan Zazelenchuk*.
38. LA RONGE. Bryanna Leeuwen, Linda Mikolayenko, Sid Robinson, *John Schisler*.
39. LAST MOUNTAIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE AREA. Wayne Busch, Veronica Schellenberg, *Sharlane Toole*.
40. LOVE - TORCH RIVER. *Bert Dalziel*, Joan Dalziel, Sara Dalziel, Scott Edwards, Harold Fisher, Dennis Foy, Liz Foy, Valerie Homer, Roseanne Kirkpatrick, Ron Knutson, Terri Knudson, Susan Kreutzweiser, Renee Kurbis, Eilene L'Heureux, Shawn Paschke, Linda Petrinchuk, Reg Petrinchuk, Audrey Schrader, Eric Schrader, Leonard Turtle.
41. LUSELAND. Estelle Finley, *Kim Finley*, Jean Halliday, Brent Honeker.
42. MAPLE CREEK. *Sharlane Toole*.
43. MEADOW LAKE. *Bob Wilson*, Ian Wilson, Peyton Wilson.
44. MELFORT. Bert Dalziel, Joan Dalziel, *Kim Eskowich*, Wendy Eskowich, Angela Gooliaf, Cecil Gooliaff, Delores Gooliaff.



45. MOOSE JAW. Stuart Anderson, Joel Cherry, Gordon Clark, Vivian Darroch-Lazowski, Ian Fallas, Annie McLeod, *Jeff Mander, Richard Pickering*, Brett Quiring, Dan Sawatzky, Pat Sterzuk.
46. MOOSE MOUNTAIN. Bill Fletcher, Dorothy Fletcher, Kathy Hedegard, *Val Thomas*.
47. MORSE. Larry Bonesky, Lorie Dean, Elizabeth Enns, Stella Enns, Dave Gardner, Randy McCulloch, Joel Priebe, Ken Priebe, *Myrna Priebe*, Shirley Robert, Lori Wilson.
48. NICOLLE FLATS. David Donald, Elaine Ehman, Gail Fennel, *Dale Hjertaas*, Jeff Mander, Karen Mander.
49. NIPAWIN. Carol Blenkin, Cindy Collopy, Mark Collopy, Bert Dalziel, Joan Dalziel, *Rick Doustin*, Patti Gaertner, Carol Grimm, Susan Gulewich, Terry Gulewich, Maureen Hagen, Wayne Hagen, Jeannette LeCuyer, Kate McCorrison, Doug Phillips, Shirley Phillips, Luc Syrenne.
50. NISBET FOREST, NORTHWEST. *Sandra Jewell*.
51. NISBET FOREST, WEST. *Kim Clark*, Shamara Clark, Suzanne Clark.
52. ODESSA. *Arden Curts*, Denise Curts, Denny Curts.
53. OUTLOOK. *Graham Thomson*.
54. PIKE LAKE. Dalice Abraham, Max Abraham, Denise Bezopenko, Donna Bruce, El Dormuth, Judy Haraldson, Bob Howe, Irene Howe, Judy Howsam, Greg Hutchings, Jeff Jensen, Ron Jensen, Robert Johanson, LeeAnn Latremouille, Marilyn Leuty, Larry McGuire, Joe Monahan, *John Patterson*, Marc Sabourin, Nick Saunders, Joe Stookey, Ljubica Stuglin, Stephan Stuglin, Guy Wapple, Bert Weichel, Diane Wells, Jim Wells.
55. PRINCE ALBERT. Doug Braaten, Marie Braaten, Kim Clark, Shamara Clark, Judy Demong, Lisa Elder, Harold Fisher, Hamilton Greenwood, Estelle Hjertaas, Ryan Holizki, Valerie Horner, Sandra Jewell, Gwen Klebeck, Merle Klebeck, Axel Klenz, John Lundgren, Teddy McDougald, Carl Nahachewsky, Shannon Poppy, Ramona Renneberg, Christine Rye, John Rye, Gail Sackett, *Vicki St. Germaine*, Warren St. Germaine, Eldon Thorson, Gwen Thorson, Jeannie Walker.
56. QU'APPELLE. Jean Ashcroft, Peter Ashcroft, Melanie Beattie, Cory Bennett, Christine Blair, Jeannie DesRochers, *Colette Stushnoff*, Richard Stushnoff, Frank Veresh.
57. QU'APPELLE VALLEY DAM. Bob Godwin, Dawn Hall, Robert Johanson, *John Patterson* (non-participating compiler), Jan Shadick, Stan Shadick, Marten Stoffel, Guy Wapple.
58. REDBERRY LAKE. *Mike Blom*, Maggie Britton, Jody Collier, Mary Collier, Zoe Collier, Cody David, Lillian Donahue, Jenna Englot, Matt Englot, Linda Erlanson, Stephen Galvin, Ian King, Joan Matechuk, Kari Matechuk, Larissa Matechuk, John Stead, Phil Taylor.
59. REGINA. Ingrid Alesich, Brian Armstrong, Jonathan Armstrong, Tracey Bakkeli, Lionel Bonneville, Stephane Bonneville, Joel Cherry, Roberta Cox, Derek Donald, Elaine Elhman, Jim Elliott, Claudia Fallas, Eric Fallas, Ian Fallas, Rachel Fallas, Mary Field, Terry Ford, Shirley Friel, Clara Githegi, Trevor Herriot, Bruce Holmes, Marie James, Sarah James, Fran Kerbs, Sarah Ludlow, Jeff Mander, Lauren Mang, Kim Mann, Val Mann, Joanne Martin, Annie McLeod, Ananya Punagoti, Swetha Punagoti, *Brett Quiring*, Brian Rainey, Chris Ratch, Jacqueline Roy, Ed Rodger, Dan Sawatzky, Margaret Skeel, Brian Sterenberg, Ethan Verroen, Lorraine Weidner, Levi Zeigler, Marcia Zeigler.
60. ROSCOMMON S.D. Bernice Althouse, Jim Althouse, Kate Althouse, Kurt Althouse, Ruby Finnie, Penny Froh, Brian Irving, Sophie Jankowski, Joan Lillibo, Lloyd Lillibo, *Dianne Sloan*.
61. ROSETOWN. *Ryan Dudragne*, Ryan Sparks, Sophia Sparks, Guy Wapple.
62. ROSTHERN. *Greg Bobbitt*, Dennis Helmut, Loretta Helmut, Zandi Hildebrand, Brenda Kramarchuk, Luca Lamb, David Ryson, Joan Yoder.
63. ROUND LAKE (Qu'Appelle Valley). Brent Bachtold, Kelly Finkas, *Boyd Metzler*, Pat Ward.
64. SALTCOATS. *Arden Bradford*, Donna Bradford, Len Cameron, Muriel Cameron, Barbara Crosswell, Walter Farquharson, Gail Gillard, Pam Hall, Terry Hall, Gerri Knudsen, Ron Knudsen, Fern McKay, Monique Smith, Violet Taylor-Braun, Heather Torrie, Randy Torrie, Bonnie Trowell, Mardell Trowell, Val Trowell, Verne Trowell, Earl Upshall, Verda Upshall, Rob Wilson.
65. SASKATCHEWAN LANDING PROVINCIAL PARK. Yvonne Nelson, Debbie Peterson, Glen Pederson, Marten Stoffel, Tracy Tangen, *Dan Zazelenchuk*.
66. SASKATCHEWAN RIVER FORKS. John Lundgren, Ellen McNeill, *Vicki St. Germaine*, Warren St. Germaine.
67. SASKATOON. Alexander Acton, Bruce Acton, Britt Agrey, Anas Ansari, Carol Blenkin, Donna Bruce, Jennifer Burgess, Geoffrey Carter, Jenny Carter, Kathleen Carter, Roseanne Carter, Roberta Cross, Elsewhere Dormuth, Kiel Drake, Melanie Elliott, Joan Feather, Greg Fenty, David Forbes, Stephanie Gauthier, Peter Gerrard, Denise Giroux, Kyron Giroux, Bob Godwin, Mike Gollop, Jeff Harder, Kerry Hjertaas, Amanda Horvath, Greg Hutchings, Jeff Jensen, Julie Jensen, Ron Jensen, Robert Johanson, Shan Landry, LeeAnn Latremouille, Dan Loran, Heather Loran, Janet Loran, Bill MacKenzie, Valerie Martz, Janine McManus, Jane McPhee, Kathy Meeres, Joan Merrill, Meghan Mickelson, Scott Mitchell, Carol Armstrong Monahan, Joe Monahan, *John Patterson* (non-participating compiler), Jim Paul, Kosala Rajapaksha, Don Robertson, Lisa Rohachuk, Marc Sabourin, Trish Santos, Nick Saunders, Stan Shadick, Lorrie Sielski, Kathlin Simpkins, Barbara Sprigings, Marten Stoffel, Phil Taylor, Brandon Wapple, Guy Wapple, Robert Wapple, Sandra Wapple, Trent Watts, George West, Dan Zazelenchuk, Norman Zlotkin.
68. SHAMROCK. Mike Francis, Joel Priebe, *Myrna Priebe*, Randy McCulloch, Iris McNeill, Darwin Menke, Krista Routledge, Lori Wilson.

69. SHELL LAKE. *Ryan Dudragne, Carole Martin, Nick Saunders.*

70. SMEATON. *Joyce Christiansen, Bob Godwin (non-participating compiler).*

71. SOUTH LADY LAKE. *Donna Krahn, David Weiman.*

72. SPINNEY HILL. *Andy Didiuk, Ed Driver.*

73. SWIFT CURRENT. *Jacquie Bolton, Norris Currie, Laurent Dudragne, Mary Ann Dudragne, Arnie Ens, Lorna Fast, Sandra Fortman, Barb Fraser, Tana Fraser, Dave Gardner, Dave Green, Esther Green, Katie Hagman, Norma Hain, Hugh Henry, Verna Lynne Knipfel, Dot Letkeman, Gavin McCulloch, Randy McCulloch, Janet Payne, David Tuttle, Allen Twamley, Betty Twamley.*

74. THICKWOOD-SPIRITWOOD. *Mavis Bellisle, Shannon Cafet, Anna Froese, Jennifer Froese, Julia Froese, Kenneth Froese, Giles Lalonde, Carole Martin, Kay Willson, Philip Willson.*

75. TORCH RIVER VALLEY. *Lorna Blaine, Bert Dalziel, Joan Dalziel, Sara Dalziel, Ellen Douslin, Richard Douslin, Don Lidster, Nancy Lidster, Barry MacLeod, Deborah MacLeod, John Minty, Wanda Minty, Shawn Paschke.*

76. TURTLEFORD. *Joel Banks, Ken Chambers, Margaret Chambers, Hank DeGraaf, Marlene DeGraaf, Larry Ingram, Brent Keen, Bonny MacNab, Richard Roney, Marg Uhlig.*

77. VAL MARIE. *Anne Beauchamp, Alec Cairns, Nick Cairns, Sally Cairns, Casey Duquette, S. Davis, 20 Students.*

78. WATROUS. *Cayle Cross, John Lundgren, Karen Norberg, Veronica Schellenberg, Sharlane Toole, Piet Van De Ruit.*

79. WEYBURN. *Bob Cameron, Lucille Cameron, Millie Fleming, Brad Hala, Jacquie Hala, Charlotte Payak, Don Payak, Goretta Pennington, Jim Pennington, Garnet Schultz, Linda Schultz, Joe Stephaniuk Tanis Thomas, Val Thomas.*

80. WHITE BEAR. *Greg Nelson, Yvonne Nelson, Dan Zazelenchuk.*

81. WHITEWOOD. *Ken Aldous, Carole Armstrong, Paul Ashfield, Kerri Bachtold, Thear Clark, Sarah Mambourg, Boyd Metzler, Brenda Pollock, John Pollock, Dawn Vennard, Lyle Vennard, Diane Veresh, Pat Ward.*

82. WINGARD. *Rebecca Beam.*

83. YORKTON. *Vern Brown, Warren Crossman, Patti Fletcher, Joyce Gardner, Sheldon Knoll, Dianne Norman, Doug Norman, Gloria Rathgeber, Dorothy Riesz, Ray Riesz, Bonnie Rushowick, Geoffrey Rushowick, Cory Sharpe Dale Sharpe.*



Three new species were recorded during the 2023 Christmas Bird Count, including a Pygmy Nuthatch on the Regina count. Photo credit: Annie McLeod.



**TABLE 1. Weather and Snow Cover.**

LOCALITY		MIN TEMP (°C)	MAX TEMP (°C)	MIN WIND (KM/HR)	MAX WIND (KM/HR)	MIN SNOW (CM)	MAX SNOW (CM)	SKY A. M.	SKY P. M.
Archerwill	22 Dec 2023	-4	2	15	0	2	2	clear	clear
Assiniboia	4 Jan 2023	-4	-3	0	10	0	2	overcast	clear
Avonlea	22 Dec 2023	1	10	0	5	0	0	clear	clear
Balgonie	30 Dec 2023	-13	-4	0	11	0	50	clear	clear
Biggar	16 Dec 2023	1	4	16	30	0	2	cloudy	clear
Borden-Radisson	18 Dec 2023	-10	0	5	10	0	1	mostly clear	partly cloudy
Broadview	20 Dec 2023	-9	-6	15	30	2	4		
Candle Lake	30 Dec 2023	-14	-12	10	15	8	40	clear	mostly clear
Carlyle	19 Dec 2023	-2	-2	2	2	0	8	overcast	overcast
Clark's Crossing	16 Dec 2023	-7	4	14	24	0	0	overcast	mostly clear
Coronach	2 Jan 2023	-4	-4	0	0	0	0	partly cloudy	clear
Craven	16 Dec 2023	-3	3	12	27	0	2	cloudy	cloudy
Crooked Lake	14 Dec 2023	-2	2	0	5	0	2	clear	clear
Crooked River	4 Jan 2024	-13	-10	12	19	1	5	overcast	overcast
Cypress Hills P.P.	28 Dec 2023	4	9	2	5	0	5	partly cloudy	mostly clear
Denholm	25 Dec 2023	-22	-1	0	5	0	0	clear	clear
Dorintosh	21 Dec 2023	-2	-10	0	2	2	5	mostly clear	mostly clear
Dundurn	21 Dec 2023	-8	2	5	10	0	0.5	cloudy	partly cloudy
E.B.Campbell Dam	1 Jan 2024	-9	-7	5	15	0	10	light snow	overcast
Ebenezer	21 Dec 2023	-2	-1	0	0	1	1	clear	clear
Estevan	3 Jan 2024	-10	-10	5	10	0	5	light snow	mostly clear
Estuary North	22 Dec 2023	4	12	0	0	0	0	clear	clear
Fenton	14 Dec 2023	5	5	10	15	0	0	cloudy	cloudy
Floral	4 Jan 2024	-7	-6	5	15	0	3	overcast	overcast
Fort Qu'Appelle	15 Dec 2023	-3	0	2	5	0	1	cloudy	cloudy
Gardiner Dam	14 Dec 2023	-3	4	16	25	0	2	partly cloudy	partly cloudy
Good Spirit Lake	5 Jan 2024	-9	-7	15	20	8	16	light snow	light snow
Greenwater	3 Jan 2024	-13	-9	2	5	10	10	cloudy	clear
Grenfell	29 Dec 2023	-3	2	10	20	0	2	clear	clear
Harris	15 Dec 2023	-3	1	10	20	0	2	partly cloudy	clear
Hudson Bay	26 Dec 2023	-7	-1	5	10	6	8	clear	
Indian Head	27 Dec 2023	-7	0	0	5	2	5	mostly clear	mostly clear
Kenaston	14 Dec 2023	-3	4	0	10	0	0	clear	partly cloudy
Kenosee Lake	29 Dec 2023	-2	2	20	40	5	10	clear	clear
Ketchen North	26 Dec 2023	-14	-4	7	10	3	8	clear	clear
Kinloch	30 Dec 2023	-8	-3	2	11	5	10	mod. fog	mostly clear
Kyle	21 Dec 2023	4	5	4	5	0	0	clear	clear
La Ronge	26 Dec 2023	-12	-8	6	10	12	12	clear	clear
LMLNWA	2 Jan 2024	-10	-6	11	17	1	1	cloudy	partly cloudy
Love-Torch River	26 Dec 2023	-19	-3	0	10	3	10	clear	clear
Luseland	30 Dec 2023	-8	-2	0	11	0	0	mostly clear	mostly clear
Maple Creek	20 Dec 2023	7	12	33	40	0	0	clear	clear

LOCALITY	DATE	MIN TEMP (°C)	MAX TEMP (°C)	MIN WIND (KM/HR)	MAX WIND (KM/HR)	MIN SNOW (CM)	MAX SNOW (CM)	SKY A.M.	SKY P.M.
Meadow Lake	26 Dec 2023	-14	2	0	5	0	3	clear	clear
Melfort	30 Dec 2023	-9							
Moose Jaw	17 Dec 2023	1	4	24	44	0	0	partly cloudy	mostly clear
Moose Mountain	3 Jan 2023	-12	-5	11	15	3	6	mostly clear	cloudy
Morse	14 Dec 2023	-5	5	13	19	0	0	clear	clear
Nicolle Flats	18 Dec 2023	-7	-1	0	14	0	3	partly cloudy	overcast
Nipawin	27 Dec 2023	-7	-1	0	5	0	10	clear	clear
Nisbet Forest NW	26 Dec 2023	-18	-10	2	2	0	4	clear	clear
Nisbet Forest West	31 Dec 2023	-9	-3	0	15	0	5	partly cloudy	partly cloudy
Odessa	28 Dec 2023	-2	1	5	10	4	10	mostly clear	mostly clear
Outlook	24 Dec 2023	-9	0	10	19	0	0	mostly clear	mostly clear
Pike Lake	30 Dec 2023	-17	-9	5	18	0	1	mostly clear	mostly clear
Prince Albert	17 Dec 2023	-13	-5	17	22	2	4	light snow	mostly clear
Qu'Appelle	27 Dec 2023	-7	0	2	10	0	10	clear	clear
Qu'Appelle Dam	17 Dec 2023	-7	-3	14	31	0	1	mostly clear	mostly clear
Redberry Lake	30 Dec 2023	-15	-10	2	5	0	0	clear	
Regina	27 Dec 2023	-11	-2	7	13	0	3	clear	clear
Roscommon S.D.	3 Jan 2024	-12	-9	5	10	0	8	light fog	partly cloudy
Rosetown	2 Jan 2024	-22	-15	0	5	3	15	heavy fog	light fog
Rosthern	2 Jan 2024	-16	-5	5	15	0	0	partly cloudy	partly cloudy
Round Lake (Q.V.)	19 Dec 2023	-3	-1	0	5	2	18	overcast	overcast
Saltcoats	18 Dec 2023			5	25	0	2	mostly clear	
Sask. Landing P.P.	20 Dec 2023	-4	13	5	10	0	0	clear	clear
Sask. River Forks	20 Dec 2023	-10	-5	25	40	3		overcast	overcast
Saskatoon	26 Dec 2023	-10	6	8	21	0	1	mostly clear	partly cloudy
Shamrock	4 Jan 2024	-7	-2	15	25	0	0	light fog	overcast
Shell Lake	4 Jan 2024	-8	-6	10	15	0	0	overcast	cloudy
Smeaton	26 Dec 2023	-12	-4	10	15	2	2	clear	clear
South Lady Lake	1 Jan 2024	-1	2					partly cloudy	partly cloudy
Spinney Hill	3 Jan 2024	-11	-7	15	21	0	2	overcast	partly cloudy
Swift Current	15 Dec 2023	3	-10	20	30	0	0	partly cloudy	partly cloudy
Thickwood-Spiritwood	3 Jan 2024	-12	5	20	25	0	3	overcast	overcast
Torch River Valley	23 Dec 2023	-9	-2	0	15	3	8	clear	mostly clear
Turtleford	29 Dec 2023	-14	-2	0	5	0	1	clear	clear
Val Marie	15 Dec 2023	-3	3	2	11	0	4	overcast	partly cloudy
Watrous	3 Jan 2024	-7	-6	11	22	1	2	cloudy	partly cloudy
Weyburn	28 Dec 2023	-9	-5	10	10	1	3	clear	mostly clear
White Bear	30 Dec 2023	-9	6	10	25	0	0	clear	clear
Whitewood	27 Dec 2023	-8	-1	2	2	1	15	clear	clear
Wingard	2 Jan 2024								
Yorkton	5 Jan 2024	-14		5		2		partly cloudy	mostly clear



**TABLE 2. Effort and Habitat Coverage (%). Wild Fruit: p=poor, f=fair, g=good, e=excellent.**

LOCALITY	PARTICIPANTS	KM ON FOOT	HOURS ON FOOT	KM BY VEHICLE	HOURS BY VEHICLE	HOURS AT FEEDERS	EVERGREEN FOREST	MIXEDWOOD FOREST	DECIDUOUS FOREST	ASPEN GROVE/FARMLAND	ASPEN GROVE/PRAIRIE	NATIVE PRAIRIE	TAME PASTURE	FARMLAND	FARMSTEADS	URBAN	OPEN WATER	RIPARIAN	OTHER	WILD FRUIT CROP	
Archerwill	12	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0		25						50	25						p
Assiniboia	2	0.0	0.0	90.0	4.5	0.0						5	5	60		25		5			p
Avonlea	4	0.2	0.2	105	5.5	0.5		5				5	5	35	10	35		5			p
Balgonie	6	23.2	8.2	292	10.9	0.0				40				20		40					p
Biggar	9	7.0	6.0	551	17.0	7.0				15				49	7	29					p
Borden-Radisson	4	10.5	6.5	140	6.5	0.0															p
Broadview	6	0.5	0.5	127	7.5	5.0			15	25		5	10	25	5	15					p
Candle Lake	8	0.0	0.0	175	10.8	0.0	15	30	20							25		5	5		p
Carlyle	2	0.0	0.0	40	2.8									5		95					
Clark's Crossing	19	23.9	16.0	511	27.8	2.7				15	10			25	5	35	5	5			p
Coronach	2	0.0	0.0	90	3.5	0.0							5	55		25	10	5			p
Craven	21	12.3	5.9	298	21.5	4.0				45		5	5	35		10					p
Crooked Lake	4	1.0	1.0	115	7.0	0.0				15			5	30	5	25	20				p
Crooked River	3	0.0	0.0	22	1.0	7.0		40						40	20						
Cypress Hills P.P.	18	10.0	7.0	24	2.0	0.0	30	25	10			25		10							g
Denholm	5	0.0	0.0	275	9.0	1.0				10	5		5	70	5	5					g
Dorintosh	4	6.0	4.0	0	0.0	2.0	5	40										55			f
Dundurn	3	2.0	1.0	160	5.8	0.0				15	15			60		10					p
E.B.Campbell Dam	8	4.5	2.5	118	6.8	4.0		50		20							10	20			f
Ebenezer	2	0.0	0.0	80	4.0	1.5		10	20	20	10	20	10	10							p
Estevan	9	7.0	7.0	230	11.0	9.0								31		11		58			p
Estuary North	3	3.0	3.0	30	6.0	4.0			20			50		10	20						
Fenton	2	0.0	0.0	150	4.9	0.0				20				69		10	1				p
Floral	3	5.0	4.0	114	5.5	0.0				18				60	11	11					p
Fort Qu'Appelle	17	3.7	2.0	548	15.4	0.0				25	20		10	20	4	20					p
Gardiner Dam	9	18.0	17.0	477	13.5	0.0					5			37	15	7	34	2			p
Good Spirit Lake	3	0.0	0.0	101	6.0	0.0				20			20	30	5	25					p
Greenwater	3	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	21.0		70		30											f
Grenfell	4	0.5	0.5	121	7.0	2.0				15	10		10	30	15	20					p
Harris	5	4.0	2.5	317	9.0	0.0				17				61	9	13					p
Hudson Bay	5	0.0	1.0	0	1.0	6.0		60						20		20					p
Indian Head	23	17.0	30.0	423	14.0	25.0	5			10				74	5	5	1				p
Kenaston	2	0.0	0.0	90	5.0	0.0								95	5						
Kenosee Lake	5	0.0	0.0	84	6.0	0.5			15					15		70					f
Ketchen North	1	1.0	1.0	65	2.5	5.5				30			20	20	20	10					
Kinloch	7	1.0	1.5	100	4.5	22.0	10	30	20	20	10				10						f
Kyle	6	6.0	4.0	175	11.0	0.0					10	10	5	20	15	35		5			p
La Ronge	4	4.0	3.5	57	2.5	5.0		60							5	30		5			g
LMLNWA	3	0.0	0.0	160	12.0	1.0				10	10	30	5	15		30					p
Love-Torch River	20	3.5	2.0	370	15.5	18.0	10	15		50				5	10	10					p
Luseland	4	5.0	3.0	277	7.5	2.0				50	10	5	5	20	5	5					p
Maple Creek	1	0.0	0.0	120	6.0	0.0															

LOCALITY	PARTICIPANTS	KM ON FOOT	HOURS ON FOOT	KM BY VEHICLE	HOURS BY VEHICLE	HOURS AT FEEDERS	EVERGREEN FOREST	MIXEDWOOD FOREST	DECIDUOUS FOREST	ASPEN GROVE/FARMLAND	ASPEN GROVE/PRAIRIE	NATIVE PRAIRIE	TAME PASTURE	FARMLAND	FARMSTEADS	URBAN	OPEN WATER	RIPARIAN	OTHER	WILD FRUIT CROP
Meadow Lake	3	5.0	4.0	125	2.0	0.0		50						40		10				g
Melfort	7	1.0	0.5	55	4.5	3.0														
Moose Jaw	10	16.6	7.4	321	16.2	2.0		10					5	40	5	30		10		p
Moose Mountain	4	0.0	0.0	92	5.5	0.0				15			10	50	5	15	5			f
Morse	11	6.0	2.5	471	22.5	5.0							3	90	7					p
Nicolle Flats	6	16.8	6.2	273	13.0	0.0			12	5	8	8	2	45	4	4	1	8	3	p
Nipawin	19	1.5	0.8	150	9.0	8.0	15	5		15				25	10	30				f
Nisbet Forest NW	1	1.0	0.3	0	0.0	3.7								5	95					
Nisbet Forest West	3	1.0	1.0	115	8.5	2.3	5		10	40				40		5				p
Odessa	3		1.0		2.0	3.0				20	20	20		20	20					f
Outlook	1	3.0	1.5	130	5.5	0.0				75			10			10		5		f
Pike Lake	27	27.7	19.4	367	18.8	22.8			5	10	5		15	35	10	15		5		f
Prince Albert	29	30.5	13.5	568	28.8	5.5	15	10		50						23		2		f
Qu'Appelle	9	8.2	2.5	274	9.5	17.5				60	5		5	20	5	5				p
Qu'Appelle Dam	7	9.5	6.8	439	18.8	0.0			15	25	10			15		15	10	10		p
Redberry Lake	18	10.0	4.5	472	15.3	0.5		10		90										
Regina	45	106.5	40.9	337	19.4	12.0				10				40		50				p
Roscommon S.D.	11	2.0	2.0	98	4.0	56.0				20				60	20					p
Rosetown	4	1.6	1.2	214	7.4	0.0						5	5	45	25	10		10		p
Rosthern	8	15.0	4.0	320	12.0	0.0				15				60	5	20				g
Round Lake (Q.V.)	4	0.0	0.0	33	2.5	1.0			10	30				20	30		10			f
Saltcoats	23	0.0	0.0	176	12.0	120.0				2		5	10	79	3		1			f
Sask. Landing P.P.	6	6.0	4.0	250	10.0	0.0						10	10	50	10	5		15		p
Sask. River Forks	4	0.0	0.0	215	11.8	0.0		15		10				75						p
Saskatoon	65	133.0	62.8	859	59.4	23.6				10				5		70	5	10		p
Shamrock	8	2.0	1.0	432	21.0	2.0							5	60	25	10				p
Shell Lake	3	11.6	6.75	202	9.5	0.8	10	20	20	15			10	5		15		5		f
Smeaton	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0									95				5	
South Lady Lake	2	0.0	0.0	93	5.3	0.0				40			5	50	5					f
Spinney Hill	2	1.0	0.3	165	7.7	0.0	5			60	30	5								f
Swift Current	23	18.0	15.0	321	21.0	12.0								20	10	68		2		g
Thickwood-Spiritwood	10	7.5	2.9	204	11.0	2.5	5	10		15			15	35	5	10		5		f
Torch River Valley	13	5.8	2.0	256	12.5	11.0		40		20				20	20					p
Turtleford	10	8.0	3.0	365	6.0	6.0				45			50			5				
Val Marie	26	6.0	4.0	27	1.5	0.0						20	20	50		5	2	3		p
Watrous	6	1.0	0.5	125	14.0	1.0				10	5	5	5	5		70				p
Weyburn	14	0.0	0.0	297	14.0	6.0	5	20	5	5		5	10	30		15	5			f
White Bear	3	2.0	2.0	275	10.0	0.0						20		50	25			5		p
Whitewood	13	6.5	8.5	14	30.9	12.0				25				25	25	25				f
Wingard	1													5	95					
Yorkton	14			54	10.0	10.0										90			10	



**TABLE 3. Species found on 5 or more counts; ( ) = seen during Count Period (CP).**

SPECIES	ARCHERWILL 12 DEC 2023	ASSINIBOIA 4 JAN 2024	AVONLEA 22 DEC 2023	BALCONIE 30 DEC 2023	BIGGAR 16 DEC 2023	BORDEN - RADISSON 18 DEC 2023	BROADVIEW 20 DEC 2023	CANDLE LAKE 30 DEC 2023	CARLYLE 19 DEC 2023	CLARK'S CROSSING 16 DEC 2023	CORONACH 2 JAN 2023	CRAVEN 16 DEC 2023	CROOKED LAKE 14 DEC 2023	CROOKED RIVER 4 JAN 2024	CYPRESS HILLS PP. 28 DEC 2023	DENHOLM 25 DEC 2023	DORINTOSH 21 DEC 2023	DUNDIRN 21 DEC 2023	E. B. CAMPBELL DAM 2 JAN 2024	EBENEZER DEC 21 2023	ESTEVAN 3 JAN 2024	ESTUARY NORTH 22 DEC 2023
Cackling Goose										12												125
Canada Goose										2063	2893		1612									37938
Mallard					9					90	550		303									107
Green-winged Teal													1									
Common Goldeneye										216			17						80			27
Ruffed Grouse								3	5				1	(1)	1	(2)	1		(1)			
Sharp-tailed Grouse			62		41		37			35		9				(3)		24	51			45 80
Gray Partridge		25		15	67	10	(8)			78		45				17						11 16
Ring-necked Pheasant							(1)					1	1		1							183 35
Rock Pigeon		1	77	20	119	47	36			357	56	285	13			122		50	12			50 15
Eurasian Collared-Dove			4	1	3	2	4		2	1		8						46				14 2
Golden Eagle					1							1	1			(1)					(1)	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk										2		(1)										2
American Goshawk																						2
Bald Eagle					1	3	(1)			7	1	2	5		3	(1)			9	1		2
Rough-legged Hawk					2	1					(1)	6			1	(1)		1		1	1	1
Snowy Owl			2		2					2		2				2						1
Great Horned Owl			1		3					3		1	(1)	(1)		(1)		1				2
American Three-toed Woodpecker								1														
Downy Woodpecker	1		1	5	4	6	2	3		10		12	2	1	1	2	2	4	1	1	13	3
Hairy Woodpecker	4		(1)		1	4	(1)	5	1	10		7	1	1		1	2	1	7		7	1
Northern Flicker										1		2										3
Pileated Woodpecker	(1)			(1)		(1)	1	1											2			2
Merlin		2			1					1	1											1
Prairie Falcon																						
Northern Shrike					1		2					2	1			(1)						
Canada Jay								18										1		3		
Blue Jay	18			7	4	9	(1)	14		11		14	3	2		1	12		19			6
Black-billed Magpie	5	1	11	34	110	40	19	18	8	148		120	11	20	19	35	(2)	49	40	19	7	50
American Crow												1			2							
Common Raven		2	1	17	42	37	13	279		128		54	12	2	4	12	6	15	49	32	12	5
Black-capped Chickadee	63			51	21	34	18	91	7	158		81	22	3	45	5	15	19	17	7	35	19
Boreal Chickadee	1							14											(8)			
Horned Lark											10											
Golden-crowned Kinglet				1			2					2						1	2			
Bohemian Waxwing			(40)	747	30	30				68		407			17	110		72				
Red-breasted Nuthatch				15	2	4		2	2	5		2			25			2	1		3	1
White-breasted Nuthatch	7		1	3	4	6	3	4	1	10		12	1				1	1	2		5	2
Brown Creeper																						
European Starling				140	45	31				35		12		3							4	50
Townsend's Solitaire				3											1			1				
American Robin				1	1							2	(2)					1				
House Sparrow	41	134	217	852	254	530	180		100	1324	31	332	153	4	40	38		266	2	50	282	130
Evening Grosbeak	66			1								1					20		16			
Pine Grosbeak	51					6				2		27	11	(6)	13	(1)	12	5	4		29	12
House Finch				30	7	8			1	152		2						10			18	1
Purple Finch																					4	1
Common Redpoll	124			44	105	131	137	57		137		137	36			60	26	1	7		47	17
Hoary Redpoll	16					2	1															
Pine Siskin			(1)				2		3				(2)								(2)	
American Goldfinch							(3)					1										2
Snow Bunting	(35)			250	40		6			52					25	3	(30)			23	2	
Dark-eyed Junco	1		(2)	2				16	2								2				9	
Common Grackle																		2				5
<b>TOTAL BIRDS COUNT DAY</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>2239</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>942</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>5448</b>	<b>3546</b>	<b>1593</b>	<b>2217</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>39030</b>	<b>512</b>
<b>TOTAL BIRDS ONLY IN CP</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL SPECIES COUNT DAY</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>TOTAL SPECIES ONLY IN CP</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

SPECIES	FENTON 14 DEC 2023	FLORAL 4 JAN 2024	FORT QU'APPELLE 15 DEC 2023	GARDINER DAM 14 DEC 2023	GOOD SPIRIT LAKE 5 JAN 2024	GREENWATER 3 JAN 2024	GRENFELL 29 DEC 2023	HARRIS 15 DEC 2023	HUDSON BAY 26 DEC 2023	INDIAN HEAD 23 DEC 2023	KENASTON 14 DEC 2023	KENOSEELAKE 29 DEC 2023	KETCHEN NORTH 26 DEC 2023	KINLOCH 30 DEC 2023	KYLE 21 DEC 2023	LARONCE 26 DEC 2023	LMLNWA 2 JAN 2024	LOVE-TORCH RIVER 26 DEC 2023	LUSELAND 30 DEC 2023	MAPLE CREEK 20 DEC 2023	MEADOW LAKE 26 DEC 2023	
Cackling Goose				2425																		
Canada Goose			2242	16570						7500					1							11
Mallard			6	5725						380											117	1
Green-winged Teal				2																		
Common Goldeneye			51	179						1												
Ruffed Grouse							1		3	10			3	6		(1)		5				
Sharp-tailed Grouse	7		12	63	2		1	29	5	10	6				75		19	16	26			
Gray Partridge	10	5		19			53	30		5	28				80			(7)	60	(8)		
Ring-necked Pheasant			(1)																			
Rock Pigeon		18	184	148	4		68	136	32	140			6		111		23	44	97	12	49	
Eurasian Collared-Dove			12	2			44	6		7					31		3		(2)	49		
Golden Eagle				4																(1)		
Sharp-shinned Hawk								1							1				(1)			
American Goshawk																						
Bald Eagle	1		5	14					(1)	15			(1)	1		2		1				1
Rough-legged Hawk			1							3			2				5					
Snowy Owl		1		1				8			1				3		2	1	3	2		
Great Horned Owl			(1)	2				2			1			1	10				1	(2)		
American Three-toed Woodpecker																		1				
Downy Woodpecker		5	14	2	2	5	1	2	5	14	1	4	4	9	1	2		12	(1)			1
Hairy Woodpecker	4	4	5	2		6	1	3	5	12		2	4	9		3	1	16	1	1	1	1
Northern Flicker		1		1						1											1	
Pileated Woodpecker									(1)			1		1		(1)		3				
Merlin			1		(1)					1					(1)							
Prairie Falcon				1				1							2				1			
Northern Shrike			1					1				1										
Canada Jay			(1)						11					9		6		15				1
Blue Jay	3	2	22	4	4	19	4		18	13		15	6	33		4	1	54	2	2	1	1
Black-billed Magpie	43	45	31	65	7	9	14	125	12	31	2	3	17	8	57	6	13	113	29	32		9
American Crow										4												
Common Raven	17	14	106	40	7	3	8	20	158	103	1	4	62	14	42	154	16	113	4			27
Black-capped Chickadee	21	49	115	24	31	26	7	2	34	113		18	10	55		10	1	160	2	9		2
Boreal Chickadee									1							2		9				
Horned Lark			(12)	2							(2)				5				1			
Golden-crowned Kinglet			3	4									2									
Bohemian Waxwing			413	14			25			424				1	9	(5)		14	(27)			
Red-breasted Nuthatch			2	2					1	29		2				2		14	3	1		
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	4	15	1	2	2	2	1	3	25		4	2	8		1	3	14				
Brown Creeper				1									1					1				
European Starling				24			7			7			1		50			22				2
Townsend's Solitaire										1										1	(1)	
American Robin			1															1	(1)			
House Sparrow	22	147	144	1010	2		198	285		392	75	30	26		690		238	21	97	466		11
Evening Grosbeak						39				73			(2)	86		31		149	(14)			
Pine Grosbeak	6	1	23	21		51	5			23			5	27	8	7		89		1		1
House Finch		6		2						51	9				10			2		15	56	
Purple Finch												(1)								3		
Common Redpoll	105	83	197	46	45	214	178	116	42	77		59	50	33		56	10	376	63	(5)		
Hoary Redpoll		2				10		2								1		2				
Pine Siskin			(1)						(15)	22			(1)									
American Goldfinch				1						4										1		
Snow Bunting		2		2	30			13	(100)	8				10	26		25	(200)	2	40		12
Dark-eyed Junco								2	(1)	15		(6)						3	(2)	9		
Common Grackle																		1	(1)			
<b>TOTAL BIRDS COUNT DAY</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>3607</b>	<b>26622</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>9418</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>1212</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>1268</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>142</b>	
<b>TOTAL BIRDS ONLY IN CP</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>TOTAL SPECIES COUNT DAY</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	
<b>TOTAL SPECIES ONLY IN CP</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	



**TABLE 3. Species found on 5 or more counts; ( ) = seen during Count Period (CP).**

SPECIES	MELFORT 30 DEC 2023	MOOSE JAW 17 DEC 2023	MOOSE MOUNTAIN P.P. 3 JAN 2024	MORSE 14 DEC 2023	NICOLLE FLATS 18 DEC 2023	NIPAWIN 27 DEC 2023	NISBET FOREST NORTHWEST 26 DEC 2023	NISBET FOREST WEST 31 DEC 2023	ODESSA 28 DEC 2023	OUTLOOK 24 DEC 2023	PIKE LAKE 30 DEC 2023	PRINCE ALBERT 17 DEC 2023	QU'APPELLE 27 DEC 2023	QU'APPELLE DAM 17 DEC 2023	REDBERRY LAKE 30 DEC 2023	REGINA 27 DEC 2023	ROSCOMMONS D. 4 JAN 2023	ROSETOWN 2 JAN 2024	ROSTHERN 4 JAN 2023	ROUND LAKE (Q.V.) 19 DEC 2023	SALICOATS 18 DEC 2023	SASKATCHEWAN LANDING P.P. 20 DEC 2023	SASKATCHEWAN RIVER FORKS 20 DEC 2023		
Cackling Goose														4		(2)									
Canada Goose		14								1000	168	(1)	(200)	7904		685							(100)		
Mallard										3				20		329							1		
Green-winged Teal																3							7		
Common Goldeneye					2	2				3		(1)		65		8								3	
Ruffed Grouse	2		1					(4)	4			11	(3)		14		5					7			
Sharp-tailed Grouse		2	2	93	31				40		48		28	69	227			15	13			12	76	9	
Gray Partridge		63		508	11				20				(44)	11	13	375		40	17			60	27		
Ring-necked Pheasant		2							2														1		
Rock Pigeon	11	502	14	336	112	458		73	15	55	164	149	167	38	113	786	32	169	114		3	90	5		
Eurasian Collared-Dove		39		8		5				(3)			10	1								2			
Golden Eagle				1																(1)			1		
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1								(1)						1				(1)					
American Goshawk												(1)			1										
Bald Eagle				1	3	2				2	2	(1)	(1)	16	2	(1)	(1)				(2)	8	(1)	3	
Rough-legged Hawk		2			2				4						1	3		1	1	(1)		2		2	
Snowy Owl	3	(1)		9	1					1					1	27		5					1		
Great Horned Owl	1	(1)		13	2				2		2	(1)	1	2	1	2	(1)	1	(1)		3		5		
American Three-toed Woodpecker						(1)							1												
Downy Woodpecker	35	4	3	(1)	4	2	2	2	4	2	41	15	11	3	7	34	9	2	3		12		4		
Hairy Woodpecker		3	1	(1)	2	3	2	2	4		21	8	8	1	15	5	10	2	4	1	14		3		
Northern Flicker		2										1				9							3		
Pileated Woodpecker			2			1		(1)	2		6	2		1	1						3				
Merlin		2		1								1	1			6			1						
Prairie Falcon				1						1				1		(1)									
Northern Shrike		(1)			1					1	2	(1)	1			6			1				1	1	
Canada Jay					1							2													
Blue Jay	8	(3)	22		2	23	2	11		5	23	19	9	2	22	21	17	4	3	2	22		10		
Black-billed Magpie	17	37	25	29	15	41	(1)	55	14	31	154	79	102	47	78	43	20	33	38	7	15	40	19		
American Crow																11						2			
Common Raven	11	12	11	13	22	141	1	12	8	13	101	264	24	19	39	47	14	9	24	6	51	7	22		
Black-capped Chickadee	50	43	51	1	14	62	6	23	20	14	363	117	60	29	84	243	54		15	9	83	21	24		
Boreal Chickadee												4												1	
Horned Lark		5		22	2								4	3	10	1		9							
Golden-crowned Kinglet		(2)			2										5	1									
Bohemian Waxwing		9		(10)	26	2				3	8	627	30	180	142	17						58	210	100	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2	8	5			7	1			3	2	3	2	2	3	69			2		1				
White-breasted Nuthatch	5	9	7			11	2	1		1	36	13	3	3	6	13	5		2	1	7		2		
Brown Creeper		1														1									
European Starling		55	5	30	12	60		17	20	17	20	18						107					5		
Townsend's Solitaire												1		1		4		1							
American Robin					1						2	(1)				(2)									
House Sparrow	115	659	43	1387	192	87	(40)	7		173	675	518	216	201	112	1678	86	625	87	195	286	315	28		
Evening Grosbeak						110	3	40				33			33									15	
Pine Grosbeak	8	8	10		17	91	3	14			120	37		3	18	19	55	2	9		5	26	115		
House Finch		64		5						3	2	2			17	241		3							
Purple Finch																									
Common Redpoll			45	155	5	135	8	45			61	394	379	20	325		64	15	81	31	231	45	198		
Hoary Redpoll											2	6												2	
Pine Siskin			6								3	2				(1)					15				
American Goldfinch											1	26													
Snow Bunting		7		154	20			16			7			2	605	(1)	100	220	2		270				
Dark-eyed Junco		10										2	5		13	4	10				4				
Common Grackle																									
<b>TOTAL BIRDS COUNT DAY</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>1563</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>2767</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>1246</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>1331</b>	<b>2043</b>	<b>2361</b>	<b>1061</b>	<b>8678</b>	<b>1887</b>	<b>4708</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>1263</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>1217</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>563</b>		
<b>TOTAL BIRDS ONLY IN CP</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>TOTAL SPECIES COUNT DAY</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>		
<b>TOTAL SPECIES ONLY IN CP</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>		

SPECIES	SASKATOON 26 DEC 2023	SHAMROCK 4 JAN 2024	SHELL LAKE 4 JAN 2024	SMEATON 26 DEC 2023	SOUTHLADY LAKE 1 JAN 2024	SPINNEY HILL 3 JAN 2024	SWIFT CURRENT 15 DEC 2023	THICKWOOD-SPIRITWOOD 3 JAN 2024	TORCH RIVER VALLEY 23 DEC 2023	TURTLEFORD 29 DEC 2023	VAL MARIE 15 DEC 2023	WATROUS 2 JAN 2023	WEYBURN 28 DEC 2023	WHITE BEAR 3 JAN 2023	WHITEWOOD 27 DEC 2023	WINGARD 2 JAN 2024	YORKTON 1 JAN 2024	TOTALS COUNT DAY	TOTALS ONLY IN COUNT PERIOD	# COUNTS COUNT DAY	# COUNTS ONLY IN COUNT PERIOD
Cackling Goose	11																	137	0	2	0
Canada Goose	2231						50											44506	0	4	0
Mallard	370						4				1							1059	0	5	0
Green-winged Teal	(2)																	1	0	1	0
Common Goldeneye	456																	340	0	4	0
Ruffed Grouse	1		2					9	4	8		(3)			4			11	4	5	3
Sharp-tailed Grouse	13	40				30	21	2	3	101	24		3	31	12			384	3	9	1
Gray Partridge	44	37					112	2		16			24	50	2		8	284	8	9	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	4					39				1		20					221	1	5	1
Rock Pigeon	3108	113	12			63	452	59	9	15	13	4	114	280	171		117	1260	0	15	0
Eurasian Collared-Dove	20	12					95				9	32	20		22		1	87	0	11	0
Golden Eagle		1									1			2				4	2	4	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6											1						4	1	2	1
American Goshawk	1								(1)									2	0	1	0
Bald Eagle	3		1		(1)		1			(2)								34	2	10	2
Rough-legged Hawk	1				(1)								4		(1)			13	2	7	2
Snowy Owl	1	2					4				7		2					11	0	6	0
Great Horned Owl	3	6	1				2			2		1	3	9	(1)			11	3	6	3
American Three-toed Woodpecker			1						1									1	0	1	0
Downy Woodpecker	58	2	5	1	1	1	6	4	4	6	1	4	5		12	2	7	74	0	19	0
Hairy Woodpecker	28		9		1	1		2	4	11	1	3	2		8	1	6	53	2	15	2
Northern Flicker	19											1					2	6	0	3	0
Pileated Woodpecker	1							1	3									6	3	4	3
Merlin	7	1					3		1				2	1				6	0	5	0
Prairie Falcon		1																1	0	1	0
Northern Shrike						1					1							6	1	4	1
Canada Jay									11									22	0	3	0
Blue Jay	114		8	3	2	5		25	38	13		5			11	2	8	120	1	13	1
Black-billed Magpie	747	23	28	1	20	18	90	63	29	42	5	4	9	114	44	1	14	764	2	20	1
American Crow	12						1						4					3	0	2	0
Common Raven	129	6	24	1	25	15	7	45	59	21		12	66	3	115		76	722	0	19	0
Black-capped Chickadee	647		70	1	5	16	30	72	50	44		42			119	6	41	711	0	19	0
Boreal Chickadee			2															15	8	2	1
Horned Lark		46																10	0	1	0
Golden-crowned Kinglet		1																8	0	5	0
Bohemian Waxwing	530					130	62	50				200			17		160	1481	40	8	1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	99	99	2	1		2	48		1			2	2		7		4	64	0	12	0
White-breasted Nuthatch	49	49	16		2	1		4	4	2		6	7		14	1	9	63	0	16	0
Brown Creeper	1																	0	0	0	0
European Starling	23						7	10	1		1		6	4				320	0	8	0
Townsend's Solitaire	2														(1)			5	0	3	0
American Robin	3										1							5	2	4	1
House Sparrow	4632	420	57		44	17	643	34	75	173	91	600	291	725	384	80	184	4960	0	20	0
Evening Grosbeak								1	91						15			104	0	5	0
Pine Grosbeak	31		93				5	68	40	2		25				1	9	172	7	11	2
House Finch	205						159					13			10		2	229	0	9	0
Purple Finch					3													5	0	2	0
Common Redpoll	74		315	25	68	23	41	446	135	57		157		56	41	(15)	85	1066	0	15	0
Hoary Redpoll			1					2	1	4		(1)						19	0	3	0
Pine Siskin	8																	5	5	2	3
American Goldfinch																		3	3	2	1
Snow Bunting		12			41	30	29	1	138			1			57			401	65	8	2
Dark-eyed Junco	1	1					6											32	2	6	1
Common Grackle	(1)																	7	0	2	0
<b>TOTAL BIRDS COUNT DAY</b>	<b>13717</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>1114</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>1275</b>	<b>1050</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>167411</b>	<b>1140</b>		
<b>TOTAL BIRDS ONLY IN CP</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>1140</b>		
<b>TOTAL SPECIES COUNT DAY</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>106</b>			
<b>TOTAL SPECIES ONLY IN CP</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>		



**TABLE 4. Species found in fewer than 5 counts.**

SPECIES	LOCALITY AND NUMBER (*=SEEN DURING COUNT PERIOD)
Snow Goose	Gardiner Dam (1)
Ross's Goose	Gardiner Dam (2)
Greater White-fronted Goose	Gardiner Dam (1)
Tundra Swan	Crooked Lake (1*), Gardiner Dam (11)
Gadwall	Crooked Lake (2), Gardiner Dam (5), Nicolle Flats (2), Regina (3)
American Wigeon	Crooked Lake (2*), Gardiner Dam (2), Regina (1)
Northern Pintail	Crooked Lake (2)
Canvasback	Crooked Lake (1)
Redhead	Gardiner Dam (44)
Ring-necked Duck	Crooked Lake (3), Saskatoon (1)
Greater Scaup	Gardiner Dam (56)
Lesser Scaup	Crooked Lake (1), Gardiner Dam (8), Saskatoon (3)
Long-tailed Duck	Qu'Appelle Dam (1)
Bufflehead	Clark's Crossing (28), Crooked Lake (1), Gardiner Dam (7), Qu'Appelle Dam (3)
Hooded Merganser	Estevan (1*)
Common Merganser	Clark's Crossing (2), Gardiner Dam (37), Qu'Appelle Dam (1)
Red-breasted Merganser	Qu'Appelle Dam (1)
Ruddy Duck	Regina (1)
Spruce Grouse	La Ronge (1), Qu'Appelle (1*)
Horned Grebe	Gardiner Dam (1)
Eared Grebe	Maple Creek (2)
Mourning Dove	Regina (2), Roscommon S.D. (2*), Saltcoats (1), Torch River Valley (1*)
American Coot	Estevan (3), Gardiner Dam (10), Qu'Appelle Dam (2)
Baird's Sandpiper	Gardiner Dam (1)
Black-legged Kittiwake	Qu'Appelle Dam (1)
Herring Gull	Gardiner Dam (12)
Glaucous Gull	Gardiner Dam (1)
Northern Harrier	Redberry Lake (1)
Red-tailed Hawk	Archerwill (1*), Good Spirit Lake (1), Qu'Appelle Dam (1)
Northern Hawk Owl	E.B. Campbell Dam (1*), Saskatchewan River Forks (1)
Barred Owl	Love-Torch River (1)
Long-eared Owl	Shamrock (1)
Short-eared Owl	Kyle (2*)
Northern Saw-whet Owl	Saskatoon (1*)
Belted Kingfisher	Regina (1*)
Red-headed Woodpecker	Regina (1)
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Saltcoats (1*)
Black-backed Woodpecker	La Ronge (1), Love-Torch River (1*), Prince Albert (1)
American Kestrel	Regina (2)
Cedar Waxwing	Estevan (40), Estuary (50), Odessa (6), Saltcoats (40)
Pygmy Nuthatch	Regina (1)
Varied Thrush	Estevan (1), Nipawin (1), Regina (1), Roscommon S.D. (1)
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	Love-Torch River (1*), Redberry (2*)
Red Crossbill	Biggar (3), Prince Albert (4), Saskatoon (16), Swift Current (12)
White-winged Crossbill	Regina (1), Shell Lake (2)
Lapland Longspur	Luseland (3)
Fox Sparrow	Estevan (1)
American Tree Sparrow	Val Marie (18)
White-crowned Sparrow	Regina (1*)
Harris's Sparrow	Prince Albert (1), Wingard (2)
White-throated Sparrow	Broadview (1), Swift Current (1)
Swamp Sparrow	Regina (1)
Eastern Towhee	Broadview (1)
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Regina (1), Shell Lake (2)
Pine Warbler	Carlyle (1)
Western Meadowlark	Grenfell (1)
Red-winged Blackbird	E.B. Campbell Dam (1), Nisbet West (1), Odessa (15)
Rusty Blackbird	Love-Torch River (1), Odessa (10), Regina (1), Val Marie (2)
Pine Warbler	Carlyle (1)
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Regina (1)
Northern Cardinal	Saskatoon (1), Fort Qu'Appelle (1)

**TABLE 5. Birds not identified to species.**

CATEGORY	LOCALITY AND NUMBER (*=COUNT PERIOD)
Diving Duck sp.	Coronach (2)
Merganser sp.	Saskatoon (1)
Duck sp.	Clark's Crossing 300, Meadow Lake (14), Morse (50*)
Grouse sp.	Borden-Radisson (1)
Hawk sp.	Dehnmolm (1)
Woodpecker sp.	Craven (1), Nicolle Flats (1), Pike Lake (5), Saskatoon (1)
Large Falcon sp.	Avonlea (1*), Coronach (1)
Nuthatch sp.	Saskatoon (2)
Finch sp.	Craven (2)
Sparrow sp.	Love-Torch River (1)
Blackbird sp.	Pike Lake (4)



One of three Townsend's Solitaires observed during the Balgonie Count on December 30, 2023. Photo credit: Annie McLeod.

**TABLE 6. New (in bold and italics) and tying high counts for individual species 2023.**

LOCATION	2023 COUNT	SPECIES	PREVIOUS HIGH	LOCATION, YEAR
<i>Gardiner Dam</i>	<b>2425</b>	<i>Cackling Goose</i>	1800	Gardiner Dam (2021)
<i>Gardiner Dam</i>	<b>2</b>	<i>Ross's Goose</i>	1	Regina (30 Dec. 1962, 26 Dec. 1974), Coronach (20 Dec. 2015)
<i>Gardiner Dam</i>	<b>44</b>	<i>Redhead</i>	27	Gardiner Dam (19 Dec. 2011)
<i>Gardiner Dam</i>	<b>56</b>	<i>Greater Scaup</i>	23	Gardiner Dam (19 Dec. 2016)
Qu'Appelle Dam	1	Long-tailed Duck	1	6 counts north to E.B.Campbell Dam
<i>Clarks Crossing</i>	<b>28</b>	<i>Bufflehead</i>	17	Coronach (23 Dec. 1998)
Gardiner Dam	1	Horned Grebe	1	6 counts north to Saskatoon
Maple Creek	2	Eared Grebe	2	Regina (30 Dec. 1962)
<i>Gardiner Dam</i>	<b>1</b>	<i>Baird's Sandpiper</i>	<b>New</b>	
<i>Qu'Appelle Valley Dam</i>	<b>1</b>	<i>Black-legged Kittiwake</i>	<b>New</b>	
<i>Saskatoon</i>	<b>6</b>	<i>Sharp-shinned Hawk</i>	<b>4</b>	Saskatoon (26 Dec. 2010)
Regina	1	Red-headed Woodpecker	1	White Bear Lake (19 Dec. 1991)
Saltcoats	1	Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	8 counts north to Crooked River and Nipawin
Regina	2	American Kestrel	2	Indian Head (5 Jan. 2002)
Regina	6	Northern Shrike	6	9 counts north to Saskatoon
<i>Regina</i>	<b>1</b>	<i>Pygmy Nuthatch</i>	<b>New</b>	
Regina	1	Swamp Sparrow	1	Harris (18 Dec. 2001)
Carlyle	1	Pine Warbler	1	Saskatoon (26 Dec. 2015)
Regina	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	1	4 counts north to Biggar and Saskatoon

# 51ST ANNUAL SASKATCHEWAN CHRISTMAS MAMMAL COUNT - 2023

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Of the 83 Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) conducted last winter, almost all, 81, were accompanied by a Mammal Count — an increase of two over last year. Only 2,884 mammals were counted, however, compared to the previous winter's 4,937. Variety was down, as well, with only 29 species heard or seen on count day compared to last year's 34.

Most of the decline in numbers was due to a decrease in deer. White-tailed Deer dropped from 1,880 in 2022-23 to 610 individuals this past winter; Mule Deer from 1,379 to 586 animals. These changes are probably mainly due to a lack of snow, which did not force animals in to towns and farmsteads in search of food. Also, deer would be much less conspicuous on a snowless background.

Due to the unusually warm weather, Richardson's Ground-Squirrels were much in evidence. Twenty-five were seen on seven counts. None are recorded on most annual counts.

White-tailed Jackrabbits continue to

prosper in Regina with a new provincial high of 218 animals. Unfortunately only 74 hares were seen in the rest of the province.

A Wolverine was seen during the count period (24 December) near the E.B. Campbell Dam. This is an astonishing record as the only other Christmas Mammal Count (CMC) record was on Nisbet Forest West Count on 26 December 2022!

Most unwanted were Wild Boar tracks seen during the count period at Archerwill (the animal was actually seen in November). The only previous record was of tracks seen on the Pike Lake count on 5 January 2019.

Indian Head had the most species seen or heard with 13, Odessa was the runner-up with 12 species.

No new species were added this past winter. The all-time provincial total of species seen or heard remains at 52, plus three species found dead and three others recorded only on the basis of tracks.

For information on participants, weather, coverage and location of CMCs see the CBC summary in this issue.

## Explanation of entries in Table 1

The number of mammals actually seen

or heard on count day is treated separately from those recorded by other means, or those recorded during count period (14 December to 5 January) but not on count day. Numbers of individuals seen or heard are given in Table 1 and are tallied in the first line of totals at the bottom of the table. The number of species they represent is given in the second line.

For species only detected by tracks or by other means, or that are seen or heard only in the count period but not on count day, no numbers of individuals is given in Table 1. Species detected only by tracks are indicated by 't' in the table; those detected only by other means — dead animals 'm', more clearly identifiable chewing or digging 'd', dens or lodges 'L' (including Muskrat push-ups) and by smell 's.' Species detected by any means during the count period, but not on count day are indicated by 'c' in the table. These additional species are tallied in lines three, four and five at the bottom of the table. If a mammal is reported as member of a species group (i.e. mouse species, deer species), it is counted as a species only if no other species in this group has been definitely recorded. The columns at the end of the table, give totals for each species.

**TABLE 1. 51st Saskatchewan Christmas Mammal Count - 2023.**

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>ARCHERWILL 22 DEC 2023</b>	<b>ASSINIBOIA 4 JAN 2024</b>	<b>AVONLEA 22 DEC 2023</b>	<b>BALGONIE 30 DEC 2023</b>	<b>BIGGAR 16 DEC 2023</b>	<b>BORDEN - RADISSON 18 DEC 2023</b>	<b>BROADVIEW 20 DEC 2023</b>	<b>CANDLE LAKE 30 DEC 2023</b>	<b>CARLYLE 19 DEC 2023</b>	<b>CLARK'S CROSSING 16 DEC 2023</b>	<b>CORONACH 2 JAN 2023</b>	<b>CRAVEN 16 DEC 2023</b>	<b>CROOKED LAKE 14 DEC 2023</b>	<b>CROOKED RIVER 4 JAN 2024</b>	<b>CYPRESS HILLS P.P. 28 DEC 2023</b>	<b>DENHOLM 25 DEC 2023</b>	<b>DORINTOSH 21 DEC 2023</b>	<b>DUNDURN 21 DEC 2023</b>	<b>E. B. CAMPBELL DAM 2 JAN 2024</b>	<b>EBENEZER DEC 21 2023</b>	<b>ESTEVAN 3 JAN 2024</b>	<b>ESTUARY NORTH 22 DEC 2023</b>
Shrew species																	t					
Eastern Cottontail																						7
Nuttall's Cottontail															2							7
Snowshoe Hare	c			16			t	t					t			2	t		t			
White-tailed Jack Rabbit										4		1	t			c		1				4
Richardson's Ground Squirrel															1	c						1
Eastern Grey Squirrel				1																		
Eastern Fox Squirrel			c	10			4		5			10	c									8
American Red Squirrel	10				1	8	4	18				6	7		5	2	c		5			
Northern Flying-Squirrel																1						
Northern Pocket Gopher																d						
American Beaver	t						D	D					D									
Deer Mouse								t					t			c	t					
Muskrat	t							D					4									
Gapper's Red-Backed Vole																c						
Meadow Vole					1					1												
Vole species	t																t					
House Mouse																						
Mouse species								t									t					
American Porcupine																				1		
Coyote	1			2	1	1	2	t		12	3		3		2	c	t		c	2		3
Gray Wolf								t	t								t		c			
Red Fox	c						1	t					c		D	2	t		c	2		
Raccoon																						
American Marten	t																					
Fisher	t																					
Ermine										1						c						
Long-tailed Weasel								t														
Weasel species	t									2							t					
American Mink													1						1			
Wolverine																			c			
American Badger																d						
Striped Skunk					s																	
River Otter													1				D		1			
Canada Lynx								t														
Wild Boar	t																					
Mule Deer	c	8	42	12	36	2	c			3	10	14	6			14		7			13	
White-tailed Deer	5		12	6			2	20		6		5	10		12	7	c	2	4		10	
Deer species																				5		
Moose	c					1	2	t							t	2			2			3
Elk	t																					
Pronghorn															15							7
<b>TOTALS SEEN/HEARD ON COUNT DAY</b>	16	8	54	47	39	12	15	38	5	29	13	36	32	0	37	30	0	10	11	12	38	25
<b>TOTAL SPECIES SEEN/HEARD</b>	3	1	2	6	4	4	6	2	1	6	2	5	7	0	6	7	0	3	4	5	4	6
<b>TOTAL SPECIES RECORDED BY TRACKS</b>	8	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	9	0	1	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL SPECIES OTHERWISE RECORDED</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SPECIES RECORDED COUNT PERIOD</b>	4	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	6	2	0	4	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL SPECIES COUNT PERIOD AND DAY</b>	15	1	3	6	5	4	13	10	1	6	2	5	13	0	8	15	12	3	9	5	4	6



SPECIES	FENTON 14 DEC 2023	FLORAL 4 JAN 2024	FORT QU'APPELLE 15 DEC 2023	GARDINER DAM 14 DEC 2023	GOOD SPIRIT LAKE 5 JAN 2024	GREENWATER 31 JAN 2024	GRENFELL 29 DEC 2023	HARRIS 15 DEC 2023	INDIAN HEAD 23 DEC 2023	KENASTON 14 DEC 2023	KENOSE LAKE 29 DEC 2023	KETCHEN NORTH 26 DEC 2023	KINLOCH 30 DEC 2023	KYLE 21 DEC 2023	LA RONGE 26 DEC 2023	L'AMINWA 21 JAN 2024	LOVE-TORCH RIVER 26 DEC 2023	LUSELAND 30 DEC 2023	MAPLE CREEK 20 DEC 2023	MEADOW LAKE 26 DEC 2023	MELFORT 30 DEC 2023	MOOSEJAW 17 DEC 2023		
Shrew species																						2		
Eastern Cottontail																								
Nuttall's Cottontail				1	t				1		t			1					1				c	
Snowshoe Hare			1			1			1		t		2		t		t				2			
White-tailed Jack Rabbit				2			t		1	t				c									2	
Richardson's Ground Squirrel			c	2										4					2					
Eastern Grey Squirrel																								
Eastern Fox Squirrel					2				5							2							20	
American Red Squirrel	6		24			3	6		22		5	8	8		2		30				1	6		
Northern Flying-Squirrel						5	4						3											
Northern Pocket Gopher																	t							
American Beaver	D		c		D						D		D									2	m	
Deer Mouse			c						1								t							
Muskrat									1		D		D											
Gapper's Red-Backed Vole			c																					
Meadow Vole								1																
Vole species																	t							
House Mouse																								
Mouse species														t										
American Porcupine				1	t									c			1							
Coyote	t	t	2	5	1		3	1	6	2		2	t	8			5	4		2			1	
Gray Wolf													t				t							
Red Fox	t		1		1			1	4			c				1	t				t			
Raccoon																	1							
American Marten						1																		
Fisher												c												
Ermine												c												
Long-tailed Weasel			c						2	1														
Weasel species																	2							
American Mink				1					1															
Wolverine																								
American Badger																							d	
Striped Skunk					m								t	s									c	
River Otter																3					t			
Canada Lynx																								
Wild Boar																								
Mule Deer		16	13	4				34	32		7			c				5	14				14	
White-tailed Deer	4	2	1	44	1	10	t		9		6	2	2	1			30	c	22		3		14	
Deer species																								
Moose			c		t		t		5		t	c	3	t				9						
Elk											t	t	19				t							
Pronghorn								31						40					32					
<b>TOTALS SEEN/HEARD ON COUNT DAY</b>	10	18	42	60	5	20	13	68	90	3	18	12	37	54	5	3	69	18	71	3	15	51		
<b>TOTAL SPECIES SEEN/HEARD</b>	2	2	6	8	4	5	3	5	13	2	3	3	6	5	2	2	6	3	5	2	5	5		
<b>TOTAL SPECIES RECORDED BY TRACKS</b>	2	1	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	1	3	1	3	2	1	0	7	0	0	0	2	0		
<b>TOTAL SPECIES OTHERWISE RECORDED</b>	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2		
<b>SPECIES RECORDED COUNT PERIOD</b>	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2		
<b>TOTAL SPECIES COUNT PERIOD AND DAY</b>	5	3	12	8	9	5	6	5	13	3	8	8	11	11	3	2	13	4	5	2	7	9		

SPECIES	MOOSE MOUNTAIN P.P. 3 JAN 2024	MORSE 14 DEC 2023	NICOLLEFLATS 18 DEC 2023	NIPAWIN 27 DEC 2023	NISBET FOREST NORTHWEST 26 DEC 2023	NISBET FOREST WEST 31 DEC 2023	ODESSA 28 DEC 2023	OUTLOOK 24 DEC 2023	PIKE LAKE 30 DEC 2023	PRINCE ALBERT 17 DEC 2023	QU'APPELLE 27 DEC 2023	QU'APPELLE DAM 17 DEC 2023	REDBERRY LAKE 30 DEC 2023	REGINA 27 DEC 2023	ROSCOMMON S.D. 4 JAN 2023	ROSETOWN 2 JAN 2024	ROSTHERN 4 JAN 2023	ROUND LAKE (Q.V.) 19 DEC 2023	SALT COATS 18 DEC 2023	SASKATCHEWAN LANDING P.P. 20 DEC 2023	SASKATCHEWAN RIVER FORKS 20 DEC 2023	
Shrew species						m				t												
Eastern Cottontail																						
Nuttall's Cottontail																						
Snowshoe Hare				t			2			t		1	2		t		t					t
White-tailed Jack Rabbit		3			t		6			t		3		218	t					1		
Richardson's Ground Squirrel		10			t						c											
Eastern Grey Squirrel							4							1								
Eastern Fox Squirrel			6								7	2		93	2		3		1			
American Red Squirrel	4			16		13	2		21	25			3		10							11
Northern Flying-Squirrel																						
Northern Pocket Gopher															d							
American Beaver			1							D							D					
Deer Mouse										t							t					
Muskrat			4					1		D												
Gapper's Red-Backed Vole										c					m							
Meadow Vole										t												
Vole species					t												m					
House Mouse															m							
Mouse species				t	t					t										t	t	
American Porcupine						1	2		d			1		t						1		
Coyote		10	3	5	t	c	4		1	3	3	2	7	7		1	5			3		t
Gray Wolf																						c
Red Fox		1		t	t		2			1				t	t	1	c					t
Raccoon							6								t							
American Marten																						
Fisher										t												
Ermine										t												
Long-tailed Weasel							1						1									
Weasel species				t																		
American Mink											c				m							
Wolverine																						
American Badger		d													d							
Striped Skunk															t							
River Otter										c												
Canada Lynx																						
Wild Boar																						
Mule Deer		44	34				10	4	10			14	23	10	9	29		2				4
White-tailed Deer		22		11	t	c	6		t	9	6		87	4	19		7	38	7			
Deer species																					t	
Moose			1				2		3	c	c		11		3				1	t		
Elk				t								4										c
Pronghorn		81																			8	
<b>TOTALS SEEN/HEARD ON COUNT DAY</b>	4	171	49	32	0	14	47	5	35	38	16	27	134	333	43	31	15	40	9	13	15	
<b>TOTAL SPECIES SEEN/HEARD</b>	1	7	6	3	0	2	12	2	4	4	3	7	7	6	5	3	3	2	3	4	2	
<b>TOTAL SPECIES RECORDED BY TRACKS</b>	0	0	0	5	7	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	1	6	0	2	0	0	3	4	
<b>TOTAL SPECIES OTHERWISE RECORDED</b>	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	
<b>SPECIES RECORDED COUNT PERIOD</b>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	
<b>TOTAL SPECIES COUNT PERIOD AND DAY</b>	1	8	6	8	7	5	12	2	6	17	6	7	7	7	16	3	8	2	3	7	8	

SPECIES	SASKATOON 26 DEC 2023	SHAMROCK 4 JAN 2024	SHELL LAKE 4 JAN 2024	SOUTH LADY LAKE 1 JAN 2024	SPINNEY HILL 3 JAN 2024	SWIFT CURRENT 15 DEC 2023	THICKWOOD-SPIRITWOOD 3 JAN 2024	TORCH RIVER VALLEY 23 DEC 2023	TURTLEFORD 29 DEC 2023	VAL MARIE 15 DEC 2023	WATROUS 2 JAN 2023	WEVBURN 28 DEC 2023	WHITE BEAR 3 JAN 2023	WHITEWOOD 27 DEC 2023	WINGARD 2 JAN 2024	YORKTON 1 JAN 2024	# INDIVIDUALS SEEN/HEARD COUNT DAY	# COUNTS SEEN/HEARD	# COUNTS RECORDED AS TRACKS	# COUNTS RECORDED AS OTHER	# COUNTS COUNT PERIOD	# COUNTS COUNT PERIOD & COUNT DAY
Shrew species																	2	1	2	1	0	4
Eastern Cottontail																	7	1	0	0	0	1
Nuttall's Cottontail						3											15	6	1	0	1	8
Snowshoe Hare	1		1	t					t					1		t	33	13	16	0	1	30
White-tailed Jack Rabbit	38	1			t	1						6	t				292	16	8	0	2	26
Richardson's Ground Squirrel									D				5				25	7	1	1	3	12
Eastern Grey Squirrel						39				1				4			50	6	0	0	0	6
Eastern Fox Squirrel											7	14					201	18	0	0	2	20
American Red Squirrel	13		17	2	t		3	32	1					5	1	1	367	40	1	0	1	42
Northern Flying-Squirrel																	13	4	0	0	0	4
Northern Pocket Gopher									D								0	0	1	3	0	4
American Beaver			D	D			1	t	D								4	3	2	13	1	19
Deer Mouse												1		1			3	3	6	0	2	11
Muskrat	1			D			D		D	1							12	6	1	7	0	14
Gapper's Red-Backed Vole																	0	0	0	1	3	4
Meadow Vole																	3	3	1	0	0	4
Vole species									t								0	0	5	1	0	6
House Mouse																	0	0	0	1	0	1
Mouse species									t				t				0	0	10	0	0	10
American Porcupine		1		t	t	m											9	8	4	2	1	15
Coyote	8	7	6	t	m	2		1	5	2		7	3	4			173	47	8	1	3	59
Gray Wolf				t				2									2	1	6	0	2	9
Red Fox	2			t		1		1	t	1	t						23	16	13	1	5	35
Raccoon								t				2		3			12	4	2	0	0	6
American Marten																	1	1	1	0	0	2
Fisher																	0	0	2	0	1	3
Ermine									c								1	1	1	0	3	5
Long-tailed Weasel									c	1							6	5	1	0	2	8
Weasel species																	4	2	3	0	0	5
American Mink																	4	4	0	1	1	6
Wolverine																	0	0	0	0	1	1
American Badger		d															0	0	0	5	0	5
Striped Skunk										s							0	0	2	4	1	7
River Otter								t									5	3	2	1	1	7
Canada Lynx																	0	0	1	0	0	1
Wild Boar																	0	0	1	0	0	1
Mule Deer	3	48		t		10	3		8	4	6		5				586	41	1	0	3	45
White-tailed Deer	9	23		t	t	23	11	4		27		36	3	6			610	48	5	0	3	56
Deer species																	5	1	1	0	0	2
Moose				t	t		4	t	3			1	t	6			62	18	11	0	5	34
Elk				t	t			t									23	2	8	0	1	11
Pronghorn						2				73			42				331	10	0	0	0	10
<b>TOTALS SEEN/HEARD ON COUNT DAY</b>	75	80	24	2	0	81	22	40	17	110	13	67	58	30	1	1	2884					
<b>TOTAL SPECIES SEEN/HEARD</b>	8	5	3	1	0	8	5	5	4	8	2	7	5	8	1	1		29				
<b>TOTAL SPECIES RECORDED BY TRACKS</b>	0	0	0	9	6	0	0	5	4	0	1	0	3	0	0	1			28			
<b>TOTAL SPECIES OTHERWISE RECORDED</b>	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0				14		
<b>SPECIES RECORDED COUNT PERIOD</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					24	
<b>TOTAL SPECIES COUNT PERIOD AND DAY</b>	8	6	4	12	7	9	6	10	14	9	3	7	8	8	1	2						38



# FIRST CONFIRMED RECORD OF PYGMY NUTHATCH IN SASKATCHEWAN

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During the late afternoon of 6 November 2023, I conducted a count of my regularly occurring back-yard feeder birds when an unusual looking bird caught my attention. I was quite surprised to immediately recognize the bird as a Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*). I had been to British Columbia a couple of months earlier and had hoped to find this species there, so its image was still fresh in my mind. A quick run to grab my camera resulted in a few lower quality images that were just good enough to confirm the identification. I had missed the bird in BC and was astonished that this species, a new one for my “life list”, was now in my backyard, in Regina. The bird was at the feeder for approximately two minutes and did not return that day. Hopeful that it would return the next day, I informed several people of the Pygmy Nuthatch and seven birders showed up the next morning to look for the bird. Over the next two months, the bird visited my feeders and at last count at least 61 people had seen this bird and excellent photos were taken (Figure 1). Often the first indication the bird was present was its loud piping call, which is unlike those uttered by other nuthatches found in Saskatchewan. There are two hypothetical records (single observer, sight only record) for this species in Saskatchewan, but this is the first confirmed record.

## Habitat, Range and Movement

Pygmy Nuthatches inhabit the mountainous areas from the extreme southern interior of British Columbia through the western states and well into central Mexico.<sup>1</sup> This species is considered non-migratory, with populations being mostly sedentary except for some post-breeding wandering to both higher and lower elevations. Pygmy Nuthatches



**FIGURE 1.** More than 60 people had the opportunity to observe and take photographs of Saskatchewan's first confirmed Pygmy Nuthatch. Photo credit: Annie McLeod.

show a strong preference for long-needle pines and are one of the most abundant species in Ponderosa, Jeffrey and other long-needle pine forests.<sup>1</sup> Coincidentally, there are quite a few Scotch Pine and Blue Spruce along the easement by my house, which perhaps — along with my feeders — attracted the bird to this location. Pygmy Nuthatch distribution is rather patchy, reflecting the patchily distributed pine forests they require (Figure 2).

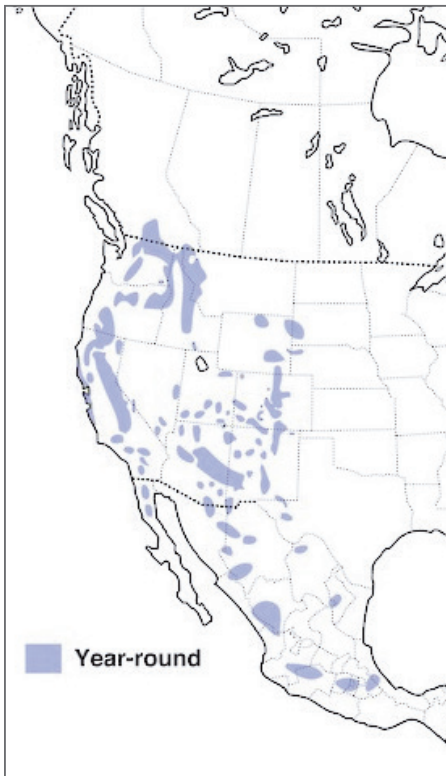
There are three confirmed eBird records of Pygmy Nuthatch from Alberta, all in the extreme southwest part of the province. These include two sight records, accompanied by field notes, from Rainy Ridge<sup>2</sup> and Waterton<sup>3</sup>; the lone record backed by a photo is from Mountain View, in 2008.<sup>4</sup> The two sight records are also from 2023. This lack of Alberta records is a bit surprising as the Pygmy Nuthatch's regular range

extends to Cranbrook, British Columbia, only about 100 km west of AB, and to Columbia Falls, Montana, about 80 km to the south.<sup>1</sup>

There are also confirmed Pygmy Nuthatch records from Fargo, North Dakota and adjoining Moorhead, Minnesota, in October 1996<sup>5</sup>, from Des Moines, Iowa in January 1977<sup>6</sup> and Algona, Iowa in October 2000.<sup>7</sup> There are two hypothetical records for Pygmy Nuthatch in the comprehensive *Birds of Saskatchewan*. One in Val Marie at Lise Perrault's feeder on 12 May 1999, and another — again at a feeder — far to the north at Murphy Lake near the town of Loon Lake, by Beth Dales, who described a “tiny nuthatch with a gray-brown cap”, in mid-May 2000.<sup>8</sup> Manitoba also has a hypothetical record of two Pygmy Nuthatch visiting a feeder at Reston on 23 October 1984.<sup>9</sup>

As a bird this unusual deserves





**FIGURE 2.** Pygmy Nuthatch Range Map from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Birds of the World.



**FIGURE 3.** The Pygmy Nuthatch preferred the peanut feeder, but was also seen on other feeders containing suet, hulled sunflower seeds and black oil sunflower seeds. Photo credit: Annie McLeod.

special attention, I posted the record on the American Birding Association Rare Bird Alert Facebook page. Among the comments received was interesting information from birders who live in the traditional Pygmy Nuthatch range. This year had seen an unprecedented dispersal, starting this past summer, to the coast of Oregon and lowlands of northern California<sup>10</sup> and this fall to Victoria, BC<sup>11</sup> and along the Washington coast.<sup>12</sup> A significant irruption apparently occurred but the cause is unclear, although the recent widespread wildfires in the west and the resulting habitat loss may have played a part.

## Feeding

The Pygmy Nuthatch preferred the peanut feeder (Figure 3) but also spent time on other feeders that contain suet, black oil sunflower and hulled sunflower seeds. Exhibiting typical nuthatch behaviour, it cached food in the surrounding trees in crevices amid the bark of branches and trunk.<sup>1</sup> It dominated the peanut feeder, often chasing White-breasted (*S. carolinensis*) and Red-breasted (*S. canadensis*) nuthatches, Black-capped Chickadees

(*Poecile atricapillus*) and even the House Finches (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) and only gave way to the much larger Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*). I also observed the bird on the ground consuming small pieces of ice and taking larger chunks into a tree and pecking them as it did with peanuts.

On 10 January 2024, the temperature dropped to -27 °C followed by a few days of -30 to -35 °C and the Pygmy Nuthatch was not seen again. But what a pleasure to have such an interesting bird in my yard that enticed so many fantastic people to come for a visit.

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# NATURE SASKATCHEWAN MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: A Q&A WITH MARGARET A. SKEEL



Margaret Skeel. Photo credit: David B. Donald.

## *How long have you been involved with Nature Saskatchewan and in what capacity?*

I've been involved with both Nature Saskatchewan and Nature Regina since 1985, when I moved to Regina from Edmonton with my husband and our young family. I first worked for Nature Saskatchewan from 1988-94 as a part-time Office Assistant/Administrative Secretary to the Executive Director, Suzanne Henry, who was hired in 1987 as the first staff position, and then later for Curt Schroeder. In 1990-91, I also was the Saskatchewan coordinator for the 1991 International Piping Plover Census.

I joined Nature Saskatchewan full-time in August 1997 as Program Coordinator, one of only two staff positions, the other being an Administration Coordinator. Following a re-organization in 2003, I served as both General Manager (GM) & Natural Heritage (NH) Programs Manager until 2008, after which I focused on the now very busy NH Manager position until I retired in August 2011. When I left, as programming and staff had greatly increased, the NH Manager position was divided into a Species At Risk Manager and a Conservation & Education Manager. I continue to be involved though the local affiliate, Nature Regina, where I've served as treasurer since retiring.

## *How has being involved with Nature Saskatchewan impacted your life?*

I've been involved with Nature Saskatchewan for almost 40 years — as a member, volunteer, and half of this time as an employee. Being part of Nature Saskatchewan has encouraged my interest not only in appreciating and conserving nature, but in mentoring young adults and facilitating other people's desire to care for and appreciate our natural world.

## *How have you seen the organization evolve and change over the years?*

When I joined Nature Saskatchewan, it was active in serving its members through the highly regarded journal, *Blue Jay*, through its special publications on Saskatchewan's natural history, its spring and fall gatherings, and its important work in advocating for the protection of natural spaces. Shortly thereafter, the organization began to shift its focus to include programs to actively engage many others in conservation of our species and spaces with the insightful initiation of Operation Burrowing Owl (OBO) by Dale Hjertaas and Lorne Scott in 1988. The Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk, signed in 1996, brought attention and support for the International Piping Plover Censuses, of which I coordinated or supervised 5 of the past 6 Saskatchewan censuses, the first being in 1991.

Opportunities for more programs to involve nature-minded people in conserving our natural heritage greatly increased with federal funding from the Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk, established in 2000, and tied to *The Species At Risk Act* adopted in 2002. This allowed for the hiring of talented staff, mostly recent graduates. Working with federal and provincial partners, landowner stewardship programs modelled on OBO were set up, including Rare Plant Rescue in 2002, Shrubs For Shrikes in 2003, and Plovers On Shore in 2008 — all now under the banner of Stewards of Saskatchewan (SOS). SOS provides an annual newsletter, educational materials and landowner workshops in rural communities. Nature Saskatchewan has offered a habitat enhancement program by funding landowners to improve habitat for Burrowing Owls since 2000. The Beneficial Management Practices project, which began in 2007, worked with partners to develop a document for land managers on selected species at risk. The SOS Banner Program was initiated in 2011 to bring many listed species at risk into landowner stewardship and endangered species education.

Nature Saskatchewan partnerships with government and non-government agencies began to flourish after 2000. A Piping Plover Guardian Program at Lake Diefenbaker ran from 2002-2007. The Important Bird Areas (IBA) program, part of an international program led in Canada by Nature Canada and Birds Canada, was initiated in Saskatchewan in 1997. Conservation plans for 13 IBAs were completed by Dr. Josef Schmutz in 2002, and a Caretaker Network was set up in 2009, with volunteer caretakers monitoring bird populations and possible threats at their assigned IBA. In 2016, the Key Biodiversity Areas international program was adopted to be applied to all species and ecosystems.

I was fully engaged in The Living by Water Project from 2000 to 2009. This was a national initiative to promote practices to maintain healthy shorelines



and clean water. A coordinator was hired in 2002 to help, including with publication in 2002 of the Manitoba/Saskatchewan edition of the book *On the Living Edge - Your Handbook for Waterfront Living*. Five workshop modules were developed in 2004-2005 for use by agencies and cottager associations. Close to 100 presentations were delivered over the 10 years to cottager associations throughout Saskatchewan as well as to conservation and government agencies.

Nature Quest, operating in the boreal forest region, was initiated by Member Services Manager Paul Wilson in 2004, in partnership with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (Saskatchewan Chapter). It further expanded Nature Saskatchewan's activities in more northern areas. The program blends cultural experiences with appreciation of the environment through presentations, music and storytelling in many schools and communities.

In 2008, management of the Last Mountain Bird Observatory (LMBO) was transferred from the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) to Nature Saskatchewan, with the retirement of Alan Smith from CWS. Al was bander-in-charge when LMBO was established in 1989 under the direction of CWS, and he continued to run the station upon his retirement. A five-year Flight Plan Partner campaign, launched in 2008, raised funds to ensure the long-term operation of the monitoring and educational station. In 2009, a large interpretive sign designed by Al was unveiled at LMBO, and the Black-and-White newsletter was re-started. Management of LMBO formalized Nature Saskatchewan's relationship with Birds Canada and the national Migration Monitoring Network. Involvement with continental research has grown to include a MOTUS station set up near LMBO in 2022. Managing the LMBO station, with support from other agencies, has been a great success of Nature Saskatchewan.

***How do you think Nature Saskatchewan can continue to grow and thrive in the future?***

It's important to adhere to Nature Saskatchewan's mission to engage and inspire people to appreciate, learn about and conserve Saskatchewan's natural

environment. Remaining relevant is also important, in advocacy and programs, and involves working with other agencies towards shared goals. Seeking partnership opportunities will be invaluable as it is well known that bringing together different expertise, skills and resources accomplishes more than working alone. An example might be collaboration to drive conservation through nature-friendly government policies. Identifying and managing for keystone species, including consumers, modifiers or prey, reduces risks of detrimental effects on ecosystems.

***What do you think has been the biggest accomplishment of Nature Saskatchewan in its 75 years?***

There have been many great accomplishments over Nature Saskatchewan's 75 years. The first 50 years were focused on conservation advocacy by volunteers. This included working with others towards the establishment of Grasslands National Park in 1981, and the passing of the provincial Wildlife Habitat Protection Act in 1983. Setting up a small network of nature sanctuaries throughout the province is noteworthy, as are the natural history publications, including the crown jewel, *Birds of Saskatchewan*, by Alan Smith, Stuart Houston and Frank Roy. In the later years, our most significant accomplishments focused on growing many and diverse programs, both natural heritage and cultural, that engage citizens throughout the province.

***What do you think is the biggest environmental challenge facing Saskatchewan, and how can we address it?***

The greatest challenge facing Saskatchewan is protecting rare and common species. Our prairie habitats have only 10 to 15 per cent of natural landscape remaining, with many species of plants, animals and decomposers greatly reduced in abundance. Some once common grassland species (e.g., Burrowing Owl and Greater Sage-Grouse) have declined at a rate of more than 80 per cent in the last 50 years. Loss of biodiversity, as is occurring, results in a destabilizing effect on ecological systems. Wetlands have been drained;

these moderated droughts and floods and were once abundant and teeming with life. Grasslands are disappearing; these have an important role in climate stability through carbon sequestration, and are the world's most endangered habitat.


In the longer term, unpredictable and more extreme weather events that are related to our changing climate will be at the root of many other environmental challenges. For Saskatchewan, these might include species losses and altered migrations, and extreme drought and wet cycles. Mitigating and moderating climate change is a global issue, requiring attention by individuals, industries and governments.

***Can you speak to the sense of community and friendship within the organization?***

Nature Saskatchewan can be thought of as a large community of people interested in exploring, conserving and enjoying nature. Within this community, there are smaller groups where interests are pursued and friendships are formed. The Spring and Fall Meets attract many people who enjoy the social and nature parts of the gatherings. The nature sanctuaries bring stewards and others together in a common purpose, as do the publications and educational programs such as the Last Mountain Bird Observatory. The landowner stewardship programs bring communities together to share knowledge and expertise.

***What advice would you give to someone who is interested in getting involved with Nature Saskatchewan?***

Join Nature Saskatchewan, attend the Spring and Fall gatherings — which are held at interesting natural locations throughout the province — and learn where you might like to become involved.

*As part of our 75th anniversary celebrations, we are interviewing and writing articles that highlight active members who have had a significant impact on Nature Saskatchewan, as nominated by fellow members. If you would like to suggest someone to be recognized, please reach out to Ellen Bouvier at [ebouvier@naturesask.ca](mailto:ebouvier@naturesask.ca). *

# PROTECTING THE PRAIRIES: LORNE SCOTT AND THE POLITICS OF CONSERVATION

ANDREA OLIVE. NOVEMBER 2023. UNIVERSITY OF REGINA PRESS. 280 PP. ISBN: 9780889779600. \$32.95.

Joel Cherry

Regina, SK

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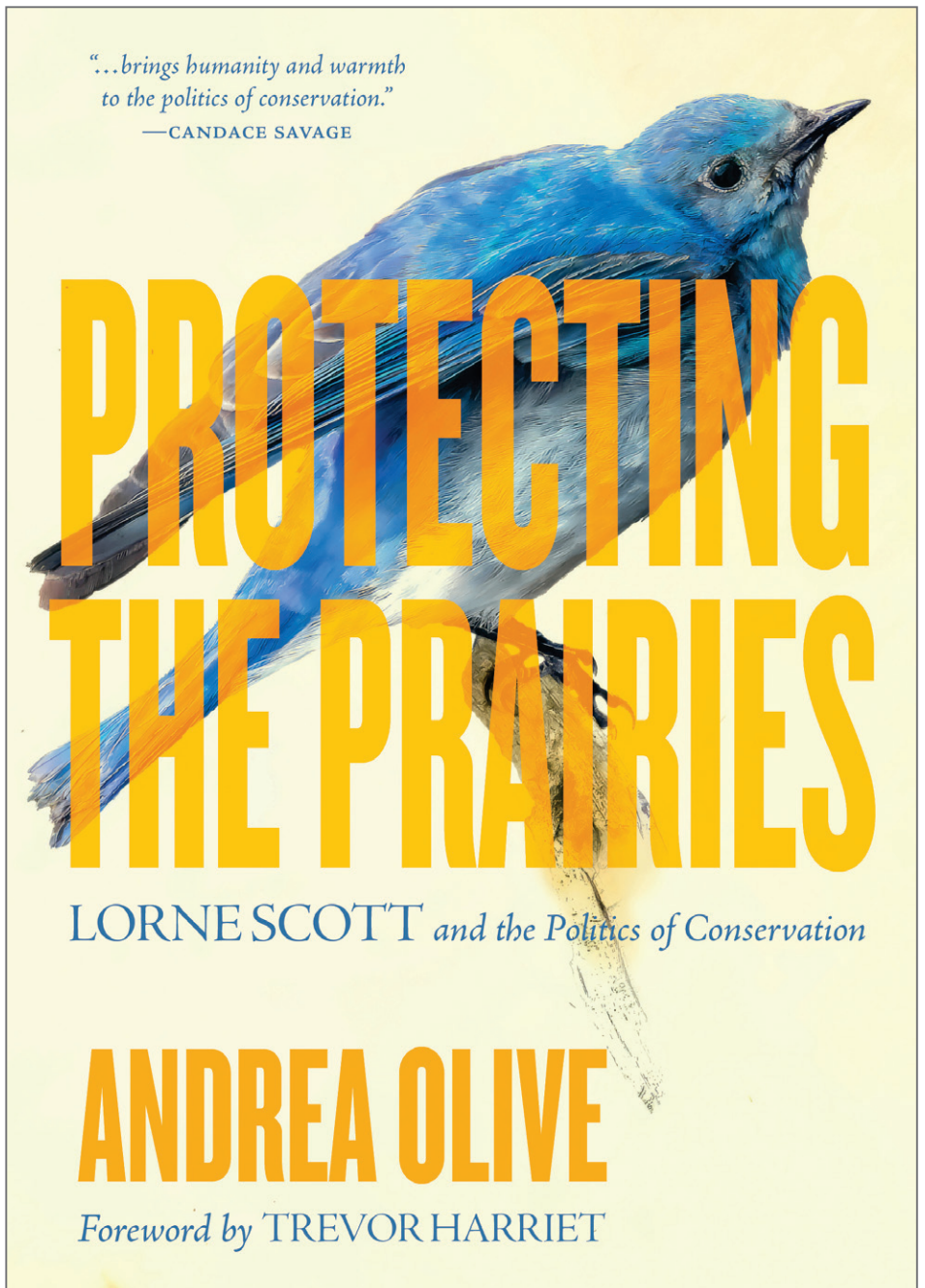
If you have spent any amount of time involved with wildlife conservation causes in Saskatchewan, it's likely that you've at some point arrived for a meeting and parked near an old van bearing a "NATURE" licence plate. Perhaps you have even banded nestling bluebirds with the friendly, unassuming farmer who drives that van.

In any case, Lorne Scott should require little introduction to *Blue Jay* readers. The former politician has spent more than 50 years advocating for nature, and he remains active to this day — you likely read some of his own words in the President's message at the beginning of this very issue.

Andrea Olive, an author and professor of political science at the University of Toronto Mississauga, first encountered Lorne in 2008 while researching for a book. She was looking for a farmer and conservationist in the vein of the great Aldo Leopold, and was beginning to despair that they did not exist. Originally from Regina and now spending her summers at a cottage in Saskatchewan, Olive happened to find just such a person close to home. She toured Lorne's farm, which still has wetlands and bluffs of trees — plenty of room for both the farming operation (which he still carries out with his father's equipment) and for wildlife.

Olive's *Protecting the Prairies: Lorne Scott and the Politics of Conservation* is not a typical biography, but rather an examination of land and wildlife conservation in Saskatchewan since the 1970s, told through the lens of its most tireless champion.

The book is organized chronologically, beginning with Lorne's youth and the initial bonds he formed with wildlife and nature, which led to an early and lifelong



friendship with the equally prodigious Stuart Houston, and eventually to a job as Wascana Park's naturalist. One of Lorne's first major contributions to wildlife conservation was his role supporting Fred Lahrman in the park's Canada Goose breeding program. Any visit to the park today can attest to the success of that program.

Lorne's hard work for bluebird and

Whooping Crane conservation earned him accolades, and he began to take up leadership roles in conservation organizations such as the Saskatchewan Natural History Society (now Nature Saskatchewan), and the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation.

The 1980s would cement Lorne's role at the forefront of conservation in Saskatchewan and Canada, as he was

instrumental in working with the Devine Government to create the *Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, and against the same government in the Rafferty reservoir controversy. While Lorne and his cohort were unable to prevent the creation of Rafferty reservoir, which flooded an expanse of riparian habitat in the Souris River Valley, the battle would lead to the birth of Environmental Impact Assessments in Canada. Lorne would soon after enter the world of politics as an elected official, representing Indian Head and area in the provincial legislature from 1991 to 1999, and serving as Minister of Environment in Premier Roy Romanow's cabinet during the latter four years of his term.

In addition to sitting down at the Indian Head Dairy Mart for hours of conversation with Lorne himself, Olive conducted numerous interviews to bring these stories to life, including with major political players such as Lorne Calvert, Lynda Haverstock and even Lorne's Rafferty reservoir adversary Grant Devine. This reliance on first-hand research gives the book an enjoyably lively and journalistic flavour.

What emerges again and again is a picture of Lorne as a practical and common-sense leader. He has strongly held views, but he is clearly not ideological, and there must be some truth in Calvert's quip to Olive that Lorne decided to run for the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party because they were the first to ask.

While in office, Lorne spearheaded the Wildlife Conservation Easement Program, which will be one of his most lasting and important achievements. These easements protect intact habitat from the plow or other "development" and stand against the notion that land is "empty" simply because it's not being used or occupied by humans. It was also prescient since the subsequent Saskatchewan Party government has made it a matter of policy to sell off as much Crown land as possible. Public lands are still being sold off, but they have at least nominal protection because we had the rare and special fortune to have had a Minister of Environment who

is deeply concerned for the natural world beyond just economic value.

Olive does not shy away from offering some criticisms of Lorne's time in office, however. Romanow's NDP government was not focused on environmental issues overall, and in fact opposed early emissions reduction initiatives such as the Kyoto Protocol. Even today Lorne is somewhat reticent to talk about climate change, which continues to be a divisive political issue, to say the least. Olive also takes Lorne to task somewhat for his role in greenlighting uranium activities in northern Saskatchewan.

Lorne did not slow down after leaving provincial politics, and the latter section of the book deals with his post-political activism, such as his opposition to the closing of the Indian Head Tree Nursery, and his mentorship of other conservationists. The book concludes with an incredible chronology of Lorne's life as a conservationist and activist spanning eight pages of bullet points, from building his first bluebird box in 1963 to beginning his third (and final, he claims) stint as president of Nature Saskatchewan in 2023.

There is a note of sadness, as there always is in modern conservation stories, about all that has been lost. While there are success stories such as the Whooping Crane, many species continue to decline, including Lorne's bluebirds, which have all but disappeared from his farm. Lorne is realistic, but also believes there is no excuse not to try our best.

Ultimately, *Protecting the Prairies* is the story of Lorne's life-long advocacy for the natural world that he so loves. It is a demonstration of the difference that one man can make in his human, and as Leopold would say, his biotic communities. It is also a call to action — if we allow creatures such as the magnificent sky-blue Mountain Bluebird to disappear forever, the wide-open spaces they inhabited truly become the empty places our machine civilization always believed them to be.

*Joel Cherry is a birder, communications professional, and former journalist. He is a regular contributor to the Blue Jay.* 🐦

## CANADIAN PRAIRIE PIPING PLOVER CENSUS

**Ashley Vass**

Piping Plover Census Coordinator  
Nature Saskatchewan

Hi there! I'm Ashley Vass. I have been with the Stewards of Saskatchewan programs for more than 10 years now and have had the pleasure of working with many different aspects of the stewardship programs. Most recently, I have been seconded from my permanent role as the Rare Plant Rescue Coordinator to help coordinate another project. I am happy to announce that we are once again conducting a Piping Plover Census and I am really looking forward to coordinating the effort in Saskatchewan!



Ashley Vass at Lac Pelletier.

Piping Plovers were first listed as a species at risk in the 1970s. Their status was upgraded to Endangered in 1985 and the first International Piping Plover Census, a concerted effort to count all Piping Plovers in Canada, the USA, and Mexico and the Caribbean, was conducted in 1991. Nature Saskatchewan coordinates the Saskatchewan portion of this International Census, which usually takes place every five years, at least until COVID-19 and the USA subsequently pulling out put the International Census on hiatus. As such, the 2021 census did not take place.

In lieu of the International Piping Plover Census, Nature Saskatchewan — in partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Service — is conducting a Canadian Prairie Piping Plover Census. Supported by many partners and volunteers in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba, surveyors will search the shorelines of basins across the Canadian prairies over a two-week window in early June in an effort to count all adult Piping Plovers. This will take more than one hundred volunteers and we are so grateful to have the support of the conservation community to achieve this endeavour. I am really looking forward to getting out there and counting some birds this summer! 🐦



# SPRING MEET

## Saskatoon, SK June 21-23, 2024

### FRIDAY, JUNE 21

- 6:30 p.m.** Registration at the Saskatoon Inn; light refreshments (coffee, tea, baking) available
- 7:30 p.m.** Presentation: The Northeast and Small Swales
- 8:00 p.m.** Brief overview of Saturday's itinerary

### SATURDAY, JUNE 22

#### TOUR A

- 8:15 a.m.** Board the bus at the Saskatoon Inn
- 8:30 a.m.** Bus leaves for **Asquith NCC Property**

#### TOUR B

- 8:45 a.m.** Board the bus at the Saskatoon Inn
- 9:00 a.m.** Bus leaves for the **Pike Lake Park**

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Bagged lunches will be enjoyed on the bus ride back to the Saskatoon Inn before leaving for the afternoon tours

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#### TOUR C

- 1:00 p.m.** Bus leaves for **Northeast Swale Tour**

#### TOUR D

- 1:00 p.m.** Bus leaves for the **Donna Birkmaier and Hyde Park** Naturalized Parks Tour

- 3:30 p.m.** Buses to return to the Saskatoon Inn
- 5:30 p.m.** Cocktails with nature photo slideshow by Saskatoon Nature Society members
- 6:30 p.m.** Banquet
- 7:30 p.m.** **EVENING EVENTS**  
Nature Saskatchewan 75th History presentation by Ron Jensen  
Meewasin Connects presentation by Andrea Lafond, MVA CEO  
Silent auction arranged the by Saskatoon Nature Society

### SUNDAY, JUNE 23

- 8:30 a.m.** Breakfast at the Saskatoon Inn
- 9:00 a.m.** Annual General Meeting
- Post AGM** *Optional* self-driving tour to Blackstrap Lake

#### SUGGESTED ACCOMMODATIONS

The **Saskatoon Inn** has a block of discounted rooms available until June 7, 2024.

To book your room, please go to <https://reservations.travelclick.com/6876?groupID=3989737> or call 1-306-242-1440 ext.0 and ask to book under the Nature Saskatchewan block.

Our 75th Anniversary Committee has been hard at work to make sure this year is one to remember and the spring and fall meets are a big part of the celebration! Staff, board members and representatives from local societies in Regina and Saskatoon are working together to bring you wonderful weekends of presentations, field trips and more!

First up is our Spring Meet, June 21-23 in Saskatoon, SK. There are multiple options for morning and afternoon tours on June 22 and they can fill up fast, so please select your activities early!

## TOUR DETAILS

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Morning Tour A</b>  <b>Asquith NCC Property - 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.</b>                  Leader: Sara Bryson (SNS) and NCC staff member</p> <p>The NCC's Asquith Nature Destination was established with funding by the Saskatoon Nature Society and is a landscape of aspen woodland rolling into fescue prairie grassland, with wildflowers scattered across the site, prairie birds flying over, sparrows that follow you along the trail, and the occasional deer peering at you through the leaves. We will hike along the first half of the mowed trail, about 4 km of uneven terrain, identifying native wildflowers and birds, and hoping to see a deer or fox.</p> <p><b>Wear good hiking shoes, a hat, sunscreen, and bring a good amount of water. You may also wish to bring bug spray and remember that the ticks will be active.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Morning Tour B</b>  <b>Pike Lake Park Tour - 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.</b>                  Leader: Stan Shadick</p> <p>Pike Lake Provincial Park (30 km SW of Saskatoon) has oxbow lake, sand dunes, marsh, grassland and woodland habitats for plants and birds. We plan to walk the 1.5 km loop nature trail plus stroll along the lake shore and other wooded portions of the park. Some birds we may see include Red-necked Grebes, Black Terns, ducks, Great Horned Owl, woodpeckers, Veery, Spotted Towhee and American Redstart.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bring water and a hat.</b>  <b>Walking distance: 3 km</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Afternoon Tour C</b>  <b>Northeast Swale - 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.</b>                  Leader: Sara Bryson</p> <p>The Northeast Swale is a valuable native grassland landscape including several wetland areas, within the city limits of Saskatoon. We will stop at the slough at the entrance to identify shorebirds and ducks, then move along the uneven trail to the ridges to view the wildflowers, get a different view of the wetlands, and enjoy the sound of the meadowlark and other grassland birds.</p> <p><b>Good hiking shoes, a hat, and water are recommended.</b>  <b>Walking distance: 2.5 to 3 km</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Afternoon Tour D</b>  <b>Donna Birkmaier and Hyde Park</b>  <b>Naturalized Parks Tour</b>  <b>1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.</b>                  Leader: Stan Shadick</p> <p>These 2 adjacent naturalized parks near the east end of Saskatoon contain marshes, grassland, and some woodland habitats. We plan to wander past the wetlands on level trails. Some birds we may see include Red-necked Grebes, Black Terns, ducks, Brown Thrashers, Gray Catbirds, finches, and native sparrows.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bring water and a hat.</b>  <b>Walking distance: 3 km</b></p>

**On Sunday morning**, there is a **Bonus** Optional Self-driving Tour of **Blackstrap Lake** led by Stan Shadick.

Blackstrap Lake is a large reservoir fed by a canal from Lake Diefenbaker, situated in an old glacial river valley.

We will depart the hotel in a car convoy about 30 minutes after the end of the AGM.

Our first stop will be at the south end of the lake next to Highway 11. We will later visit the north dam and possibly the park.

Some birds we may see include pelicans, cormorants, ducks, Forster's Terns and other water birds.

**Bring water and a hat. Walking distance: 0.2 km.**



# SPRING MEET

## Saskatoon, SK

### June 21-23, 2024

## REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s)	
Address	
Phone #	
Email	

Full registration includes Friday evening presentations and snacks, Saturday tours (morning and afternoon), Saturday evening 75th celebration banquet, and optional Sunday morning tour.

**\*\*Individual banquet tickets are also available\*\***

### Early Registration (until June 2)

Member: \$175

Non-Member: \$200\*

### Late Registration (June 3 - June 17)

Member: \$190

Non-Member: \$215\*

*\*Non-member registration includes an electronic membership for the remainder of 2024*

Morning Tour Options Choose one per person

# <input type="text"/>	<b>A</b> Asquith NCC Property	# <input type="text"/>	<b>B</b> Pike Lake Park
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Afternoon Tour Options Choose one per person

# <input type="text"/>	<b>C</b> Northeast Swale	# <input type="text"/>	<b>D</b> Donna Birkmaier and Hyde Naturalized Park
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*\*tour availability is on a first-registered, first-served basis; if a tour is full you will automatically be assigned to the second option*

Any food allergies or dietary needs? Yes  No

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Registration: **\$175** (early)/ **\$190** (late) \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Member Reg: **\$200** (early)/ **\$215** (late) \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional** Individual Banquet Tickets **\$75** each \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*\*All prices include GST*

**Total Due:** = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Pay by cheque (payable to Nature Saskatchewan), VISA or Mastercard**

CREDIT CARD: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ EXP \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ CVC \_\_\_\_\_

Mail, email, call our office or visit [naturesask.ca](http://naturesask.ca) to register today!

206-1860 Lorne Street, Regina, SK S4P 2L7

Email: [info@naturesask.ca](mailto:info@naturesask.ca) [www.naturesask.ca](http://www.naturesask.ca)

306-780-9273 or 1-800-667-4668





# TREES AGAINST THE WIND: THE BIRTH OF PRAIRIE SHELTERBELTS

WILLIAM. R. SCHROEDER. 2024. NATURE SASKATCHEWAN. 270 PP. ISBN: 9780921104377. \$29.95.

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Have you ever wondered how shelterbelts appeared across the Canadian Prairies in the early 20th century? *Trees Against the Wind* provides the answer through the story of the Forest Nursery Stations (FNS, later called Shelterbelt/Agroforestry Centres or SAS) in Indian Head and Sutherland, its long-time ‘founder’ and boss Norman Mackenzie Ross, and his dedicated staff.

Mr. Ross oversaw the creation and operation of both FNS during his amazing 41-year career, until his retirement in 1941. The author of *Trees Against the Wind*, William Schroeder, also had a 35-year distinguished career at the SAS in Indian Head. Due to his career and the abrupt closure of the SAS in 2012-13, Schroeder wanted to tell the story of prairie shelterbelts and the FNS. His decades-long association with SAS greatly facilitated him in locating hard to find material and in synthesizing the detailed and immaculate research for this book. I particularly enjoyed the fair and balanced approach Schroeder took, and the well-written narrative flows nicely and is easy to read.

Readers will learn the strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures of the key players, including Mr. Ross. Schroeder does not shy away from the prejudices that Mr. Ross and other folks of British descent had at the time against non-British immigrants. Immigrants from Germany and Austria Hungary ably filled the less desirable temporary seasonal jobs at the FNS in Indian Head during Mr. Ross’ time.

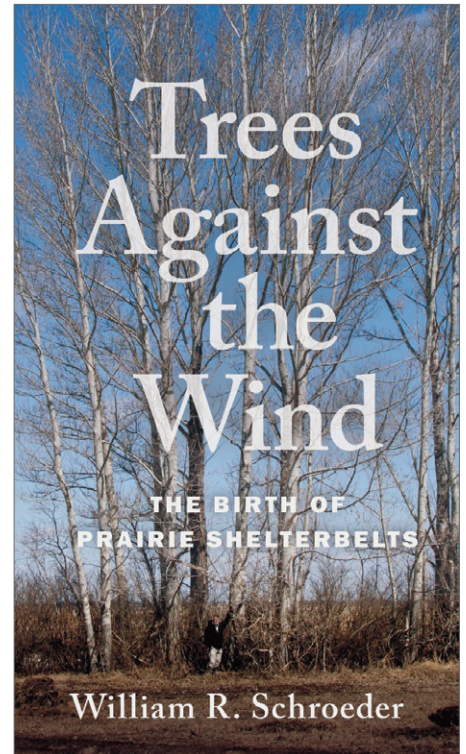
The text throughout the book is strengthened and complemented by an introductory timeline, many photos, and several tables, maps, and graphs. Without them, the text would have much

less impact. I also enjoyed the ‘text box’ essays inserted in numerous chapters. The volume also contains several handy appendices — a metric conversion chart, a list of tree and shrub species grown in Indian Head and Sutherland, and lists of known permanent and temporary staff at the FNS in Indian Head, up to 1941. In addition, there is both a detailed end notes section and an extensive bibliography for obtaining more information, as well as a useful subject index.

The first two chapters of *Trees Against the Wind* focus on an overview of the exploration and subsequent European settlement of the Canadian Prairies, and the harsh and difficult conditions and challenges homesteaders faced in late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most homesteaders found the treeless prairie alien and wanted trees for their homesteads. This, in turn, generated the need and want for trees and shrubs on prairie farms by 1900. Chapter three provides the biography of Norman Ross including his hiring to develop and set up the tree planting program on the Prairies. Chapter four covers the selection of the FNS site near Indian Head and its construction and setup. I found it fascinating how quickly the FNS were set up and operational without modern machinery and how FNS staff learned on the fly both with scientific approaches and sometimes through trial and error. Logistics were another strength of FNS. Even with modern aids, logistics often fail today.

Chapter five focuses on the FNS in Sutherland. It was created to help meet the demand that Indian Head FNS could not meet. Its operation began in 1913 and closed in 1966. Part of the Sutherland FNS later became the beloved Forestry Farm and Zoo in Saskatoon in the 1970s.

Later chapters focus on shelterbelt trees that grow well on the prairies,



Mr. Ross’ forestry inspectors and their important work with farmers, and spreading the gospel of shelterbelts and their successes and challenges in 1920s and 1930s.

The Great Depression and catastrophic budget cuts nearly ended the FNS. It was through farmer support, Norman Ross’ effective lobbying, and established shelterbelts demonstrating value during the Dust Bowl that saved the FNS. It was shown that shelterbelts can help to conserve soil moisture and reduce soil erosion by wind during drought. FNS partnership with the new Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration in the mid-1930s stabilized the FNS situation in following years until the 1990s when the PFRA was formally absorbed into the Department of Agriculture.

In Chapter 11, Schroeder summarizes the remarkable success of the FNS and the Tree Planting Program that Mr. Ross created. More than 175 million seedlings of 19 species and cultivars were grown

*continued on page 37*

# WHEN THE MEADOWLARK SINGS

Lorne Fitch, P. Biol.

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The trill of a meadowlark in full song penetrated the cab of the truck, overcoming the whine of tires, radio voices and engine noise. Somehow the quality of that song, certainly not its volume, triggered a smile and a sigh of weather-related relief. If there is a tangible, audible signal of spring, the meadowlark produces it in an unforgettable set of notes.

“Repeated, melodious flute-like phrases” is how the Audubon Society’s Field Guide describes the sound. Something like “hip hip hurrah! Boys three cheers.” This would certainly qualify as the fond expectation of spring.

A more precise description includes: “a complex, two-phrase primary song that begins with 1-6 pure whistles and descends to a series of 1-5 gurgling warbles.” I don’t think any of those descriptions would help you distinguish the song of a meadowlark, but once you’ve heard it, the sonogram is riveted in your brain.

A meadowlark’s song isn’t just a musical composition that provides a sense spring is upon us. The composition and combination of bird and song are more than that audible reminder. A meadowlark is a synecdoche, a tangible, living representation of a grassland landscape that extended from the Rocky Mountains to the Canadian Shield and from the boreal forest to the Gulf of Mexico.

Meadowlarks return to Alberta’s grasslands and parkland early, to a brown, sometimes a white world devoid of colour. Although these birds have streaked brown upper parts, blending with the tans and browns of early spring grasslands, they harbour hidden splashes of color. Their underparts are a solid rich yellow, which the meadowlark males telegraph from perches on power poles, fence posts and sage brush clumps. Across their vibrant yellow chests is an elegant black collar, which resembles a black tie, as if the return is a formal event.

At one time, and not so long ago, the meadowlark’s song would have been one of many returning grassland birds. Together

the chirps, trills, twitters, whistles, buzzes, screeches, squeaks, warbles and gurgles would have been a boisterous, even raucous cacophony of sound. The symphony of nearly 70 grassland and parkland birds, in addition to that of waterfowl and shorebirds would have constituted a chorus of combined beauty and variety.

One might think the legions of prairie explorers, like David Thompson, Peter Fidler, Peter Erasmus, Anthony Henday, John Palliser, George Dawson and others might have heard the notes and made a note of this phenomena. They didn’t and perhaps they were more fixated on wildlife to eat, not listen to. John Macoun, a botanist and bird enthusiast collected grassland birds in 1882 but there is little mention in his notes of the riotous nature of the chorus they made. It is thought he and his companions were deaf to some of the songs and missed the subtle intonations of birds like the Sprague’s Pipits which were not recorded in his bird lists.

One early traveler, the Earl of Southesk, perhaps better provisioned than most, fairly gushed over bird song. On June 15, 1859 he wrote: “At dawn of day I was awakened by a most delicious concert of birds singing...all nature was full of cheerfulness, and the pretty songsters tuned their voices to an encouraging strain. As they fluttered around me...one with a deep voice would sing all alone... then a hundred voices would answer him rapturously...then all would unite together and chorus forth their little ditty again and again.”

Where once you would have been tempted to cover your ears from the racket, there is now silence, a deficit of bird song. We are not going deaf, although the gentle voices of Baird’s Sparrows and Sprague’s Pipits are hard to hear at the best of times. They can go missing without our acknowledgement or regret.

The silence stems from males — whose songs are a come-on for females, “hey baby, I’ve got territory with food and a great nesting spot” — being unable to find suitable habitat. No songs mean there are no subsequent territorial calls, no alarm,

contact, flight or begging calls and the landscape goes quiet.

This silence isn’t illusionary or understated. The North American Bird Conservation Initiative, in its 2019 “State of Canada’s Birds”, points out the shocking statistic that 300 million birds have been lost from the grasslands since 1970. Two of every three birds have gone missing. Birds dependent on native grasslands have declined 87 per cent. Even birds tolerant of agricultural landscapes have dropped by 39 per cent.

Aerial insectivores, birds dependent on insects for food are suffering most of all. Not only are birds in decline but “the little things that run the world” as ecologist E. O. Wilson describes insects are in free fall. The finger points to agricultural alchemy, the heavy reliance on pesticides, herbicides and intensive farming. Any way you slice it, grassland birds are in sharp decline, even the “common” meadowlark.

A rite of spring passage for us is a wandering drive through the grasslands south and east of Lethbridge. It is like a tonic to see the returning birds, to realize both they and we have survived another winter. But it is disheartening to drive down dozens of kilometres of country roads, through a biological wasteland of fields covered with stubble and not see a single bird.

Cultivation agriculture has become so expansive that the fields crowd up against the road, no fencerows remain, there are no patches of waste ground, just a blank perfection of last year’s crop residue, so short even the occasional Horned Larks have trouble finding a perch. Kilometre after kilometre, acre upon acre, the rich diversity of native grassland has been transformed into a bland, homogenized monoculture.

Agriculture simplifies and eliminates native vegetation; most wildlife relies on vegetation diversity to meet all of their life cycle requirements. Like Goldilocks and the three bears’ porridge, some birds need undisturbed grassland, others require patchiness (a range of plant height and density) and a few are content with virtually bare ground. Meadowlarks like

the middle ground, where the habitat is “just right.” Key to bird survival is vegetation diversity, not obliteration.

Less than 20 per cent of the mixed grass prairie remains in Canada and only a fraction of the fescue grasslands, less than 5 per cent. To put this into perspective, this decline in mixed grass prairie would be like the average Canadian family with an average house of 2,000 ft<sup>2</sup> being squeezed into one 400 ft<sup>2</sup>. Consider the ramifications of that and maybe we would have some sympathy for the plight of grassland birds.

Much of the remaining mixed grass is public land (at least in Alberta) but all is subject to periodic nibbling and conversion. A quarter (160 acres) might have retained its native complement but years of overgrazing, neglect and lack of oversight leave it vulnerable to sale, because it is no longer considered “valuable”. It becomes a potato field, or an enlargement of an already enormous empire of wheat. In the purity and single-mindedness of economics meadowlarks don’t stand a chance against potatoes.

The goal of our spring drive is to spot the first meadowlark of the season, an icon even more representative of the season than snow geese, swans, pintails or Northern Shovelers. Most of these are in transit; the meadowlark is a sticker. Finally, after kilometres of disappointment, a male in full-throated splendor and song perches on an old cedar fence post beside a remnant piece of grassland, too rough to plow. Our mood improved instantaneously as the repertoire reverberated through the truck cab.

We read later this isn’t surprising, that birds can positively influence people’s moods. Analyzing data from 26,000 adults across 26 European countries, compiled in the 2012 European Quality of Life Survey (reported in the *Ecological Economics* journal), the researchers concluded that diversity in nature, especially of birds, had the greatest influence on people’s moods, more so than wealth.

It’s hard to curse the loss of grasslands (and birds) without being hypocritical. Both my sets of grandparents were sodbusters and, to a major degree the wealth and comfort I enjoy today was made possible because of the conversion of native

landscapes to agriculture. Wallace Stegner, no stranger to grasslands, pointed out that, “western history is a series of lessons in consequences.”

Grasslands are one of our most imperiled landscapes and it isn’t hyperbole to suggest birds that rely on grasslands are in serious decline. In a major way we have traded the song of the meadowlark for the material pursuits of more potatoes, canola and wheat, as well as urban sprawl and industrial sites.

In Alberta, land trusts like the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Southern Alberta Land Trust Society along with conservation efforts by the Alberta Conservation Association, Cows and Fish and the Prairie Conservation Forum have made gains, important ones in conserving native grasslands. But the losses are still evident and development easily outpaces conservation. Endangered spaces lead to endangered species.

The diversity, abundance and distribution of birds is a metric that provides a window to understand the health and integrity of a landscape. Results from the European Quality of Life Survey show the sights and sounds of birds are also a major contributor to our feeling of well-being. We can’t live without bread — perhaps we can’t live without meadowlarks either.

Given the negative trends in grassland bird numbers I’m not sure what audible signal subsequent generations will hear as the harbinger of spring — lawnmowers perhaps? Without bird song, its variety and exuberance we will surely lose an essential connection to the natural world and, for anyone connecting the dots, a catastrophic loss of a big piece of the natural world.

It will be sad and a failure of our stewardship to say, as William Wordsworth did, “The things which I have seen [and heard], I will see [and hear] no more.”

*Lorne Fitch is a Professional Biologist, a retired Fish and Wildlife Biologist and a past Adjunct Professor with the University of Calgary. He is the author of Streams of Consequence — Dispatches from the Conservation World.* 🐦

## TREES . . .

*continued from page 35*

and shipped during the Ross era. Service to farmers was consistently judged as excellent and that secured the support and respect of farmers for FNS. The author noted it that Mr. Ross and his many accomplishments as a forester, administrator and leader were almost forgotten by history after his retirement and death.

It was too bad that the author stopped the story at the retirement of Mr. Ross in 1941, as I’m sure the story of the FNS and Prairie shelterbelts continued to be interesting thereafter. Hopefully material will still be available for a sequel, or follow-up articles, to this book. However, I am glad Schroeder included an afterword chapter on the sad end of the SAS Centre in Indian Head. In this chapter, the author details clearly how and why the Centre was closed and how the attempts to keep it open failed in 2012 and 2013. Based on the facts presented in the chapter, I agree with the author that the shutdown was an extremely poor decision and poorly managed by the Harper government.

I learned a lot from this book and was amazed at what was achieved in the early decades of the FNS, especially given the technological, financial, and human resource limitations at the time. Mr. Ross and his staff deserve our thanks and respect. I also thank the author for neatly answering the question of how shelterbelts appeared across the Canadian Prairies in early 20th century, and for saving and recording the story of the FNS and Prairie shelterbelts before they are lost to the mists of time. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the agricultural landscape history of the Canadian Prairies. 🐦



# NATURE SASKATCHEWAN AWARDS:

Each year at the Fall Meet, we recognize outstanding service and contributions that Society members and/or affiliate and partner organizations have made toward Nature Saskatchewan's objectives and goals.

Clear criteria have been established in terms of purpose, eligibility, and nomination procedure. This year, we are seeking nominations for three classes of awards — **Volunteer Recognition Award**, **Fellows Award**, and **Conservation Award**.

The Volunteer Recognition Award and Conservation Award can be conferred on the same individual or organization more than once.

The Cliff Shaw Award will also be presented at the Fall Meet. The recipient is chosen by the *Blue Jay* editor.

Local societies throughout Saskatchewan play an important role in furthering conservation and appreciation of nature at the local level. There are always those who step up to the plate to organize meetings and outings, go the extra mile to help others connect with nature, or work silently and tirelessly behind the scenes. It's time those contributions were recognized. We encourage anyone from a local society to consider nominating someone from your group who is a Nature Saskatchewan member, and who deserves recognition for any of these awards. Note that nominees for the Volunteer Recognition Award and Fellows Award must hold a current membership with Nature Saskatchewan.

## Nomination Procedure

The nomination procedure is the same for all three awards. The criteria and names of past recipients can be found on the Nature Saskatchewan website at [www.naturesask.ca/what-we-do/awards](http://www.naturesask.ca/what-we-do/awards). The office can also send a copy by mail, if preferred.

- Nominations can be made by Nature Saskatchewan members, directors, and staff. Local societies should consider

nominating someone from their local group.

- Self-nominations will not be accepted.
- Nominations are to be made in writing and submitted by the published deadline.
- Nominations are to include the following information: The nominee's name, address, and phone number; the nominator's name and contact information; details of the nominee's efforts.
- The Awards Committee will independently rate the nominations, and confirm that the nominee holds a current membership with Nature Saskatchewan.
- Chairperson of the Awards Committee will bring the recommendations to the Board.
- If ratified, the President or his/her delegate shall confer the respective Awards to the recipients at the Fall Meet.

**The deadline to submit nominations for awards is August 30, 2024.**

All Nature Saskatchewan Awards consist of the following:

- The announcement of the recipient's name at the Fall Meet.
- The presentation of a certificate recognizing the contribution.
- An announcement in *Blue Jay* recognizing the distinction.

## VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARD

This award was created in 1996 to acknowledge an individual Nature Saskatchewan member who has devoted significant time and energy to promoting the objectives of the Society, including contributions made at the local society level. Priority for this award will be given to a Nature Saskatchewan member whose volunteer work has helped to enhance the public awareness of the Society (this may include contributions to a Society conservation project or program). It may be appropriate in some years to have this award shared by more than one person, if they have worked together on the same project, or on closely related projects.

## CALL FOR RESOLUTIONS

The resolutions considered during the business meeting at each year's Fall Meet are important expressions of member concerns on environmental issues. The Nature Saskatchewan Board of Directors is responsible for acting on all resolutions that are passed by the members. This includes sending resolutions directly to the responsible government ministry and pursuing further action and/or meetings with government and others, as deemed appropriate.

Anyone wishing to submit a resolution for consideration at the 2024 business meeting is asked to send a written draft to the Nature Saskatchewan office ([info@naturesask.ca](mailto:info@naturesask.ca)) no later than **Friday August 16, 2024**. This provides an opportunity to receive feedback from members of the resolutions committee that can help to improve your resolution. It also helps us prepare for the meeting.

Please note that resolutions not submitted to the Nature Saskatchewan office by **5 p.m. on Friday, September 6, 2024** will be considered only with the agreement of a two-thirds majority of those attending the business meeting.

### Resolution Guidelines:

1. Resolutions must be in keeping with the society's mandate, bylaws and goals.
2. All resolutions must be submitted in writing.
3. A resolution is, essentially, an exercise in communication. Simple, clear language and focus on one topic or issue is most effective.
4. Supporting information presented in "Whereas" statements must be accurate and factual.
5. Resolutions should be no longer than one page, and preferably less.

# CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

## Eligibility

Nature Saskatchewan members who have provided valuable time and effort in contributing to the Society are eligible. Local societies are encouraged to nominate someone from their local group who is a Nature Saskatchewan member, recognizing that Nature Saskatchewan values their contributions to the overall goals of the Society. The nominee must be a current member of Nature Saskatchewan. This award can be conferred on the same person more than once.

## FELLOWS AWARD

A motion was passed at the 1987 Annual General Meeting creating a new class of honorary membership entitled “Fellows of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society”. This award recognizes an extensive and continuing contribution of time over many years to the Society and its objectives. Up to five recipients may be

chosen annually. Once selected, Fellows hold that title as long as they remain members of the Society. It is the highest honour the Society can bestow upon a member.

## Eligibility

Eligible individuals are members of Nature Saskatchewan who have provided an outstanding time and work contribution to the Society over many years. These contributions have been significant, and may have come in the form of leadership, communication, authorship, social media outreach, research, and other areas. The contributions have been cumulative or ongoing, and represent long-standing service or commitment to Nature Saskatchewan and its objectives.

## CONSERVATION AWARD

In addition to advocacy and other forms of conservation action, it is important that Nature Saskatchewan

recognize, as it has done since 1953, those both within and beyond the organization who have done “meritorious work in the interest of conservation in Saskatchewan.”

Nature Saskatchewan’s Conservation Award will be presented to an individual or organization whose total contribution to conservation is outstanding, whether in relation to a particular project or in a number of roles over a period of years.

## Eligibility

Individuals, affiliate and/or partner organizations, not-for-profit associations, institutions, community groups, businesses, government and non-government organizations that have contributed significantly to conservation in Saskatchewan.

This award can be conferred on the same individual or organization more than once.

# THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS!

## NATURE SASKATCHEWAN FUNDERS LISTING

### 2023-24 FISCAL YEAR

#### Piping Plover Project

- Environment and Climate Change Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service

#### Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre

- Nature Serve (Parks Canada/ Canadian Wildlife Service)
- South of the Divide Conservation Action Plan

#### NatureHood

- TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
- Nature Canada
- City of Regina
- City of Saskatoon
- Nature Regina
- SaskOutdoors
- Magnet Student Work Placement Program
- Provincial Capital Commission

#### Important Bird Areas

- Ministry of Environment – Fish and Wildlife Development Fund

#### Last Mountain Bird Observatory

- South Saskatchewan Community Foundation – Murray and Edna Forbes
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Ministry of Environment – Fish and Wildlife Development Fund
- Young Professionals Stewardship Grant (PCESC)

#### Nature Saskatchewan General Fund

- SaskCulture/SK Lotteries

#### Stewards of Saskatchewan

- SaskEnergy
- Environment and Climate Change Canada – Priority Places, Habitat Stewardship Program, and Community Nominated Priority Places
- The Mosaic Company
- Enbridge Inc.
- Alliance
- SaskTel
- Canada Summer Jobs
- US Fish and Wildlife Service – Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grant
- Ministry of Environment – Fish and Wildlife Development Fund
- Earth Rangers
- TC Energy
- The McLean Foundation
- Magnet Student Work Placement Program
- United Nations Association in Canada - Canada Green Corps' Science and Technology Internship Programme

Nature Saskatchewan would also like to thank our many generous individual donors who contributed throughout the year

# STEWARDS OF SASKATCHEWAN PROGRAMS

Each summer, the Stewards of Saskatchewan (SOS) staff are busy connecting with land stewards, surveying for species at risk, and promoting awareness of our disappearing prairie parkland landscapes and their biological diversity. This work is supported by hard working summer staff and, in 2024, we are pleased to welcome Amy Bailey, Brandon Melnechenko, Maizie Anderson, Tory Frankl, Vanessa Wagner, Sophia Uytterhagen, Nathaniel Hak and Kim Sowa to the SOS team.

## **Amy Bailey, Rare Plant Rescue Search & Monitoring Crew**

Amy grew up around the rural community of Alida, Saskatchewan on her family's farm. As a child, she spent a lot of time outdoors finding pretty flowers and chasing frogs, which eventually led her to choose natural resources as her career path. She is currently living in Prince Albert and is finishing her diploma in Integrated Resource Management at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. She has enjoyed all of her classes so far, but conservation ecology and classes on plant and bird identification are her favourites. In her spare time, Amy likes to explore as much of our beautiful province as possible through activities such as hiking, backpacking, camping and kayaking. In the future, she hopes to add micro photography to her list of hobbies so she can capture and share the tiny unseen details of the world around us. This will be Amy's second summer working with Nature Saskatchewan on the RPR crew and she is very excited to be returning!



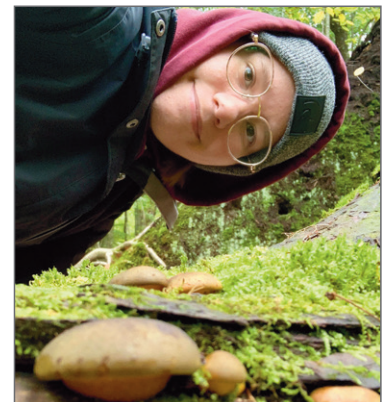
## **Brandon Melnechenko, Rare Plant Rescue Field Coordinator**

Brandon was born and raised in Regina, but also enjoyed helping out on the family farm in the Foam Lake region of Saskatchewan. This previous winter, he was able to try out many different ice fishing spots and is always looking forward to the fun and exciting summer opportunities that Saskatchewan has to offer. After completing a wildlife and fisheries conservation diploma program at Lakeland College in 2023, and spending the following summer as a part of Nature Saskatchewan's Rare Plant Rescue search and monitor crew, Brandon learned so much and began to truly grow a solid footing in the world of conservation. This year, he is fortunate enough to be joining the team at Nature Saskatchewan again before going back to school to continue and complete a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Biology. Brandon is anticipating a very exciting and productive field season in an effort to conserve native prairie and plants alongside wonderful like-minded people! He thinks it is amazing to be a part of something as great as Nature Saskatchewan and is grateful to be able to connect with people across the province to build and contribute to long lasting conservational efforts.



## **Maizie Andersen, Rare Plant Rescue Habitat Stewardship Assistant**

Maizie was born and raised in Regina, Saskatchewan, and grew up doing all things outdoors. Her favourite childhood memories include exploring the old-growth wood lot on her family's farm in southern Ontario where she would take numerous pictures of fungi and find as many frogs, toads, or salamanders as possible. She enjoys camping, fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, ice fishing, and reading a good book in a hammock. Maizie is currently a biology student at the University of Regina and is excited to explore all that the realm of biology has to offer. Aside from her passion for biology, Maizie is currently the Warrant Officer First Class for 41 Hercules Air Cadet Squadron where she has honed her problem solving and leadership skills. When she was seven, Maizie was obsessed with Burrowing Owls and worked hard to raise \$200 to donate to Nature Saskatchewan's Operation Burrowing Owl program. Maizie is beyond excited to be working with Nature Saskatchewan this summer and is looking forward to contributing to the protection of the province's beautiful prairie.



## **Tory Frankl, Rare Plant Rescue Search & Monitoring Crew Lead**

While Tory grew up in Regina, she spent plenty of time out at her family farm. When she was young, Tory always enjoyed being outside exploring, sitting in the tractor with her dad, and working with cows and horses. With a fascination for nature, her interest in land management grew and she pursued her education in biology and conservation, recently receiving her BSc in Environmental Biology from the University of Regina. Between semesters, she left the prairies to be a rangeland technician in British Columbia where she had the opportunity to combine her interest in cattle and grassland management. When she is not working, Tory's favourite ways to explore the outdoors are on horseback, snowshoeing, or hiking on a trail. She throws on some good tunes and makes sure to stop at any plant that catches her eye along the way. In addition, she enjoys traveling and making stained glass. Tory is looking forward to working for Nature Saskatchewan and having the opportunity to help conserve and bring awareness to the biodiversity that makes Saskatchewan a unique and beautiful place.





# WELCOME SUMMER STAFF FOR 2024



## **Vanessa Wagner, Rare Plant Rescue Search & Monitoring Crew**

Vanessa is originally from Germany but spent the majority of her life on a farm in southern Saskatchewan. She is a third year biology student at the University of Regina, focusing on Ecology and Environmental Biology, as well as a minor in Geology. Between spending a few years working at a vet clinic and a dairy farm, Vanessa realized she enjoys working outdoors, even if it means early mornings and bad weather! As a child, Vanessa always loved the outdoors and would love looking for frogs and salamanders, and playing with the family dogs. She grew up going camping and fishing with family, which led to her interest in exploring nature and wanting to travel. In her free time, Vanessa enjoys going on hikes with her dog, camping, going to the lake, snowboarding, baking, and crafting. She is excited to be a part of the Nature Saskatchewan team and make a difference in conservation!



## **Sophia Uytterhagen, Rare Plant Rescue Search & Monitoring Crew**

Since she was a child, Sophia has had a strong interest in learning about anything related to wildlife and ecology. She was raised on a farm outside of the small town of Lake Alma, which meant she spent much of her time outside exploring and working with animals. This is where my Sophia's love of nature and everything in it came from. That, and watching every National Geographic show and documentary that came on T.V. (much to her family's annoyance). In her free time, Sophia enjoys going on walks and hikes, baking anything to satisfy her sweet tooth, listening to music, and playing card/board games. Sophia is currently in her fourth year of Environmental Biology at the University of Saskatchewan and is hoping to go back in the Fall of 2024 to complete an honours. She feels very fortunate to be able to work with Nature Saskatchewan, where she can share her passion for conservation and contribute to the protection of Saskatchewan's biodiversity.



## **Nathaniel Hak, Habitat Stewardship Assistant**

Nathaniel was born and raised in Regina, Saskatchewan, and has been spending time outdoors for as long as he can remember — camping, fishing, hunting, and hiking. Nathaniel's passion for the outdoors and wildlife conservation began at an early age, as his favourite shows to watch growing up were BBC Earth documentaries featuring David Attenborough. He always enjoyed spending time with his dad, who also works in conservation, while he was in the field. In 2023, Nathaniel graduated from Lakeland College in Vermilion, AB, with a Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation diploma, which was an incredible learning experience. This fall, he will be starting his final year of a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Biology at the University of Regina, having transferred into the program last year. In his spare time, Nathaniel can typically be found hanging out with friends and family, exploring the outdoors, or thinking about his next travel adventure. This is Nathaniel's second year as a Habitat Stewardship Assistant with Nature Saskatchewan, and he couldn't be more excited! Last summer, he really enjoyed being able to spend time with the other amazing Stewards of Saskatchewan participants while exploring more of the province. Nathaniel is looking forward to building on those skills, meeting more of participants, and contributing to species-at-risk conservation this summer!



## **Kim Sowa, Habitat Stewardship Assistant**

Kim graduated from Lakeland College this spring with a diploma in Land Stewardship and Conservation. Growing up on a small farm by Wadena, Saskatchewan, no matter the season or the weather Kim would always be outside playing with her dogs, exploring the woods around her house, or spending time at the lake. She has always had an interest in wildlife and nature, but more recently her interest has turned to plants. No matter where Kim was, she would always drag her friends and family around for hours at aquariums, zoos, and now botanical gardens and greenhouses. Walking her dogs has now turned into walks to find native flowers and new species to identify and learn. In the future, Kim plans to travel across Canada to explore new ecosystems and their unique properties. Although she has always appreciated nature and its beauty, she now has a new understanding of it as well. Kim is excited to work with Nature Saskatchewan and to put all of her schooling to use as she deepens her knowledge. 🐦



# NATURE SASKATCHEWAN MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: DON WEIDL

Ron Jensen

Saskatoon, SK

In conversation with Don Weidl, a long-time Nature Saskatchewan member from Broadview, major accomplishments for Nature Saskatchewan include the publication of *Birds of Saskatchewan* — thanks to Manley Callin's bequest — plus the hard work and due diligence in publishing the Manley Callin series. *Birds of Saskatchewan* was the final publication and Don thinks Manley's expectations were not only met but surpassed. Nature Saskatchewan members should be proud of this world class publication.

Don became aware of Saskatchewan Natural History Society (SNHS) through Doug Francis, who conducted Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) in the Broadview and Round Lake areas. Don joined the SNHS in 1968 along with fellow birder David Chaskavich.

His first society meeting was the Regina fall meeting in 1972, when David drove them to Regina. Don vividly recalls an exchange between a young Wayne Harris and Stuart Houston who was chairing a section of the meeting.

Don grew up in Broadview, located in southeast Saskatchewan, where he and buddy David birded. The pair are credited in the *Birds of the Qu'Appelle 1859-1979* with "5 or more Christmas Bird Counts between 1966 to 1979." Don continues CBCs in the southeast part of the province with counts from Broadview, Grenfell and Crooked Lake. He's also participated in previous CBCs in Birch Hills, Candle Lake, Codette Lake, Dundurn, Fenton, Hafford, Herbert, Moose Mountain Provincial Park and Prince Albert, to name a few.

A birding student of E. Manley and Elmer Callin, Don grew up birding with two of the province's better birders in a great area — the Qu'Appelle Valley. Don's mother, Lorraine, was a niece of Elmer's wife. It was during Elmer's family visits to Broadview that Don benefitted from good bird coaching. Beginning in 1968,



Don Weidl.

some of Don's great memories are joining Elmer, Manley, John Nelson and David in annual field meetings to special places like Round Lake in the Qu'Appelle Valley and Ekapo Lake south of Broadview.

Snowy Egret sightings were first reported in 1956 at Good Spirit Lake and Craven. Don and George Anderson photographed a Snowy Egret at Crooked Lake on May 7, 1978, providing the first confirmed species record. A short article of the sighting, authored by Don, appears in the March 1979 *Blue Jay*.

Don suggests habitat loss and protecting water as the biggest challenges for all naturalists. Purchasing land and educating people of the value of native habitat and water systems — not only for healthy ecosystems, but for human health — are an essential part of the society.

Nature Saskatchewan-related highlights for Don have included leading a group of birders at the Prince Albert spring meet, and the great food at the Preeceville fall meet. Other highlights include meeting many great people — some becoming lifelong friends.

Sometimes it's years between talking with members; however, as soon as contact is made that commonality renews.

The quality of the *Blue Jay* articles is a great way to reach members and non-members. People can relate to the variety of articles presented from the very scientific to casual observations; all of which are important in conveying what members are seeing in their natural world.

As a closing thought, the growth and survival of Nature Saskatchewan will benefit from nature education for youth. Youth becoming involved in nature through education programs is critical for Nature Saskatchewan to continue doing great work. Join now! There are many programs and counts with which to become involved.

*As part of our 75th anniversary celebrations, we are interviewing and writing articles that highlight active members who have had a significant impact on Nature Saskatchewan, as nominated by fellow members. If you would like to suggest someone to be recognized, please reach out to Ellen Bouvier at [ebouvier@naturesask.ca](mailto:ebouvier@naturesask.ca).* 🐦



# HUMAN NATURE: PRAIRIE SASKATCHEWAN'S DECEPTIVE REPUTATION

**Grace Pidborchynski**

Operation Burrowing Owl Coordinator  
Nature Saskatchewan

Starting at an early age, I appreciated the smaller things in nature and the little moments that I experienced. My family was not one to take trips out to cabins or going cross-country driving in a camper, like some of my peers did with their families. However, I never really thought about it because my family created moments that I can take with me for the rest of my life. Thinking back, some of my favourite memories were going to visit my grandma and finding a number of things to do outside. After a big rain, I loved going outside in search of frogs. I never really did anything with them, as I was actually scared to hold them the first few times! I just enjoyed finding them and counting them. This may have been my first taste of biodiversity and what sparked my curiosity in wildlife.

Another memory is going fishing in the very small lake that was in my grandma's

hometown. From what I can remember, I don't think I ever caught a fish from that lake, but the conversations and fun moments from those experiences is what sticks with me. We would bring old, stale crackers to throw into the water right by the dock to see the curious creatures that would come to the surface in search of food. Going on these trips, there was never really the intention of catching fish to bring back for supper. We often would just go to be outside and spend time with each other.

Growing up, in my own backyard, we always had a birdbath for as long as I can remember. Even today, whenever I am visiting my parents, I enjoy either sitting outside or standing at the window watching all the visitors to this birdbath. It is so fascinating to see different personalities of birds and how they interact with each other. There's the robin, who seems to think they are the boss of the bath. Then there are the numerous sparrows that just hop all around the backyard and seem to have no worry except finding the best tasting seeds in

the vegetable garden. There's the Blue Jay that doesn't make an appearance every day but, when it does, my family rushes to the window to get a look at this brightly coloured bird. Having the chance to look outside to see wildlife, and not need to drive anywhere, has made me appreciate how my family encourages visits from animals.

More specifically, my dad has always taken me to places that he has come across or heard about through work or through word of mouth. I think he played a large part in my appreciation for nature and for always taking a moment to stop and observe my surroundings. I have always loved going on hikes and seeing how many different species of plants and animals I can come across. Being an inquisitive person, having these small moments in nature has allowed me to have more insightful and informative conversations with family and friends. I am so grateful to have grown up with these experiences and to now have the opportunity to share them with others to enjoy. 🐦

## MYSTERY PHOTO



### SUMMER 2024 (top)

QUESTION: What species of caterpillar is shown here? Hint: this photo was taken during a Native Plant Society visit to a ranch near Eastend. Goats were also present!

Photo credit: Morley Maier.

### SPRING 2024 (bottom)

ANSWER: The youngsters shown in the Spring 2024 Mystery Photo are Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) chicks. Note the horizontal barring on their bodies, as well as the dark, blackish facial disks.

Photo credit: Randy McCulloch.

Do you have an image that would make for a good mystery photo challenge? Send it to the *Blue Jay* editor at [bluejay@naturesask.ca](mailto:bluejay@naturesask.ca)!





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