



# Saskatoon Nature Society Newsletter

January 2021

Vol. 43 No. 1

## January Program

7:30 PM Thursday, January 21, 2021

Online presentation by Dr Frank Mitloehner

### Rethinking Methane: The Path to Climate Neutrality.

Animal agriculture is often shouldered with a large part of the blame when it comes to climate change, but that's because we haven't been looking at all greenhouse gases correctly. By rethinking methane, we can show how animal agriculture is on the path to climate neutrality, which will allow the global community to find meaningful solutions to climate change.

Dr. Frank Mitloehner is the director of the CLEAR Center (Clarity and Leadership for Environmental Awareness and Research at UC Davis). He is also a professor and air quality specialist in cooperative extension in the Department of Animal Science at the University of California, Davis. As such, he shares his knowledge and research, both domestically and abroad, with students, scientists, farmers and ranchers, policy makers, and the public at large.

The CLEAR Center brings clarity to the intersection of animal agriculture and the environment, helping our global community understand the environmental and human health impacts of livestock, so we can make informed decisions about the foods we eat and while reducing environmental impacts. Frank was recruited by UC Davis in 2002, to fill its first-ever position focusing on the relationship between livestock and air quality.



All members who have registered an email address will receive information by email on how to join the Zoom meeting. For those who do not have the technology to use Zoom, we hope that you will be able to join someone in your close social group. If you have not registered an email address but would like to do so, please do as soon as possible (see box on page 6). If you do not use email or if you have any questions, please contact Sara Bryson at 306-261-6156 (if you text, please include your name).

## Field Trips

**Members Only Events.** We are planning some winter field trips with strict limits to the number of participants in accordance with Saskatchewan's current COVID-19 regulations. Participants must follow social distancing at all times and wear masks when requested by the leader. Do not car-pool except with members of the same household or close associates. There will be limited sharing of scopes or other equipment. All events are open only to paid-up members of the Saskatoon Nature Society. Members who wish to participate in a particular field trip must contact the listed leader by phone or email as quickly as possible. The leader will notify those members who are accepted to join their field trip and send them additional information about the meeting location and other trip details. Participants are free to depart early if they wish. Members with FRS radios should bring them on out of town trips. Bus Information: 306-975-3100. Many of our trip destinations are described in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of "A Guide to Nature Viewing Sites in and around Saskatoon" available from <https://saskatoonnature.org/special-publications/>

**Saturday, January 2, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
Pike Lake – Whitecap Bird Count**

Help us survey the bird population near Pike Lake for this final Christmas bird count.

**Register** in advance by contacting Donna Bruce (306-956-3437) or by email to [donna.bruce@sasktel.net](mailto:donna.bruce@sasktel.net)

*More field trips on page 3*

## President's Message

Happy New Year to All! I hope everyone had a chance to relax and do something that they love over the holiday season. This month I wanted to talk about some of my favourite (mostly) winter sightings – owls!

Since moving to Saskatoon about 8 years ago, I have had the pleasure of sighting multiple owl species (some of which I described in the November 2019 newsletter). The vast majority of these experiences have been on Saskatoon Nature Society field trips or as a result of something I have learned from fellow members. I must give much credit to Marten Stoffel and Stan Shadick, among others, for greatly increasing my knowledge of owls including where to look, what to watch for, and how to identify by call.

Winter is a great time for sighting owls as the bare trees and white background remove some of the camouflage of summer, and some only venture here in colder months. Around and close to Saskatoon I have seen several species and had exciting experiences sighting Great Horned, Saw-Whet, Long-eared, Short-eared, and Snowy. Great Horned owls (GHOW) seem to be the most commonly sighted owl near Saskatoon as they are larger and more abundant. We had the pleasure of seeing numerous GHOW on the last Snowy Owl trip while scanning acreage (and the cemetery) windbreaks and old barns. There also seems to be a possible resident GHOW on the Pike Lake nature trail that I've seen on an SNS field trip and clearly heard on a personal trip to feed Chickadees in December. The interesting thing about the GHOWs in our areas, specifically the one sighted at Pike Lake, is that they are a lighter morph which is quite beneficial to the creature among aspen and in the winter.

Saw-Whet Owls are, in my opinion, the cutest! I've only sighted them in conifer trees and while banding one with Marten. While banding we got to stroke their heads (with Marten's approval) and they seem to like it! In winter 2020, there were even sightings in the city.

Two less commonly seen species are the Long-eared and Short-eared Owls, both aptly named by the size of their ear feather tufts. It is a treat to see the Long-eared with its "ears" sticking out of the nest. We had the pleasure of seeing one, guided by Marten Stoffel, nesting in a large aspen bluff NW of the city. Short-eared can be

distinguished by their round light face, with on point heavy "mascara" that flatters their bright yellow eyes, and light under wings with a notable dark patch towards the tips. They gracefully fly low over grasslands while hunting. I have had the great pleasure of seeing this enchanting owl when I accidentally flushed one out (twice – whoops!) during a bioblitz at the NE Swale, and then on the Snowy Owl trip, Erin Lang and I had one flying beside the vehicle at window height! On that same trip the group also sighted 5 of these owls together in an acreage windbreak, which Marten commented was unusual.

The Snowy Owl field trips are always a hoot to join! Marten leads us along his research trek, down grid roads where he somehow has the ability to see about 5 km ahead of everyone else. We scan power poles in hopes of seeing these white beauties. On the last trip, we even got to meet up with someone out banding them and witnessed the process of a large female being banded, which was amazing!

To the North of our city, you can find more Saw-Whets, as well as Great Gray, Northern Hawk, and Barred Owls. These owls can often be spotted in conifer trees and atop snags. Great Grays remind me of home (Thompson, MB) and being in the presence of one is an awe-inspiring experience for me with their haunting call, amazing size and colouring. I have heard these owls more than seen them, but we have seen them on the northern owl trip near Montreal Lake. There are several sightings this year of Great Gray Owls on the Sask Birders Facebook page.

Northern Hawk Owls are smaller feisty owls that can be difficult to spot. I have only seen these owls on SNS trips with the assistance of Marten, Stan, and John Patterson. We also had the benefit (on one of these trips) to watch Marten and Jan Shadick band a Northern Hawk owl!

The only time I have seen a Barred Owl is on one of these trips to Waskesiu. There seemed to be one residing in the campground at Waskesiu that came quite close to our group. The chest of this owl is pale with heavy light to dark brown barring that blends well in the mix of lightly barked deciduous trees and conifers.

Finally, I will briefly mention the South, where our coveted species at risk, the Burrowing Owl, can be found. I have yet to make the trip to Grasslands National Park, but I have had the pleasure of seeing an educational Burrowing Owl at an event while volunteering at the SNS

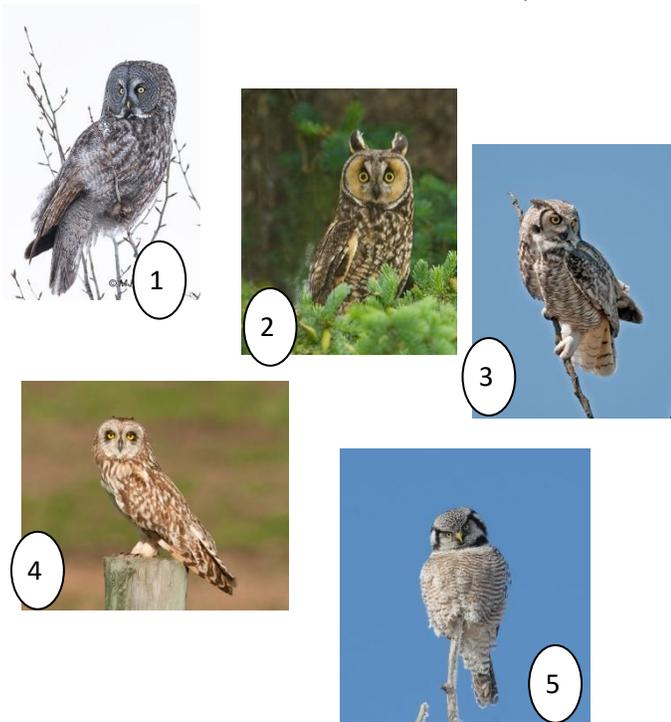
booth. So the Saskatoon Nature Society definitely provides opportunities to see many of our owls of Saskatchewan!

For more information on owls, members are welcome to join the upcoming driving field trips and you can check out the most common species of owls in Saskatchewan on the EcoFriendly Sask site at:

<https://www.ecofriendlysask.ca/2020/10/owls-of-saskatchewan.html>.

I must give praise to two of our dedicated long-term members, Hilda Voth and Michael Williams who have both stepped down from their SNS volunteer positions. The lovely Hilda Voth has been organizing and providing refreshments, including baking, coffee, tea, and juice, at our in-person meetings for numerous years. The dear Michael Williams has been coordinating our memberships for many years. They have also contributed to bird counts, and various field trips.

Sara Bryson



Which is which? See how well you know your owls!  
Answer on page 5. (all photos by May Haga)

## Field Trips continued...

**Sunday, January 10, 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM**

### Sanatorium Site Bird Walk

**Members only. Advance Registration Required.** We will walk through the former Sanatorium site portion of Holiday Park to look for winter songbirds. This park is one of five naturalized parks in the city which is managed to promote a diversity of wild birds and mammals.

**To register:** email [trips@saskatoonnature.org](mailto:trips@saskatoonnature.org) or phone 306-652-5975.

Meet at the south end of Avenue K, adjacent to Bowerman House. <https://goo.gl/maps/wniy6XzhVKA2>

**Leader:** Stan Shadick

**Bus:** Route 9 Riversdale departs downtown terminal at 1:31 PM and arrives at Avenue K and Schuyler about 1:45 PM. Walk south one block along Avenue K.

**Guide to Nature Viewing Sites:** Page 126.

**Saturday, January 16, 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM**

### Chorney acreage Bird Feeders

**Members only. Advance Registration Required.** We plan to visit this private Grasswood acreage south of the city which has attracted the highest concentration of birds found during recent Boxing Day bird counts.

**Meet** by the grain elevator at the Western Development Museum's parking lot on Lorne Ave.

<https://goo.gl/maps/3j1KTNfasmC2>.

**To register:** text 306-230-9291.

**Leader:** Marten Stoffel

**Saturday, January 23, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

### Snowy Owl Excursion

**Members only. Advance Registration Required.** We plan to drive a 60 km census route along back roads to count Snowy Owls from Mildred to Elrose. Most years, there is a high concentration of Snowys along this route. Your vehicle should have winter tires, good ground clearance and a tow rope and a full gas tank. Bring winter boots and a warm parka. Bring a lunch.

**To register:** text 306-230-9291.

**Leaders:** Marten Stoffel and Karen Wiebe

**Saturday, January 30, 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM**

### Great Gray Owl Excursion

**Members only. Advance Registration Required.** We plan to drive a 500 km round trip route NE of Prince Albert to look for Great Gray and Northern Hawk Owls. Several birds have been seen earlier this winter along this route. Your vehicle should have winter tires, good ground

clearance and a tow rope and a full gas tank. Bring winter boots and a warm parka. Bring food for lunch and supper.  
**To register:** text 306-230-9291.

**Leader:** Marten Stoffel

**Saturday, February 6, 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM**

**Forestry Farm Bird Walk**

**Members only. Advance Registration Required.** We will walk through this park watching for winter finches and other songbirds.

**To register:** prefer email to [godmee@sasktel.net](mailto:godmee@sasktel.net) or phone 306-343-8590.

**Meet** at south end of “overflow” parking lot next to the main hall. <https://goo.gl/maps/N1xo9789xxqaFkQn8>

**Leaders:** Bob Godwin and Blair McCann

**Guide to Nature Viewing Sites:** Page 130.



**LATER WINTER OUTINGS.** Please check February newsletter.

**Calling all Volunteers**

Nature Saskatchewan obtains most of its funding from Sask. Culture. One of the factors influencing the success of Nature Saskatchewan’s application is the support it and affiliated societies receive from volunteers as evidenced by the number of hours worked. We ask that each member of SNS tally the hours you have volunteered in 2020 and send your totals to Yvonne Cuttle at [treasurer@saskatoonnature.org](mailto:treasurer@saskatoonnature.org) . Once compiled, they will be forwarded to Nature Saskatchewan early in 2021. Thanks to all for your good work on behalf of SNS during 2020, and for the additional time that, I hope, you will be willing to spend on this request. **Yvonne Cuttle**

**Young Naturalists**

The Young Naturalists is all about nature activities for kids and their families. Each program offers interesting activities geared for children aged 5 to 11 years. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Enrolment is limited on most programs and often programs fill up in advance, so register early. To register or for more information e-mail: [naturekids@saskatoonnature.org](mailto:naturekids@saskatoonnature.org).

**Saturday, January 16**

Pike Lake Nature Walk

(And possible snowshoeing)

**Saturday, February 6**

Chickadee Pishing

Due to COVID-19 the group size on these Young Naturalists programs will be limited. There will be multiple meeting times to accommodate participants. Visit the Young Naturalists web page for more details. <https://saskatoonnature.org/young-naturalists/>

**Canadian Bat Project**

If you have a bat box scientists want to know about it!

Bats in Canada face multiple threats from habitat loss and disease. A bat box is a simple way to provide additional roosting habitat for bats, yet little is known about bat box use in Canada. Information on bat box use is especially important as three bat species in Canada are listed as endangered: little brown bats, northern long-eared bats, and tricolored bats.

If you have a bat box and would like to participate in this study, please fill out this online multiple-choice survey with questions about your bat box. Your participation is important even if your box does not have any bats! [https://trentu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_86og8C3MIgO2ff7](https://trentu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_86og8C3MIgO2ff7)

This project is in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Canadian Wildlife Federation. More information on the project is posted here: <https://wcbats.ca/Our-work-to-save-bats/Batbox-Project/BatBox-Project-Canada-wide> and here: <https://rrvfn.org/canadian-bat-project/>

## Remembering Thelma Pepper



Long-time Saskatoon Nature Society member Thelma Pepper passed away on December 1 at the age of 100 years. Thelma was trained as a botanist with a MSc degree from McGill University. She participated in many

of our birding and botany field trips and served on the society's board as secretary and vice-president during the 1970s. In 1980, she discovered a rare Northern Cardinal in her backyard that took up residence in the area for over a year. More recently she has become famous for her art portrait photography. Thelma is a member of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit and recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts. Saskatoon writer Amy Jo Ehman has recently published her biography "Thelma Pepper – A Life in Pictures" now available at bookstores. An exhibition of Thelma's photography titled "Ordinary Women" is scheduled to be shown at the Remai Modern starting on February 21.

## Golden Eagles Winter Program

Due to Covid-19 there will be no winter program. Hopefully the 2021 spring program will resume.

### Call for Nominations to the Board of Directors

The board of directors of the Saskatoon Nature Society is elected at the March Annual General Meeting. If you would like to serve on the board, please contact the past-president Valerie Martz at 306-249-0468

### Answers to the owl quiz from page 3:

1. Great Gray Owl; 2. Long-eared Owl; 3. Great Horned Owl; 4. Short-eared Owl; 5. Northern Hawk Owl

## Have you paid your 2021 membership?

SNS memberships go from January-December. This is your **last newsletter**. Renew right away to ensure delivery of your next newsletter.

-use the membership form at the end of this newsletter or

-use the link at:

<https://saskatoonnature.org/membership/>

### Reminder:

**Saskatoon Nature Society Members are eligible for the following discounts:**

- Early's Farm and Garden Centre provides a 10% discount on regular-priced seed, birdhouses and books;
- Wild Birds Unlimited provides a 10% discount on many regular-priced items;
- Don's Photo offers a discount on photo-finishing



*Bohemian Waxwing*

*Bob Godwin*

**Saskatoon Nature Society**

**Mailing address:**

PO Box 27013 GROSVENOR PARK  
SASKATOON SK S7H 5N9

**Website:**

<https://saskatoonnature.org>

**Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/SaskatoonNatureSociety](http://www.facebook.com/SaskatoonNatureSociety)



**Newsletter**

The deadline for the next newsletter is Jan. 17. Please send any announcements or articles to Kathy Meeres. Please email: [godmee@sasktel.net](mailto:godmee@sasktel.net) or call 306-343-8590. The editor would appreciate if articles are complete and submitted electronically.

**Please consider switching from a paper to electronic copy** of the SNS newsletter. You will help us save on paper, stamps, and volunteer time and you will get information more quickly and get pictures in colour.  
**Please contact** Claire Bullaro ([c.bear@sasktel.net](mailto:c.bear@sasktel.net)) with your email address to switch. Thank you.

**Chairs and Coordinators**

Brochure	Mary Jean Roy .....	306-665-0987
Coffee		
Display	Greg Fenty .....	306-370-8839
Facebook Editor	Sara Bryson .....	306-261-6156 (text please)
Field Trips	Stan Shadick .....	306-652-5975 ..... <a href="mailto:trips@saskatoonnature.org">trips@saskatoonnature.org</a>
Golden Eagles	Hilda Noton .....	306-374-0674
Membership		
Newsletter		
Editor	Kathy Meeres .....	306-343-8590 ..... <a href="mailto:godmee@sasktel.net">godmee@sasktel.net</a>
Mailing	Bev Beland.....	306-445-3439
Mailing List	Claire Bullaro .....	306-373-1787
e-distribution	Claire Bullaro .....	306-373-1787 ..... <a href="mailto:c.bear@sasktel.net">c.bear@sasktel.net</a>
Program	Joe Stookey .....	306-229-7499
Publications	Donna Bruce.....	306-956-3437 ..... <a href="mailto:donna.bruce@sasktel.net">donna.bruce@sasktel.net</a>
Publicity	Ron Jensen .....	306-741-7537
Webmaster	Trent Watts .....	..... <a href="mailto:web@saskatoonnature.org">web@saskatoonnature.org</a>
Young Naturalists	Greg Fenty .....	306-370-8839 ..... <a href="mailto:naturekids@saskatoonnature.org">naturekids@saskatoonnature.org</a>

**Board of Directors**

President	Sara Bryson .....	306-261-6156 ..... <a href="mailto:president@saskatoonnature.org">president@saskatoonnature.org</a>
Past President	Valerie Martz.....	306-249-0468
Vice President	Blair McCann .....	306-653-2958
Secretary	Diane Wells .....	306-229-0328
Treasurer	Yvonne Cuttle.....	306-374-5228 ..... <a href="mailto:treasurer@saskatoonnature.org">treasurer@saskatoonnature.org</a>
Director	Kathy Meeres .....	306-343-8590
Director	Robert Johanson .....	306-653-2610
Director	LeeAnn Latremouille .....	
Director	Stan Shadick .....	306-652-5975 ..... <a href="mailto:trips@saskatoonnature.org">trips@saskatoonnature.org</a>
Director	Ryan Dudragne .....	
Director	Joshua Erikson.....	
Director	Al Scholz .....	306-221-0248 ..... <a href="mailto:al@alscholz.com">al@alscholz.com</a>

The board of directors meets about once a month, usually in the week before the monthly meeting. If you wish to bring an item to the attention of the board, please contact the president.

## JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Pike Lake CBC
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Chorney Acreage Bird Feeders
10 Sanatorium Bird Walk	11	12	13	14	15	16 YN: Pike Lake Nature Walk
17	18	19	20	21 January Meeting	22	23 Snowy Owl Excursion
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30 Great Gray Owl Excursion

## FEBRUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Forestry Farm Birds YN: Chickadee Pishing
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 February Meeting	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

GE: Golden Eagles; YN: Young Naturalists; CBC: Christmas Bird Count