



Saskatoon Nature Society Newsletter

December 2021

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Saskatchewan's Woodland Caribou

Online presentation by Michael McLaughlan

7:30 PM Thursday, December 9, 2021

In the month of December, reindeer are the stars: appearing in holiday movies, in front yards, in greeting cards. For conservationists, though, it's caribou that take centre stage – as concerns mount over the impacts of climate change, energy development and other factors. Actually reindeer and caribou are the same species.

There are more than 2.4 million caribou in Canada. Some dwell in forests, some in mountains, some migrate each year between the sparse forests and tundra of the far north, and others remain on the tundra all year. The woodland caribou is the largest of the caribou subspecies. It is found throughout much of the boreal, or northern, forests from British Columbia and the Yukon Territory to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Since the woodland caribou was listed under the *Species at Risk Act* as threatened in June of 2003, Saskatchewan has been quietly working to help assure the species self-sustainability. By understanding the species, the population status, and its habitat, the province has been developing strategies and range plans to improve its conditions.

This month's presentation will explore the characteristics of the woodland caribou, its biological requirements, threats to its self-sustainability, and what is being done to achieve and maintain a self-sustaining woodland caribou population while still allowing for continued economic activity in northern Saskatchewan.

The presenter will be Michael McLaughlan, RPF. Michael is a registered professional forester who has been with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment for 25 years and currently works in Fish, Wildlife & Lands branch as a conservation specialist.



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 (contact c.bear@sasktel.net). If you do not use email or if you have any questions, please contact Blair McCann at president@saskatoonnature.org or 306-653-2958.

Field Trips

Any member is welcome to participate in any field trip. Contact the trip leader if you have any questions. Participants are free to depart early if they wish. To download checklists, visit <https://saskatoonnature.org/>. Number of registrants may be limited by current Saskatchewan COVID regulations. Please wear a mask and maintain physical distancing when outside your vehicle. Bus Information: 306-975-3100.

Many of our trip destinations are described in the 3rd edition of "A Guide to Nature Viewing Sites in and around Saskatoon" available from <https://saskatoonnature.org/special-publications/>

Check <https://saskatoonnature.org/> website for any updated information

Saturday, December 4, 9:00 AM–5:00 PM

Gardiner Dam Birding

We will drive to this site 100 km south of the city looking for ducks, geese, gulls and eagles. Dress warmly and bring a lunch.

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

<https://goo.gl/maps/MyshGfcWzey>

Leader: Robert Johanson (306-653-2610).

Saskatoon Area Christmas Bird Counts

The Saskatoon Nature Society is organizing the following 5 Christmas Bird Counts in the Saskatoon area.

SAT. DEC. 18 Clark's Crossing (Warman, Martensville, Osler, NE Swale)

SUN. DEC. 19 Qu'Appelle Dam (Elbow)

MON. DEC. 27 Saskatoon (city and south)

TUE. DEC 28 CBC for Kids (see Young Naturalists Pg 3)

MON. JAN. 3 Pike Lake – Chief Whitecap

To register for any count, please complete the online form on our website <https://saskatoonnature.org/scheduled-trips/>

President's Message

Winter's onset is going to give me more time for attending meetings to represent the interests of the SNS. One recent meeting dealt with the city's plans to update park development standards. Waterfront Planning and Design out of St Catharines, Ontario is the independent design firm that is co-ordinating the initiative. My background isn't in planning and design so I've found the meetings quite interesting. There is an opportunity for public input in the process through a survey that is offered till the end of November. Here's the link to the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V7DTJ7X>

Most folks who have responded to the survey thus far are not interested in the issues that SNS would likely support: 78% of the respondents want more mowing and weed control. I encourage everyone to participate in the survey and emphasize the importance of naturalized areas as part of the park development process. If enough folks

express their concerns, we may be able to influence the development standards.

On another city development issue, City Planning and Development has approached the SNS for input on the University Heights 3 Natural Area Screening. For folks not familiar with this proposed development, it will cover an area in the northeast part of the city extending north and west of the Northeast Swale all the way to the river. The various reports on this development can be found at this link: <https://www.saskatoon.ca/engage/university-heights-3-natural-area-screening>

Stan Shadick made a presentation to the SNS Board at our November meeting in which he outlined a number of potential concerns regarding the Natural Area Screening report. Stan and I are hoping to be able to present those concerns to the Meewasin and City Planning officials in the coming weeks.

On a much lighter note, one of the truly enjoyable activities during the winter months is to curl up on the couch with a good book. Last winter I discovered a mystery series written by a British author who lives in Ontario: Steve Burrows. He's created a series of six books in which the protagonist solves murders using his knowledge of birding. The series has been dubbed the Birder Murder Mysteries. Burrows uses the collective noun for the bird species featured in each book. My two favourite titles are *A Shimmer of Hummingbirds* and *A Dance of Cranes*. I think the author gives us a good depiction of the world of birders and how non-birders perceive us. The whole series is available at the Saskatoon Public Library in both hard copies and e-books. I encourage folks to check them out.

On a final note, I would like to wish everyone all the best for the holiday season. Here's hoping that things return to some semblance of normal in 2022. It's time!

Blair McCann



White-breasted Nuthatch
Jaswant Singh

Golden Eagles

The Golden Eagles programs are on hold due to continuing Covid concerns. Membership in the Golden Eagles is open to retirees and partners interested in birds and the natural world. Participants should be members of the Saskatoon Nature Society and consider membership in Nature Saskatchewan.

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. To register or for more information e-mail: naturekids@saskatoonnature.org.

Indoor programs for December have been cancelled due to Covid. Be sure to check the website for future developments.

- Christmas Bird Count for Kids Tuesday, December 28
- Saturday, January 8 Tracks and Scats
- Saturday, February 5 Chickadee Pishing

Depending on current COVID-19 guidelines the group size on these Young Naturalists programs may be limited. Visit the Young Naturalists web page for more details. <https://saskatoonnature.org/young-naturalists/>

Kids in Nature Grant Program

The Saskatoon Nature Society (SNS) is now taking applications for the Kids in Nature grant. This grant was established to strengthen existing programs and encourage new initiatives that connect youth in the Saskatoon area with nature. The SNS has set aside approximately \$2000 for the year's Kids in Nature grant.

Application deadline is December 31, 2021. Information and application are available on the SNS website:

https://saskatoonnature.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Kids_in_Nature_2020_application.pdf



Bird Friendly City.....Call for Volunteers

Are you interested in helping to make Saskatoon more bird friendly? The SNS is currently looking for expressions of interest from volunteers to join the Saskatoon Bird Team. The team will work towards our city becoming certified as a Nature Canada Bird Friendly City. A variety of skill sets are needed, and there are opportunities for various time commitments. At a minimum the Bird Team will meet four times a year. Please email saskatoon.bfc@gmail.com for more details.

Membership Information

SNS memberships go from January-December. **Renew by December 31** to ensure delivery of your newsletter. Memberships paid after July 1 will continue through the following year. Membership cards are mailed out yearly, whether your membership is one year or multiple years.

Donations qualify for a tax receipt.

You can find a link to the membership form and information at:

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

Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation Gift Certificates and Calendars

So far this year, Saskatoon's Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation has cared for over 2600 injured and orphaned wild birds and mammals. Leading causes of injuries include collisions with windows, vehicles and power lines as well as attacks by outdoor cats. Here are 4 ways you can help us cover our costs of food, medicine and care.

- 2022 LSWR Calendar (\$20) features images of wildlife in care this year.
- Adopt-An-Animal Gift Certificates (tax deductible)
- Tax-Deductible donations
- Birding Tour Gift Certificates (www.birdtours.ca)

For details, check out

<https://livingskywildliferehabilitation.org/donate/> or email LSWR@sasktel.net or phone 306-281-0554.

Saskatoon Nature Society

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Website:

<https://saskatoonnature.org>

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SaskatoonNatureSociety



Newsletter

The deadline for the next newsletter is December 12. Please send any announcements or articles to Kathy Meeres. Please email: 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) with your email address to switch. Thank you.

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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.

DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 Gardiner Dam birding
5	6	7	8	9 December meeting	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 CBC: Clark's Crossing
19 CBC: Qu'Appelle Dam	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 CBC: Saskatoon	28 CBC for Kids	29	30	31	

JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 CBC: Pike Lake	4	5	6	7	8 YN: Tracks and Scats
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20 January meeting	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

YN: Young Naturalists; CBC: Christmas Bird Count

