



# Saskatoon Nature Society Newsletter

October 2024

Vol. 46 No. 8

## Saskatchewan Muskegs: What Are They and Why Do They Need Our Help?

**Dorothy Bird, Saskatoon, Member of “For  
Peat’s Sake”**

**In person and online!**

**Rm #GB06 Health Sciences Bldg, U of S  
7:30 PM Thursday, October 17, 2024**

Dorothy Bird has been a student of the outdoors her entire lifetime. She was raised on a small prairie mixed farm, in a small log cabin about 100 km north of Prince Albert, and Christopher Lake in the boreal zone. Seasonally, her family fished commercially at Weyakwin and they were well provided for by other meats and fruits of the land.

Her adult years have continued to be nurtured by the boreal forest, and she has learned about the inhabitants, their habitats and their interconnectedness through actively living there. Her knowledge comes from the wisdom of resident elders, and from walking, photographing, working, fishing, foraging, trapping, and reading.

Dorothy has been an educator for many years. She is currently a member of “For Peat’s Sake” a community-based activist group dedicated to advocating for the conservation of peatlands. In

her presentation she plans to illuminate the beauty and the importance of peat bog habitats, and the threats posed to them particularly by open pit mining in northern Saskatchewan.

She will relate the history of “For Peat’s Sake”. She will explain the makeup of muskeg and its extent, emphasizing its vital importance and interconnectedness for plants, animals and humans. She will describe the significance of peatlands to the local and global health of our environment. She will provide examples of those bog inhabitants that are particularly threatened by open pit mining and how habitat disruption and loss results in carbon release associated with climate change.



*All members who have registered an email address with SNS will receive an **email containing the link to join the meeting through Zoom**. If you have not registered an email address with us, but would like to do so, please contact Claire Bullaro at [c.bear@sasktel.net](mailto:c.bear@sasktel.net).*

## Field Trips

Members who wish to participate in a particular field trip must contact the listed leader by phone or email as quickly as possible. 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/>

### Sunday, September 29, 7:30 AM – 2:00 PM

#### Whooping Crane Viewing Trip 1

Meet at Flying J Travel Centre parking lot south of Denny's Restaurant, 3850 Idylwyld Dr N

Leader: Marten Stoffel

Open Only to current Saskatoon Nature Society members.

Limit: 5 vehicles plus leader.

SNS member should register in advance by sending names and phone number by email to

[trips@saskatoonnature.org](mailto:trips@saskatoonnature.org)

### Saturday, October 5, 7:30 AM – 2:00 PM

#### Whooping Crane Viewing Trip 2

Meet at Flying J Travel Centre parking lot south of Denny's Restaurant, 3850 Idylwyld Dr N

Leader: Robert Johanson

Open Only to current Saskatoon Nature Society members.

Limit: 5 vehicles plus leader.

SNS member should register in advance by sending names and phone number by email to

[trips@saskatoonnature.org](mailto:trips@saskatoonnature.org)

### Saturday, October 12, 7:30 AM – 2:00 PM

#### Whooping Crane Viewing Trip 3

Meet at Flying J Travel Centre parking lot south of Denny's Restaurant, 3850 Idylwyld Dr N

Leader: Kerry Hjertaas

Open Only to current Saskatoon Nature Society members.

Limit: 5 vehicles plus leader.

SNS member should register in advance by sending names and phone number by email to

[trips@saskatoonnature.org](mailto:trips@saskatoonnature.org)



Whooping Cranes

Bob Godwin

### Monday, October 14, 2024, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

#### Woodlawn Cemetery Bird Walk

Work up an appetite for Thanksgiving dinner by strolling through Woodlawn Cemetery. We'll look for late fall migrants and early-returning winter residents. Later we may move to riverbank.

**Meet** at the Cemetery's gate, just off 33rd St, on Memorial Ave, west of Warman Road. See red star on map in our guide. Google pin is

<https://goo.gl/maps/NShg8PbGvdy>

**Bus:** Route 14 North Industrial departs downtown terminal at 9:01 AM and arrives at 33rd St and 1st Ave about 9:10 AM. Walk east 2 short blocks to Memorial Avenue.

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

**Guide to Nature Viewing Sites:** Page 154.

### October 1 – 31

#### Northern Saw-whet Owl banding at Osler

If interested in attending an evening session, Phone Marten Stoffel at 306-230-9291 and ask for available dates and times.



Northern Saw-whet Owl May Haga

### Saturday, November 2, 9 AM – 1 PM

#### Blackstrap Waterfowl Trip

We will drive to Blackstrap Lake to look for ducks, loons, grebes and other waterfowl. At this time of year, some unusual species sometimes show up here. Bring a scope if you have one.

**Meet** at the Wild Birds Unlimited parking lot on the SE corner of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Emerson Avenue.

**Leader:** Kerry Hjertaas (306-260-6602)

**Guide to Nature Viewing Sites:** Page 24.

*As a volunteer or participant in the activities of the Saskatoon Nature Society (SNS), you are fully responsible for your own safety, and for your own personal insurance in case of injury. Please exercise great caution and care on field trips or any other outings. The Saskatoon Nature Society is not responsible for damage incurred to vehicles or other personal property while participating in any SNS activity. If going onto private land, always ask for permission, be friendly and respectful, exercise caution, and please be aware that participants may be responsible for damage to landowners' property.*

## President's Message

### I Bird I Vote!

Sometimes things come in over the internet that catch your eye, and you have to say that's about right. I often get fundraising emails from the American Audubon Society and this one was like so many others selling a host of bags, hats and T-shirts but the words caught my attention: I Bird I Vote!

This, to me, says it all. I bird means so much, it means you care about our environment, you see our environment, you think and consider what's happening in our environment, you get it – when you say you vote you mean you are committed to a better world, you are asking important questions and thinking through the consequences. I've shown this to many people, they've all caught the simple but powerful message - I hope you do as well - I bought the T-shirt!



We will all be answering our doors as candidates and their canvassers come knocking this fall. Most likely this will be right away as the provincial election is set for October 28 and then the civic election later in November. Let them know you care – you may have many issues, but I hope we share a deep concern for conservation. One critical issue that Nature Sask is championing is the urgent need for a wetlands policy here in Saskatchewan. You may be hearing radio ads to this effect sponsored by Wetlands for Tomorrow which your executive has decided to support. Ask the candidates where they stand on conserving wetlands, hopefully they have some knowledge of the issue, and they have a positive answer – Tell them you bird! You vote!

Another Fall bird count is in the books, and I want to thank everyone who came out to make it a success. Indeed, it was a warm fall day, and the birds were definitely trying to keep cool somewhere in the bushes but our ears and eyes on the ground/branches/ponds were effectively taking tabs on what was out there!

I read with interest a story on Ebird about the positive impacts participatory science (citizen science) can have on larger more expensive bird research: "Bird observations made by participatory scientists can really make a difference in helping us understand abundance and

distribution patterns that are an important part of creating effective conservation plans. In a world where the health of our ecosystems hinges on accurate data, this research underscores the potential of integrated datasets as a promising avenue for safeguarding the future of bird populations."

I also want to give a big shout out to Donna Bruce who was recognized at the 75th Anniversary Fall Nature Sask Meet with a Fellows Award for her contributions and leadership in her volunteer work with Nature Sask, particularly as Special Publications Editor. Well done and well earned; over the many years of working on a variety of publications she has made an incredible mark! "Fellows of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society" is an award that recognizes extensive and continuing contribution of time over many years - it is the highest honour the Society can bestow upon a member.

Also at the Fall Meet Nature Canada reported about Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy. Very exciting news indeed! The Strategy establishes a shared vision to address biodiversity loss. Earlier this year, Canada introduced the Nature Accountability Bill in Parliament. The Bill establishes an accountability framework for the federal government in fulfilling its commitments. It includes requirements to develop national biodiversity strategies and action plans – like the 2030 Nature Strategy – and to report on their implementation.

I am really excited to tell you about this month's book Dare to Bird by Melissa Hafting. I heard Melissa on the ABA American Birding Podcast with Nate Swick this summer, and I immediately thought I must see this book, just published in June 2024. Melissa is an avid bird watcher/guide/photographer from Vancouver who put this collection of essays and pictures together to support those of us who may be going through a rough patch. She lost both her parents unexpectedly in a short time span, but she found strength and comfort through her birding as the book's subtitle says Exploring the Joy and Healing Powers of Birds. Her book is a poignant powerful call to action to protect birds and their world. I hope you check it out; it is available at the Saskatoon Public Library!

So, it's going to be a busy fall, be sure to get out and enjoy the outings and our fall presentations! And answer your door and let the candidates know you bird – you vote!!

**Also give some thought to our need for a new treasurer!**

David

## Wanted: Treasurer!



We are looking for a new treasurer for next year!  
Is this something for you? Do you have related skills & experience?

For more information contact:

Laurette Lefol: email (laurette.lefol@gmail.com)

David Forbes: email (davidforbes@sasktel.net)

## 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. Advanced registration is required. To register or for more information e-mail: [naturekids@saskatoonnature.org](mailto:naturekids@saskatoonnature.org).

Visit the Young Naturalists web page for more details.

<https://saskatoonnature.org/young-naturalists/>

- Sandhill Crane Field Trips
  - Saturday, October 5 at 9:30 a.m.
  - Sunday, October 6 at 9:30 a.m.
  - Monday, October 7 at 9:30 a.m.
- Saw-whet Owl Field Trips - October TBA
- Bird Feeder Workshop - Saturday, November 2



## Golden Eagles

The Golden Eagles is an informal group of Saskatoon Nature Society (SNS) members. Our interests include all aspects of the natural world (birds, plants, etc.), as well as social and multicultural history. We engage in out-of-town and city field trips. Participants should be SNS members and consider membership in Nature Saskatchewan. Unless otherwise indicated, we meet on Thursdays at the Churchill Shopping Centre, Taylor St. and Clarence Avenue. Please check departure dates and times. Typically, participants are asked to bring snacks and beverages, lunch and chairs unless otherwise noted by the trip leader. For out-of-town trips, those who have CB or FRS radios should bring them. Carpooling is at participants' discretion but is encouraged.

Leaders may request pre-registration for certain destinations. Participation is free, although some destinations may charge admission or encourage donations. Please contact the trip leader if you have any questions.

**Thursday, Oct 17, 9:00 am:** Blackstrap area fall birding:  
**Meet** at Churchill Shopping Centre.

**Leaders: Dave and Louise Cook, 306-955-4764**



*Ring-billed Gull*

*Bob Godwin*

**Thursday, Oct 24, 9:30 am:** Tour of Cam Merkle's woodworking studio and supply shop, Maple and Bass (Razortip Industries), 301B-9th Street North, Martensville. Morning only. Limit of 25.

**Meet** at Lawson Heights Mall.

**Contact Valerie Martz** by email/phone/text: vmartz@shaw.ca, 306-229-0419 to register.

**Wednesday, Oct 30:** Fall Wind up dinner, 5:00-9:00 pm at Mano's restaurant, 1820 8th Street East. Limit of 40.  
**Contact Valerie Martz** by email/phone/text:  
vmartz@shaw.ca, 306-229-0419 by October 23 to register.

## Sustainability Speakers Series – Fall 2024

The Sustainability Speakers Series is hosted by the Saskatoon Public Library in partnership with the Saskatchewan Environmental Society. These free events are held in the Auditorium of **Cliff Wright Library** (located in the Lakewood Civic Centre, 1635 McKercher Dr.). The events start at 7:00 p.m. and end at about 8:30 p.m. These are in-person events. Recordings of some of the presentations are posted on the internet several days after the event.

### October 22, 2024 (Tuesday)

#### How much should the Saskatchewan government subsidize the oil industry?

What is an appropriate level of public support and subsidy for an industry that must be phased out if we are to maintain a habitable planet? **Dr. Emily Eaton** will give an overview of the various ways that the Saskatchewan government supports and subsidizes its oil and gas industry and suggest ways to correct its course in line with the Paris climate agreement.

### November 26, 2024 (Tuesday)

#### SMR—Spending Money Recklessly—in Saskatchewan and in Canada

**Gordon Edwards** of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility will discuss the legacy of nuclear power, its threat to global security, and answer several important questions: Is nuclear thriving? Is it clean? Safe? Dependable? What about fast? Affordable? Sustainable? What are the alternatives?

Recordings of previous presentations in the series are available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRUK7BHZUVfrHCxuJyBeOOlgjqBwseY>

## It's not too early to RENEW!

### Membership Information

SNS memberships go from January-December. **Renew by December 31 to ensure delivery of your newsletter.** New memberships paid after July 1 will continue through the following year.

Donations qualify for a tax receipt.

Don't forget the retail discounts available

- 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.

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

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

### Change of address or phone number

Have you changed your addresses or phone number? Please remember to update us with your e-mail and paper-mail addresses and phone number. Contact [c.bear@sasktel.net](mailto:c.bear@sasktel.net) or send us a note at our postal address (next page).



Orange-crowned Warbler

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 **October 18**. 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) with your email address to switch. Thank you.

**Chairs and Coordinators**

Conservation	Sara Bryson .....	306-261-6156 .....	
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	Valerie Martz .....	306-249-0468 .....	
Membership	Jan Spencer.....		<a href="mailto:j.spencer01@sasktel.net">j.spencer01@sasktel.net</a>
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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	David Forbes .....	306-230-5611 .....	<a href="mailto:president@saskatoonnature.org">president@saskatoonnature.org</a>
Past President	Jim Lee .....		
Vice President	vacant		
Secretary	Mercy Harris .....		
Treasurer	Laurette Lefol .....		<a href="mailto:treasurer@saskatoonnature.org">treasurer@saskatoonnature.org</a>
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Director	Kathy Meeres .....	306-343-8590 .....	
Director	LeeAnn Latremouille .....		
Director	Sara Bryson.....	306-261-6156 .....	
Director	Joshua Erikson .....		
Director	Heather Brenneman .....		
Director	Bill Robertson .....		
Director	Jan Spencer .....		<a href="mailto:j.spencer01@sasktel.net">j.spencer01@sasktel.net</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.

## OCTOBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 GE: Whooping Cranes 1 (Full)	4	5 Whooping Cranes 2 ----- YN: Sandhill Cranes
6 YN: Sandhill Cranes	7 YN: Sandhill Cranes	8	9	10 GE: Whooping Cranes 2 (Full)	11	12 Whooping Cranes 3
13	14 Woodlawn Cemetery Bird Walk	15	16	17 October Meeting ----- GE: Blackstrap birding	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 GE: Cam Merkle's studio	25	26
27	28	29	30 GE: Fall Windup Dinner	31		

## NOVEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Blackstrap Waterfowl ----- YN: Bird Feeder Workshop
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 November Meeting	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

YN: Young Naturalists; GE: Golden Eagles