

Saskatoon Nature Society Newsletter

October 2025

Vol. 47 No. 8

Through the Seasons at Olson Place

Dale Hjertaas and Paule Hjertaas

In person and online!

Rm #GB06 Health Sciences Bldg, U of S

7:30 PM Thursday, October 16, 2025

Dale and Paule Hjertaas are ecologists, naturalists and gardeners who have lived in Regina for over 40 years. Nature has been an important part of their lives since well before they met, in 1976 at a Canadian Nature Federation meeting.

As people who love nature and want to experience the beauty in their daily lives, we have worked to bring more native species into our yard. While we love visiting parks and natural areas, we understand that we spend a lot of our lives at home and so have worked to make home a beautiful, ecologically rich and diverse place. Through more than 35 years at Olson Place in Regina we have slowly learned, planted and designed to increase biodiversity in our yard, while also having places for children to play and growing food.

Dale and Paule have been active in the naturalist community for many years. Both have served as President of Nature Saskatchewan and Nature Regina. Dale, along with Ron Jensen, developed the anniversary presentation in honour of Nature Saskatchewan's 75th anniversary given at the fall meeting in Regina. Paule has a passion for photography and has won many awards for her photographs, some of which you can see in Birds of Saskatchewan.

Using Paule's outstanding photography, Dale will take you through the seasons at Olson Place and share the beauty we see through the year, whether from spring flowers, migrant birds, autumn leaves, insects or frost and snow. We will show some of the hundreds of species we have identified in our yard and talk about steps we have taken to increase biodiversity, with special emphasis on birds, plants and insects. One can find a lot of nature in a small area. Every photo in our presentation was taken from our yard.

We hope the great photos of birds, flowers and insects combined with stories about wildlife we observed and how we incrementally improved our yard for wildlife will communicate how that enriches our lives. We presented this talk to Nature Regina in May 2024 where it was very well received and attracted the largest audience of the year. The presentation has since been enjoyed by naturalists and gardeners in White City, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert.



Please note that if the link to join online requests a passcode, please enter SNS. If you have trouble connecting via the Zoom link, please text or phone LeeAnn at 306-880-9027. Please consider joining the meeting a little early so we can address any problems.

*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.*

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 3rd edition of "A Guide to Nature Viewing Sites in and around Saskatoon" available from

<https://saskatoonnature.org/special-publications/>

Sunday, October 12, 8:30 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 email to

trips@saskatoonnature.org

Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding near Osler

September 21 – October 26

Limited number of participants each evening. First come basis.

You must request to attend your preferred date by texting Marten Stoffel at 306-230-9291.

If weather is appropriate and space is available, he will confirm by text and give you directions.

Monday, October 13, 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.



Dark-eyed Junco

B. Godwin

Saturday, November 1, 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 8th 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

It was so nice to see so many out to the Fall Picnic at the Stookey's home! What a great turnout, and the offer of oven-fired pizza was too good to turn down! A very nice way to start the fall with Saskatoon Nature Society. Thank you so much Joe & Gayle for your hospitality!

It looks like a great fall for outings too! I understand there is a lot of interest in the Whooping Crane trips so be sure to register and reserve your spot! Thanks to all those who came out to help with the fall bird count, we await the final tallies but again what a beautiful day to be out and about! I hear there were 2000 Sandhill Cranes counted along the river – an awesome sight!

I want to give a special shout out to the volunteers who helped out at the Broadway Street Fair. They gathered over 250 signatures calling on City Hall to treat their windows, especially the north facing ones that are particularly hazardous for bird collisions. This spring, students and volunteers were counting bird strikes downtown; their work shows there is work to do! City Councillors can lead the way – as the petition says we live on a major migratory flyway and some 30 to 40 million birds die each year in Canada by window collisions! That's a question for all of us – are our own windows treated? More birds die from residential window strikes than from the tall office buildings – we all can do better!

Despite the city dragging its feet on treating its own windows, I was delighted to learn by response to my enquiry that the new central library windows have been designed to reduce bird strikes. There is a ceramic frit applied to the library windows. That's great news too!

Terrific news on the Bird-Friendly City front as well: the Saskatoon Bird Team consisting of Saskatoon Nature Society, Living Sky Wildlife Rehab, Wild About Saskatoon and SOS Trees Coalition recently received a small start-up grant of \$3000 from Nature Canada to help get Saskatoon certified as a Bird-Friendly city! The grant will provide a small monthly honorarium for an interim co-ordinator to help us plan our strategy to move this forward. If you are a person who organizes well, please contact Mercy Harris or myself. We aim to develop a strong cadre of volunteers to help in this initiative! Here is the link to more information: [Bird Friendly Nature Canada](#)

Last spring, I wrote in this column about my grave concerns about the provincial government's intentions to overhaul its Environmental Management Protection Act 2010 (EMPA) this fall. Recently I received a letter summarizing what they heard and how they are planning to respond. It is shocking! They have changed their plan to producing the [Saskatchewan State of the Environment Report](#) every five years instead of two. Doing the math, it is possible that the report will actually skip over an entire four-year government mandate without being reviewed! I await word from Nature Saskatchewan and other provincial conservation groups' plans on how to respond!

On September 4th, National Wildlife Day, I was invited to the premiere showing of [Homes on The Range](#) a video developed by Raising Canadian Beef group. It was an enlightening panel discussion with q's and a's followed. Its message was clear: there is an important link between healthy grasslands and cattle grazing. The video championed a greener view of the beef industry as ranchers practice stewardship of the land including wetlands – a very good reminder!

Something to think about if you are looking to help out improving our city's green initiatives: the City is looking for several volunteers (at least six!) to serve on the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory committee. Yes - 6 positions are open; check here for more details <https://www.saskatoon.ca/city-hall/city-council-boards-committees/boards-committees>. It would be fantastic to

get some members on the advisory committee and have a stronger voice for conservation!

Finally, for my must read of the Month, my recommendation is another owl book! I've enjoyed reading *The Hidden Lives of Owls* by Leigh Calvez available at our library. I found this book a comfortable read as it chronicles naturalist Calvez's dive into the world of owls which so many of us find compelling. She goes into details about several species of owls in a very informative personal manner. I particularly found her writing about the Great Gray Owl and the Great Horned Owl fascinating as they are both present here in Saskatchewan – It's a book that I would go out and buy now!

Have fun this fall - get out there and check out the Whoopers!!

David Forbes

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. Visit the Young Naturalists web page for more details. <https://saskatoonnature.org/young-naturalists/>

Sandhill Cranes – October 4

Saw whet Owl banding – October 10 and 11

Bird Feeder Workshop – November 1



Sandhill Cranes

B. Godwin

Golden Eagles

The Golden Eagles is an informal group of Saskatoon Nature Society (SNS) members. Our interests include all aspects of the natural world 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 a beverage, snack or lunch, and chairs unless otherwise noted by the trip leader. For out-of-town trips, carpooling is encouraged. Those who have CB or FRS radios should bring them. Leaders may request 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, October 2: 9:00 am: Whooping Cranes, place TBA

Meet at Flying J Travel Centre, 3750 Idylwyld Dr N and Marquis Drive. Limit 5 vehicles plus leader
Trip leader: Marten Stoffel. Register with Bill Robertson 306-280-4708

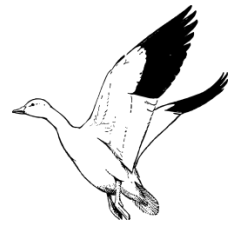
Thursday, October 9: 9:00 am: Whooping Cranes, place TBA

Meet at Flying J Travel Centre, 3750 Idylwyld Dr N and Marquis Drive. Limit 5 vehicles plus leader
Trip leader: Marten Stoffel. Register with Bill Robertson 306-280-4708



Whooping Cranes

M. Haga



Golden Eagles Fall Banquet –

Thursday, October 16, 12 Noon:

Our fall banquet will be on Thursday, October 16, at 12 noon at Agar's Corner (junction of Hwy 16 and Floral Road). If the weather permits, after the meal and program we can walk about the acreage to enjoy the landscape and check for birds. We hope everyone will attend. **You must register with Val Martz (phone/text 306-229-0419 or email: vmartz@shaw.ca) by October 12**, as we must provide a number for the caterer. **Late registrants will only be accommodated in place of late cancellations, after October 12. We must pay the caterer for the number we submit early on Monday October 13.** The cost per person is \$35 which includes gratuity - **plan to pay at the site, exact cash only please.** The menu consists of chicken parmesan with noodles, salad, dessert and beverage. Please identify any dietary allergies when registering. During the meal we'll enjoy member images. **If you have images you would like to include, please contact John by October 12 (phone/text 306-371-9354, or email: jrpatterson@shaw.ca) for more information. On October 16 we will meet at 11:30 am at the Churchill Shopping Centre parking lot to carpool and convoy to Agar's Corner.** For more information about the location, etc., please contact Val or Joan Feather (306-653-3160, or email: jfeather@sasktel.net).

Thursday, October 16 (evening): Saw-Whet Owl banding

Meet at Churchill, time TBA. Number of participants will be limited

Trip leader: Marten Stoffel. Register with Bill Robertson 306-280-4708

Thursday, October 23 (evening): Saw-Whet Owl banding

Meet at Churchill, time TBA. Number of participants will be limited

Trip leader: Marten Stoffel. Register with Bill Robertson 306-280-4708

Thursday, October 30, time TBA: Hieberts Hot Shop (glass and metal workshop), Shields townsite, Blackstrap Lake.

Meet at Churchill.

Trip leader: Joan Feather 306-653-3160

Bird Friendly Saskatoon Seeks Co-ordinator

We are looking for an interim co-ordinator to help develop a strategy for Bird-Friendly Saskatoon and who could manage and coordinate Bird Friendly activities and volunteers.

This is a volunteer position with a small honorarium.

This is a great opportunity for someone with strong organizational skills

For more information and/or to apply contact:

David Forbes: email (davidforbes@sasktel.net)

or

Mercy Harris (mercye-harris@gmail.com)

By October 10th



Sustainability Speakers Series

The Sustainability Speakers Series is hosted by Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES) volunteers in partnership with the Saskatoon Public Library (SPL). These are FREE, in-person events. Please note the new start time of 6 p.m.

Tuesday, October 21, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Cliff Wright Library Auditorium (located in the Lakewood Civic Centre, 1635 McKercher Drive, Saskatoon)

Can we save the Earth's Glaciers? 2025 — International Year of Glaciers' Preservation

A UNESCO Chair in Mountain Water Sustainability, **Dr. John Pomeroy** will describe the impacts of climate warming and other changes causing the global retreat of mountain glaciers and why this matters for humanity. The impacts on water resources, sea levels, and ecosystems will be addressed and the prospects for glacier preservation in a time of global warming and the highest atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations in over two million years will be considered.

Tuesday, November 25, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Cliff Wright Library Auditorium (located in the Lakewood Civic Centre, 1635 McKercher Drive, Saskatoon)

Home Renovations — Solar, Battery Storage, Heat Pumps, and More

Phil Foster will cover the renovation of a home built in the 2000s, including adding solar panels, battery storage, a heat pump, smart electric vehicle charging, and advanced mechanical systems.

Recordings of previous presentations in the series are available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRUK7BHZUVfrHCxuJyBeO0lgjjeqBwseY>

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.**

Memberships paid after July 1 will continue through the following year.

SNS Membership can be paid for 1 year or up to 5 years. Member cards are mailed out annually.

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/>



Saskatoon Nature Society

Mailing address:

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SASKATOON SK S7H 5N9

Website:

<https://saskatoonnature.org>

Facebook:

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 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

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Director	Robert Johanson	306-653-2610
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Director	Peggy Schmeiser.....	
Director	Jan Spencer	j.spencer01@sasktel.net


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 GE: Whooping Cranes	3	4 YN: Sandhill Cranes
5 Whooping Cranes 2	6	7	8	9 GE: Whooping Cranes	10 YN: Saw- whet Owls	11 YN: Saw-whet Owls
12 Whooping Cranes 3	13 Woodlawn Cemetery Bird Walk	14	15	16 Oct. SNS Meeting ----- GE: Agar's Corner (AM) Saw-whet Owls (PM)	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 GE: Saw-whet Owls (PM)	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 GE: Hieberts Hot Shop	31	

NOVEMBER

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

YN: Young Naturalists; GE: Golden Eagles