

Saskatoon Nature Society Newsletter

November 2025

Vol. 47 No. 9

Honey Bees vs. Wild Bees: Friends, Foes, or Frenemies?

Dr. Sarah Wood

**Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of
Saskatchewan
and Emilio Prieto MSc**

**In person and online!
Rm #GB06 Health Sciences Bldg, U of S
7:30 PM Thursday, November 20**

Dr. Sarah Wood, MSc, DVM, PhD, DACVP, Research Chair in Pollinator Health, Associate Professor, Department of Veterinary Pathology, along with her graduate student, Emilio Enrique Tellarini Prieto, will share and discuss current research at the University of Saskatchewan related to wild and managed pollinators.

Dr. Wood's research program focuses on optimizing the management and diagnosis of honey bee disease to enhance the health and productivity of Canadian honey bee colonies. Her specific research aims include understanding mechanisms of antimicrobial resistance of foulbrood bacteria, investigating the safety and efficacy of overwinter miticide treatments, enhancing pesticide risk assessment for honey bee drones, and improving honey bee health to ensure sustainable pollination of blueberries and canola. The outcomes of this applied research, including novel therapeutics and diagnostics for honey bee disease, will have direct, positive impacts on the health of honey bees and the crops they pollinate, with overall benefits for food security and sustainability. Moreover, Dr. Wood's research program strengthens the relationship between veterinarians and beekeepers, fostering shared advancements in antimicrobial stewardship and surveillance of bee disease.



Emilio Enrique Tellarini Prieto, MSc, Agriculture Engineer, was born in Argentina and took his bachelor degree there as Agriculture Engineer at the National University of the South. From 2023 to August 2025, he did his Masters in the Honey Bee Health Lab, supervised by Dr. Sarah Wood at the Department of Veterinary Pathology, Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan.



As an Agricultural Engineer with a Master of Science, Emilio's research explores the intersection between agriculture and pollinator health, with a focus on honey bee nutrition,

pesticide exposure, and wild bee diversity in canola-dominated landscapes of the Canadian Prairies. Emilio has worked as a researcher and extensionist in the private sector, supporting sustainable beekeeping practices and farmer education. During his MSc, he published in *Frontiers in Bee Science*, presented his work at national conferences, and co-supervised several students in pollinator ecology projects. Emilio's work aims to strengthen the link between agricultural productivity and pollinator conservation, contributing to sustainable food systems and resilient prairie ecosystems. Today, he is working as a research assistant for the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Development Commission, where he is leading several projects related to honey bee health.

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/>

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.

Sunday, November 16, 2 PM – 3 PM

President Murray Park Birds

We will walk through this park looking for any golden-crowned kinglets, brown creepers, woodpeckers or other late fall songbirds. Please dress warmly.

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



Brown Creeper

Saturday, December 6, 9 AM–5 PM

Gardiner Dam Birding

We will look 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/3j1KTNfasmC2>

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

Watch for Christmas Bird Count information in the next newsletter!

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.

Vice President's Message

Heather Brenneman

As Vice President of the Saskatoon Nature Society, I am filling in for our President, David Forbes who, at this writing, has been travelling in Europe since late September. He asked me to prepare the message for this month's newsletter.

What a gorgeous fall we have had!! As I write this in early October, we have just experienced two more days of hot, dry weather. The fall colours of the trees have been exceptionally lovely and lasting and the bird migration along the Central North American Flyway has been spectacular. Watching hundreds of Sandhill Cranes fly in from harvested fields to shelter for the night on the sandbars in the river off Chief Whitecap Park is always thrilling. This year, Whooping Cranes were sighted further north of here in record numbers: the largest one-day total of 196 amounts to over 35% of the entire population on the continent! Right here in Saskatchewan!



Sandhill Cranes

Bob Godwin

Let me tell you a little about myself and my participation on the SNS Board. I am a former clinical psychologist who retired in 2017 after practicing in Saskatoon for over thirty years. I have served on the boards of a variety of community organizations through the past 35 years. I became a member of SNS about 20 years ago and began by joining in birding field trips and attending monthly presentations. In 2021 I was elected to the board of directors. Since then, I have been active on three board committees.

As the Programme Coordinator for our general monthly meeting speaker series I enjoy researching and hosting presenters from the Saskatoon area and beyond. At present we continue to offer these presentations through meetings in person on the university campus while live-streaming them via the internet to viewers at home. David Forbes and Nancy Allan are fellow members of this committee.

Recently, I have also coordinated the Treaty Land Acknowledgment and Reconciliation Committee. Last year this committee crafted a statement of reconciliation with First Nations and Metis peoples. This land acknowledgement was adopted by the board in October, 2024 and is now used in opening our members' monthly meetings. This committee, which currently includes new board members Nicole Paslowski and Nancy Lease, is now working to identify ways that we may engage together with First Nations and Metis peoples in our common goals of conservation and stewardship of the land, its birds, animals and plants.

Last year I was a member of the Nominations Committee which recruits new board members to replace those who are leaving the board, most often because they have reached the end of their maximum 5-year tenure. Although it is a bit early to make this pitch, I would like to encourage you to consider putting your name forward next March when board elections are held at our Annual General Meeting. Contrary to many people's belief, you do not need to be a biologist or an expert birder or native plant lover to contribute to the board. You need only desire to contribute your time to this wonderful organization that has been successfully operating for over 60 years - because of its volunteers! We will have several vacancies that need to be filled come March.

I want to acknowledge the recent loss for nature lovers everywhere of Jane Goodall at the age of 91. Jane's work with chimpanzees which began in 1960 not only taught us about their behaviour as wild animals but provided evidence that successfully challenged and changed how we in the western world have viewed our relationship to other living organisms since the time of Aristotle (over 2400 years ago!). She did more than any of her predecessors to convince us that humans are not the only sentient beings, able to use tools, to feel, to solve problems, to have meaningful social bonds, and to pass on knowledge across generations. You will be missed, Jane! (Listen to a rebroadcast of Rob MacDonald's Quirks and Quarks interview of Jane Goodall from 2002 at <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/audio/9.6926723>)

Finally, continuing on the topic of sentience I want to recommend a great read. *The Light Eaters* (2025) by Zoe Schlanger describes recent and somewhat controversial research on plants. Zoe is a former climate-change journalist with the *Atlantic* and other major U.S. news publications. Disillusioned with the slow progress towards

addressing climate change, she went in search of a topic to revive her wonder about the natural world. The book is absolutely fascinating! Plants must adapt while rooted in a single place, where they have adapted ingenious methods of survival. Recently, scientists have learned about their ability to communicate, to recognize their kin, to store memories that inform their life cycle and even to trick animals into behaving to their benefit. One of the most intriguing examples is a mimic vine found in Chile. This vine changes appearance to closely resemble the plants that it is twining with, altering the size, shape, and colour of its leaves. The big questions are: how does the plant know what the other plant "looks like", and what is the mechanism of the mimicry? A clue: the mechanism is not through a change in DNA! To find out how scientists think that the plant recognizes how the other plant looks and then changes its appearance, check out the book. It is well written, well researched and examines the topic with a lovely mixture of wonder and skepticism. You will never look at plants the same way again!

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/>

Bird Feeder Workshop – November 1

Christmas Bird Count for Kids – December 27



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.

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.

We will take a break in November, but our program will start again in December, continuing in 2026. Watch for the information in the December and January newsletters.

Wednesday, December 3, 10:15 – A one hour tour of the Remai Modern at River Landing featuring the exhibition, Great Plains Series. Lunch to follow at a local restaurant. Details to follow closer to the event. **To register** contact Valerie Martz vmartz@shaw.ca or call/text 306-229-0419 (limit of 30).

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, 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=PLRUK7BHZUVfrHCxuJyBeO0lgjqBwseY>



Kids in Nature Grant Program

January 15, 2026 Deadline

The Saskatoon Nature Society (SNS) aims to strengthen existing programs and encourage new initiatives that connect youth in the Saskatoon area with nature. Each year, we accept proposals from educational institutions including primary or secondary schools, community associations, First Nations and Metis, and registered charities in the Saskatoon area to fund projects that target children or youth up to and including 18 years of age. Priority will be given to projects with a focus on local natural history. Please note that gardening projects which do not focus on local natural history will not be considered. The total funding available is approximately \$2000.00. This amount may go to one applicant or may be divided among several applicants

Grant application available on the home page of Saskatoon Nature Society website.

<https://saskatoonnature.org/>

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 or send us a note at our postal address (next page).

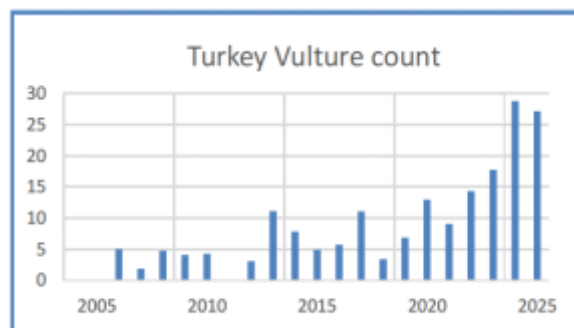
Saskatoon Fall Migration Bird Count September 6, 2025

The fifty-one participants in the Saskatoon Nature Society fall count on September 6, 2025 enjoyed mostly sunny skies, mild temperatures and light winds. The species count of 167 was the highest since 2010 and well above the long-term average of 152. Pine Warbler was seen for the first time, Eastern Bluebird and Veery for only the second time.

Water levels have recovered somewhat from several dry years, and of the dabbling ducks only Northern Shoveller count (43% of LTA) was significantly below normal. However, several of the diving duck counts were uniformly low: Canvasback (13%), Ring-necked Duck (0%, the first time none have been observed), Lesser Scaup (16%, a new low), Bufflehead (9%), Hooded Merganser (9%), Ruddy Duck (18%).

With ample shoreline habitat, the overall shorebird count was above normal (152% of LTA). Stilt Sandpiper (915%) and Semipalmated Plover (872%) were particularly abundant., along with Least Sandpiper (273%) and Semipalmated Sandpiper (600%).

Black Tern is an example of a species whose fall migration has shifted earlier. In the last ten years a total of only four have been counted. In the previous 12 years the count averaged 26 per year. In contrast, Turkey Vultures (363%) seem to be staying longer into the fall. The four highest counts have been recorded in the last four years. .



The warbler count this year was exceptional, with a new high of 20 species observed. Yellow-rumped Warbler (54%) which dominates the fall count was lower than usual, but offsetting that were new high counts for Ovenbird (475%), Northern Waterthrush (695%), Cape

May Warbler (424%), Bay-breasted Warbler (812%) and Blackpoll Warbler (469%).

Thank you to all who participated in the count this year. We hope you will join us again on future counts.

John Patterson (compiler)

Stan Shadick (organizer)

Notes: Long-term averages (LTA) are calculated from 2004 – present. Counts prior to 2004 are not comparable as they were conducted a week later. To make year-to-year count comparisons valid, raw counts have been corrected for effort (annual corrected count = annual raw count x long-term average party hours / annual party hours). Counts quoted in the narrative and presented as a % of the LTA are corrected. Raw counts are shown in the tables. Tables may be found on the SNS website: <https://saskatoonnature.org/bird-count-reports>

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:

PO Box 27013 GROSVENOR PARK

SASKATOON SK S7H 5N9

Website:

<https://saskatoonnature.org>

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SaskatoonNatureSociety

Newsletter



The deadline for the next newsletter is **November 15**. 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

Conservation	Sara Bryson.....306-261-6156	
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Young Naturalists	Greg Fenty.....	306-370-8839 naturekids@saskatoonnature.org

Board of Directors

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Director	Kerry Hjertaas.....	
Director	Robert Johanson	306-653-2610
Director	Nicole Pasloski.....	
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.

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 Pres. Murray Park Birds	17	18	19	20 Nov. Meeting	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 GE: Remai Modern	4	5	6 Gardiner Dam Birding
7	8	9	10	11 Dec. Meeting	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 YN: CBC for Kids
28	29	30	31			

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