

Saskatoon Nature Society Newsletter

December 2025

Vol. 47 No. 10

Habitat Restoration in the Canadian Prairies: When and Where Does it Work, and Why Do We Need to Keep Habitat Intact?

Dr. Lauren Bortolotti
Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research
Ducks Unlimited, Manitoba

Online only!
7:30 PM Thursday, December 11

The restoration of lost or degraded habitat is an important tool for biodiversity conservation, with the global community striving to restore at least 30% of areas of degraded ecosystems by 2030 (Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Target #2). However, not all ecosystems can be restored, and not all organisms benefit from restoration. Lauren will share research by Ducks Unlimited Canada that has asked and answered questions about habitat restoration in the Canadian Prairies like: What species benefit from restoration and where is it most effective? How long does it take for a restored ecosystem to recover? She'll also discuss why we can't rely on restoration alone and need to keep remaining habitat intact.



Lauren Bortolotti is a Research Scientist with Ducks Unlimited Canada's Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research. Her research aims to advance conservation in Canada through quantification of the benefits of nature to society, evaluation of conservation programming to improve program design, and addressing fundamental knowledge gaps related to conservation threats and

opportunities. Research projects involve facets of wetland ecology and biogeochemistry, avian ecology, and/or conservation biology. Lauren has a BSc in Biology from the University of Saskatchewan and a PhD in Ecology from the University of Alberta.

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, 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).



Saskatoon Area Christmas Bird Counts

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

If you wish to help with a bird count, please contact the listed organizer and provide your phone number.



Hairy Woodpecker Bob Godwin

- **Sun. Dec. 14 Qu'Appelle Dam**
Bob Godwin
email: godmee@sasktel.net
Phone: 306-361-6732
- **Sat. Dec. 20 Clark's Crossing**
LeeAnn Latremouille
email: leeannlatre@gmail.com
Phone: 306-880-9027
- **Fri. Dec. 26 Saskatoon**
Stan Shadick / Kerry Hjertaas
Before Dec. 20: email trips@saskatoonnature.org
or phone 306-652-5975
Later: email Kerry.hjertaas@usask.ca
- **Sat. Dec. 27 Christmas Bird Count for Kids**
Greg Fenty
email greg.fenty@gmail.com
- **Sat. Jan. 3 Pike Lake**
Donna Bruce
email: donna.bruce@sasktel.net
Phone: 306-956-3437
- Other counts: contact Guy Wapple,
wapz339@gmail.com:
Sun. Dec. 14 - Harris
Mon. Dec. 15 - Gardiner Dam
Tues. Dec. 16 - Biggar

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

Here we are – closing in on the end of 2025 and what a year it's been! First off, I want to thank Heather Brenneman our vice-president for stepping in as I took a bit of a holiday! Thanks Heather, you did a great job! Much appreciated!!

Exciting news too as our membership stands at 488. This is the highest it has been in many years and Jan, our membership coordinator, reports that we are having record numbers of new members signing up because of word of mouth - we are our best advertisers!

Lots of news over the past few weeks. I am glad to see the provincial government withdraw its intentions to amend the Environmental Management Protection Act this fall; it may come back next year though so we should be prepared for that! Also, there is not much in the federal budget for nature – we were hoping for good things such as some funding announcements for the Saskatoon National Urban Park – no word on that yet!

We have been asked by Nature Canada to sign on to their request to Ministers Dabrusin, Guilbeault, and Secretary of State Provost, urging the Government of Canada to continue supporting the Bird Friendly Cities Program. Since 2020, the Bird Friendly Cities movement has grown to include 37 certified municipalities, representing nearly 10 million Canadians. Together, 466 organizations including ours have collaborated to protect birds from window collisions, habitat loss, pesticides, and free-roaming cats, to help restore local natural habitats for birds and to educate the wider community about their importance.

I should note that the Saskatoon Bird Friendly team received a \$3000 grant from Nature Canada this fall to help establish Saskatoon as a Bird Friendly City. As a result, we now have a part-time co-ordinator for the next 5 months – Sabine Kirsch. She will help us with much needed organization to move forward. Saskatoon Bird Friendly's email is birdfriendlyyx@gmail.com – send us a note. I also want to thank Mercy Harris for her incredible leadership for our meetings with City Hall committees, urging them to fix the north side windows of City Hall. Mercy has been hard at this since spring, and I think she is having an impact – we await further word. And thanks to all who sent in supportive messages as well.

We are excited to hear that Nature Sask has released the long-awaited *Saskatchewan Butterflies*. It is available now at local bookstores including Turning the Tide and McNally Robinson. *Saskatchewan Butterflies* illustrates the colour, variety and allure of all 158 butterfly species found in the province. Donna Bruce and Anna Leighton were very actively involved in this project – very worthwhile to check out especially with Christmas coming up!

I was also delighted to deliver our first contribution of \$7500 to NCC as part of our renewed partnership agreement regarding the Asquith Destination property – a very critical conservation endeavour!

It's official - Saskatchewan's first-ever Breeding Bird Atlas has landed! This critical new resource is the result of one of the largest volunteer-driven conservation efforts in the province's history. Explore the Saskatchewan Breeding Bird Atlas: <https://sk.birdatlas.ca>

Our Kids in Nature grant application deadline is coming up really quick on January 15, 2026. If you know of a group that could use some extra support, please direct them to our website or show them the KIN ad in this newsletter. We want to strengthen initiatives that connect youth in the Saskatoon area with nature so get your applications in!

My book of the month is Trish O'Kane's *Birding to Change the World* – a fascinating and inspirational read for all of us who are attracted to the avian world! Her premise is that if we take care of the birds and their world it follows that our own world will be so much better! Trish's life story is quite a tale, starting out as a journalist in war-torn Nicaragua in the mid 1980's, not an easy place for an American. Then by chance she started anew by teaching at Loyola in New Orleans in the fall of 2005, just as Hurricane Katrina hit, a very powerful personal experience where she became connected to birds in that devastated city in an odd way. She later decided to get her PhD in Madison, Wisconsin and fell into a local group of conservationists/birders and there was no turning back! I highly recommend this book – it is so timely for us in Saskatoon as we work towards our bird friendly designation making our own city better for birds! *Birding to Change the World* is in our library – check it out!!

Finally, as you will see in this newsletter, we are starting to get ready for the annual Christmas Bird Count. It will be

our 71st - an amazing milestone! Be sure to volunteer and see how you can help out!

Again – all the best as we close out the year, hopefully the weather will be kind!

David Forbes

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, car-pooling 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.

Wednesday, December 3, 10:15: The tour at the Remail Modern at River Landing featuring the exhibition, Great Plains Series has been filled. Please contact Valerie Martz: vmartz@shaw.ca or call/text 306-229-0419 if you wish to be placed on a wait list.

January - March, 2026: Plans have been made for the programming for the winter of 2026. Details will follow in the January and February newsletters.



Frozen marsh

K. Meeres

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/>

Christmas Bird Count for Kids – December 27

Tracks and Scats - January 25

Chickadee Pishing - February 7



Kids in Nature Grant Program

January 15, 2026 Deadline

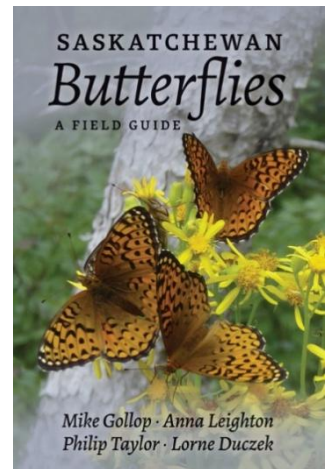
The Saskatoon Nature Society (SNS) aims to strengthen existing programs and encourage new initiatives that connect youth in the Saskatoon area with nature. Each year, we accept proposals from educational institutions including primary or secondary schools, community associations, First Nations and Metis, 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/>

Saskatchewan Butterflies: A Field Guide

A wonderful new field guide from Nature Saskatchewan is now available for sale, just in time for Christmas gifting! In 352 pages, *Saskatchewan Butterflies* illustrates the colour, variety and allure of all 158 butterfly species found in the province to date. It includes a wealth of photos along with valuable background information, distribution maps, detailed identification plates, and pictorial and quick indexes to help you navigate easily.



The authors have dedicated the book to Juhachi Asai, an SNS member who dedicated much of his retirement until his passing to finding and photographing as many of the province's butterfly species as he could. Juhachi's dream and the photos he produced provided the motivation for this book to be done. A large number of the wonderful photos in the book are his. [The only other book about Saskatchewan's butterflies was published in 1973 — in black and white. You could say this new publication is long overdue!]

I will have copies to sell to SNS members **for two weeks only — November 29th to December 13th**. Payment is by **cash or cheque only** and books must be **picked up no later than December 13th**. The cost is \$42, tax included. To arrange purchase, please contact me at donna.bruce@sasktel.net or 305-956-3437. Copies can also be purchased through the Nature Saskatchewan office and, in Saskatoon, from McNally Robinson, Wild Birds Unlimited and Turning the Tide.

The authors put a lot of thought into designing and compiling this guide. I'm confident you will find it very useful, attractive and interesting —a great resource for the field and a pleasant distraction on housebound days. Do check it out!

Donna Bruce

Publications Coordinator, Saskatoon Nature Society

Breeding Bird Atlas

It's official - Saskatchewan's first-ever Breeding Bird Atlas has landed! This critical new resource is the result of one of the largest volunteer-driven conservation efforts in the province's history.

From 2017 to 2021, 330 dedicated participants spent over 22,000 hours surveying Saskatchewan's birds to deliver the Atlas, a province-wide account of the distribution and relative abundance of breeding bird populations. Their incredible effort provides us with the in-depth knowledge we need to protect Saskatchewan's birds and their habitats.

Explore the Saskatchewan
Breeding Bird
Atlas: <https://sk.birdatlas.ca>



2026 Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation Calendar Available

The 2026 LSWR Wildlife calendar features pictures of injured or orphaned birds and small mammals that Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation in Saskatoon has cared for during the past few years. Pictures taken by Saskatoon photographer Krista Trinder.

To order and for more information contact
<https://livingskywildliferehabilitation.org/lswr-calendar-order-form/> or phone 306-281-0554.



It's time 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/>



Common Redpoll

May Haga

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 **December 14**. 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	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.

December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 GE: Remai Modern	4	5	6 Gardiner Dam Birding
7	8	9	10	11 Dec. Meeting (online)	12	13
14 CBC: Qu'Appelle Dam CBC: Harris	15 CBC: Gardiner Dam	16 CBC: Biggar	17	18	19	20 CBC: Clark's Crossing
21	22	23	24	25	26 CBC: Saskatoon	27 YN: CBC for Kids
28	29	30	31			

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 CBC: Pike Lake
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 YN: Tracks and Scats	26	27	28	29	30	31

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