

# Saskatoon Nature Society

# Newsletter

April 2026

Vol. 48 No. 4

## Understanding the physiology of migratory bird flight at high altitudes

With Dr. Catherine Ivy

7:30 PM, Thursday April 16, 2026  
Rm 1130 Health Sciences Building  
In person and Online

Dr. Catherine Ivy is a new assistant professor at the University of Saskatchewan in the Department of Biology who focuses on how animals maintain oxygen uptake in changing and challenging environments. She earned her BSc in Zoology at the University of Guelph and a PhD at McMaster University, followed by Postdoctoral research at the University of Western Ontario. Her research has spanned various altitudes, continents, and species, with the underlying question of how animals maintain oxygen uptake when challenged by low oxygen.



Migratory flight is an intensive exercise that requires birds to maintain high amounts of oxygen uptake for many hours or days. Maintaining oxygen supply to flight muscles is therefore important during migration, especially since tracking studies have shown that songbirds will ascend to altitudes of 6,000 m during migratory flight where oxygen is less readily available (hypoxia). Whether there are adaptations or seasonal plasticity along the oxygen cascade (transporting oxygen from the lungs to the flight muscle) that allow songbirds to fly at such high altitudes during the migratory season has been unknown. My research has shown that migratory songbirds do exhibit seasonal plasticity along the oxygen cascade during migration. This includes changes in breathing pattern, haemoglobin-oxygen binding affinity, and muscle fiber size and phenotype. We have also shown that the magnitude of seasonal plasticity may be dictated by migratory distance. In yellow-rumped

warblers and hermit thrush, two short-distance migrants, the ability to fly at high altitudes appeared to be dictated by the magnitude of seasonal flexibility along the oxygen cascade. Moving forward, the Ivy lab will be assessing how wildfire smoke impacts the lungs of songbirds and their ability to complete migration.

*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](mailto:c.bear@sasktel.net).*

## Field Trips

All are welcome to participate in field trips, except those described as “members only”. In some cases pre-registration may be necessary. Invite your friends! Carpooling for out-of-town trips is arranged at the meeting place. There are no fees or restrictions unless indicated; however, participants are expected to share gasoline costs and should make arrangements with the driver to do so. Phone the trip leader if you have any questions. Participants can return early if they wish. Members with FRS radios should bring them on out-of-town trips. For information on city buses, phone 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/>

### Early April - Sharp-tailed Grouse Dance Trip

SNS Members Only. We will drive out of town well before dawn on a weekday morning in early April to view this sunrise ritual from a public road. We should return to the city before 8:00 AM.

Leader: Stan Shadick (306-652-5975)

Register before April 4 by sending your full name(s) and cell phone number and trip title by email to

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

Date of trip TBA

**Tue. April 7, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm**

**Gull Trip**

Learn to identify Saskatoon's gulls. We plan to drive to a variety of locations along the riverbank in or near the city. Meet at WonderHub Children's Museum south parking lot. Stand outside and wear your binoculars so we can find you.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/Z8kgSnKfYCbz7oVn9>

Leader: Robert Johanson ([robert.johanson@shaw.ca](mailto:robert.johanson@shaw.ca))

No registration required.

**Sat. April 11, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

**Bluebird Trip**

We plan to drive in a short convoy west of Saskatoon in search of Mountain Bluebirds. The round trip distance should be less than 150 km.

Meet in the parking lot for the Esso Station near the intersection of highway 7 and 11<sup>th</sup> St W.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/H6wsxxEhdNrRvAnw7>

Leader: John Patterson

Register before April 9 by sending your full name(s) and cell phone number and trip title by email to [jrpatterson@shaw.ca](mailto:jrpatterson@shaw.ca)



Mountain Bluebird

B Godwin

**Wed. April 15, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

**Crocus Hike**

From the meeting point, we will drive to the most suitable location. Check the SNS website in case this field trip is postponed due to weather.

Meet at gravel parking area to the east of Lakewood Civic Centre.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/DwmAYkWbVvq8kVZK6>

Leader: Sara Bryson (306-261-6156)

No registration required.

**Sun. April 19, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**

**Holiday Park River Walk**

We plan to follow the walking trail from the park to Gordie Howe bridge and back. Look for ducks, gulls, and any other signs of spring. Wear good waterproof shoes and bring a water bottle. Admire the new pathways/benches set up by the Meewasin Valley Authority. May be postponed if weather is bad.

Meet at the south end of Avenue K.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/Dnh3yR194pgUC1Ty7>

Leader: Kathlin Simpkins

Register before April 18 by sending your full name(s) and cell phone number and trip title by email to

[kaelraye@gmail.com](mailto:kaelraye@gmail.com)

**Sun., April 26, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

**Brightwater Marsh Waterfowl trip**

We plan to drive to Brightwater Marsh and Blackstrap Lake to look for early waterfowl. Bring a lunch.

Meet in the parking lot in front of Wild Birds Unlimited, 2600 8<sup>th</sup> St E in the strip mall at SE corner of 8<sup>th</sup> Street at Emerson Avenue.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/agu1zX1f4ekpaFQf6>

Leader: Bob Godwin (306-361-6732)

No registration needed.

**Sat. May 2, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM**

**Miller Avenue Slough**

We will observe ducks, grebes, shorebirds and other birds at this wetland near the north end of Saskatoon.

Meet at the wetland on Miller Avenue north of 71<sup>st</sup> Street.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/HHT4EiPLCGQRfVSo6>

Leader: Kerry Hjertaas

Register by texting 306-260-6602 before May 2.

**Mon. May 18, 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Birding trip to Proctor Lake**

A special opportunity to view the wetland and woodland birds near this prairie lake situated on a private pasture south of Dundurn. Be prepared to walk approximately 4 km over trails and meadowland and drive on rough prairie trails. Bring a lunch if you wish.

Meet at Dundurn Gas Plus Station parking lot and wear your binoculars.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/bhBXkwpFaxAXERdv5>

Register by text to 306-361-6732

Leaders: Janine McManus and Bob Godwin.

**Thu. May 21 6:00 PM – 9:30 pm**

**SNS Picnic at St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Park (Brown's Lake)**

Bring your own food. Use of fireplace is not guaranteed.

Meet at the grain elevator in the Western Development Museum parking lot off Lorne Avenue.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/1bGzDH4iLd6q3MM57>

Register by texting to 306-230-9291

Check SNS website before you come in case of any more information.

Organizer: Marten Stoffel , Josh Erikson and Kerry Hjertaas

## Spring Bird Count

**Saturday, May 23**

Help survey the bird population in and around Saskatoon during the peak of the spring migration.

Compiler: John Patterson

Organizers: Stan Shadick and Kerry Hjertaas

To participate, please email your full name, cell phone number and address to [trips@saskatoonnature.org](mailto:trips@saskatoonnature.org)

*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.*



Three-Flowered Avens

K. Meeres

## President's Message

Thank you to all who attended our recent AGM, I am honoured to be re-elected as president, and I am equally excited about the new crew coming on board. We will miss the retiring folks who served us all so well! The AGM provides an excellent review of the health of the organization and whether the organization is meeting its stated goals. I was delighted to say yes to both points, we are healthy, and we are doing our best to meet our goals – I've provided a checklist below that underlines that

good work. Our treasurer, in her report, demonstrated that we are financially sound.

I want to acknowledge our volunteers, those folks that make things happen in the SNS. I think of Kathy with the newsletter, Jan with memberships, Claire with the email, Trent working the Website, Valerie, Bev, Stan, Greg, Donna, Kerry, Ron, Nicole & Peggy - we owe them a big thank you!! I want to especially thank those who have given so much through their board activities.

I organized my President's report around our three themes of conservation, education and advocacy. These three vital goals stand out in making SNS a truly valued legacy nature organization here in our Saskatoon. They are so linked that's it's difficult to say what belongs to what, but I think this gives you, the member, a good perspective on our activities.

### CONSERVATION

- Citizen Science activities such as our annual bird counts
- We signed 3 yr. renewal partnership agreement with NCC
- Participated in the relaunch of the Saskatoon Urban National Park's (SUNP)
- Renewed efforts to have Saskatoon certified as a Bird-Friendly City.
  - We petitioned the City to treat the City Hall windows, getting over 500 signatures at our tables at Broadway Street Fair and 33<sup>rd</sup> St Fair.
  - We received a start-up grant of \$3000 from Nature Canada to help us get going.

### EDUCATION

- Our Programming committee continued to present thoughtful and provocative speakers
- 3 groups received Kids in Nature grants, providing nature experiences for kids!
- Our field trips continue to be a big success,
- A big thank you to Ron Jensen, Kerry Hjertaas and John Patterson who led early morning outings as part of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists Conference this August 2025, Mercy Harris played a big part in this too.

## **ADVOCACY**

- We made comments on the proposed provincial Environmental Management Protection Act amendments and the Federal proposed migratory birds hunting regulation changes.
- We continued to call for an effective Wetlands policy for the province.
- We participated in Phase 3 freeways consultation meetings in the fall.
- We nominated Stan Shadick and Al Scholz to represent SNS on the renewed Blackstrap advisory committee.

A special thank you to Mercy Harris our secretary and Nancy Lease our treasurer and all the committee chairs & coordinators (names are listed in the newsletter) who make it all happen in the SNS – Thank you so much!!

I want to recognize Jim Lee, who is stepping down as past-president, who helped so much as President then with the nominating committee and the Kids in Nature Grants; Heather Brenneman, especially for her work with the programming committee and her leadership on our Truth and Reconciliation committee and stepping up for me in the fall when I was away; Sara Bryson who has served effectively in so many roles especially as President and Conservation chair; Robert Johanson who has also served in so many ways, but I have to say I have personally valued his ability to share insights from past practice; Julia Balaton & Nancy Allan who shared their time with us – thank you all! Know that we truly appreciate your gifts of effort, time and thoughtfulness!

Again, welcome to our new executive members: LeeAnn Latremouille, Leanne Grieves, Rylan Urban, Guy Wapple, Wally Wells and Andreas Lohstraeter and those who are returning for another year! Please be sure to check out the new board listing on Page 7!

As I often do, I close with a book recommendation, this is one is a book published by SNS in 2006, *Thanks to the Sun, A Scrapbook of Nature Notes about the Northern Prairies*. I recognized several names who had contributed, and the topics are always something we are thinking about, I thought I should read this! As then President Donna Bruce observed, what better way to celebrate our fiftieth year! That gets me to thinking – our 75<sup>th</sup> is coming up soon - in four years in fact, something we should be thinking about!!

In closing, I was delighted to see over 100 people in attendance (in person or by Zoom) at our November General Meeting, By the end of 2025 our membership was getting very close to 500!! All of these are good indicators that we are doing well!

Thanks – see you out on the trails!

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](mailto:naturekids@saskatoonnature.org). Visit the Young Naturalists web page for more details. <https://saskatoonnature.org/young-naturalists/>

**Birdhouse workshop** – April 18

**Crocus hike** – April 25

**Pond dipping** – May 9



## **Golden Eagles**

The Golden Eagles is an informal group of Saskatoon Nature Society members. Interest lies in the natural world; birds, botany, multicultural history, and out-of-town field trips. Participants should be SNS members and consider membership in Nature Saskatchewan.

Typically, participants are asked to bring lunch, drinks and chairs unless otherwise noted by the trip leader. Those who have CB radios (tuned to channel 28) or FRS radios

(tuned to channel 7) should bring them on out-of-town trips. Carpooling at participants' discretion.

Leaders may request pre-registration. Please contact the trip leader if you have any questions.

Unless otherwise arranged, we meet on Thursdays at Churchill Shopping Center, Taylor St. and Clarence Avenue. Please check departure dates and times.

**Thursday, April 2,** No trip scheduled.

**Thursday, April 09, 8:00 AM**

**Bluebirds, Grandora area**

Meet at Esso Station, 11St. & highway 7. Bring lunch, drinks, chair. Depending on our success, the trip may not last till lunch. If it does, we will likely have lunch in our cars along the road. If the snow is gone, we may continue on to Asquith and have lunch at the NCC site.

**Leader:** John Patterson.

**Register** with John by email, text or phone jrpatterson@shaw.ca or 306-371-9354.

**Wednesday, April 15, 8:30-10:00 PM Saw-whet Owl – Maple Grove**

An evening trip to observe Saw-whet Owl in Maple Grove – MVA site.

Meet at WDM parking lot by the grain elevator. Bring a chair if you wish.

**Leader:** Marten Stoffel (306-230-9291)

**Thursday, April 16, 9:30-11:00 AM**

**Crocuses, NE Swale**

Meet at the Swale. North turn-off on Fedoruk Drive at RR3050. Morning only.

**Leader:** Nancy Zacher (306-717-5871)

**Thursday, April 23, 8:00 AM**

**Brightwater Marsh**

Meet at Churchill Shopping Center.

**Leaders:** Louise Cook (306-955-4764) and Bill Robertson.

**Thursday, April 30, 9:30-11:00**

**Forestry Farm bird walk.** A walk-about to see resident and late winter birds.

Meet at the main parking lot at the end of Forestry Farm Park Drive

(near maintenance buildings). If you want to stay for coffee after the walk, bring snacks, drink, chair. No park entry fee. Washrooms on site.

**Leader:** Nancy Lease (306-371-9286)

**Thursday, May 7, 8:00 AM**

**Spring ducks, Porter Lake and area**

Meet at FasGas service station on Highway 5 & Zimmerman Road. It's okay to leave cars at the station. Lunch at Bergheim picnic site. \$2.00 donation for picnic site use

**Leader:** John Patterson (306-371-9354)



*Northern Shoveler*

**Thursday, May 14, 8:00 AM**

**Martensville Dog Park, Trails & Wetlands**

Meet at the Flying J, 3850 Idylwyld Drive N.

Morning only. If you want to stay for coffee, bring snacks, beverage and a chair.

No dogs, please.

**Leader:** Dianne Young (306-717-5735). Leader to Martensville: John Patterson (306-371-9354)

**Thursday, May 21, 8:00 AM**

**Pike Lake acreage warblers**

Meet at Churchill Shopping Center.

**Leader:** Audrey & Bill MacKenzie (306-227-3696)

**Thursday, May 28, 8:00 AM**

**Bradwell and area**

Meet at Churchill Shopping Center

**Leader:** Bill Robertson (306-280-4708)



## Pelican Watch Spotters Needed

In April the American White Pelicans gather by the weir to fish. For Saskatoon residents, their arrival is a harbinger of spring. Since 1996 Meewasin has conducted the Pelican Watch Contest. In the month of March residents of Saskatoon are invited to guess the arrival time of the first pelican to land between the CPR Bridge and the Saskatoon Weir. It's a great contest, with prizes up for grabs for the closest guess.



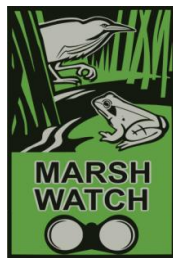
Pelican May Haga

Saskatoon Nature Society is the official pelican spotter. Meewasin relies on the support of the Saskatoon Nature Society to spot the first pelican. During the month of April pay close attention to the weir. If you spot a pelican in the official splashdown zone (between the weir and the train bridge) please report it by calling 306-652-5975 (Stan) or Richard (306-653-4209) or texting 306-370-8839 (Greg) or by e-mail to [saskatoonnaturekids@gmail.com](mailto:saskatoonnaturekids@gmail.com) Happy Spotting!

## Marsh Watch

Join Birds Canada for a deep-dive into prairie wetlands!

MarshWatch is a free 10-part weekly webinar series designed for the prairie provinces. We'll dive into tips, tricks, and behavioural cues to identify ~50 species of wetland birds and frogs by sight and sound. You'll also learn about the importance of wetlands, their connections to other habitats, and how to report your observations to help conservation.



The series began Wednesday March 18th, at 7pm. You can still register and watch the earlier episodes.

Find out more and register for MarshWatch at <https://www.birdscanada.org/bird-science/marshwatch/prairiecanada-marshwatch>.

## Jane's Walk event at the Saskatoon Natural Grasslands

### Memorializing the Saskatoon Natural Grasslands

May 2, 2026 3:00pm Leader Paul Cluett.  
Meet at the Konihowski Road Entrance.

Nature plays a critical role in our cities. Often times despite our best efforts, conservation is not able to preserve a space in its native state. The walk will be an opportunity to memorialize the loss of plant diversity in the Grasslands and to share stories on the impact of loss of natural spaces and native plants within urban conservation areas. Meet at the Konihowski Road Entrance.

For more Jane's walks, see

<https://www.janeswalkyxe.org/joinawalk.html>

## Membership information

Invite a friend!

SNS memberships run from January-December.

Find a membership form and **Canada Helps** link at:

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

Saskatoon Nature Society Members are eligible for the following discounts:

- 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

## Earth Day is April 22



Visit the Earth Day Canada Website

<https://earthday.ca/> or Facebook page for information.



## 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 **April 17**. 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>
Newsletter		
Editor	Kathy Meeres .....	306-343-8590 .....
Mailing	Bev Beland.....306-445-3439 .....	
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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	.....	
Vice President	Leanne Grieves.....	
Secretary	Mercy Harris.....	
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Director	Nicole Pasloski.....	
Director	Peggy Schmeiser.....	
Director	Rylan Urban	
Director	Guy Wapple.....	
Director	Wally Wells.....	

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.

## April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sharp-tailed Grouse Trip early April			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Gull Trip	8	9 GE: Bluebird Trip	10	11 Bluebird Trip
12	13	14	15 Crocus Hike GE: Saw-whet Owls	16 <b>April Meeting</b> ----- GE: Crocus Trip	17	18 YN: Birdhouse Workshop
19 Holiday Park River Walk	20	21	22	23 GE: Brightwater Marsh	24	25 YN: Crocus Hike
26 Brightwater Marsh Waterfowl Trip	27	28	29	30 GE: Forestry Farm Birds		

## May 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Millar Ave Slough
3	4	5	6	7 GE: Porter Lake Ducks	8	9 YN: Pond dipping
10	11	12	13	14 GE: Martensville Trails/wetlands	15	16
17	18 Proctor Lake Birds	19	20	21 SNS Picnic St. Volodymyr Pk ----- Pike Lk Acreage Warblers	22	23 <b>Spring Bird Count</b>
24/31	25	26	27	28 GE: Bradwell	29	30

YN: Young Naturalists; GE: Golden Eagles