

Saskatoon Nature Society Newsletter

September 2026

Vol. 48 No. 7

“Avian Influenza in Saskatchewan’s Migratory Birds: Ongoing Surveillance, Lessons from Fall 2025 and Future Outlook”

**Dr. Trent Bollinger (Canadian Wildlife Health
Cooperative / University of Saskatchewan) & Mark
Bidwell (Canadian Wildlife Service)**

In person and online!

**Rm # HLTH 1A60, Health Sciences Bldg., U of S,
Thursday, September 17th, 2026 @ 7:30 PM**

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) continues to affect bird populations across North America. This presentation looks at how the virus behaved in Saskatchewan during the fall 2025 migration. While high-profile losses in Whooping Cranes drew significant concern due to the species' small population, field monitoring and post-mortem testing showed impacts across a much wider range of birds, including waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, and scavengers. Bringing together field observations from the Canadian Wildlife Service and health tracking from the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative, Trent and Mark will discuss local transmission patterns, what was learned from last autumn's events, and how surveillance is being conducted today. They will also share what these ongoing wildlife health dynamics could mean for migratory birds moving through the province this coming fall.

Dr. Bollinger specializes in the pathology and epidemiology of diseases in wildlife and fish. He is a professor in the WCVN's Department of Veterinary Pathology as well as a Regional Director and wildlife pathologist with the Western Northern Regional Centre of the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative.

Based in Saskatoon, Mark is a Wildlife Biologist with the Prairie Region of the Canadian Wildlife Service, where he leads the whooping crane monitoring and science program. His work focuses on assessing key threats to the recovery of the Aransas-Wood Buffalo population, including the emerging risks posed by Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.



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/>

Trips on page 2

Fall Bird Count – Saturday, September 12

This bird count covers the city plus the rural area SE of Saskatoon.

To register, please send your full contact information to

trips@saskatoonnature.org

Organizer: Stan Shadick

Compiler: John Patterson

Tue. Sep 15, 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Fall Pizza Picnic evening Stookey Acreage

Joe Stookey will provide home-made pizzas for everyone.

You may bring your own food if you prefer or your own toppings. Bring a lawn chair if you have one.

Directions: Take Valley Rd, past Berry Barn and up to intersection with Hwy 60. Cross Hwy 60 and continue straight for 2 miles. Turn left on grid road 3070. Travel 2.2 km and immediately past the last power pole you should see sign "Pura Vida Acres" on right. You have arrived at Stookey's! Take lane up to house.

Google Map:

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/5fnZxvJ4jyZoDjWY7>

Sep 18 – 20 Nature Saskatchewan Fall Meet in Meadow Lake

See details at

<https://www.naturesask.ca/get-involved/fall-meet>

Wednesday, September 23, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Sandhill Crane viewing at Chief Whitecap Park

Open to everyone.

An evening outing to view the cranes as they fly to the river to roost for the night near the city.

Dress for the weather.

Leader: Diane Wells

Register in advance: Text or phone: 306-229-0328



Sandhill Crane May Haga

Saturday, September 26, 8:30 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: John Patterson

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

Sunday, October 4, 8:30 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: Bob Godwin

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

Saturday, October 10, 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

There may be additional trips in October that will be announced in the next newsletter.

Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding near Osler

Sep 21 – until snow stays

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.

There may be additional trips in October that will be announced 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.

President's Message

Here we are - the birds are in the midst of migrating and the first signs of fall are starting to happen including all our field trips, the fall bird count and of course the start of our fall general meetings/presentations. I am very much looking forward to Mark's & Trent's talk about the health of the migrating birds especially the Whooping Cranes that we have come to appreciate each autumn!

I have to say I have been thrilled to see the bird-friendly dots going up on the north side of City Hall – some have dubbed this Death Valley citing so many bird collisions on that side of City Hall. To think that it was just a year ago, Mercy Harris and Jan Shadick and others started petitioning the city for affixing dots to the windows. Over 500 signed the petition (many of you helped out as well!) in a few short weeks at Broadway Street Fair and 33rd St Fair and the City listened! A big shout out to the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee for providing funds for this project! Stay tuned for more news as we hope to profile this in the media as a very good bird friendly event!



Speaking of Bird Friendly, things are moving here as well, we are getting close to tying up our application for certification – This is very exciting and thanks to Sabine Kirsch for putting this altogether, not an easy job! If you want more information, check out Nature Canada's website on [bird friendly cities](#). You can follow us on our Facebook page [Bird Friendly Saskatoon](#) as well. Watch for our bird monitors watching for bird collisions downtown, this data is important for our advocacy!

Bird Friendly Saskatoon will be hosting a table at the 33rd St Fair (Sept 19). If you would like to help out on these projects, please send me a note at president@saskatoonnature.org.

The SNS board has been busy over the summer in committee work – one area is about keeping our bylaws current. In the last few years, the provincial government updated its Non-Profit legislation. Two updates are particularly relevant to our end of year activities. The first is about how we prepare our financial reports.

Because the size of our financial activities are less than \$100,000/year we are not required to have an audit or

financial review as we have been doing. Our annual financial numbers are about \$15,000 to \$20,000 at the max so we should be thinking about what would work best for us. The second change is that the Annual General Meeting must be held 4 months after our year end instead of three months. This is to allow more time to prepare end of year reports. What do you think of these changes? Should we have our AGM in April instead of March? Let me know if you have some thoughts here!

Elsewhere in our newsletter, you will see a **Save The Date** announcement regarding the restarting of our Conservation Committee, a vital part of our organization. We have an outstanding reputation for being strong advocates for conservation here in Saskatoon, whether it's for the swales and green spaces or doing diligently our three annual bird counts. We should get the committee fired up again! If you are interested in this, please send me a note at president@saskatoonnature.org. and I will send you a Zoom link to this meeting - Please join us!

We have had a busy summer with many issues ranging from the WCVM college considering stopping wildlife services, the federal government's proposed changes to critical environmental protection legislation, the City's newly announced Climate Action Strategy to the revamped Diefenbaker Irrigation Strategy, all of which we have been watching closely!

On a sad note, we learn that Andre Bouthillette, who served as president of the Saskatoon Natural History Society (later Saskatoon Nature Society) in 1977 and 1978 and was a board member for 5 years, has died. His leadership led the society to lobby for more green space in Saskatoon and greater protection of the Saskatchewan River delta. He passed away on July 28 at the age of 100.

Members, as we turn to fall, we think about how we can participate in different ways and help out! Volunteering is what makes this society work. We do so many things and we make a difference whether it's in the fall tours, the programming, the youth initiatives, or the advocacy - it's the people who keep it going! We have some positions still to fill for example on the programming committee and we may be looking for a new treasurer – if these opportunities sound like they might fit you, please reach out to us! And Fall Bird count day is Sept 12th so please volunteer!

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 - Saturday,
Oct 3
**Northern Saw-whet Owl
Field Trip** - Oct (TBD)



SNS introduces new youth programming

In September, SNS will begin a new collaboration with the Greystone Community Association (GCA) to offer a one-hour after-school program on Mondays, from September 14 – October 5, 2026. Aimed at grades 3-8, the 4-week program will offer SNS volunteer-led activities once a week. Registration is available through the GCA website. If you know of any other community associations or schools that might be interested in collaborating on an initiative like this, please contact Peggy Schmeiser at pschmeiser@sasktel.net

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, beverages, lunch and chairs unless otherwise noted by the trip leader. For out-of-town trips, those who have CB radios 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.

September 3: Martensville Dog Park Trails, 9:00 am
(morning only).

No dogs please. Meet at the Flying J at 3850 Idylwyld Dr. Bring drink, snack, chair (optional).

Leader - Dianne Young 306-717-5735 or email dianne.young@sasktel.net

Leader from Saskatoon- Regina Koenders 306-230-9293.

September 10: Bev and Orval Beland Acreage (Denholm), 9:00 am.

Meet at the Petro Canada Station on Hwy 16 and 71st Street. Bring lunch and chair

Leader - Regina Koenders 306-230-9293.

September 17: George Genereux Afforestation Area, 9:00 am (morning only)

Meet at the Esso on 11th and Hwy 7. Bring drink, snack, and chair.

Leader - Julia Adamson; Contact Sylvia Raginski 306-260-9356 email. svraginski@gmail.com

September 24 - Blue Sky Ranch near Hepburn, 9:00 am.

Meet at Flying J at 3850 Idylwyld Dr N. Bring drink, lunch and chair.

May buy Saskatoon berries.

Leader – Jarvis Bluske, Leader from Saskatoon- Regina Koenders 306-230-9293

October 1- Golden Eagle Luncheon - 12:00 to 2:00 pm.

Agars Corner - Hwy 16 and Floral Rd

Menu: chicken parmesan with noodles, veggie tray, dessert and coffee/tea. **Please identify any dietary concerns or allergies when registering.** The cost per person is \$35 which includes gratuity - plan to pay at the site, exact cash only please. **Registration required by September 24** with Valerie Martz phone/text 306-229-0419 or email vmartz@shaw.ca

We must provide a number for the caterer a week in advance. Late registrants will only be accommodated in place of late cancellations, after September 24. We must pay the caterer for the number we submit so no shows or late cancellations must be paid. Please let Valerie know

when you register if you wish to carpool from Churchill Shopping Centre.

During the meal we'll enjoy member images. **If you have images you would like to include, contact John Patterson by September 24** (phone/text 306-371-9354, or email: jrpatterson@shaw.ca) for more information.

Oct 7 & 8 – Saw-whet Owl Banding – Osler, 7:00- 10:00 pm

Meet at Flying J at 3850 Idylwyld Dr N. Maximum of 10 people per evening.

Registration for each evening is required with Geri Eaket 306-914-6217

Leaders - Marten Stoffel and Regina Koenders (from Saskatoon).

Oct 14 & 15- Whooping Cranes, 9:00 am (morning only).

Meet at Flying J at 3850 Idylwyld Dr N. Bring snacks and chairs. Carpooling is encouraged (maximum of 5 cars).

Registration for each date is required with Geri Eaket 306-914-6217

Leader - Marten Stoffel.

October 22 - River Ridge Walk and Langham Museum. 9:00 am.

Meet at Petro Canada Station at 71st and Hwy 16. Museum by donation. Soup and sandwich lunch at Langham Museum.

Leader - Regina Koenders 306-230-9293

October 29 - U of S Art : College Gallery (Peter MacKinnon Bldg) and Ag Bio Bldg. 10:00 am

We will meet in the Administration building (105 Administration Place) outside of Student Central/Room c80 on the first floor with a student ambassador to take us around to a couple locations and galleries, where we will be joined by Leah Taylor from the Galleries Department. We will start in the Peter MacKinnon Building at College Art Gallery 1, and after that we will go to the Agriculture Building to see the gallery there as well as other pieces.

Lunch at Filosphi, 414 Cumberland Ave N.

Registration required by October 22 with Regina Koenders 306-230-9293 (Maximum 25).

Monarch Migration Project

As part of a Canada-wide Monarch migration project, Environment and Climate Change Canada and the University of Guelph are tagging Monarch butterflies. The group is looking for locations in Saskatchewan that have a good number of Monarchs at which we might be able to tag and collect individuals.

If you know of any locations with a reasonable abundance of Monarchs (10+ individuals) that you wouldn't mind sharing along with landowner contact information, please email Tyler Flockhart, dt.tyler.flockhart@gmail.com



Save the Date!!

We are hosting a reboot of the Conservation Committee on

Tuesday Sept 22 at 7 pm by Zoom!

If you are interested in being part of this committee where we deal with conservation issues, then send me an email and I will be sure to send you a Zoom link to our organizing mtg in September.

This committee serves a vital function of the Nature Society doing important work both as advocates for nature conservation but also generating new good ideas of what we might want to do in the area of conservation!

Be sure to sign up to

president@saskatoonnature.org



Saskatoon
Nature
Society

Engage with SNS on

Social Media

Keep current with SNS happenings by following SNS on Facebook and Instagram!

Instagram:
@saskatoonnaturesociety

Facebook:
facebook.com/SaskatoonNatureSociety

And, if you have field trip photos, send them to melospiza.melodia@outlook.com so that we can highlight the society's outings.

Ideas for something else to highlight on our social media? Reach out at the above address.

Tigers on the Prowl, Tiger Salamanders in SK

From Nature Sask – Whether it's birds flocking, mammals gathering or insects swarming, late summer is the season critters get moving! There's one more often overlooked creature that is also on the move this time of year, the Tiger Salamander. As an amphibian, this species spends part of their live cycle in aquatic habitats (water) and part of it in terrestrial habitats (land), meaning they rely on both to have a successful breeding season and survive the winter. "The Tiger Salamander larvae are completely aquatic," Emily Putz, Habitat Stewardship Coordinator at Nature Saskatchewan explains, "in our prairie pothole wetlands, the larvae and adults both cover an important niche, controlling insect populations in spaces that don't

host fish." This dual life cycle comes with many threats, including pesticides, habitat loss, a virus, and traffic!

"If it is safe to do so, and you see a salamander crossing the roadway in front of you, slow down and take a minute to avoid them." Putz concludes, "Saskatchewan is this species stronghold in Canada, and we want to do everything we can to help them along in their recovery."

If you spot a salamander, you can report your sighting the Nature Saskatchewan's Stewards of Saskatchewan program. Sighting records can go towards tracking population and range fluctuations, and aiding recovery. If you have any questions about the Stewards of Saskatchewan program or would like to learn more about the Western Tiger Salamander, please contact Emily Putz at 306-780-9832 or outreach@naturesask.ca. Full news release at: <https://www.naturesask.ca/resources/news>



Window dots at home

If you don't have bird dots on your windows, now is the time to apply them

You can buy them at Wild Birds Unlimited. Remember, deterrents must be on the outside of the window and cover the whole surface – bird silhouettes don't work!

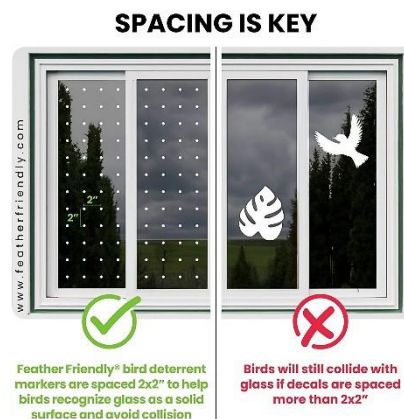


Image from Feather Friendly Technologies Inc.

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 **September 16**. 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.

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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.

September 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 GE: Martensville trails	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 GE: Beland acreage	11	12 Fall Bird Count
13	14	15 Fall Picnic at Stookey's	16	17 Sept Meeting ----- GE: Genereux Afforestation Area	18 Nature SK fall meet Meadow Lk > 18-20th	19
20	21 Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding begins	22	23 Sandhill Cranes	24 GE: Blue Sky Ranch	25	26 Whooping Cranes-1
27	28	29	30			

October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
YN: Northern Saw-whet Owls; date TBD				1 GE: Luncheon Agars Corner	2	3 YN: Sandhill Cranes
4 Whooping Cranes-2	5	6	7 GE: Saw-whet Owl banding	8 GE: Saw-whet Owl banding	9	10 Whooping Cranes-3
11	12	13	14 GE: Whooping Cranes	15 Oct Meeting ----- GE: Whooping Cranes	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 GE: River Ridge and Langham	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 GE: College Galleries	30	31

YN: Young Naturalists; GE: Golden Eagles