Saskatoon Nature Society
Newsletter

November 2026 Vol. 48 No. 9

Pigs in Space: Mapping the Spread of Invasive Feral Swine on the Canadian Prairies

Dr. Ryan Brook is a Professor in the Department of Animal and Poultry Science

In person and online!
Rm # HLTH 1A60, Health Sciences Bldg., U of S, Thursday, November 19th, 2026 @ 7:30 PM

There are no native pigs in Canada so anything that looks like a pig and oinks like a pig out in the wildlands of Canada is by definition an invasive wild pig. This issue began in the 1980s when Canada imported domestic wild boar to stock farms across all provinces and the Yukon Territory for meat and in some provinces to create shoot farms. The domestic wild boar were crossbred with domestic pigs and escaped and were purposely released over the last 45 years and they have become firmly established in the wildlands across the Canadian Prairie provinces. They do massive crop damage, can be a public safety risk, and they are considered an 'ecological trainwreck' because they contaminate water, destroy habitats, eat almost anything, and they can spread diseases to humans, pets, livestock, and wildlife. We welcome Dr. Brook back for an update on this subject.



Dr. Ryan Brook (PhD) in the Office vs in the Field

Dr. Ryan Brook is a Professor in the Department of Animal and Poultry Science at the University of Saskatchewan, where he has been advancing applied wildlife research since 2010. His research focuses on wildlife ecology, invasive species, conservation, and the complex relationships among wildlife, agriculture, and human activities. He is perhaps best known for his work on wild pigs in Canada but he also studies urban wildlife in Saskatoon, caribou and wolves on the Hudson Bay coast, and wildlife in Sri Lanka.

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 7, 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 15, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
President Murray Park Bird
We will walk through this park looking for any golden-crowned kinglets, brown creepers, woodpeckers or other late fall songbirds. Please dress warmly.
Leader: Stan Shadick (306-652-5975).

Sunday, November 22, 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Holiday Park Bird Walk
We will walk through the former Sanatorium site portion of Holiday Park to look for winter songbirds. This park is one of five naturalized parks in the city which is managed to promote a diversity of wild birds and mammals. Meet at the south end of Avenue K, adjacent to Bowerman House. https://goo.gl/maps/wniy6XzhVkA2
Leader:Bob Godwin (306-361-6732). Guide to Nature Viewing Sites: Page 126.



Blue Jay *May Haga*

Saturday, December 5, 9:00 AM–5:00 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: Kerry Hjertaas (306-260-6602)

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.

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's been a beautiful fall with memorable images of huge flocks of snow geese taking off from fields and many of us were very fortunate to see the impressive numbers of whooping cranes stopping by. It is truly an amazing story of species recovery that we can still witness!

On the news front, I know many of you got out on the October Big Day on Saturday October 10th. Over 50,000 birders identified over 7400 species this year around the globe. In Saskatchewan, we identified 132 species from 89 birders – Saskatoon region led the pack with 95 species from 27 ebirders. All good – thank you all for coming out!!

Of course, John Patterson and Stan Shadick have just released the results of the fall 2026 bird count – fascinating work of our 40 volunteers who counted those birds. The bird count summaries are on our web site and provide a lot to think about regarding the future of birds in our region!

In other news, as president, I was fortunate to meet with Mike Velonas of the Meewasin Valley Authority to get a sense of their new plans regarding a new building and what that might mean for the MVA. As well, we discussed the progress of the National Urban Park – all of this is still in early stages, so we need to watch carefully and be ready to share our thoughts with the MVA!

On September 22 you may have seen Bird Friendly Saskatoon in the news announcing that City Hall has gotten an upgrade: window decals and stenciled dots have been applied to the north side windows to prevent bird-window collisions. Previously this side of City Hall was well-known for its numerous fatal bird collisions. At the news event, Mayor Cynthia Block said:



"This project is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when community members, volunteers, and the City work together. By taking this simple step, we are helping protect migratory birds and making Saskatoon a more welcoming place for wildlife. My thanks to Bird Friendly Saskatoon and

everyone involved for their leadership and commitment to our environment."

Saskatoon BF team thanked everyone who made this possible including the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee, councillors Parker and MacDonald, Shannon Dyck at the Sustainability dept and the staff at the City of Saskatoon for doing such a fantastic job installing the dots.

We have a great Bird Friendly team including Mercy Harris and Jan Shadick – thank you all!

We had another excellent general meeting in October with the MVA and the NCC, two major conservation partners. Both gave great overviews then a bit of where they want to go in the future. Interestingly both the MVA and NCC won Sabex awards on that same evening, MVA for Spirit of Saskatoon and NCC for Community Impact. Andrea stressed that the NCC sees the SNS as a significant partner in the Asquith property and as such as a big part of the reason they won - we are glad to help out!!

I am looking forward to Dr. Ryan Brook's update on the state of wild boars in Saskatchewan in November. These invasive animals are growing in number and area and pose a huge risk to the natural balance in our biodiversity - come on out on November 19th!

I am very happy to report out that we have 10 members on our conservation committee, and we had a very good organizational meeting a few weeks ago. Members who are interested in advocacy and conservation are always welcome! If you want to join us, please send me an email at president@saskatoonnature.org

Please check out two ads in our newsletter regarding a new website master and a new treasurer (as Nancy Lease has decided to take a break). She has done an amazing job of mastering the role of treasurer, so we thank her immensely! Please take a look at these ads and see if you have something to offer!

Finally, last call for any suggestions or comments for bylaw amendments or just even about things in general for the SNS board to consider – due Oct 31st! So far, the two issues we have identified are 1) the necessity of auditors and our year financial statements and 2) when the AGM must be held; both were changed in legislation recently. As well, we are looking at creating a Year End protocols policy document in December – a work in progress but one that needs some attention Please submit your thoughts to me at president@saskatoonnature.org The SNS is doing a review of its bylaws to make sure they are in tune with the current legislation, reflect best practices and allow the Board to govern effectively following our goals, so things are not missed!

Have a great fall – I'm heading out right now to check in on those whooping cranes!!

- ***David***

Volunteer Opportunity #1: Website Manager — Saskatoon Nature Society

The Saskatoon Nature Society (SNS) is seeking a volunteer to transition into the manager for our website (saskatoonnature.org). This is a great opportunity for someone who enjoys nature and wants to contribute their web skills to a local environmental non-profit.

The Role

You'll work alongside our current webmaster, Trent Watts — who has generously supported the SNS website for many years — to modernize and refresh the site's design, then take over ongoing maintenance during a transition period. Day-to-day, this means adding content on an as-needed basis: publications, events, field trips, and more, as directed by the board. You may occasionally field technical questions or coordinate with our hosting provider to resolve issues. As an optional add-on, you're welcome to take on our Facebook presence as well.

What We're Looking For

- some experience with WordPress, including themes and plugins (our site uses Divi)
- self-directed with an eye for design — the board won't provide detailed instructions, so you'll need to use your own judgment
- comfortable with minimal coding when needed
- able to make a medium- to long-term commitment

Time Commitment

A few hours per month ongoing, plus roughly 10 hours upfront for the initial website refresh.

How to Apply

Send a short cover letter and resume to president@saskatoonnature.org. Happy to answer any questions you might have.



White-breasted Nuthatch May Haga

Volunteer Opportunity #2: Treasurer – Saskatoon Nature Society

The Saskatoon Nature Society (SNS) is looking for a member to volunteer to take over the Board position of Treasurer starting in mid-March 2027. In this position, you can make an important contribution to the continued functioning of this local environmental charity.

The Role

You are responsible for updating the financial records, paying bills, depositing cheques, reviewing SNS treasurer email, periodically retrieving mail from post office box and completing the annual filing of documents related to the charitable status of the Society. You will have the continued support of the current treasurer and the bookkeeper. As a member of the Finance Committee, you will also have their guidance and input concerning the management of SNS finances.

Competencies needed

- comfort in maintaining records in a well-organized computer filing system
- familiarity working with spreadsheets
- ability to self-direct and to work with others

Time commitment

The volume of work is seasonal and can vary from 5 – 15 hours per week. The busiest period is November through February.

How to follow up

If you feel your talents would be well-used as the SNS treasurer, please contact Nancy Lease treasurer@saskatoonnature.org to set up a time to talk more about it.



Snowshoe Hare *May Haga*

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 14 - SOLD OUT. New requests for registration will be placed on the waitlist in the order in which they were received.

Golden Eagles

The Golden Eagles is an informal group of Saskatoon Nature Society (SNS) retiree 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.

From November through March we plan indoor tours. Watch for further information in the December and January newsletters.

Thursday, November 26, 2026, 10:00 a.m. - tour of the Saskatoon Museum of Military Artifacts (located at Royal Canadian Legion Nutana Branch 362). The Museum is run by volunteers who provide guided tours and answer questions. It is a registered charity dedicated to preserving and showcasing Canada's military heritage. It houses thousands of artifacts donated by veterans, families, collectors, and Legion members. Exhibits highlight local veterans, major conflicts, and specialized military equipment. Admission is $5 per adult. After our tour we will have lunch at Red's Bar and Grill in Hunter's Eastview Bowling.

To register for this event contact the trip leader: Joan Feather, 306-653-3160, jfeather@sasktel.net. Please indicate if you plan to join us for the lunch as well.



Kids in Nature Grant Program

January 15, 2027 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/

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 17, 2026, from 6–7:30PM

Beyond Coal: The Case Against Extending Coal-Fired Power in Saskatchewan

Join us at the Cliff Wright Library in Saskatoon. Saskatchewan Environmental Society board members **Margret Asmuss, Bob Halliday, Peter Prebble, and Elaine Wheaton** will explore the issues behind our legal challenge of Saskatchewan's decision to extend coal-fired electricity — including escalating costs, climate impacts, and the role of federal legislation.

The Sustainability Speakers Series is an event hosted by the Saskatchewan Environmental Society in partnership with the Saskatoon Public Library.

You can watch recordings of previous presentations on the Saskatoon Public Library's YouTube page.

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/



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Facebook:
www.facebook.com/SaskatoonNatureSociety

Newsletter



The deadline for the next newsletter is ***November 17.*** 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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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.

November 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Blackstrap Waterfowl
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 YN: Bird Feeder Workshop (Sold Out)
15 Murray Park Birds	16	17	18	19 **Nov Meeting** ----------	20	21
22 Holiday Park Birds	23	24	25	26 GE: Museum of Military Artifacts	27	28
29	30					

December 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 Gardiner Dam Birds
6	7	8	9	10 **Dec Meeting** ----------	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

YN: Young Naturalists; GE: Golden Eagles