

2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As I wind up my third term as President of Nature Saskatchewan, I reflect on my 60 years of involvement with a great organization. My first decades were in admiration of the leaders that made Nature Saskatchewan what it is today. I guess I am one of those old timers now. We all have great pride and respect for our dedicated staff. Reading their report for our AGM shows the wide variety of programs and achievements they have accomplished for conservation.

Peter Brown, our new Executive Director, quickly filled the shoes that our retiring Executive Director, Jordan Ignatiuk, left. We thank Jordan for his years of service and welcome Peter to our team. The rest of the staff continue to provide invaluable work with landowners, public education, bird banding and many other programs.

We have a very strong and diverse Board of directors. Each one bringing their own expertise to the table. We have rural and urban, north and south, female and male, farmers and professionals in business and conservation management.

Our dedicated and supportive members are the backbone to our organization. You keep coming through with support in so many ways. Without you our impact with conservation programs would be greatly diminished.

While sixty years ago I was in admiration and respect to those before me, today I extend the same admiration and respect to the Staff, Board and Members as we remain a strong, effective and responsible Voice for Nature in Saskatchewan.

With humble thanks and appreciation,



Lorne



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the 2024-25 fiscal year drew to a close, I was given the pleasure of joining Nature Saskatchewan as Executive Director. I took over this role from Jordan Ignatiuk who gave your organization twelve solid years of his time and attention. I thank you Jordan for a job well done!

Moving into this role I feel blessed. I have a very capable and experienced staff to work with, and a committed and supportive Board. Spending time in nature has always been a great love of mine. Working with Nature Saskatchewan only takes this interest to another level. I grew up on a farm in Southwestern Ontario and have a BSc degree in Crop Science. I spent some years with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture before joining a major bank in their agriculture department. Most recently, I spent a number of years with the Saskatchewan milk industry before coming to your organization. Nature Saskatchewan has a long and proud history of serving all of us who love nature; who want our endangered species protected; and look to preserve our precious environment for generations to come. I am proud to be a small part of it.

The hardworking staff at Nature Saskatchewan have had another successful year with their various projects. The species-at-risk initiatives were very active this past year with the Stewards of Saskatchewan now reaching nearly 800 unique participants with nearly 300 participants in multiple programs. Several summer students were again employed to help with field census.

This past year we surveyed all of our participants in species-at-risk programs as to their awareness of issues, land management changes, retention of native grasslands and receptiveness to legal protections such as conservation easements. Results showed that awareness of species at risk has increased. The majority of respondents have implemented changes to their land management to incorporate conservation efforts. 90% said they are more receptive to land protection controls such as conservation easements. Lastly, the highest valued effort toward conservation was visited from program staff, one of the methods most likely to increase interest in

protecting species-at-risk.

We also had a successful year with our children/youth program, Naturehood (a Nature Canada initiative). Political science students from MacEwan University partnered with us to conduct a formal evaluation of Naturehood. 100% of teachers surveyed agree/strongly agree that Naturehood field trips left a lasting impression on their students. There are so many things that prevent families from getting outside and programs like naturehood provide a brief relief to the many barriers.

For the first time, Naturehood participated in the Treaty Four Gathering in Fort Qu'Appelle. Hundreds of students from all over Treaty Four gathered to commemorate 150 years since the signing of Treaty Four. It was an incredible week of activities, giving students the opportunity to experience Indigenous culture through dancing, drumming, singing and connecting to land. Naturehood provided a paper roll bird feeder craft and led a migration obstacle course.

We continued to offer opportunities for hundreds of youth to connect to nature. We held our very successful public events, World Migratory Bird Day, and Christmas Bird Count for Kids.

Finally, Nature Saskatchewan, as part of the Bird Friendly Regina team, was awarded Nature Canada's Conservation Partner of the Year award. This award recognizes our tireless work protecting nature.

Thank you for your continuing support,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Peter Brown'.

Peter Brown



OUR VISION

Humanity in Harmony with Nature

OUR MISSION

We engage and inspire people to appreciate, learn about and conserve Saskatchewan's natural environment

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OUR VALUES

Nature Saskatchewan aims to practice and balance these core, defining values:



Openness and Learning - We pursue:

- effective two-way communications at all levels;
- open, clear, collaborative processes; and
- continuous, mutual and open-minded learning.

Collaboration - We place a priority on:

- working through and nurturing partnerships externally;
- functioning through a supportive, team environment internally; and
- developing respectful and inclusive relationships in all activities at all levels.

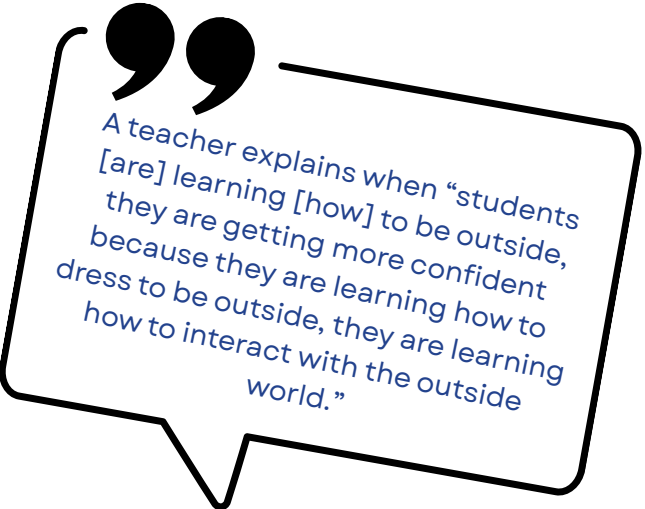
Dedication - We demonstrate:

- passion for the cause of conserving nature;
- commitment to sound science;
- best organizational practices and standards in a context of continuous improvement; and
- integrity in our words and actions.


PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

NatureHood

We led 20 Naturehood field trips specifically to the Last Mountain National Wildlife Area and Wascana Migratory Bird Sanctuary for 528 youth from kindergarten to grade 12. In total, we delivered 38 field trips engaging 926 youth. We also hosted 18 public events, including the Christmas Bird Count for Kids event, World Migratory Bird Day event, Get Outside! Kids Club events, National Indigenous Peoples Day at Coronation Park school, and led activities at Frost Fest Regina at the Wascana Centre Hub reaching 11,783 people. We are supporting partnerships with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders at public events such as Frost Fest. We continue to strengthen our relationships with the Regina Open Door Society, City Kidz Regina, and the North Central Family Centre. Nature Saskatchewan as part of the Bird Friendly Regina committee was awarded Nature Canada's Conservation Partner of the Year Award. It recognizes our tireless work protecting nature.



A teacher explains when “students [are] learning [how] to be outside, they are getting more confident because they are learning how to dress to be outside, they are learning how to interact with the outside world.”



“The students and staff really enjoyed/appreciated the fact that the facilitators incorporated Indigenous ways of knowing into the trip.” Grade 5/6 Teacher

100% of the teachers agree/strongly agree that these trips left a lasting impression on their students.

Last Mountain Bird Observatory (LMBO)



The total number of birds captured at 615 was slightly above the long-term average of 571, while total number of species at 52 was above the average of 48. The catch rate of 596 birds/1000 net hours was also above of the average 441. Our first spring, and third overall, Townsend's Solitaire was banded on 19 May. A Red-headed Woodpecker on 24 May was only the second sight record for Last Mountain Regional Park. The number of birds captured in the autumn of 2024 was the lowest since standardized mist netting began in 1992, while the number of birds captured per net hour was the second lowest. Anecdotal (but nearly daily) observations from 200 km away in Avonlea suggest that this marked decline in the number of fall landbird migrants was a more widespread phenomenon. In one respect the lighter banding load was perhaps a good thing as the staff of the Observatory were occupied with the decommissioning and demolition of the old bird banding laboratory and living quarters. This put a heavy strain on Observatory staff who had to cope with less-than-optimal working and living conditions.

Although the number of captures of most species had declined, there were a few bright spots. A Great Crested Flycatcher on 23 September was only the second to be banded at the Observatory, with the previous record from 7 September 1993. Two Bobolinks doubled the number of all-time captures of this declining species. No new species were banded - the total number of species banded in the fall remains at 112; for both seasons the total it is now 126.

Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA)

Saskatchewan has 52 Important Bird Areas. These IBAs rely on a Volunteer Caretaker Network to monitor bird populations and environmental concerns in these areas. Our volunteers make the conservation of these areas possible. During the next year, many of the IBAs will be transitioning to Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). Canada is a global leader in identifying KBAs, which are sites that play a critical role in the persistence of species and ecosystems. KBAs will play an important role in our efforts to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. In addition to the species KBAs that used to be IBAs, there will also be areas designated for supporting endangered habitats and to preserve ecosystem services.



STEWARDS OF SASKATCHEWAN (SOS)

The Stewards of Saskatchewan programs had another successful season in 2024-25. As of 2024, across the suite of 5 programs, there are 1,181 participants conserving over 1,032,000 acres (417,000 hectares) of grassland habitat and 220 miles (354 km) of shoreline habitat for wildlife and plants across Saskatchewan.

Operation Burrowing Owl, Shrubs for Shrikes, Plovers on Shore and the SOS Banner program have four main objectives: Habitat Stewardship, Site Identification and Population Monitoring, Education and Awareness and Habitat Enhancement.

Operation Burrowing Owl (OBO) received 23 reports to the Hoot

Line (species reporting hotline), including 9 singles of unknown age/sex, 14 pairs and 15 juveniles.

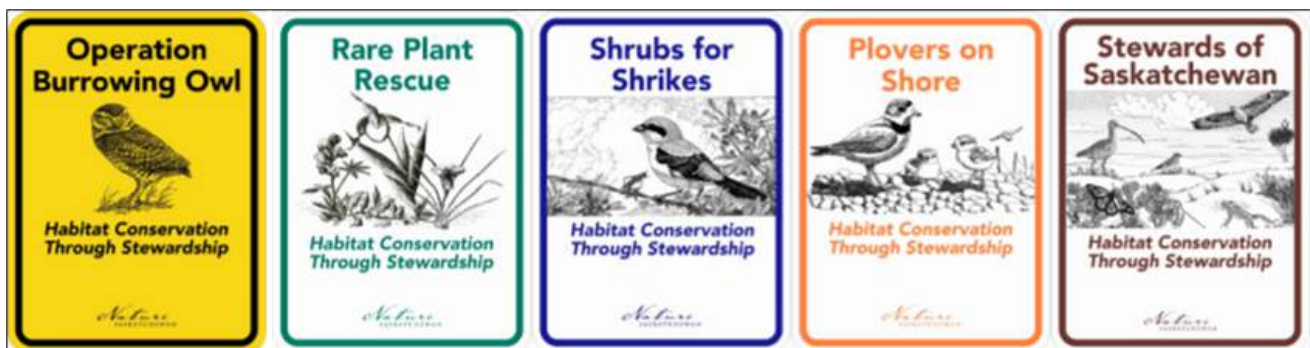
The Shrubs for Shrikes program (SFS) received 92 reports to the Hoot Line, including 35 pairs, 67 singles of unknown age/sex, and 21 juveniles.

Piping Plover, Sprague's Pipit, and other Species at Risk Reports included 97 other Hoot Line reports of SAR in 2024. These reports included 29 adult Monarchs and 23 caterpillars, 3 pairs, 4 single adults, and 4 juvenile Ferruginous Hawks; 8 adult Short-eared Owls; 37 pairs, 3 single, and 35 fledglings of Barn Swallows; 1 pairs and 6 single and 2 juvenile Piping Plovers; 1 pair and 8 single Sprague's Pipits; several Common Nighthawks; 1 pair and 25 single adult Bobolink; 10 adult and 4 juvenile American Badgers; 11 adult Tiger Salamanders; at least 213 Northern Leopard Frogs; 2 Baird's Sparrows, 2 Chestnut-collared Longspurs, 1 Bank Swallow, 1 Red-headed Woodpecker, and 1 sighting of 1 adult and one juvenile Whooping Cranes.

Rare Plant Rescue (RPR) shares the same main program objectives minus the population monitoring done by the program participants.

Reporting of rare plant locations to RPR by the public is not common since the target species are not well known, nor are they easy to distinguish from similar related species. However, reporting is encouraged since once verified, new sightings are a means of increasing the number of RPR participants and contributing data to the SK CDC. Reporting of sightings is solicited through working with other agencies, as well as articles in various newsletters and rural newspapers.

In 2024-25, staff hosted five Conservation Awareness and Appreciation Dinners (CADs) featuring numerous presentations and covered topics such as Indigenous history, wildlife rehabilitation, Great-horned Owls, LMBO and the Piping Plover Census. Two CADs also included Species at Risk workshops and hike. Species experts and partnering agencies were invited to present.



MEMBER SERVICES

75th Anniversary Celebrations

In the 2024-25 year, Nature Saskatchewan proudly celebrated its 75th anniversary, a milestone that stands as a testament to decades of dedication and passion for the natural world. This remarkable achievement was made possible by the tireless efforts of countless volunteers and staff whose enthusiasm and commitment were instrumental in planning the celebrations. Over the past 75 years, Nature Saskatchewan has thrived thanks to its devoted members, whose unwavering support has been the backbone of its success. As we commemorate this historic occasion, we also look to the future with excitement and determination. The next 75 years present an opportunity to continue this vital work, as there is still much left to be done. Together, we strive to preserve and protect the natural beauty of Saskatchewan for generations to come, ensuring that our shared legacy endures and inspires.

Membership

Nature Saskatchewan currently has just over 700 dedicated members. Our spring and fall meets were held in Saskatoon and Regina in conjunction with 75th anniversary celebrations.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all our members for their unwavering support and enthusiasm, which have been crucial in advancing our mission. Together, we continue to make a meaningful impact on nature conservation and education across Saskatchewan.

Margaret Skeel Graduate Student Scholarship

In 2025 the Graduate Student Scholarship was awarded to Jay Vavadia. Jay's project is titled "Changes in wildlife and plant communities associated with development of utility-scale solar energy facility in Southern Saskatchewan."

CONSERVATION REPORT

Submitted by Ed Rodger

Hi Everyone. I'll give updates on a few projects that illustrate the variety of conservation activities that Nature Saskatchewan is involved with.

Nature Saskatchewan has been doing preliminary work for a few years to determine our possible use or promotion of the Motus wildlife tracking network, and made a lot of progress this past year. Motus is a Birds Canada program that has become an international standard for electronic wildlife monitoring, and is gaining a worldwide footprint. Nature Saskatchewan's involvement can be in both the infrastructure component of setting up Motus tracking stations, and the use of electronic 'tags' to monitor birds and other wildlife. Over the past year, we have coordinated with a joint project from Birds Canada and the University of Saskatchewan that is working to extend the footprint of Motus monitoring in Saskatchewan. NS has started with a receiving station at the Last Mountain Bird Observatory at the north end of Last Mountain Lake, and next stations will cover the Last Mountain Lake corridor, after which we'll look at other opportunities to help build out the network.

Another update regards Nature Saskatchewan's support of a project in which researchers and staff at the University of Saskatchewan have been digitizing the field notes of Stuart and Mary Houston, as gathered through their extensive bird-banding and field work over more than seven decades. The project has seen much success at capturing the information in a computerized format, and is proceeding into the detailed work of turning the legacy data into databases that can be used for research and analysis, and integrated with other data. This latest phase of bringing new life to the Houstons' field work is happening in conjunction with a national organization that specializes in this concept of restoring various types of historical data. The project may eventually also incorporate the work of others from Saskatchewan's earlier community of ornithologists.

In another ongoing project that's received a lot of attention in the past couple of years, Nature Saskatchewan has been working closely with the Chaplin Nature

Centre to help ensure its ongoing operations and development. The Chaplin centre serves an important educational, research and tourism role in its area, the location of critical bird habitat and an important migratory stopover. Things are going well for the Centre: recovery has been good from the years of travel slowdown earlier in the decade, and opportunities are being assessed to improve facilities and programs. Nature Saskatchewan has been happy to participate in this work and support the Centre in various ways.

As one last project to mention, I'm starting to compile an online resource that landowners can use to understand their options for the ongoing protection of their land. This will go on Nature Saskatchewan's new website, and include summaries of the options along with links to other organizations as appropriate, where users could find further details.

Finally, I'd like to take the opportunity to commend and thank the Nature Saskatchewan staff for their continued great work, as well as the board members and other volunteers that contribute their time and effort.

Respectfully submitted,
Ed Rodger



LOCAL SOCIETY REPORTS

Saskatoon Nature Society (SNS)

It was a busy year for the Saskatoon Nature Society. In the spring they hosted the 75th Nature Saskatchewan anniversary and did a fantastic job! The positive work with Nature Conservancy of Canada in extending their Asquith Nature Destination Letter of Understanding for 3 more years.

SNS also recognized member, Greg Fenty, with a Life Membership for his long-time contribution to SNS.



Kelsey Ecological Society (KES)

If you groom it, they will come: Preeceville Loppet sees many enjoying winter on the ski trails!

The sun was shining for Preeceville Nordic's Third Annual Loppet on the afternoon of Sunday, March 2. After a week of melting temperatures, ski conditions on the Preeceville Lions Family Trail were somewhat in question; but in the end, fresh grooming and a high of 2C produced a great combination of kick and glide.

The involvement of Kelsey Ecological Society (KES) offered a new twist this year. Several KES members were in attendance, participating in the Loppet and/or cheering on skiers, tending outdoor and indoor fires, and serving hot chocolate and s'mores. A nature scavenger hunt had skiers on the lookout for chickadees, deer tracks, plant life and other winter forest sights. The first skiers to complete the activity received prizes donated by parent organization, Nature Saskatchewan.

This year's event saw 36 participants, including Preeceville Nordic families and several other area residents.

Riding along with parents, the youngest Loppeters were Elwood Van Nieuwenhuyze and Natalie Arneson, both two years of age. Four-year-old Forrest Van Nieuwenhuyze was the youngest skier. Daryl Kalenchuk self-declared as the participant of most advanced years. This was the first Loppet for Kalenchuk and wife Val, who, thanks to this event, have now set their time and distance to beat in future years.

Yorkton resident, Susan Hurst, returned for her third Preeceville Loppet, making it an annual tradition to ski the event. Hurst is no stranger to local Nordic ski opportunities, last year participating in Melville, Esterhazy, Yorkton and Preeceville events as well as the Lamplighter Loppet hosted by the Good Spirit Cross Country Ski Club.

Hitting the trails for more than 12 km, Saskatoon resident Ethan Joyce took the unofficial record for furthest distance skied—and traveled. Megan Maier, Preeceville Nordic chair and event organizer, appreciated the camaraderie and help of KES volunteers. “It was a fun collaboration, and it was great to

spend the afternoon together! We're grateful to everyone who came out to enjoy the fabulous trails, sunshine, food and fellowship.”



Nature Regina

2025 is the third celebration year in a row for Nature Regina. The first in 2023 was the 90th anniversary of our organization's founding. The second celebration in 2024 was the 30th anniversary of the Native Plant Garden at the RSM and this year, 2025, the 70th anniversary of the lease and later purchase of our 320-acre Hidden Valley Sanctuary in the Qu'Appelle Valley.

Our Bird Safe Initiative conducted two successful tours of our downtown this past year, recording dead or injured birds in their spring and fall migrations through our city. To date, we have found 281 birds (47 species), 57 of which were alive and sent to Salthaven West for rehab. We continue to supply bird friendly window tape to reduce residential window collisions.

We continue to be actively involved with Bird Friendly City Regina and support Nature Saskatchewan's CBC4Kids. This January we were happy to be part of the unofficial unveiling of the painting, Melody of the Seasons, the Black-capped Chickadee painted by Madison Pascal.

Throughout this past summer and winter, our field trips both for adults

and children (Get Outside! Clubs for Kids and Preschoolers) have had strong attendance giving everyone a chance to see nature up close. This past winter has had a few harsh cold days forcing us to cancel a few field trips. The weather did, however, provide us with an eventful Christmas Bird Count in Craven, Regina and Balgonie. Of note were the substantive number of Gray Partridge and the lower-than-normal Snowy Owl populations. Found also was the Pygmy Nuthatch in a resident's backyard, a first for Regina.

The Native Plant Garden in front of the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, managed by Nature Regina since 1994, has been formally added to the Wascana Centre Master Plan. In addition, we have been participating in our community at various events, festivals, conferences and gatherings including Seedy Saturday, the Cathedral Village Arts Festival, the Regina Teachers' Convention and a month-long display on "Better Birding" at Bothwell library in its Creation Cube.

2024-25 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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RARE PLANT RESCUE SEARCH & MONITORING
CREW/DATABASE TECHNICIAN INTERNS



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS IN 2024-25



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Neotropical
Migratory Bird
Conservation Act



South
Saskatchewan
Community
Foundation



United Nations Association in Canada
Association canadienne pour les Nations Unies



NatureHood
A NATURE CANADA INITIATIVE



Canada
Summer Jobs



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