

# Last Mountain Bird Observatory

## 2019 Report

Migration Monitoring and Education



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SASKATCHEWAN

**Rebecca Magnus**  
**Conservation and Education Manager**

Nature Saskatchewan  
206 – 1860 Lorne Street  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
S4P 2L7

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**Nature Saskatchewan**  
**Last Mountain Bird Observatory**  
**Summary of 2019 Activities**

By Rebecca Magnus, Conservation and Education Manager

Last Mountain Bird Observatory (LMBO), managed by Nature Saskatchewan (NS), delivers activities that contribute to our knowledge and understanding of bird trends and increase public understanding about birds and threats to their populations. Through migration monitoring, LMBO monitors populations of songbirds and other landbirds that breed in the boreal forests of Canada and Alaska. The work done at LMBO through professionals and volunteers has contributed greatly to the understanding of the intricacies of bird migration through the prairies and provides evidence for the concern over the decline of the world's bird species. A member of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (CMMN), LMBO is the only bird observatory in Saskatchewan.

Last Mountain Bird Observatory presents an excellent opportunity to provide education to youth and adults, many of whom may later contribute to bird monitoring or conservation work. LMBO trains volunteers in observation, monitoring, and banding processes so that the important work of monitoring can continue. Visitors of all ages gain appreciation and awareness of birds and their habits. Bird monitoring and educational opportunities have been ongoing at LMBO since its initiation in 1989.

Monitoring occurs daily in spring (May) and fall (August – early October). In 2019, the station operated seven days a week from May 9 – May 31 during spring migration, and from August 6 - October 6 during fall migration. All data were collected by a bander-in-charge and an assistant and volunteers (23 individuals in total), using standardized techniques, and forwarded to the Canadian Wildlife Service to be included in the continental database. In the spring, about 100 species were observed and 55 species (817 new birds) were captured and/or banded; in the fall, around 137 species were observed and 75 species (2427 new birds) were captured and/or banded.

Educational programming in 2019 included several scheduled events at or around LMBO. The Great Canadian Birdathon was conducted from Regina to LMBO on May 11<sup>th</sup> attracted 5 keen birders, including our leader. We also celebrated World Migratory Bird Day on May 11<sup>th</sup> with a free BBQ and activities. We had over 100 people attend the event. Five schools visited the banding station in the spring, and five schools and youth groups visited the banding station in September. They participated in the banding, learned about shorebirds and their adaptations and went geocaching. There were **652** visitors to LMBO in 2019 that toured the bird banding station and the 13 mist nets, and observed the process from capture to processing and releasing songbirds.

A number of activities supported LMBO in 2019. The LMBO Committee of 6 people met to plan and coordinate activities. The spring 2019 issue of the *Black-and-white Warble* newsletter of LMBO was e-mailed in April to supporters and Saskatchewan bird monitoring program participants.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Alan Smith, LMBO station manager, for his continued dedication to LMBO; Alan has operated and developed the bird monitoring program at LMBO since its inception in 1989. We are grateful to others for their valuable assistance as BIC or Banding Assistant including Marla Anderson, Jordan Rustad (BIC), Laura Tabbakh and Ryan Dudragne. Marla Anderson provided expert leadership for the Great Canadian Birdathon event.

We thank the volunteers whose assistance was invaluable in helping with LMBO. Migration monitoring volunteers Britt Agrey, Marla Anderson, Corey Barlow, Sury Christoffell, Emily Dornstauder, Ryan Dudragne, Alex Fisher, Shelly Fisher, Collette Stushnoff, Nick Selinger (spring migration); and Shirley Bartz, Evan Centanni, Emily Dornstauder, Ryan Dudragne, Shelly Fisher, Sarah Ludlow, Abbie Quennel, Tim Quennel, Rebecca Magnus, Riley Magnus, Alyssa Steilberg, Laura Stewart, Laura Tabakh (fall migration). We thank our LMBO Committee: Alan Smith and Rebecca Magnus (LMBO newsletter editors), Jordan Ignatiuk, Lacey Weekes, Gary Seib, and Margaret Skeel, as well as all others who helped out with LMBO.

Nature Saskatchewan acknowledges program partners for their in-kind support for LMBO. We are grateful to the Last Mountain Regional Park for their continued support of the Observatory. We thank Environment & Climate Change Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service for continued use of the LMBO trailer.

Nature Saskatchewan gratefully acknowledges financial support from Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment – Fish & Wildlife Development Fund, Lorne and Evelyn Johnson Foundation, SaskEnergy, Bird Studies Canada – Great Canadian Birdathon, Environment & Climate Change Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service. We thank the many individuals who responded to our Flight Plan Partners campaign with a donation. Nature Saskatchewan receives funding from Saskatchewan Lotteries.



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Last Mountain Bird Observatory (LMBO), managed by Nature Saskatchewan (NS), is a precious resource in Saskatchewan for both its bird migration monitoring and its educational programming. At LMBO, professionals and volunteers monitor the number and species of migrating songbirds, which contributes to our knowledge and understanding of bird trends and the intricacies of bird migration through the prairies, as well as provides evidence for the concern over the decline of the world's bird species. Also, educational opportunities are offered to youth and adults, increasing public understanding about birds, threats to their populations, and support for bird conservation. Training opportunities in bird monitoring are offered and may provide new participants for Saskatchewan monitoring programs coordinated through LMBO, including Christmas Bird Counts, Nocturnal Owl Surveys, and Breeding Bird Surveys. The LMBO was co-managed with the Canadian Wildlife Service until 2007 and has been managed by NS since January 2008.

LMBO, located south of the Boreal Forest at the north end of Last Mountain Lake in Last Mountain Regional Park, is ideally situated to capture data on forest migrants, possibly better than others across Canada. It is the only bird monitoring station in Saskatchewan and joined the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (CMMN) in 1992. The CMMN, comprised of over 25 observatories across Canada under the umbrella of Bird Studies Canada, has the objective to monitor all landbird species. The emphasis is on priority species that are not being adequately monitored by other programs. Monitoring techniques are standardized across Canada, and results are provided to Bird Studies Canada where they are analyzed, published in scientific journals, and made available to all who are interested. Species breeding in the boreal forests and wintering in the U.S. (short-distance migrants), or in the tropics (neotropical migrants) are the primary birds monitored at LMBO but are poorly covered by traditional Breeding Bird Surveys that are used more extensively south of the boreal forest. LMBO is an important link in the CMMN as it shows a statistically significant correlation between its trend indices and those of the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). This demonstrates its value in monitoring species breeding north of the BBS coverage.

LMBO began in fall 1989 with a modest banding program and, since 1990, has undertaken intensive landbird migration monitoring. Migratory songbird populations are monitored because many species are in serious decline due to loss of breeding and wintering habitat. Other information gathered provides us with insights into the longevity and movements of birds. On average, 3,400 birds of 76 species are banded annually; since 1990, LMBO has banded over 94,000 birds of 120 species. The total number of birds moving through the area is much higher since banding occurs in only a small section. The birds are monitored through the use of a daily census and systematic use of mist nets (finely woven nets strung between poles along hedgerows). Birds are removed from the nets and tagged with uniquely numbered bands. Data on species, age, and sex are recorded. All information is forwarded to the Bird Banding Office in Ottawa. Data on wing length, weight and fat score are also recorded. The majority of the migrating songbirds are neotropical migrants (birds breeding in northern latitudes and wintering in the tropics).

Last Mountain Bird Observatory presents an excellent opportunity to provide educational programming and volunteer opportunities to youth and adults. This will inspire an interest in birds and develop skills in people who may later contribute to bird monitoring work. LMBO trains volunteers in observation, monitoring, and banding processes so that the important work of monitoring can continue. A Great Canadian Birdathon event, led by an expert birder, is held in May (since 2008) for all ages who wish to challenge themselves in sighting as many species as possible in one day (24-hour period). We host a World Migratory Bird Day free public event each year to celebrate the return of our migratory birds. Families are bused from Regina to spend

the day at the banding station rotating through stations such as bird masks, bird feeders, migration obstacle course, and bird watching. Workshops are offered annually; these vary from training workshops for monitoring programs to workshops designed to help youth and adults to improve birding skills, learn about bird conservation, and to gain skills for participating in bird monitoring programs. Youth groups have the opportunity to arrange a visit for a day of observing, participating and learning; this involves accompanying the LMBO bander to check the mist nets for captured birds, then watching the handling process from removal from the nets to recording of information, and banding and releasing of the birds. There are opportunities to help with bringing captured birds to the banding station and the memorable experience of releasing birds once they have been banded. Visitors learn about species identification, bird migration, threats to bird populations, and how we are working to conserve birds.

At LMBO, one has the rare opportunity to see many bird species up close, to observe catching, handling, and banding techniques, and to learn about our natural heritage. The facility is open during the spring and fall migrations (May; and August to early October) and encourages visitors to the site and volunteers to assist in the monitoring program. LMBO has available a wide range of camping and recreational facilities for visitors and is nearby to Last Mountain Lake Bird Sanctuary, the oldest of such sanctuaries in North America. About 500 visitors are attracted to LMBO annually, and that number is increasing each year. The bird observatory is contributing to public appreciation and awareness of birds and their habits for people of all ages as they visit and volunteer at the observatory.



Jordan Rustad & Laura Tabbakh  
banding  
Photo by: Lacey Weekes



Migration Obstacle Course  
at World Migratory Bird Day  
Photo by: Iain Timmons

## **2.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The objectives and goals of the Last Mountain Bird Observatory are to:

- Contribute to the national monitoring of songbirds and landbirds that breed in the boreal forests of Canada by participating in the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network; the information is used to determine population trends of individual species for conservation purposes.
- Contribute to scientific knowledge about boreal songbird migration behaviour and possible threats to songbird populations.
- Provide educational programming and volunteer opportunities to youth and adults to inspire an interest in birds and to develop skills in bird identification and monitoring techniques in people who may later contribute to bird monitoring work.
- Nurture an interest and passion in youth and adults for nature and the diversity of bird species; this will gain support for bird conservation by contributing to public appreciation and awareness of birds and their habits.

### 3.0 MIGRATION MONITORING

Bird monitoring has been ongoing at LMBO since its initiation in 1989. Monitoring occurs daily in spring (May) and fall (August – early October). In 2019, the station operated seven days a week from May 9 –31 during spring migration, and from August 6 - October 6 during fall migration. All data were collected by a bander-in-charge and, on most days, an assistant bander and/or volunteers (23 individuals in total). Standardized techniques, including those set out by the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, were used, and data were forwarded in late fall to the Canadian Wildlife Service to be included in the continental database. A total of 13 mist nets are strategically placed to capture migrants. In the spring, around 100 species were observed and 55 species (817 new birds) were captured and/or banded; in the fall, around 137 species were observed and 75 species (2427 new birds) were captured and/or banded.

Migration monitoring data are primarily collected through catching birds in the 13 mist nets, which are set up along hedgerows in the same locations every year. The nets are open so as to capture birds from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., and closed outside these times and in inclement weather (rain or excessive winds). The nets are checked every 15-30 minutes, and every captured bird is carefully removed and taken in a separate cloth bag to the LMBO station; the net in which it was captured is noted. Each bird is banded with a uniquely numbered USFWS aluminum band, and the following information is taken: species, sex, age (e.g. hatching year or after hatching year), wing length, fat score and weight. A bander-in-charge, usually with an assistant bander and/or volunteer(s), undertakes this work. A walking census is conducted along the same route each morning to record all birds and species seen and heard and provides additional information.

Summaries of migration monitoring activities in the spring and fall are provided below. These were printed in the Spring 2019 *Black-and-white Warbler* newsletter of LMBO and the Nature Saskatchewan website.

#### 3.1 Spring Summary

**Last Mountain Bird Observatory – Preliminary Results - Spring 2019**  
**29th consecutive spring of coverage** (28th of standardized coverage).

#### **Migration Monitoring:**

**First Day of coverage:** 9 May.

**Last day of coverage:** 31 May.

**Total days of coverage:** 23 of a possible 23 (100%).

**Number of staff:** 2 (Jordan Rustad, Breann Sutton).

**Number of volunteers:** 5 (Britt Agrey, Marla Anderson, Corey Barlow, Sury Christofell, Emily Dornstauder, Ryan Dudragne, Alex Fisher, Shelly Fisher, Collette Stushnoff, Nick Selinger).

**Number of person-days effort:** 67 (last year 48).

**Number of visitors:** 256 (last year 184).

**Observation effort:** census, casual and incidental observations.

**Trapping effort:** 13 12mx30mm mist nets for 1405 net hours; 471 birds/1000 net hours (1992-2016 average: 431).

**Number of species observed:** 100 (for daily census results *see* ebird).

**Number of species captured:** 55 (1992-2017 average: 46).

**New birds captured:** 817 (1992-2017 average: 574); returns to LMBO from previous years included 56 birds of 16 species.

**Species peak:** 19 May, 21 species.

**Banding peak:** 13 May, 105 birds.

**Top 10 captures:**

White-throated Sparrow	180	American Robin	38
Swainson's Thrush	109	Tree Swallow	23
House Wren	62	White-crowned Sparrow	19
Least Flycatcher	45	Baltimore Oriole	18
Yellow Warbler	41	Gray-cheeked Thrush	17

**Comments:** The catch rate (471 birds/1000 net hours) this spring was about average, but the number of species (56) was the third highest ever. No new species were, however, captured; a Lark Sparrow was, however, only the fourth ever captured. Notable returns included a 7 year old male Yellow Warbler banded as a second-year bird in 2013.

**Note:** for purposes of comparison the above do not include data from 6-8 May which are outside the standard monitoring period.

### 3.2 Fall Summary

#### Last Mountain Bird Observatory – Fall 2019

29th consecutive fall of coverage (27nd of standardized coverage).

#### Migration Monitoring:

*First day of coverage:* 6 August.

*Last day of coverage:* 6 October.

*Number of staff:* 3 (Marla Anderson, Jordan Rustad, Breann Sutton).

*Number of volunteers:* 13 (Shirley Bartz, Evan Centanni, Emily Dornstauder, Ryan Dudragne, Shelly Fisher, Sarah Ludlow, Abbie Quennel, Tim Quennel, Rebecca Magnus, Riley Magnus, Alyssa Steilberg, Laura Stewart, Laura Tabakh).

*Number of person-days effort:* 133 including 102 staff and 31 volunteer (143 and 51 last year).

*Number of visitors:* 396 (277 last year).

*Observation effort:* census, casual and incidental observations.

*Standard trapping effort:* 13 12mx30mm mist nets for 3363 net hours; 838 birds/1000 net hours (1992-2017 average: 650).

*Number of species observed:* 137.

*Number of species captured:* 75 (1992-2016 average: 72).

*New birds captured* (standard banding; includes birds released without banding): 2427 (1992-2017 average: 2724). Eight banded birds of 7 species returned from previous years.

*Species banded peak:* 14 September, 27.

*Birds banded peak:* 17 September, 212.

**Top 10 New Captures:**

Yellow-rumped Warbler	799	Blackpoll Warbler	66
Yellow Warbler	247	Swainson's Thrush	65
Alder Flycatcher	229	Tennessee Warbler	64
Orange-crowned Warbler	160	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	57
American Redstart	111	Clay-coloured Sparrow	54

**Comments:**

The 2019 fall migration was one of the more uneventful migrations in the history of LMBO. The number of bird captured was the eighth fewest in 27 years, but because those birds were banded over 500 hundred fewer net hours than normal, the catch rate (birds/net hour) was almost exactly the same as the long-term average.

A young female Merlin banded on 18 August was only our fifth fall (and overall) record. An adult Lark Sparrow banded on 10 August was new for the fall (but not for the spring), and brought the total number of species banded in the fall to 112 (for both seasons the number remains at 120).

The near absence of the summer resident Gray Catbird is worrisome for although 13 were seen on 11 dates through 14 September, this was the first fall since 1995 that no birds were caught and banded; the long-term average is 10 birds.

The 12 Chestnut-sided Warblers that were banded tied last fall's record high, on the other hand 11 Wilson's Warblers was the second worst showing in history of the observatory. A young male Black-throated Blue Warbler on 20 September was only the eighth banded at LMBO.

Observations of note included an impressive 6 Clark's Grebes on 14 August, a Varied Thrush on 27 September, and Townsend's Solitaires 21 on 25 Sep.

## **4.0 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING**

### **4.1 Summary of Educational Programming**

Last Mountain Bird Observatory (LMBO) offers the opportunity for the public to visit the monitoring station on all days of operation in May, August, and September, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Educational opportunities have been ongoing since LMBO's initiation in 1989. Visitors are shown all stages of monitoring work by one of the experienced staff or volunteers, from a tour of the 13 mist nets to check for captured migrants, to watching as birds are "processed" by placing a band on its leg, measuring wing length, scoring fat level, and weighing the bird before releasing it. Visitors are treated to many interesting tidbits of information about the bird's life history, population trend and any possible threats or obstacles it faces.

The Last Mountain Bird Observatory had a good year in 2019, with over 652 visitors (including many youth groups) coming to the station to take a tour of the facility, and watch as birds are removed from the mist nets, banded and then released. Visitors were also educated on species identification, bird migration, threats to bird populations, and bird conservation, by LMBO staff.

## **4.2 Visitors and Volunteers**

There were 652 visitors to LMBO in 2019 - 256 in the spring and 396 in the fall. Visitors benefitted from learning about birds and bird migration while observing a bird banding station in action. The visitor comments were positive and enthusiastic about the work that is done at the Observatory. There were 23 volunteers at LMBO, 10 in the spring and 13 in the fall. The volunteers helped in bird monitoring activities at the level of their experience and gained new skills and insight in bird monitoring and conservation. In addition to those visiting LMBO, many Nature Saskatchewan members learned from articles about LMBO activities in our *Black & White Warbler* newsletter. The bird observatory is contributing to public appreciation and awareness of birds and their habits for people of all ages as they visit and volunteer at the observatory.

## **4.3 Great Canadian Birdathon Events**

In 2019, the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Great Canadian Birdathon event was held on May 11<sup>th</sup> in Regina to LMBO and was led by Marla Anderson. Great Canadian Birdathon events, a program of Birds Canada, are held across Canada to engage people of all ages and abilities in finding as many species of birds in one day as they can. Great Canadian Birdathons also engage sponsors whose contributions go towards bird conservation. The Birdathon event attracted five keen birders from across Saskatchewan. The birdathon leader counted 84 species in the day. The monies raised from generous sponsors will go to Birds Canada to fund their bird research and conservation efforts, as well as to the LMBO to fund their continuing bird research efforts.

The event was advertised in Nature Saskatchewan's newsletter, Blue Jay, on its website, and to its local societies. As in past years, local societies were encouraged to hold a Great Canadian Birdathon by identifying a leader to take interested people and other birdathoners on a birding outing. Each year, several local societies host a Great Canadian Birdathon, with funds raised going towards Last Mountain Bird Observatory.

## **4.4 World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD)**

World Migratory Bird Day, WMBD, is celebrated year-round to highlight migratory birds, bird conservation, and bird conservation education. WMBD is now celebrated at over 600 sites from Canada to Argentina. Last Mountain Bird Observatory is the perfect place to celebrate the return of our migratory birds. World Migratory Bird Day is the second Saturday in May in North America. In 2015 Nature Saskatchewan held its first annual WMBD celebration at LMBO in conjunction with the unveiling of the Flight Plan Partners plaque. Over 50 youth from scouts groups in the area came out to LMBO to join in the celebrations the first year. In 2019 we held the festival again to celebrate the return of our migratory birds. The theme was "BE the Solution to Plastic Pollution". We had over 100 participants at this year's event. The day began at 8am in Regina with a free bus leaving for LMBO. Participants spend the morning rotating through

different stations including: Bird banding, where participants will get an up close experience with the birds. Mist Netting, watching as we extract birds from the net, age them, sex them, and band them. A Migration Obstacle Course, where participants experienced the challenges associated with migration by having to migrate from Mexico to Canada. Nature crafts including bird feeders and bird masks. Banding bracelets, where participants made bracelets to symbolize being banded and were weighed and had arm length (for wing length measured) and recorded. Marla Anderson lead bird watching walks through the regional park. A free BBQ lunch was provided at 12:30 pm. In the afternoon participants played nature themed games and participated in a migration parade wearing the masks they created in the morning.

#### **4.5 Community Group Birding Events**

We are striving to introduce more youth into the world of birds and bird conservation through educational programming at Last Mountain Bird Observatory. LMBO is an ideal destination to engage youth in hands-on learning about birds. In 2009, with learning opportunities enhanced by the large colourful interpretive sign installed at the Observatory, we began promoting LMBO as a learning destination to Scouts Canada and Girl Guides of Canada by advertising with a flyer that was printed in the Saskatchewan provincial groups' newsletters and circulated to all local groups. The educational programming has grown since then, and each year we have more school groups requesting a visit out to LMBO.

LMBO offers great opportunities for youth groups such as Guides and Scouts. These youths have the opportunity to get up close and personal with nature. They learn about catching, handling and banding techniques as well as species identification, bird migration, threats to bird populations, and how we are working to conserve birds and their habitat. They also have the chance to earn badges related to conservation, bird watching and the outdoors. Themed-based programs are also available focused around nature and our ecosystem with activities including hiking and map and compass work. Connecting youth to nature is an important aspect for future bird conservation, and that is exactly what LMBO works towards.

In 2015 we implemented the NatureHood Programing at LMBO. This program invites city schools out to LMBO for a day of activities teaching the students about migration and "Nearby Nature". An advertisement was placed in the 2019-20 Saskatchewan School Destinations Directory highlighting the educational programming at LMBO. This magazine style Directory is published yearly and comes out in early September. Around 3500 copies are published and the directory is sent to all schools in the province K-12. All schools receive two copies, and larger schools receive five copies. It is also sent to Presidents of parent advisory committees as well as day care directors and pre-schools. In 2019 we ran a full-page, full-color ad (below).

Every Spring and Fall Nature Saskatchewan, with the financial support from Nature Canada, funds students from Regina to make the trip to LMBO.

This year we had 8 classes come to LMBO to learn about bird banding and much more. Students help bring captured birds to the banding station, and release birds once they are banded – a memorable experience to feel the bird burst from your hands! Students also learn about the threats birds face while migrating through an interactive migration obstacle course. We discuss shorebird adaptations by dressing a student up as a shorebird and explaining all the different parts of the bird that help it to survive in its habitat. Students also have the opportunity to work in their Junior Birder Journals, recording what birds they see and taking a quiet moment to listen to the sounds around them. In the afternoon, students go bird watching by the lake learning how to use binoculars and the four keys to identifying birds: size & shape, behavior, colour pattern, and habitat. The LMBO is a great place to connect kids to nature and learn about the importance of

conservation.

## Advertisement in the 2019-20 Saskatchewan School Destination Directory



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Plan to visit us!

Last Mountain Bird Observatory  
**BIRD MONITORING and EDUCATION**

Located in Last Mountain Regional Park,  
On Last Mountain Lake Between Saskatoon  
and Regina, 15 km west of Goswin

Great facilities for spending a day. Nature  
trail, natural open areas, picnic sites and  
beach, campsites, pool, canteen.

To arrange a visit for your school group, contact Nature Saskatchewan at  
306-780-9481 or 1-800-667-4668. Or email: [info@nature Sask.ca](mailto:info@nature Sask.ca)

**Last Mountain Bird Observatory  
BIRD MONITORING and EDUCATION**

A rare opportunity for youth to see many bird species up close... to observe catching, handling and banding techniques, and to learn about our natural heritage.

We will provide a morning of opportunities for youth of all ages to learn through being involved with their hands, eyes and ears.

Youth can help bring captured birds to the banding station, and release birds once they are banded! a memorable experience to hold the bird heart from your hands!

Learn about species identification, bird migration, trends in bird populations, and how we are working to conserve birds.

Fit a morning visit into theme-based programs around culture, habitats and our ecosystem. Organize afternoon activities around hiking, geocaching and nature activities. Funding is available for transportation costs.

The station is open May 9 -31, August and September.

To arrange a visit for your school group, contact Nature Saskatchewan at 306-780-9481 or 1-800-667-4668 (SK only). Or email: [info@nature Sask.ca](mailto:info@nature Sask.ca)

Plan to visit us!



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## **5.0 PROMOTION AND SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES**

### **5.1 The Black-and-white Warbler Newsletter – Spring 2019**

The *Black-and-white Warbler*, the newsletter of the LMBO, initially was produced from 1997 – 2002, and in those years included Winter, Spring and Fall issues. It was re-introduced in Spring 2009 with a special color 8-page issue developed in January – March 2009 by the co-editors, Alan Smith and Jared Clarke. The re-introduction of the newsletter was a celebration of Nature Saskatchewan's commitment to LMBO, and an announcement to recognize that this commitment was made through an unveiling ceremony of a new interpretive sign at LMBO on May 30, 2009.

In 2011 Jessica Martino replaced Jared Clarke as the co-editor of the Spring Issue. In 2013 Rebecca Magnus replaced Jessica Martino as the co-editor and has continued as co-editor to date. The Spring 2019 issue maintained the 12-page colour format (attached). The newsletter was emailed to all individuals on the email mailing list (308). Those receiving the newsletter were encouraged to forward the e-newsletter to others, and all interested persons were invited to request to have their email addresses added to our mailing list.

### **5.2 Promotion through the LMBO Brochure and Web Page**

The new brochure to promote Last Mountain Bird Observatory that was developed in 2010 continued to be available at LMBO and Nature Saskatchewan events. The brochure describes what LMBO is about as well as times of operation, how volunteers and visitors can help, and the monitoring and education programs. The Flight Plan Partner campaign is highlighted through a tear-off panel for supporting LMBO. The LMBO brochure was updated and re-printed in 2018.

The Last Mountain Bird Observatory web page is maintained on the new Nature Saskatchewan website: [www.naturesask.ca](http://www.naturesask.ca). It describes the monitoring work done at LMBO, educational opportunities, and the setting and location of the station. It also provides documents of interest including brochures and summaries. The web page was updated as regularly as possible in 2019.

### **5.3 Fly Zone Signs and Flyers**

LMBO is located in Last Mountain Regional Park (LMRP), which has many campers in both trailer and tent sites from late May through August. There are potential problems of encroachment on the LMBO site, especially in August when there is heavy usage at the same time as the nets are open. The main problem arises from children riding their bikes through the hedgerows, which is where nets are located, or people attempting to handle birds in the nets; riding bikes up and down the hedgerows puts the nets at risk of damage and the handling of birds by untrained individuals can result in injuries to birds. Al Smith and other LMBO staff engage the campers as much as possible, and outright vandalism of nets is rare, although there were some incidents of concern in 2011.

To address this concern, we increased public awareness by advertising to youth and their parents that LMBO has nets set up to capture birds. In 2012, thirty fly zone signs with a “No Bikes” symbol were printed, and these were set up at both ends of hedgerows where nets were located. Signs were 12”x12” and made of hard corrugated (vertical) plastic that then was slid down over 12”x18” H-type wire stands. In conjunction with the signs, a small flyer (1/4 sheet of 8.5x11”

paper) was developed in 2010. In 2012, fly zone flyers were updated (see below) and were attached to each camping permit as campers entered LMRP.

### 2011 Fly Zone flyer

**If you walk or cycle at Last Mountain Regional Park, this is for You!**

The Last Mountain Bird Observatory station has placed fine mesh "mist" nets along many of the hedgerows in the Park. These capture birds, which are then banded at the LMBO station and released.

Watch for  
"FLY ZONE" signs  
and the  
"NO BIKES" symbol

These mark entranceways to hedgerows where nets are placed. Please avoid these hedgerows as disturbance is harmful to birds captured in the nets.

LMBO staff and volunteers carefully remove the birds from the nets regularly. Visitors are welcome to the station to watch banding of birds and learn more about this. It is open from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. in August through September.

**Thank you for watching out for our birds!**

### 2012 Fly Zone flyer

**If you walk or cycle at Last Mountain Regional Park, this is for You!**

The Last Mountain Bird Observatory station has placed fine mesh "mist" nets along many of the hedgerows in the Park. These capture birds, which are then banded at the LMBO station and released.

Watch for "FLY ZONE" signs and the  
"NO BIKES" symbol

**Please don't touch the nets or try to  
remove birds from the nets. A staff  
member must be present when you  
are near the nets.**

These mark entranceways to hedgerows where nets are placed. Please avoid these hedgerows as disturbance is harmful to birds captured in the nets.

LMBO staff and volunteers carefully remove the birds from the nets regularly. Visitors are welcome to the station to watch the banding of birds and to learn more. It is open from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. in August and September.

**Thank you for watching out for our birds!**

## 5.4 Flight Plan Partners

The Flight Plan Partners 5-year campaign to raise \$250,000 for the Last Mountain Bird Observatory was launched in spring 2008. It was a successful campaign raising a total of \$296,612.74 to ensure the long-term operation of the LMBO monitoring and educational station. A permanent bronze plaque was unveiled at LMBO on May 9th, 2015 to recognize the 67 Flight Plan Partners who donated to the campaign. In 2018 the plaque was mounted next to the stairs of the banding station.

Flight Plan Partners plaque



## 5.5 Last Mountain Bird Observatory Committee

Nature Saskatchewan assumed management of Last Mountain Bird Observatory (LMBO) in January 2008, after co-managing the program with the Canadian Wildlife Service (Environment Canada) since its initiation in 1989. In August of 2008 Nature Saskatchewan set up a LMBO committee in recognition of the continued work on migration monitoring as well as to increase development of educational programming. Those on the Committee for part or all of 2019 included Alan Smith and Rebecca Magnus (LMBO newsletter editors), Lacey Weekes (Chair), Gary Seib, Jordan Ignatiuk and Margaret Skeel.

A number of activities resulted from committee meetings. These included development of the 11<sup>th</sup> annual issue of the LMBO *Black-and-white Warbler* newsletter for spring 2019, information about activities and school programming, hosting World Migratory Bird Day, and progress toward LMBO taking promotion of the Saskatchewan portion of bird monitoring under its “wing” (including Breeding Bird Surveys, Saskatchewan Nocturnal Owl Surveys and Christmas Bird Counts), maintenance work such as re-shingling the banding station and sanding and re-staining the deck.