



Saskatoon Nature Society Newsletter

February 2018

Vol. 40 No. 2

February Meeting

A Walkabout in Australia The Land Down Under

Ron Jensen

7:30 PM Thursday, February 15
Room 106, Biology Bldg., U. of S. campus

In 2016 and in 2017, Laurel and Lorne Duczek, and Julie and Ron Jensen took 3-week guided trips in Australia to see the natural wonders of this island continent. While there, they also visited the east and west coasts, the interior desert and the Great Barrier Reef.

Through stories and photos, they will share the wild lands of Australia: its landscapes, its marinescapes, its unique plants and animals, and some of the Aboriginal places open to the public.

Ron Jensen will do most of the talking (naturally). He is a long-standing member of Saskatoon Nature Society and an avid naturalist and birdwatcher who has taken part in most local bird counts and advocacy groups. He is also one of only two people in the province with a permit to band hummingbirds.



Field Trips

Everyone is welcome to participate in any field trip. Bring your friends. Carpooling for out-of-town trips is arranged at the meeting place; there is no charge other than to share gasoline costs. Phone the trip leader if you have any questions. Participants are free to depart early if they wish. Members with FRS radios should bring them on out of town trips. Check our website at www.saskatoonnaturesociety.sk.ca for last minute changes or cancellations and to download checklists. City bus Information: 306-975-3100.

Many of our trip destinations are described in *A Guide to Nature Viewing Sites in and around Saskatoon* 3rd ed.; an order form is available on the SNS website.

Sunday, Feb. 11, 1:30 PM–3:00 PM Chorney Acreage Bird Feeders

We plan to visit this acreage south of the city which had the highest concentration of birds found during Saskatoon's Boxing Day bird count.

Meet by the grain elevator at the Western Development Museum parking lot, 2610 Lorne Ave.

Bus: Route 1 Exhibition departs downtown terminal at 12:31 PM and arrives on Lorne Avenue next to museum about 12:50 PM.

Leader: Marten Stoffel (306-230-9291)

Saturday February 17 1:00 PM–3:00 PM Weir and City Park Birding

We will look for waterfowl at the weir and then walk some back alleys looking for songbirds and end with an optional stop for hot beverages at City Perks Coffee Shop on 7th Ave.

Meet at the Weir parking lot and wear your binoculars.

Leader: Carol Blenkin (306-244-1927)

more field trips on page 2 →

President's Corner

One of the benefits of the Society is being able to join field trips to places in and around Saskatoon and beyond, led by SNS members with local knowledge and expertise. This past weekend, thirteen of us went on a trip led by Stan Shadick and Marten Stoffel to Beauval and area. Although we did not see any owls we saw willow ptarmigan and spruce grouse. Marten told us that the poor snow cover resulted in a low abundance of prey for the owls. Thanks to the Nature Society and the Golden Eagle field trips, I have been to places like Beauval and properties I would not have visited on my own. Many of us travel around the world, but have not explored all the areas of Saskatchewan, or even Saskatoon. That is one reason why *A Guide to Nature Viewing Sites In and Around Saskatoon* is an important publication for the benefit of the residents of Saskatoon area and has been very successful. For those of you wanting to explore beyond the Saskatoon area, consider registering for Nature Saskatchewan's Spring Meet in Coronach, June 8-10. It will be a great opportunity to explore the Big Muddy area of the province. Mark your calendar and watch for more information about registration and programming in our *Newsletter*, *Blue Jay* or on Nature Saskatchewan's website.

Through our Kids in Nature grants, we have provided support to students in the Saskatoon area to connect with nature. This year we have asked the grant recipients to provide some feedback to share with you either in the form of images and information for the *Newsletter* or images for our AGM.

Many of you attended the presentation given by Michael Mesure of FLAP (Fatal Light Attraction Protection) Canada during the 2017 Nature City Festival. A group organized by Jan Shadick has made plans to continue with this initiative in 2018. We will be posting information on our website in the future and will have material available for our display at Gardenscape.

Valerie Martz
President

The board of directors of the Saskatoon Nature Society is elected at the March Annual General Meeting. If you would like to serve on the board, please contact the past-president, Marten Stoffel.

Field Trips (continued)

Sunday, March 4, 1:30 PM- 4:30 PM

Pike Lake Birding

We will look for winter visitors to the park. Wear warm clothing. The chickadees will gratefully accept donations of sunflower seeds. *Guide to Nature Viewing Sites* page 108.

Meet by the grain elevator at the Western Development Museum parking lot on Lorne Ave.

Bus: Route 1 Exhibition departs downtown terminal at 12:31 PM and arrives on Lorne Avenue next to museum about 12:50 PM.

Leader: Hilda Noton (306-374-0674)

Sunday, March 18, 1:30 PM-3:30 PM

Forestry Farm Birding

A birding trip to the Forestry Farm Park to look for winter songbirds.

Meet at the south end of what is now called the overflow parking lot. This is the lot by the former zoo entrance. (no bus service)

Leader: John Patterson (306-249-0468)

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. Enrolment is limited on most programs and often programs fill up over a month in advance, so register early. To register or for more information, call 306-975-3042 or e-mail saskatoonnaturekids@gmail.com. Visit the Young Naturalists' website for detailed information about the upcoming programs.

www.saskatoonzoosociety.ca/programs/young-naturalists/

Program schedule

Saturday, March 17	Owl Pellet Dissection
Saturday, April 14	Birdhouse Workshop
Sunday, April 22	Crocus Hike
Saturday, May 5	Pike Lake Field Trip
May 2018, TBA	Great Horned Owl Field Trip
May 30-July 7	Bluebird Trail

Announcements and Reports

From the archives ...

Nature Notes first appeared in the Star-Phoenix in 1989 and in just the second instalment Stuart Houston, one of the founders of our Society, penned the first of almost 40 columns he has written for *Nature Notes*.

Banding Great Horned Owls

Stuart Houston
Star-Phoenix, April 19, 1989

Believe it or not, the great horned owls have downy young in their nests right now. The owls lay their eggs in early March, timed so that young bush rabbits can be fed to the nestlings in mid-May.

The female sits tight on her nest to keep the eggs warm, no matter how low the temperature. The faithful male does all the hunting. The owlets are ready to fly by early June.

No owl builds its own nest. Usually, they take over a red-tailed hawk's nest of the previous year. During April and May, the owlets wreck the nest, so most parent owls look for a different one the following year.

By banding nearly 5000 owlets in their nests, made possible by observant farmers who report the locations, we have learned where they go and how long they live. Although normally year-round residents, in years when bush rabbits are scarce, they regularly migrate up to 1500 kilometres southeasterly, as far as Kansas and Iowa.

For some years, a 13-year, seven-month old owl banded at Bredenbury and recovered southwest of Yorkton was the oldest survivor known in the banding office in Washington. Then an Illinois-banded owl held the record at 17 years, four months, shading one banded near Grasswood and found drowned in a water trough near Delisle, 17 years and one month later.

More recently, Saskatchewan resumed the lead. On January 18 of last year, Hal Fleishhacker found a freshly-killed owl beside Highway 5 east of Saskatoon. It had been banded 20-years, eight months earlier near Elstow. Before the conservation officer would issue a permit to have it taken to a taxidermist, the dead owl was X-rayed in Humboldt

to prove it had not been shot. It has since been mounted and photographed and occupies a place of honor in the Fleishhacker home, north of Humboldt. It is the longest-lived great horned owl in the wild in North America.

Anyone finding an active owl nest with young, within 150 kilometres of Saskatoon, should contact me, or my wife, Mary as soon as possible. We will come out, climb the tree, and place bands on the young.

Stuart and Mary are no longer climbing trees, but banding is still underway. If you have an active Great Horned Owl nest on your property this spring, please contact Martin Gerard (306-227-4017 or Saskgerards@hotmail.com) to arrange for banding of the young.

The Great Backyard Bird Count

February 16 to 19

Your help is needed every year to make the GBBC successful. For at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see. You can count from any location, anywhere in the world, for as long as you wish. Want to get involved and help scientists get the "big picture" about what is happening to bird populations? Visit gbbc.birdcount.org to enter count data or for more information.

BioScan 2018

W.P. Thompson (Biology) Building
112 Science Place (University of Saskatchewan)
Friday, Feb. 9 to Sunday, Feb. 11
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM daily
Admission \$5.00 (\$50.00 for school groups)
www.facebook.com/usaskbioclub/

BioScan is an educational event for school-aged children and their parents. The event happens every three years at the University of Saskatchewan and is put on by the University of Saskatchewan Biology Department and Bio-Club and sponsored by Sasktel. From live animals, to fun crafts, this event will not disappoint! While children play, parents may attend seminars to learn about research being done by the Biology Department staff and faculty. This is a fun and affordable event and a great way to spend a day, or weekend with your children or grandchildren!

Saskatoon Nature Society

Mailing address:

Box 448, RPO University
Saskatoon, SK S7N 4J8

Website:

www.SaskatoonNatureSociety.sk.ca

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SaskatoonNatureSociety

Newsletter

The deadline for the March Newsletter is February 23. Please send any announcements or articles to Gordon Edwards (306-258-2442). The publisher would appreciate if articles are complete and submitted electronically.

email: saskgord58@gmail.com

Chairs and Coordinators

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Board of Directors

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Director	Greg Fenty.....	306-343-6943 greg.fenty@gmail.com
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Director	Stan Shadick.....	306-652-5975 stan.shadick@usask.ca
Director	Guy Wapple.....	306-249-3280 gswap@sasktel.net

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.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
February				1	2 	3
4	5	6	7	8 GE: WDM	9 Bioscan begins	10
11 Chorney Acreage Bird Feeders	12	13	14 	15 Monthly Meeting	16 GBBC begins	17 Weir and City Park Birding
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

March				1	2	3
4 Pike Lake Birding	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 Monthly Meeting	16	17 YN: Owl Pel- lets
18 Forestry Farm Birding	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Membership Renewals

All SNS memberships expire on December 31; failure to renew by then may interrupt delivery of your *Newsletter*. Check the upper right corner of your mailing label to see the year your membership expires. New memberships paid after July 1 will continue through the following year. Donations qualify for a tax receipt. Mail in your completed form or bring it to the next meeting.

Membership in the Saskatoon Nature Society

The Saskatoon Nature Society publishes ten newsletters per year informing members of field trips and other activities. Except in the summer, monthly meetings present speakers on a wide range of nature related topics.

Please check: Renewal New Member Change of Address

Membership Category: Individual \$20/yr Family \$30/yr Junior (<19yrs) \$5/yr

Date: _____

Name(s) (please print neatly): _____

(Names/Ages of Children): _____

Address: _____

_____ Postal Code: _____

email: _____ Phone: _____

I would like to receive the SNS *Newsletter* electronically via email at the above address

Membership fee \$ _____ /yr x _____ year(s) (one to five) = \$ _____

Donation (designate a fund if desired)

Kids in Nature Conservation and Education Nature Capital General Fund

One-time donation: \$ _____

Monthly donation:..... \$ _____ /month

For a monthly donation, either (a) attach a cheque marked "VOID" and we will send you a Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) form to be completed and returned to start the process, or (b) download the PAD form from our website (SaskatoonNatureSociety.sk.ca), complete the form and attach a cheque marked "VOID" and mail to the address below.

Option: Membership in Nature Saskatchewan (see below) \$ _____

TOTAL (please make your cheque payable to Saskatoon Nature Society)..... \$ _____

Mail to: Treasurer, Saskatoon Nature Society, Box 448, RPO University, Saskatoon, SK S7N 4J8

Membership in Nature Saskatchewan

The Saskatoon Nature Society is affiliated with the provincial society, Nature Saskatchewan, but membership is separate and the fee schedule is different. Renewing your provincial membership through SNS earns us a \$2 commission. Nature Saskatchewan is a strong advocate for conservation and education in the province. Benefits of membership include the quarterly journal *Blue Jay*, and spring and fall meets at various locations in the province. More information is available on their web site: www.naturesask.ca.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Electronic</u>	<u>Print</u>	
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40	
Family	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> \$45	<input type="checkbox"/> New Member
Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	
Senior (>64yrs)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal
Foreign	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	
Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	