

# NATURE NEWS

From Nature Calgary

[www.naturecalgary.com](http://www.naturecalgary.com)



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## VOLUNTEER

[Volunteer\\*@naturecalgary.com](mailto:Volunteer*@naturecalgary.com)  
for general inquiries.

## LEAD A FIELD TRIP

To suggest a location or lead a trip  
email  
[fieldtrips\\*@naturecalgary.com](mailto:fieldtrips*@naturecalgary.com)

[Check the website frequently for  
new trips and updates.](#)

## MEMBERSHIPS

Individual: \$40/year  
Family: \$50/year

Contact Val 403-288-7441 or  
[membership\\*@naturecalgary.com](mailto:membership*@naturecalgary.com)  
[Join or renew online.](#)

## SUBMISSIONS

Share your experiences, art,  
stories, suggestions, news, and  
events with Nature Calgary! Nature  
News is published 8 times per year  
and submissions are accepted by  
all members.

Send to:  
[newsletter\\*@naturecalgary.com](mailto:newsletter*@naturecalgary.com).  
**Next deadline: June 29, 2020**

Mailing address:  
Nature Calgary, Box 981 Stn. M  
Calgary, AB T2P 2K4



## Message from the President

Dear Members,

As the Bow and Elbow rivers are now in full spate, so too is the flow of nature in the urban natural areas and our own backyards. Our avian friends have now arrived to establish their territories and start their nesting duties. Every day new flowers will blossom forth to greet the sun and our admiring gaze.

To provide an opportunity for Nature Calgary members to enjoy this flush of life I am pleased to say that we are once again offering field trips in accordance with the AHS guidelines. Please consult the website for the most up-to-date information about field trips, registration, and COVID protocols.

On May 2nd board members had the very special opportunity to meet with Saa'kokoto (an elder of the Blackfoot Confederacy Kainai First Nation) at the Siksikaitsitapi Medicine Wheel at Nose Hill Park. It was a wonderful experience to learn about the structure and the significance it has with the indigenous culture and people it represents. Nature Calgary looks forward to strengthening our relationship with our indigenous neighbours by acknowledging our past, present, and future role as naturalists and stewards of the land.

The NC advocacy sub-committee has had preliminary meetings to discuss our path forward in addressing concerns about the intrusion of development into our river valley systems. For example there is a major condo development proposed adjacent to the west end of Bowmont Natural Area that contains native prairie and could impede a wildlife movement corridor. Other major developments are proposed for the Nose Creek Valley (one upstream of Country Hills Blvd. NE and one downstream of Airport Road NE). Another issue is the urban deforestation of inner city neighbourhoods due to infill developments which could be exacerbated by the proposed Guidebook for Local Areas Planning if policy is not adopted to protect mature trees. If have an interest in participating in the advocacy sub-committee please contact me at [president\\*@naturecalgary.com](mailto:president*@naturecalgary.com). A list of public engagement opportunities and advocacy notifications can be found within this newsletter (Page 7).

Finally on the education front NC is excited to announce a couple of initiatives to provide new learning experiences for our members and non-members. These include a birding for beginners' course (Birding 101) and three free public about Elliston Park and the 68th Street Wetlands as part of a grant awarded to us from The TD Park People Foundation. Additionally, a series of digital and print "Birding HotSpot Maps" is being produced and will be made available at no cost to all in the coming months.

Well Wishes,

John McFaul

## Public Events

*Nature Calgary Speaker Series and Bird Study Group are now on hold for the Summer and will restart in September 2021!*

### BiodiverCity Challenge Calgary

#### June 10-13, BiodiverCity Challenge Calgary

In June 2020, The Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute kicked off an annual event to document urban biodiversity in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region. This year it will also include the City of Calgary, Okotoks, Chestermere, Airdrie, Cochrane, and Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park! This event is free and open to everyone of all ages. To participate, take photos of any flora and fauna June 10-13 and submit your observations to the [NatureLynx](#) OR [iNaturalist](#) apps! This will surely be an interesting contrast to the City Nature Challenge results that ran at the beginning of May. Let's see what we can find! For more information, please visit [www.biodivercity.ca/](http://www.biodivercity.ca/) or visit the [iNaturalist project page](#).

#### July 17-25, National Moth Week 2021!

This annual event is free and open to anyone with an interest in lepidoptera (moths and butterflies). The Alberta Lepidopterists' Guild (ALG) will be hosting events throughout the province during the week, but don't worry... you can set-up your moth-lighting experiment in your yard! Take photos and share your sightings to [iNaturalist.ca](http://iNaturalist.ca) to be identified by ALG experts. For more information and resources, visit: [www.nationalmothweek.org/](http://www.nationalmothweek.org/)



Image: Columbia Silk Moth by Madeleine Wise



Image: RWBL by Matt Wallace

#### July 31, Beyond the Birds of International Avenue

This is another free public event led by Nature Calgary at Elliston Park and the 68th street wetlands thanks to a grant from TD Parks People. Participants will have the opportunity to schedule expert-led walks on the flora and fauna of the parks throughout the day and have access to professional binoculars, scopes, water sampling kits, and visit a natural history interpretive station.

Please check out our [website](#) or social media in early July to sign up!

## City Nature Challenge 2021 Results:

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2021 City Nature Challenge! This year was the biggest of any previous year with 419 cities globally participating. 1.2 million observations were shared to iNaturalist during the event by 52,000 people. Remarkably, 45,300 species were documented in urban areas. In Calgary, 271 people explored our urban environment and documented over 770 species! The total number of observations was 6730 (the most of any Canadian City). Congratulations to everyone involved and we look forward to next year! More Information: [www.citynaturechallenge.org](http://www.citynaturechallenge.org)

View all of the observations and map on Calgary's CNC 2021 iNaturalist Project [here](#)!

It's never too late to get started using iNaturalist! Your photos of Nature (anywhere in the world) can become a permanent record assisting in biodiversity research and decision-making processes. It is a free tool that can help you learn about the world around you. Visit [iNaturalist.ca](http://iNaturalist.ca) to sign-up or download the free app on any smartphone.





## Field Trips

### Nature Calgary field trips are back on as of June 2021!

NC organizes volunteer led field trips throughout the year. Under current provincial restrictions, trips will be limited to a maximum of ten participants (members only) and pre-registration is required. Participants must wear appropriate face covering (masks). This may change given the upcoming alleviation of group sizes for outdoor events. **For the most up-to-date list of field-trips including impromptus and future trips, please visit our website: <https://naturecalgary.com/field-trips/>**

Participants are responsible for bringing their own food, water, sunscreen, bug spray and any other items that they may require for the duration of the trip.

Please contact the Field Trips Coordinator, Howard Heffler ([fieldtrips@naturecalgary.com](mailto:fieldtrips@naturecalgary.com) or 403-804-2489) with any questions or suggestions for future outings.

Day	Date	Time	Destination	Leader
Wednesday	9-Jun	7:00 AM	Weaselhead	Kaya Konopnicki
Wednesday	9-Jun	6:30 PM	LaFarge Meadows (Boat Launch)	Kaya Konopnicki
Wednesday	9-Jun	6:30 PM	Confluence Park (West Nose Creek Park)	John McFaul
Saturday	12-Jun	9:00 AM	Nature Walk - West Edworthy Park	John McFaul
Tuesday	15-Jun	9:00 AM	Frank Lake (Basin 1)*	Kaya Konopnicki
Wednesday	16-Jun	9:00 AM	Confluence Park	Kaya Konopnicki
Wednesday	16-Jun	6:30 PM	Burnsmead	Kaya Konopnicki
Thursday	17-Jun	9:00 AM	Nature Walk - Nose Hill	John McFaul
Tuesday	22-Jun	9:00 AM	12 Mile Coulee	Kaya Konopnicki
Tuesday	22-Jun	6:30 PM	Paskapoo Slopes	Kaya Konopnicki
Wednesday	23-Jun	9:00 AM	Brown Lowry Provincial Park*	Kaya Konopnicki
Wednesday	23-Jun	6:30PM	Ralph Klein Park	Kaya Konopnicki
Thursday	24-Jun	8:30 AM	Dale Hodges Park	Marje Wing, Joy Ely
Saturday	26-Jun	9:00 AM	North Glenmore Park	Penny Smith
Tuesday	29-Jun	7:00 AM	FCPP – Canyon Meadows	Kaya Konopnicki
Tuesday	29-Jun	6:30 PM	Bebo Grove	Kaya Konopnicki
Wednesday	30-Jun	9:00 AM	South Glenmore Park	Kaya Konopnicki
Wednesday	30-Jun	6:30 PM	Mallard Point	Kaya Konopnicki

\*= This is an out-of-town trip. Please visit the [Nature Calgary Field Trip Website](#) for more details about each trip.

## Community News

### Calgary Certified as Bird Friendly City

May 8th was World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD). It was a special day for Calgary as our city was officially certified as a Bird Friendly City by Nature Canada. This program was initiated by Nature Canada as a response to the alarming scientific findings that over the last 50 years the North American bird populations has diminished by an estimated 3 billion individuals. Nature Canada decided to set a target of designating at least 30 cities across Canada as being bird friendly by WMBD 2022. For more about this program see <https://naturecanada.ca/bfc/>.

In the fall of 2020 Nature Canada contacted Nature Calgary and the Calgary Migratory Species Response Team to form a bird friendly team to work to have Calgary gain certification. These two organizations were quickly joined by the Calgary Biodiversity Advisory Committee, the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society, the Calgary Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, the Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area, the Miistakis Institute of the Rockies, and Calgary Parks to form the nucleus of Bird Friendly Calgary. <https://www.facebook.com/BirdFriendlyCalgary/>

The team worked diligently over the winter/spring months to satisfy a series of criteria to show that Calgary was indeed bird friendly. These criteria included direct threats to birds such as cat predation, window strikes, light pollution, and pesticide use. They also included habitat protection and education initiatives, indigenous knowledge, and declared support by the City of Calgary. Points are given for the obtainment of each criteria. There are three levels of certification, entry level, intermediate, and high. Calgary obtain a high level of points for habitat protection, and educational policies and opportunities, but an entry level of points for direct threats to birds. Overall Calgary was given an entry level certification as more work needs to be done to reduce the direct threats to birds.

Nature Calgary members can do their part by insuring their cats do not threaten birds, treat their windows with bird collision deterrents, eliminate light polluting fixtures, and careful application of pesticides only if necessary. We can also encourage the City and Calgarians to appreciate our avian citizens.



#### Rare Bird Alert:

report rare bird sightings to Bird Alert Compiler, Terry Korolyk at 403-300-1067  
For latest sightings check: [Albertabird](#) or [BirdTrax](#)



## Community News

### Is Calgary's Biodiversity Target Unreachable?

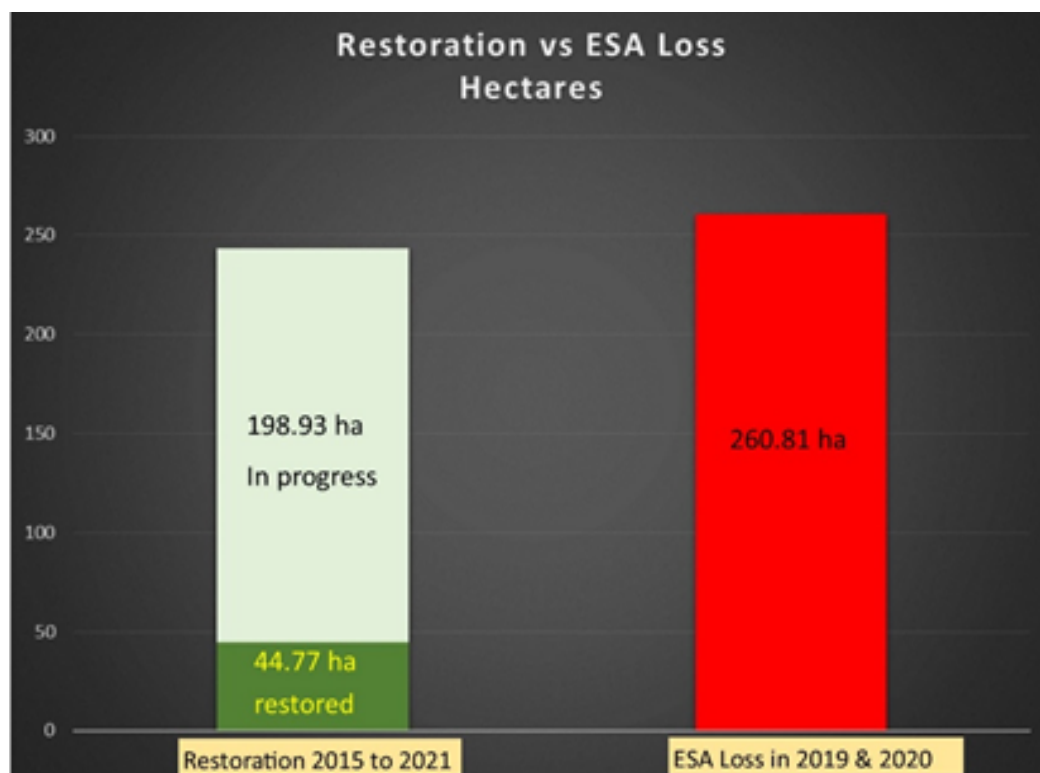
In 2015 city council voted to adopt the 10 year BiodiverCity Strategic Plan that was presented to them by Calgary Parks as developed by its Urban Conservation business unit. This was in response to the City signing the [Durban Accord](https://www.durbanaccord.org/) in which municipalities across the world recognize the important role that they have in supporting the Earth's biodiversity.  
<https://www.calgary.ca/csps/parks/planning-and-operations/biodiversity.html>

The Strategic Plan calls for the obtainment of three core targets along with a number of other commitments. These targets are to restore 20% of Calgary's open space, resolve habitat fragmentation issues by evaluating and conserving ecological cores and corridors, and the establishment of an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM) that will identify invasive species and complete management plans for them. The City recently approved their IPM  
<https://www.calgary.ca/content/dam/www/csps/parks/documents/planning-and-operations/pest-management/integrated-pest-management-plan.pdf>.

Evaluating and conserving ecological cores and corridors is ongoing as well as the restoration of 20% of Calgary's open space.

Most concerning is the lack of progress toward the restoration target. The 20% target equates to 832 hectares. Currently only 45 hectares have been restored with an additional 199 hectares in progress. Calgary Park's best estimate is that only 50% of the target will be reached by 2025. This lack of progress is being exasperated due to lack of capital and human resources that the City is willing to put toward achieving the goal. However, I do note that council did recently approve a pilot project by Calgary Roads to restore a portion of the boulevard along 16 Ave NE from 36th Street to 68th Street NE.

Compounding this concern is that every year Calgary loses Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA) due to developmental pressure. See chart. With the upcoming civic election in October where up to half of council will be replaced by newcomers, it will be important for Nature Calgary members to express their support of any measures that promote the conservation of Calgary's biodiversity.



## Community News

### Community Engagement and Advocacy Issues

In the past year, a variety of issues have arisen regarding the balance of development, conservation of natural areas, and increase in recreational uses. The following issues are some of which have been brought to Nature Calgary (NC). An NC Advocacy sub-committee has been created to better understand how NC can be more involved and relay information between members, communities, and residents of Alberta. Please keep these issues on your radar and consider joining the sub-committee if you would like to become more involved. To join the sub-committee, email John McFaul at [president\\*@naturecalgary.com](mailto:president*@naturecalgary.com).

### Fish Creek Provincial Park Trails Updates (Comments due by June 14)

Alberta Parks is gathering feedback on current and future recreational demands on the Fish Creek Provincial Park trail system to improve connectivity, safety and accessibility of trails within the park boundaries. There are several favorite birding pathways that will be removed. Please let the committee know of any nesting habitat that should exclude pathways or access points. Please review the proposed trail map and provide comments by visiting: <https://www.alberta.ca/fish-creek-provincial-park-trails-engagement.aspx>

### Inglewood Bird Sanctuary

Updates are being made to the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary lagoon to ensure its health and longevity, creating habitat for fish, birds and wildlife in the park and adding enhancements for park visitors. For more information, sign-up for free Virtual Public Engagement Sessions (June 15-17) and a Q&A public engagement tool, please visit: <https://engage.calgary.ca/ibs>

### Bowmont Park Development Proposal

A large development has been proposed adjacent to Bowmont park off of Nose Hill Dr. A petition and website have been created by community members to draw awareness to the sensitivity of the area and impacts it may have on wildlife corridors. To learn more about the project and proposal, please visit: <https://protectbowmontpark.wordpress.com/>

### Twelve Mile Coulee Trail Upgrades

Recently, the city accepted comments from the public about the future of Twelve Mile Coulee trails and infrastructure. The opportunity to provide comments is now closed, however, people can view comments shared with the City of Calgary. A "What We Heard" report is now available online which will guide the City to develop a plan for restoration of the park. <https://engage.calgary.ca/12MileTrails>

### Rosebud Badlands ESA and Badlands Motorsports Resort

A parcel once designated as an Ecologically Sensitive Area adjacent to the Rosebud River Valley has been proposed to develop a professional-grade racing track. Sensitive species are known to exist in the valley including Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, sensitive flora, and a large colony of Bank Swallows. To learn more about the proposal and who you can contact to comment on the development, please visit <https://www.savetherosebud.ca/>

### Bighill Springs Provincial Park Gravel Mine

A gravel mine along the edges of Bighill Creek has been approved by Rocky View County. Opponents of the development suggest it will compromise water quality, habitat, wildlife, and recreational opportunities in the region. To learn more about this project please visit: <https://bighillcreek.ca/>

### Eastern Slopes

The Eastern Slopes of Alberta's Rocky Mountains are still under threat. On June 1, 2020, the UCP repealed the 1979 coal policy with no public engagement. Public pressure has since forced them to reinstate the policy but the threat is far from over. Please visit [www.mountainsnotmines.ca](http://www.mountainsnotmines.ca) for a list of organizations involved in protecting the Eastern Slopes, how you can help, where you can get a lawn sign, and government officials you can write to. Together we can protect this region for the future.