

# NATURE NEWS

From Nature Calgary

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



President: John McFaul  
403-289-9517  
president\*@\*naturecalgary.com

## VOLUNTEER

Volunteer\*@\*naturecalgary.com  
for general inquiries.

## LEAD A FIELD TRIP

To suggest a location or lead a trip  
email  
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  
[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.  
**Next deadline: August 29, 2020**

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



## Message from the President

Dear members,

Summer is upon us. As I write this, Calgary is at the end of a historical heat wave which will allow us to enjoy our summer nature outings.

Another “wave” that is abating is the Covid pandemic (at least for Calgary and Canada). In following the provincial guidelines, the Nature Calgary board has decided to reduce many of the restrictions that were previously in place on the conduct of our field trips. The modified restrictions are listed in the field trip section (Page   ) of this newsletter and on our website.

The Birding 101 course developed and operated by board member Kaya Konopnicki through the month of June was quite successful and Kaya is to be congratulated for its success. We have created a [YouTube channel](#) that will host the course videos, recorded public webinars, and videos of flora and fauna submitted by Nature Calgary members. To stay up to date with our video releases, please consider subscribing to the channel. If you would like access to the Birding 101 course content, please send an email to Kaya at [communications\\*@\\*naturecalgary.com](mailto:communications*@*naturecalgary.com).

The restoration project slated for the Inglewood bird sanctuary has been put on hold until next year because of opposition to the negative impact it was to have on the Bank Swallow colony at the upstream end of the sanctuary. In part this was a result of the opposition from Inglewood community members as well as Nature Calgary. The tarps have been removed from the nesting site and the swallows did return to the site. We will continue to monitor the situation and work to ensure that the nesting opportunities will not be disrupted again. Thank you to members that submitted comments and concerns during the engagement process.

I do hope that you will have the opportunity to partake in Nature Calgary’s field trips and events being offered over throughout the summer by our valued field trip leaders and volunteers. An updated list of August field trips will be sent out directly to members at the end of July.

Have a nice summer,

John McFaul

## Public Events

*Nature Calgary Speaker Series and Bird Study Group will restart in September 2021!*

### July 17-25, National Moth Week (NMW) 2021!

This annual event is open to anyone with an interest in lepidoptera (moths and butterflies). The Alberta Lepidopterists' Guild (ALG) will be hosting events throughout the province during event week including one at the Weaselhead July 25 led by ALG president Dave Lawrie. If you're unable to attend, take photos of any moths you see and share your sightings to [iNaturalist.ca](https://www.inaturalist.ca) to be identified by ALG experts. All observations shared will be included in the NMW diversity count. 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 a 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 to sign up for scheduled walks.

### Sept 18 Your Park: International Stewardship

Nature Calgary is organizing a park clean-up! garbage and removing invasive weeds, and building bird and bumblebee boxes at Elliston Park & 68th Street Wetlands!

Elliston Park is one of the largest water bodies in Calgary and handles much of the run-off from the surrounding neighbourhoods. This pond along with the 68th Street Wetlands cleans the water before it returns to the Bow River. We'll be picking up garbage, removing invasive weeds, and building bird and bumblebee boxes in the park.

Sign-up through the [Facebook Event Page!](#)



## BiodiverCity 2021 Results:



<u>Taxa</u>	<u>Sightings</u>
Birds	330
Mammals	36
Plants	1212
Insects	301
Bryophytes & Lichens	28
Fungi	12
Others	64
Reptiles & Amphibians	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1984</b>

Congratulations to all those who participated in the 2021 BiodiverCity Challenge organized by NatureLynx. Between June 10-13, Albertans shared over 5,300 biodiversity sightings found in the Edmonton and Calgary regions. Thank you for making this year's BiodiverCity Challenge a success!

Calgary performed exceptionally well for its first year participating in the event. A total of 1984 observations (also referred to as sightings) were shared between iNaturalist and NatureLynx in Calgary. Most people living in Calgary opted to use iNaturalist to share their photos and audio recordings which is likely a result of previous events such as the City Nature Challenge that use iNaturalist. Edmonton had a fantastic showing with 176 participants making 3323 sightings during the four days.

Interesting finds in Calgary included [a pair of fence-hopping urban moose](#), [an exceptional Canadian Swallowtail butterfly](#), [a perched Rufous Hummingbird](#), an [Ant species farming aphids](#), and [a Pileated woodpecker poking out from its nesting cavity](#). These are only a few of the outstanding photos submitted during that week by people like you! Thank you to NatureLynx for spearheading this event and we look forward to next year's event!

The increase in citizen science events and consistent contributions made by people in Calgary has helped to produce the most comprehensive biodiversity maps of the city to date. If you are interested in what flora and fauna lives among us in Calgary, [visit iNaturalist \(all flora and fauna\)](#) and [eBird \(birds\)](#). It is never too late to upload old photos and checklists to these platforms. In fact, historical records are much needed to help advance our understanding of Calgary's urban biodiversity!

View all the [2021 BiodiverCity Challenge NatureLynx Submissions](#) here.

View all the [2021 BiodiverCity Challenge iNaturalist Submissions](#) here.



## Field Trips

**Nature Calgary COVID restrictions on Nature Calgary field trips are being partially relaxed!** The following restrictions remain in place:

- Trips will be limited to a maximum of ten participants (members only).
- Pre-registration is required.
- Wearing face covering (masks) is now optional.

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.

**For the most up-to-date list of field-trips including impromptus and future trips, please visit our website: <https://naturecalgary.com/field-trips/>**

**\*\*\* A complete list of August field trips will be sent out to members at the end of July!**

Day	Date	Time	Destination	Leader
Friday	9-Jul	9:00 AM	Nature Walk - Douglas Fir Trail	John McFaul
Monday	12-Jul	9:00 AM	Plants and Bryophytes - Griffith Woods	Sandra Davis
Friday	16-Jul	9:00 AM	Nature Walk - Weaselhead	John McFaul
Thursday	22-Jul	8:30 AM	Bird Carburn Park	Marje Wing, Joy Ely
Friday	23-Jul	8:00 AM	Bird Lafarge Meadows (south end)	Anne Belton
Wednesday	28-Jul	9:00 AM	Nature Walk - Glenmore Dam Park	Matt Wallace
Thursday	29-Jul	9:00 AM	Nature Walk - St. Patrick's Island Park	Matt Wallace
Friday	30-Jul	8:00 AM	Bird Votier's Flats	Anne Belton
Saturday	31-Jul	9:00 AM	Bird North Glenmore Park	Penny Smith
Wednesday	4-Aug	9:00 AM	Nature Walk - Paskapoo Slopes	Matt Wallace
Saturday	28-Aug	9:00 AM	Bird North Glenmore Park	Penny Smith

### Where do YOU Want to Explore?

Have any idea of a park to explore in Calgary? Maybe you have an interest in learning about citizen science, photography, ecology, or geology? Send any field trip requests or suggestions to the Nature Calgary Field Trips Coordinator, Howard Heffler (fieldtrips@naturecalgary.com or 403-804-2489) for future outings.

## Community News

### Calgary May Species Count Results

Over the weekend of May 29th and 30th 127 participants participated in the Calgary May Species Count for birds. They did so within the count circle with a radius of 80 km from the Centre Street Bridge over the Bow River. This is roughly from Exshaw to Standard and from Olds to Nanton. As reported by Terry Poulton this count has taken place every year since 1976, except for 1978.

For 2021, participants recorded a total of 204 species and 70,760 individual birds. In doing so the participants covered a total of 4417 km driving and 351 km on foot. The compilation and recording of the results was a monumental task conducted by Andrew Hart and Lara Fitz. Lara was able to compare the results to those previous years and came up with some preliminary analysis:

2021 was a record year (highest since 1979) for nine species: Turkey Vulture, Wood Duck, American White Pelican, Black-necked Stilt, Bobolink, American Avocet, Bald Eagle, House Finch, and Hairy Woodpecker. All but the Hairy Woodpecker had counts more than double the 10-year average.

There were a few unusual species reported this year (my definition was a species that has been seen 10 or fewer times over the 40-ish years of MSC): Long-tailed Duck, Cassin's Finch, Turkey Vulture, Virginia Rail, Brewer's Sparrow, Arctic Tern, Pacific Wren. In particular, the Cassin's Finch has only been seen twice before in MSC history.

There were a number of missed regulars this year (my definition was a species seen at least 7 of the last 10 years, but not this year): White-winged Scoter, Long-billed Curlew, Northern Goshawk, Veery (count week), MacGillivray's Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler (count week). No new species were reported this year

Thanks again to all those who participated. - John McFaul (Count Coordinator)

### Birds Canada "The Warblers Podcast"

A new podcast from Birds Canada is now online! The Warblers shares Canadian information, insights and inspiration on the world of birds and bird conservation. The first three episodes are available for listening now and discuss people's role in conservation, Common Loons, and Ferruginous Hawks! Subscribe today on [Spotify](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), or wherever you find your favourite podcasts.



#### 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



### Virtual Volunteers for Whooping Crane Pilot Project Needed

Whooping cranes are one of North America's rarest birds and an iconic symbol of international conservation collaboration. Protection of cranes and their habitat resulted in the population that summers in northern Canada and winters on the Texas Gulf Coast growing from 14 birds in the 1940s to just over 500 individuals in 2021.

The Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and Parks Canada have monitored the breeding population by aerial surveys since 1966, but the population is growing quickly and expanding into new breeding areas so aerial surveys may no longer be the most effective way to monitor breeding cranes. CWS, the Calgary Zoo, the International Crane Foundation, and Parks Canada are working collaboratively to investigate the use of high-resolution satellite imagery to detect nesting cranes as an alternative method to monitor the breeding population. From late May to early June 2021, we'll collect new satellite imagery from across the breeding range in and near Wood Buffalo National Park.

We're looking for volunteers (you!) to help us quickly review over 100,000 small satellite images through an online crowdsourcing platform to identify possible nest locations. Results from crowdsourcing will be reviewed by biologists at CWS and Calgary Zoo before probable nests are confirmed in the field by Parks Canada (following COVID-19 best practices) before cranes leave their nests. Results will be used to identify, manage and conserve new breeding areas not previously identified and to refine methods to monitor and manage this endangered species.

**Get involved:** [Sign-up on Zooniverse and join the project](#) to begin identifying images.

Image: Klaus Nigge/Parks Canada. For more information about Wood Buffalo National Park visit [www.pc.gc.ca/woodbuffalo](http://www.pc.gc.ca/woodbuffalo)



## Community News

### Recovery Strategy for the Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) in Canada Comment Period

Environment and Climate Change Canada is consulting with Canadians about the proposed Recovery Strategy for the Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*). For this strategy to be successful, it is vital that people from a variety of backgrounds and constituencies learn, understand, and contribute, and support to the recovery strategy. A 90-day comment period on the report is now underway to garner support in implementing the strategy across Canada for the benefit of the Bank Swallows. Please take your time reading the plan and submit your comments before the deadline (2021-09-14).

#### About Bank Swallows

"The Bank Swallow is an aerial insectivorous bird that nests in colonies on vertical cliff faces, and banks along waterbodies and human-made habitats. The species predominantly winters in the Southern Cone Grasslands of Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. In Canada, the Bank Swallow population shows severe long-term declines, with slower declines in recent years.

The causes of Bank Swallow population declines are unclear. Multiple factors likely have a cumulative impact on the species. The most likely primary threat to Bank Swallow are the broad-scale ecosystem modifications in the breeding, migration, and wintering areas of the species resulting in less abundant invertebrate prey. The loss of natural nesting sites from erosion control measures and a reduction in prey availability as a result of climate change may create further pressure on the species." - Proposed Recovery Strategy for the Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) in Canada (2021-06-16)

#### Recovery Strategy Document:

- PDF format: [rs\\_bank\\_swallow\\_e\\_proposed.pdf](#)
- HTML format: [bank-swallow-proposed-2021.html](#)

For more information on the Bank Swallow Recovery Strategy and to provide comments, please visit: [https://species-registry.canada.ca/index-en.html#/documents/1586?WT.mc\\_id=SMOBankSwallowFbEn](https://species-registry.canada.ca/index-en.html#/documents/1586?WT.mc_id=SMOBankSwallowFbEn)

#### Related: Bank Swallow News in Calgary (Inglewood Bird Sanctuary)

Construction (originally planned for 2021) surrounding the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary Restoration Project has been deferred until 2022 to allow The Inglewood Bird Sanctuary Reconnection Team to reexamine some aspects of the project. This includes options to complete work around the Bow River with less impact to nesting birds (Bank Swallows included). For More Information about the project and opportunities to ask questions to the Project Team, please visit <https://engage.calgary.ca/ibs>



Image: BASW by Matt Wallace

## Speaker Series (September)

### Looking for the Wild

**Speaker:** Lyn Hancock

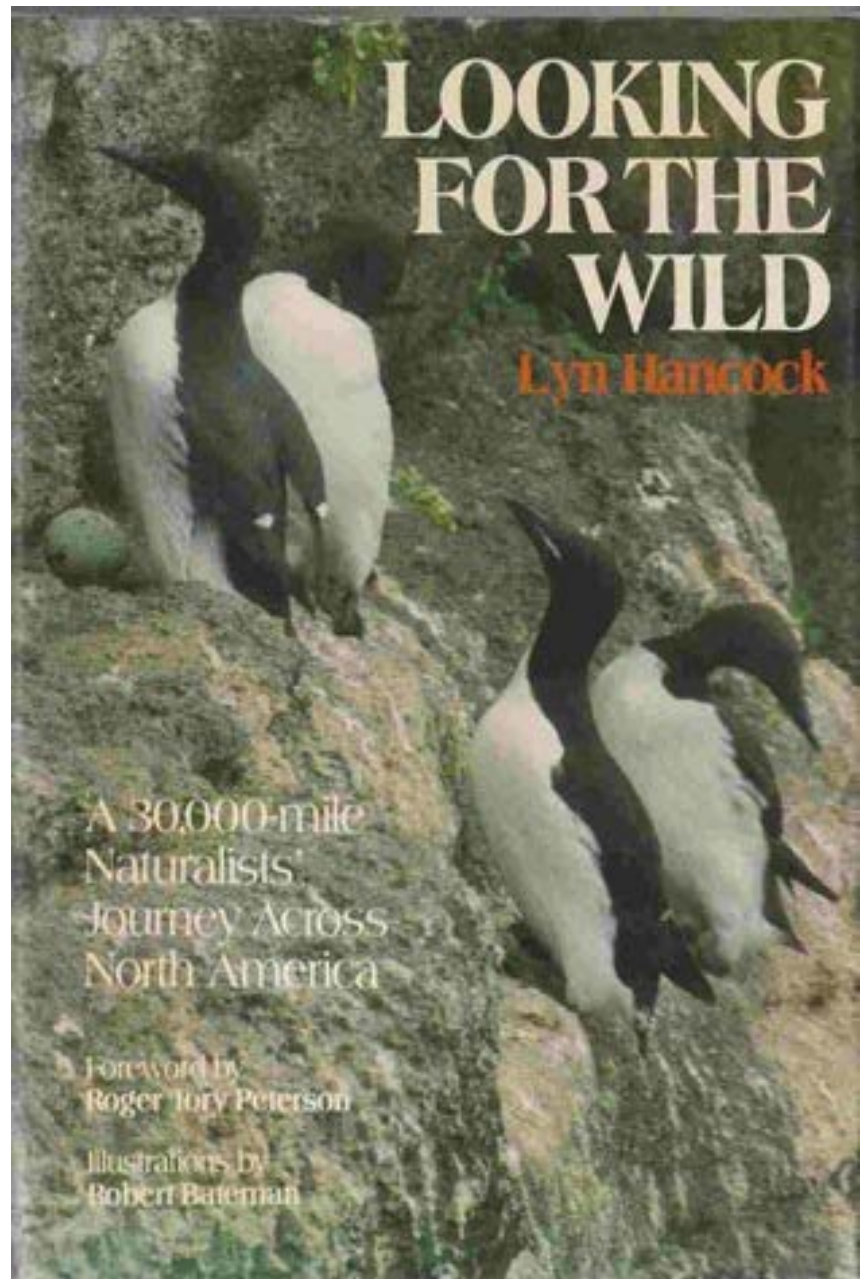
**September 8, 2021 7:30pm**

*Zoom Link will be Sent to Members in August*

To honour Gus Yaki, one of the world's most influential naturalists and a long time member of Nature Calgary, Lyn Hancock, will be presenting at the September 8, 2021 Bird Study Group meeting on Zoom.

Lyn will show photos and read excerpts from her book *LOOKING FOR THE WILD*, a 30,000-mile naturalists' journey in 1983 across North America with Gus and other birders from around the world, including Robert Bateman.

They follow the route of world famous birder and painter, Roger Tory Peterson, as he showed James Fisher, his English friend and fellow naturalist, around North America 30 years earlier.



Lyn's special interest was the exciting climax of the trip on the remote Pribilof Islands in Alaska where she had close encounters with fur seals, murres and puffins, species she had raised as orphans in British Columbia in the 1960s and led to her interest in wildlife.

Lyn is the author of 20 books about her experiences with wildlife including *THERE'S A SEAL IN MY SLEEPING BAG*, *LOVE AFFAIR WITH A COUGAR*, *TABASCO THE SAUCY RACCOON* and *THE RING: MEMORIES OF A METIS GRANDMOTHER*, the pioneer love story of Sam Livingston and Jane Howse, the first settlers in Calgary.