



WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA
MARCH 13-15, 2026

Program Schedule



A Joint Conference

FRIDAY, MARCH 13

ADVANCING CONSERVATION IN AN ERA DEFINED BY ACCELERATING CLIMATE CHANGE, HABITAT LOSS, WILDFIRES, DROUGHT, FLOODING, AND THE GROWING NUMBER OF SPECIES AT RISK.

Wildlife Management in Uncertain Times

1:00 PM -
4:00pm

Workshop - Basic R

Dr. David Walker - ROOM 201, U OF M

The Basic R Workshop is an introductory course designed for beginners with no or little prior programming experience, focusing on the fundamentals of the R programming language and the RStudio integrated development environment. Participants learn about key R data types and structures, including vectors, matrices, lists, and data frames, and how to create and access them. They are also taught how to use built-in R functions, install and access R packages to extend R's capabilities, and even write simple functions to automate analyses.

Workshop - From Science to Song: Merging Music & Wildlife

Emily Thoroski - CHAPEL, U OF M

Come take part in an environmental songwriting workshop where you will learn how music plays a role in conservation! We will discuss the steps to creating a song and finalize the workshop by writing lyrics for a song together around the theme of Wildlife Management in Uncertain Times.

Workshop - Outdoor Field Preparedness

Robert Weaver - OUTDOORS, U OF M

The intent of this Workshop is to expose participants to essential and practical hands-on learning opportunities to assist in becoming field-ready. The course is designed to provide an understanding of important safety measures and to build foundational technical skills for working in a field setting. The course consists of a number of field activities in which participants will take an active role in observing, examining, and assessing various approaches to becoming field ready and safe. Topics will be selected depending on weather conditions but will hopefully include psychology of being outdoors, what's in my pocket, when to hunker down, and fire smarts.

Workshop - Necropsy

Dr. Charlene Berkvens - ASSINIBOINE PARK ZOO

Dr. Berkvens will demonstrate standard necropsy procedures for birds and mammals. Participants will then work in groups to conduct a guided necropsy. Please dress appropriately and be prepared to assist.

Workshop - Journey to Churchill

Dr. Stephen Petersen & Bill Watkins - ASSINIBOINE PARK ZOO

Join your hosts at Assiniboine Park Conservancy, Dr Stephen Petersen and former Manitoba government zoologist Bill Watkins on a tour of the Leatherdale International Polar Bear Conservation Centre at Assiniboine Park Zoo in Winnipeg!

7:00 PM

EVENING WELCOME MIXER

IQ's Café & Billiards, UMSU Centre, U of M

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

ADVANCING CONSERVATION IN AN ERA DEFINED BY ACCELERATING CLIMATE CHANGE, HABITAT LOSS, WILDFIRES, DROUGHT, FLOODING, AND THE GROWING NUMBER OF SPECIES AT RISK.

Wildlife Management in Uncertain Times

8:30 AM

Conference Opening - Schultz Theatre
Kelly Leavesley, Alex Beatty

8:45 AM

Welcoming prayer and remarks
Karen Courchene - Grandmother-In-Residence,
Indigenous Student Centre

9:00 AM

Welcome from the Dean
Mark Hanson, Faculty of Environment

9:10 AM

Keynote Address - moderator Rick Baydack
Fidel Hernandez - The Wildlife Society
Pauline Gerrard - International Institute for Sustainable
Development
Taylor Galvin - Environmental Conservation Lab,
University of Manitoba
Savanna Vagianos - Asper School of Business

10:50 AM

COFFEE BREAK

11:05 AM

POSTER SESSION

Common Room

12:00 PM

LUNCH & CSTWS AGM

The CSTWS AGM will be held in the Common Room

1:30 PM

Concurrent Presentations

Ungulates - Schultz Theatre
**Conservation planning, public involvement,
ecological literacy, and historical ecology** - Rm 118
see page 3 for detailed list of presentations

2:45 PM

COFFEE BREAK

3:00 PM

TWS Certification Program Panel - Schultz
Moderator - Dan Chranowski
Panelists - Jonathan Wiens, Alan Arsenault, Merlin
Shoemith, Rick Baydack

5:00 PM

EVENING BANQUET

Canad Inns, Pembina

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

ADVANCING CONSERVATION IN AN ERA DEFINED BY ACCELERATING CLIMATE CHANGE, HABITAT LOSS, WILDFIRES, DROUGHT, FLOODING, AND THE GROWING NUMBER OF SPECIES AT RISK.

Wildlife Management in Uncertain Times

CONCURRENT PRESENTATIONS

1:30pm - 2:45pm

SCHULTZ THEATRE

UNGULATES

Disease monitoring in white-tailed deer in Nova Scotia -
Jason Airst

Risky business: relating probability of direct contact to
risk of chronic wasting disease - Evelyn Merrill

Duck Mountain cow elk habitat use with reference to
specific landscape features, calving and breeding
seasons - Dan Chranowski

Invasive Wild Pigs in Canada: Manitoba, Canada, and
Global Perspectives - Ryan Brook

Intraspecific Competition or Wolf Selection? What
Explains Hair Cortisol Concentration in Moose - Daniel
Dupont

ROOM 118

CONSERVATION PLANNING, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, ECOLOGICAL LITERACY, AND HISTORICAL ECOLOGY

Fur trade data for historical ecology research: 19th
century exports of grizzly bear hides from the Canadian
prairie provinces - Jeff Higdon

Badgers in Manitoba: Planning for a Familiar Species We
Barely Know - Melanie Dubois

Centring Community in Conservation: Engagement to
Advance Species at Risk Recovery in Southwest
Manitoba - Rebekah Neufeld

Expanding Ecological Literacy in Nature-based Projects
by Educating Wildlife Academics and Professionals in
Environmental Sustainability Frameworks - William
Dowie

On a Wing and a Prayer: Uncertainty and the Recovery
of Peregrine Falcons in North America - Tracy
Maconachie

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS - SATURDAY & SUNDAY

Wildlife Management in Uncertain Times



FIDEL HERNANDEZ - Changing Landscapes: Where will our Future Wildlife Biologists Come From?

Approximately 80% of the human population lives in urban areas, and a majority of children today have weak to no ties with the natural world. In addition, the increase in Artificial Intelligence (AI)-altered nature scenes is changing human perception of their local surroundings. These shifts in demography and developments in technology pose unique challenges to the wildlife profession. Here, I discuss how The Wildlife Society can meet this new, challenging landscape and help recruit our future wildlife biologists.



PAULINE GERRARD - How Scientific Knowledge Can and Should Guide Policy-Making in These Times of Uncertainty

In an era of rapid environmental change, fragmented media, and growing public uncertainty, the need for credible science to guide policy has never been greater. Drawing on more than five decades of whole-ecosystem freshwater research at the IISD Experimental Lakes Area, this talk highlights how long-term, rigorous science has informed environmental regulation, international agreements, and public decision-making, emphasizing that legitimacy is a key driver of policy impact and that research designed to consider and incorporate multiple points of view is more strongly connected to meaningful policy change. Set against today's challenges—including misinformation and misconceptions about the scientific process—the presentation offers a pragmatic and hopeful perspective on how scientists, policymakers, and communities can work together to ensure sound science continues to shape decisions that protect our environmental systems and the people who depend on them.



TAYLOR GALVIN - Use of Indigenous Knowledge Systems to Guide Wildlife Conservation

This keynote explores Indigenous-led conservation as a knowledge system where wildlife, people, water, and land exist within an inseparable web of reciprocity. By challenging persistent misconceptions that frame Indigenous conservation as merely cultural rather than scientific, it highlights the epistemological integrity and precision of Indigenous science. Through reflection on the impacts of systemic racism within Manitoba's conservation landscape, this talk calls for a transformation in how conservation institutions engage with Indigenous governance and worldviews that have always sustained ecological balance.



SAVANNA VAGIANOS - Using the Flourishing Systems Approach (FSA) to Manage the Environment in Times of Uncertainty

In an era of accelerating ecological change, biodiversity loss, and growing uncertainty, traditional approaches to business are becoming increasingly insufficient. This presentation introduces the Flourishing Systems Approach (FSA) as an integrative framework for organizational management that actively enhances ecological, social, and economic well-being over the long term. Rather than viewing business as inherently extractive or antagonistic to conservation goals, the FSA reframes business as a powerful lever for positive, regenerative change. This presentation offers practical guidance on how core business functions can be aligned with sustainability outcomes that support thriving ecosystems and communities.



JIM RAMAKKA - Uncertainty, Change, and Wildlife Management in Today's World

Uncertainty has become a defining feature of wildlife conservation and management worldwide. This presentation will explore the diverse factors driving that uncertainty and highlight how one of the most biodiverse nations on Earth successfully navigated multiple challenges to develop effective wildlife conservation and management programs.

SATURDAY BANQUET

Wildlife Management in Uncertain Times

5:00 PM

ARRIVE AT CANAD INNS!
Mix & mingle

6:00 PM

DINNER

6:30 PM

**TWSMC & CSTWS
AWARDS**



7:15 PM

LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCE!
Musicians Emily Thoroski & Merlin Shoemith will treat us to a special performance

8:00 PM

FEATURED SPEAKER
Bill Watkins

raffle &
auction...
bring your
wallet!

8:30 PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF WINNERS

Mix, mingle & dance until midnight



THE ROAD EAST: WILL WESTERN COUGARS REPOPULATE MANITOBA?

Establishment of a population of cougars in the Cypress Hills in the late 1990s early 2000s was a seminal event in the eastward expansion of the species in Canada following more than a century of decline due to human persecution and habitat loss. While robust hunting seasons to the south of Manitoba may impact the likelihood of North Dakota providing a source population for range expansion northwards, several lines of evidence including habitat analysis, and recent events in Manitoba, suggest that eastward expansion in Canada may be inevitable.

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

ADVANCING CONSERVATION IN AN ERA DEFINED BY ACCELERATING CLIMATE CHANGE, HABITAT LOSS, WILDFIRES, DROUGHT, FLOODING, AND THE GROWING NUMBER OF SPECIES AT RISK.

Wildlife Management in Uncertain Times

8:30 AM

Keynote Speaker - Jim Ramakka - Schultz Theatre
Uncertainty, Change, and Wildlife Management in Today's World
moderated by Merlin Shoemith

9:00 AM

Panel: Aspirations of Recent Grads
Moderator - Merlin Shoemith
Panelists - Emily Thoroski, Cailin Hesketh-Jost, Cooper Polet, Evan Musgrove

9:45 AM

BREAK

10:00 AM

POSTER SESSION

Common Room

10:30 AM

Concurrent Presentations
Arctic & Sub-arctic Mammals - Schultz Theatre
Bats and Birds - Rm 118
see page 7 for detailed list of presentations

12:00 PM

LUNCH & TWSMC AGM

The TWSMC AGM will be held in the Common Rm

1:00 PM

Concurrent Presentations
Prairie Community Ecology - Schultz Theatre
Community Ecology & Food Web Dynamics- Rm 118
see page 8 for detailed list of presentations

2:30 PM

BREAK

2:45 PM

Best Student Poster & Student Presentation Award - Schultz Theatre

3:00 PM

Conference Closing from TWSMC & CSTWS
Kelly Leavesley, Alex Beatty

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

ADVANCING CONSERVATION IN AN ERA DEFINED BY ACCELERATING CLIMATE CHANGE, HABITAT LOSS, WILDFIRES, DROUGHT, FLOODING, AND THE GROWING NUMBER OF SPECIES AT RISK.

Wildlife Management in Uncertain Times

CONCURRENT PRESENTATIONS

10:30pm - 12:00pm

SCHULTZ THEATRE

BATS & BIRDS

The Huddle Club: Big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*) hibernate in a wide range of humidities using huddling behaviour or phenotypic flexibility in evaporative water loss- *Kristina Muise*

Sunrise Sabotage: Does Artificial Light at Night Advance Dawn Chorus in Neotropical Birds? - *Tamara Sturch*

Distance vs. Productivity: Determining the effects of migration distance on clutch size and fledge success in long-distance migratory songbirds- *Vinuri Mendis*

The Influence of Daylength on Daily, Migratory Flight Strategies in a Diurnal Songbird - *Yantong Tan*

Mustelid Predation of *Myotis lucifugus* during Hibernation and Emergence - *Malcolm Reimer*

PIT Tags versus Bands: Tag Loss and Re-Sighting Errors in Little Brown Bats - *Taylor Cangemi*

ROOM 118

ARCTIC & SUB-ARCTIC MAMMALS

Fecal glucocorticoid metabolites stabilize following the transition of free-ranging orphaned wild polar bear cubs into human care - *C-Jae Breiter*

Tailored monitoring strategies for beluga conservation in a rapidly changing Arctic - *Kasey Ryan*

Predators and Scavengers: Polar Bears as Marine Carrion Providers - *Holly Gamblin*

Insights on red and Arctic fox demographic patterns in a low Arctic transition zone - *Audrey Moizan*

Year-round Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) reveals temporal patterns and migration timing in Arctic marine mammals in Foxe Basin. - *Marine Cailleau*

Spying on whales: Group size and composition of narwhals in a changing Arctic - *Kirsten Desorcy*

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

ADVANCING CONSERVATION IN AN ERA DEFINED BY ACCELERATING CLIMATE CHANGE, HABITAT LOSS, WILDFIRES, DROUGHT, FLOODING, AND THE GROWING NUMBER OF SPECIES AT RISK.

Wildlife Management in Uncertain Times

CONCURRENT PRESENTATIONS

1:00pm - 2:30pm

SCHULTZ THEATRE

PRAIRIE COMMUNITY ECOLOGY

Using distance sampling to monitor success of an ex-situ endangered butterfly conservation program - [Laura Burns](#)

Unbe-leaf-able Connections: Genetic Structure and Fungal Partnerships of the Endangered Western Prairie Fringed Orchid in Manitoba - [Brena Dea](#)

Beyond species counts: Updating an evolutionary baseline for Prairie pollinator conservation in Manitoba grasslands- [Thilina Hettiarachchi](#)

Effects of agricultural perennialization on wild bee diversity and abundance in Manitoba and Saskatchewan - [Emmelyn Cullen](#)

Elimination and Damage Mitigation for Richardson's Ground Squirrels in Winnipeg - [Brittany Duthie](#)

Northern Leopard Frogs in Manitoba - [Stephen Petersen](#)

ROOM 118

COMMUNITY ECOLOGY & FOOD WEB DYNAMICS

Investigating population genomic structure of Canada lynx across different phases of a snowshoe hare cycle - [William Harrower](#)

Trophic interactions, food web properties, and community composition around the Belcher Islands, Nunavut - [Natalie Vachon](#)

Influence of North American red squirrel caches on wildlife foraging activity at the northern treeline - [Aden Tobin](#)

Assessing seasonal variation in muscle metabolomes in relation to nutrient availability in Arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus*), ringed seals (*Pusa hispida*) and Iceland scallops (*Chlamys islandica*) - [Tyson Scott](#)

SYMPOSIUM SPONSORSHIP

Wildlife Management in Uncertain Times

Platinum Level Sponsorship

University of Manitoba

Clayton H. Riddell Faculty of Environment, Earth, and
Resources

Faculty of Science

Department of Biological Sciences

St John's College



Silver Level Sponsorship

Canadian Parks And Wilderness Society Manitoba
Chapter

Manitoba Hydro



SYMPOSIUM SPONSORSHIP

Wildlife Management in Uncertain Times

Bronze Level Sponsorship

Delta Waterfowl Manitoba
Higdon Wildlife Consulting

Joro Consultants

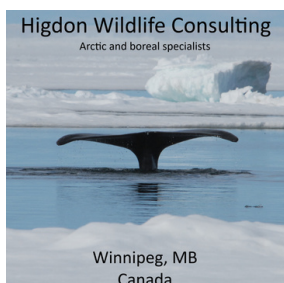
Manitoba Habitat Conservancy

Manitoba Peregrine Falcon Recovery
Project

Nature Conservancy Canada Manitoba

University College of the North

Wildlife Resource Consulting Services

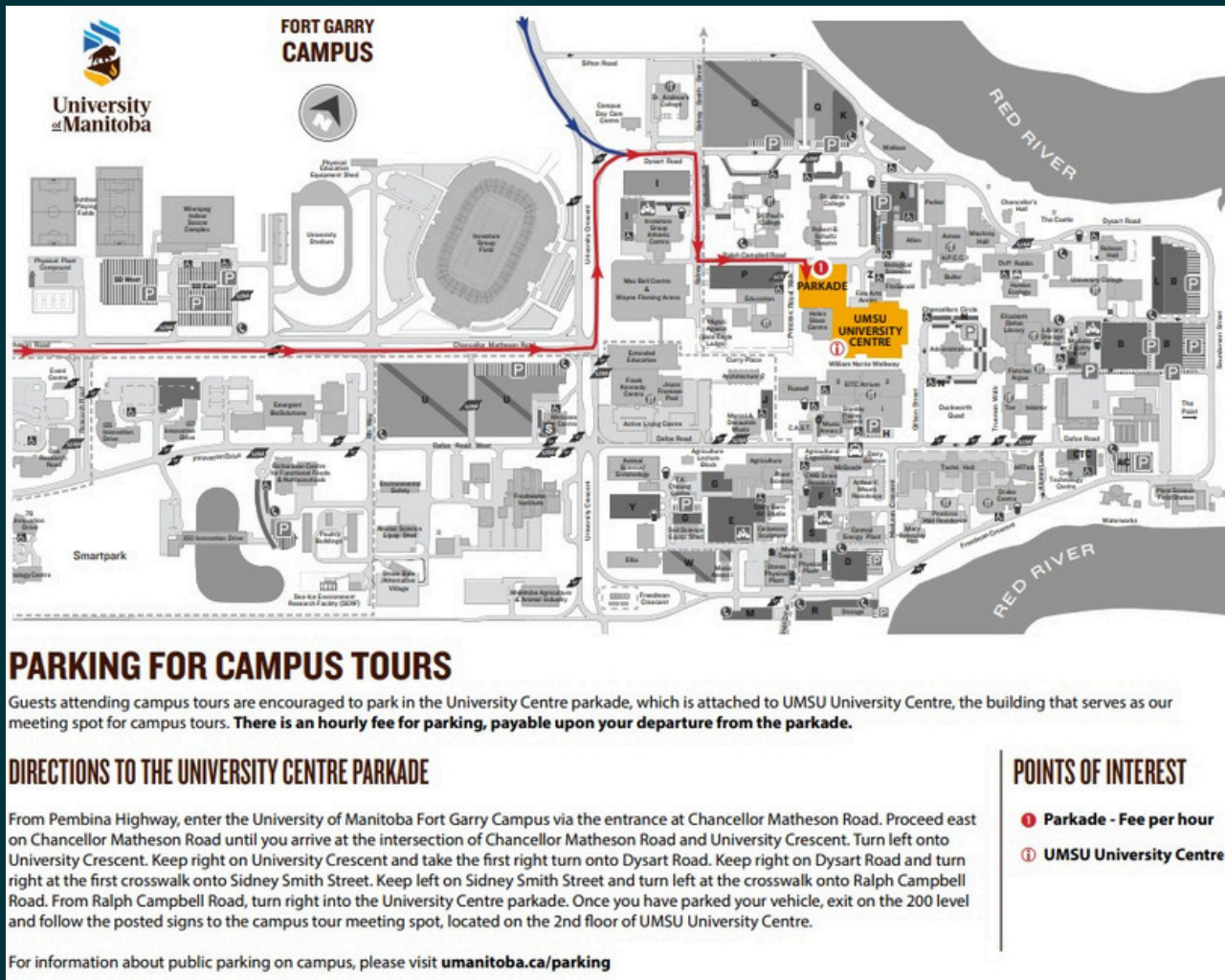


PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

The event will take place at the Robert Schultz Lecture Theatre, at 172 St. John's College, conveniently located just across the road to the north of the Parkade.

For those unfamiliar with the Fort Garry Campus at U of M, below is a map that shows the building locations you'll need to know for the conference:

Friday welcome event at IQ's is at UMSU University Centre



From Canad Inns:

-walk to Southbound Pembina at Adamar

-take the F8 bus

-disembark at Eastbound Dafoe U of M Station

-walk across the Quad to Gilson St/Chancellor's Circle and cross over to the USMU University Centre

The University of Manitoba campuses and research spaces are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Anisininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Dene and Inuit, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis.

UM recognizes that the Treaties signed on these lands are a lifelong, enduring relationship, and we are dedicated to upholding their spirit and intent. We acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and the present. With this understanding, we commit to supporting Indigenous excellence through active Reconciliation, meaningful change, and the creation of an environment where everyone can thrive. Our collaboration with Indigenous communities is grounded in respect and reciprocity and this guides how we move forward as an institution.