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## Campus Bird Checklist created by U of L master's student an open invitation to enjoy birding on campus spaces

With one of the most unique settings in Canadian post-secondary, the University of Lethbridge is home to an abundance of wildlife, not the least of which is an extremely robust population of birds. How many varieties and species of birds pass through campus aren't known entirely but a new project by master's student Samantha Krause, available to the public, provides bird lovers the opportunity to see the scope of just what's out there.

Krause, at the behest of fellow birder Dr. Jennifer Mather (Department of Psychology) and with support from Agility and the Campus Ecology Project, has created a Campus Bird Checklist. From geese, swans and ducks to flycatchers and wood warblers, Krause has documented 135 different birds that, at various times, have made their way through campus.

"I'm not surprised actually, because in the Lethbridge area as a whole, over 300 bird species have been seen, so it is possible another 100-plus species have flown over campus at some point, they just haven't been seen or logged yet," says Krause.

She utilizes the E-Bird software developed by the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology as a means to document her sightings as well as draw on the huge database populated by fellow birders.

"It's an app that is used all over the world," she says. "It allows you to log the species you've seen and then includes metadata such as where you are, the time of year, how many birds you're seeing and so on. Ornithologists can't possibly do this sort of monitoring on such a vast scale — there aren't anywhere near enough of them. So, the birders who use this app play a key role in building and maintaining an online database that both they and scientists can use."



### Campus Bird Checklist



Western Meadowlark

Ken Orich

**WARNING!** We are in rattlesnake country.  
Use caution when exploring campus.

Krause came to the U of L after completing an undergraduate degree in biology at the University of Northern British Columbia. She's completing her master's in psychology under the guidance of Dr. David Logue, studying the Adelaide's Warbler (*Setophaga adelaidae*) species in Puerto Rico and trying to figure out why mated males and females sing duets with each other. The Campus Bird Checklist came as an idea from Mather while they were out birding one day.

"There are quite a few good birders who consistently go to campus and have been building a database of birds they'd seen. I went online, downloaded the database and used that as my starting point for what birds had been recently logged on campus and what time of year they were logged there," she says.

She credits local birders Ken Orich, Teresa Dolman and David Scott as experts who reviewed her checklist and added a few historic sightings, including the Sprague's pipit, before it went public.

Krause describes the Lethbridge area as a migration corridor for birds as they move from the boreal forest regions down to southern climates and back again, hence the proliferation of multiple species.

"There are just tons that breed in the boreal forest and they use the prairies as a migration path, so there are way more birds out there than people realize," she says.

Of the new species she's logged this year, she's most excited about spotting a Lazuli Bunting.

Krause is eager to grow the birding culture in the city and with the Campus Bird Checklist, it's a way to get more people on campus and excited about the natural setting that invites these varied species.

"We're looking at possibly putting a field guide together as well. This checklist is more for birders who know what they are looking for and can record their findings but with a field guide, we'd have pictures of birds that people could look at and then try and find throughout campus," she says. "I'm already starting to talk to my local birding gurus about that."

The Campus Bird Checklist is available [here](#).

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/campus-bird-checklist-open-invitation-enjoy-birding-campus-spaces#.YWB-6kbMKLo>

Contact:

Trevor Kenney, News & Information Manager

403-360-7639 (cell)

[trevor.kenney@uleth.ca](mailto:trevor.kenney@uleth.ca)

@uLethbridge