



## Wood Buffalo Wildlife Research Institute Newsletter

March 31, 2025

### Membership Renewal

It is Membership renewal time! Membership fees for the 2025 season are now due.

We wish to extend a huge thank you to our members from our 2024 inaugural season. Your support has been essential in getting the WBWRI off the ground, and we sincerely hope that you will participate again in our 2025 season.

This year we are introducing a new platform for membership signup and event coordination. The membership form is the same but is now online! We are using the Better Impact volunteer management platform to help us improve how we coordinate with you, and in doing so, we hope to create the best experience possible for our members. The links to become a member and to access the Better Impact platform will eventually be placed on our website. For now, please use the links below.

To review the Better Impact data privacy policy, please see the link on the sign up page, also here: [Better Impact Volunteer Management Software Privacy Policy - Canada](#).

To create an account and sign-up for your 2025 WBWRI membership, use this one time link: [Click here to sign up!](#) You will only have to do this the one time! In the event of future updates to policies, we will reach out to existing members to provide guidance and support.

Once you have created your account and submitted your membership application, please use the following link to go directly to the WBWRI site login to check for events and volunteer opportunities: [Go to volunteer login](#)

If you have any difficulties at all, please reach out to Cheryll, WBWRI Director, for support at: [cgodwinabel@wbwri.com](mailto:cgodwinabel@wbwri.com). The Better Impact portal also has online support.

Please note that 2025 members who have not renewed prior to, or at, the AGM (to be scheduled in late June) will be removed from our email communication list.

Thank you again for your participation this past year, and we hope to continue to see you in 2025!!

### Presentations

We would like to invite everyone to our next online presentation Tuesday April 29, where we will talk about bird banding. We currently have two bird banding programs, the first is the tree swallow nest box monitoring and nestling banding that will begin about late May and continue through June. We will also provide some introductory information on our Taiganova fall migration banding program.

We will post the sign-up for the bird banding presentation on our new membership portal.

### Website

We have made great strides recently behind the scenes preparing our website, and would like to thank the gracious support of one of our members who has been helping with the website development. We will continue to keep you updated as we get closer to going live.

We are waiting on the final WBWRI logo design from the student graphic designers, but will be able to incorporate the updated logo onto our website after we go live if the logo is not quite ready for release.

### **Grants and WBWRI Funding**

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support from Hammerstone Infrastructure Materials Ltd., who has provided funding for our Institute for a second year. We will continue to identify other funding opportunities as they arise in order to support the following programs.

### **Motus**

We have purchased our first Motus receiver and the antennas, and have identified the deployment location north of Fort McMurray near the oil sands mines. We are in discussions with the Wood Buffalo Environmental Association (WBEA) who have offered a secure location that is co-located with one of their air quality monitoring stations. Deployment is planned for late May, and once the system is operational we will provide the link and information for members to access and discover if we are tracking any birds or animals through our region.

### **Tree Swallow Nest Box Monitoring**

The tree swallows normally return to Fort McMurray about mid-May to begin constructing their nests in our boxes. The nest boxes will need to be cleaned out of the old nest materials prior to their arrival, and we will reach out to our volunteers who might be interested in helping and spending some time outdoors and seeing the nest box trails. Once the nestlings begin to hatch in June, we will spend some time monitoring their growth so we can band them at the appropriate age. Banding tree swallow nestlings is an excellent opportunity for our volunteers to be introduced to bird banding.

### **NABat**

We have identified four locations near Fort McMurray for the deployment of ARU equipment to monitor bats as part of our involvement with the NABat Northwest Bat Hub. Timing of ARU deployment will likely be towards the end of June or early July for 8-days/7-nights to detect foraging adult bats before their pups fledge later in July. Nighttime driving transects are also to be completed during the period of equipment deployment. Please stay tuned for more information, as we will be looking for volunteer assistance on this program as well.

Once we have bat data in hand, we would plan to hold a training session for those volunteers interested in learning how to identify the electronic bat calls to species.

### **Taiganova Fall Migration Monitoring**

More information on our fall migration bird banding program will be provided later in the summer.

We are looking forward to our first full field season in 2025, and hope you are excited to join us!

Thank you,

Chris Godwin  
Director, WBWRI