

A Short Account of the Entomological Society of Saskatchewan

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(What follows is abstracted from the presentation 'Fifty Years of SUCCESS: Stories Unearthed from the Collected Correspondence of the Entomological Society of Saskatchewan', given by the author at the special meeting held May 9, 2003, to celebrate the Society's 50th Anniversary.)

Foundation and early activity

After several small group meetings, the formal organization meeting was held in Saskatoon on 31 May, 1952, with 14 persons present. Lloyd Putnam was elected the first President, with C.E. Brown and M.N. MacLeod serving as Vice-president and Secretary-Treasurer, respectively. The first full business meeting (AGM) was in November, 1952, with 32 members present, and dealt with the aims of the Society, ways of maintaining members' interest, and recruitment of new members. In March 1953, the Society held its first scientific session, at Regina College, with eight papers presented (and lunch costing 75 cents!).

After the initial excitement, interest in the Society waned so that there were no meetings in 1956. Indeed, the belated AGM held in February 1957 was devoted to a discussion of the Society's future and whether its existence was justified. This seemed to be a wake-up call and since then the Society has gone from strength to strength. Indeed, at the 5th AGM (December 1957), the Society agreed to invite the national society (the Entomological Society of Canada) to hold its 1960 meeting in Saskatoon.

In 1965 it was agreed that the Society should have an insignia. Designed by Professor Jacob G. Rempel (Department of Biology, University of Saskatchewan) and approved in 1967, the insignia shows the two-striped grasshopper (*Melanoplus bivittatus*), an important agricultural pest in Saskatchewan.

Membership

Membership in the ESS is open to anyone with an interest in insects, either professionally or as an amateur. It includes university academics, government scientists, technical staff, graduate students, and a few amateurs (mainly collectors). Membership numbers have ranged from fewer than 20 to a maximum of 97 (in 1987), but are generally in the 40-50 range.

Activities

The Society's overarching objective is to encourage interest in insects. This is achieved in five principal ways: 1. Provision of a forum for dissemination of entomological knowledge; 2. Promotion of research in entomology and insect conservation; 3. Support for students of entomology; 4. Stimulation of public awareness of the significance of entomology; and 5. Service as a local agent in the conduct of the affairs of other societies with similar interests. These are manifest through the following activities.

a) Scientific Sessions

At the Society's meetings, members and guests present oral and poster communications.

As well, the Society has participated in joint meetings with the Entomological Societies of Alberta (1967, 1978, 1980, 1994) and Manitoba (1985), and has hosted the Annual meeting of the Entomological Society of Canada on seven occasions (1960, 1968, 1975, 1983, 1992, 1999, 2007).

b) Research Promotion and Insect Conservation

The Society has supported various projects aimed at improving knowledge of the Saskatchewan insect fauna. For example the Society undertook a baseline survey the insects of the Grasslands National Park prior to its official opening. Also, the Society has made field trips to Elbow (1957), Big Muddy Badlands (1996), and Waskesiu (1998).

c) Awards

The Society presented its first student award in 1961. This award was renamed the Arthur R. Brooks Memorial Prize in 1963 in recognition of this individual's efforts to encourage student interest in entomology. Since 1986, the Society has also presented awards for the best student presentations (oral and poster) at its meetings.

Currently (May 2008), the Society is developing the terms of reference for a Travel Award, open to all its members, to support travel to conferences, field sites, etc.

d) Student and Amateur Encouragement

The encouragement of interest in insects among students and the general public has been a high priority since the Society's origin. Frequent talks to school children, insect displays in schools and malls, participation in Gardenscape, Bio Scan, Bug Club, Ecology Camp and Hort Week, and media presentations are some examples of how interest in insects is encouraged. As well, in 1984 the Society purchased a microscope for the use of the Society's amateur members, setting an example to other regional societies for this form of stimulating interest.