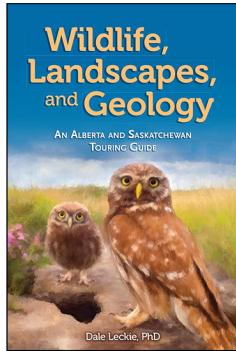


## OTHER

**Wildlife, Landscapes, and Geology: an Alberta and Saskatchewan Touring Guide**

By Dale Leckie. 2024. Broken Poplars Publishing. 216 pages, 29.95 CAD, Paper.

This book is a lovely field guide for travellers interested in the wildlife of southern and central Alberta and Saskatchewan. The book explores the landscapes and underlying geology of the region through the lens of nearly 30 species, some common and iconic, and others rare and obscure. The introduction describes the ecozones of the region and provides maps to five suggested driving routes. Following this there are sections devoted to mountains, post-glacial landscapes, grasslands, and river valleys; within each section several species are profiled. The book is filled with beautiful photography and stunning artwork. The author has partnered with two accomplished artists, Dean Francis and Sergio Gaytán, to accompany each species description with artwork highlighting either that species or an aspect of that species' landscape.



The author, Dale Leckie, is a geologist with extensive knowledge of the geology of western Canada. He has previously published two popular field guides to the geology of Alberta and the Rocky Mountain parks. In this book he expands on these themes by linking each species to their physical habitat. For each species described, the author includes aspects of ecology, the landscapes inhabited, and specific sites where the species can be viewed. Central to each of these descriptions is the geological 'why'—the features of the landscape that drive each species' presence at a particular place and time of year.

The unique focus on geology is the chief value of

this book. I'm familiar with many of the species and places highlighted but found myself eagerly turning the pages to learn more. On the practical side, there are many valuable tips for those planning a road trip. These include suggestions on accessible places to visit, the best times of year to look for a particular species, and how to search for the species when on-site. The suggestions on how to spot some of the more cryptic and obscure species, such as Mountain Plover and Greater Short-horned Lizard, are particularly valuable.

While I enjoyed the book and highly recommend it, there are some flaws. Some are minor, such as poor page layouts that leave large blank areas or figures with incomplete legends or missing data sources. For me the largest negative was that, while the conservation status of each species is mentioned, the reasons underlying that conservation status are not discussed. This is a missed opportunity to highlight conservation challenges. More importantly, in a book facilitating the viewing of rare and threatened species, it is important to highlight that for some of these species human activity is a significant threat. Any time we encourage people to seek out potentially vulnerable species, it is critical that we educate readers on how to avoid unintentional harm. A few lines outlining the threats and suggestions on sensitive observation would have been welcome.

Overall, this is an excellent book that I would highly recommend to any naturalist interested in the fauna and landscapes of southern and central Alberta and Saskatchewan.

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