

Giving a Hoot

The Burrowing Owl Interpretive Centre, located in Moose Jaw, is dedicated to the conservation of the endangered burrowing owl and its vanishing prairie habitat.

With population decreases up to 20% annually, burrowing owls need help to survive. Multiple factors including low birth rates, high mortality and decreasing habitat are contributing to the population decline.



*Georgie, an ambassador owl, in her outdoor aviary at the Interpretive Centre
(Photography by: Jerry Anderson)*

SaskEnergy has been supporting the Burrowing Owl Interpretive Centre's education programming since 2004. This includes the "Owls on Tour" school tour program and guided tours at the interpretive centre. Collectively, this presentation reaches 3,000-5,000 students annually with the school program.

*Wild juvenile burrowing owls at play
(Photography by: Jerry Anderson)*



The Owls on Tour program brings owls and experts into classrooms across the province. The children meet an owl, learn about its native habitat, and why burrowing owls are endangered, and discover what conservation and protection means. The programming is intended to increase public awareness of the problems faced by burrowing owls and other endangered species, and how residents are able to help. The hope is that through its multiple programs the number of burrowing owls, especially the fledgelings, will return to healthy levels.



School visitors play with captivity born fledgling burrowing owls which are being imprinted for educational programming. Notice the unique colouring on each chick.

In addition to educational programming, the Interpretive Centre also cares for orphaned and injured owls and breeds owls to help increase their population.

Annual censuses track and report the population, its fluctuations, and the impact of habitat restoration efforts. Many rural people in Saskatchewan are aware of owls nesting on their property and report them to a central registry to help track provincial numbers as accurately as possible.

Organizations whose operations impact the natural habitat of burrowing owls try to limit the negative impact their operations have on the Burrowing Owl. For example, if SaskEnergy/TransGas employees encounter an owl burrow while laying pipe, all work stops and the pipe's path is changed to protect the endangered owl's breeding ground.

