

## Taking Flight at Last Mountain

Nature Saskatchewan's Last Mountain Bird Observatory, near Govan in central Saskatchewan, is a very important conservation effort in Saskatchewan; it is the province's only migratory bird monitoring program, and one of few in North America.

In line with a major flyway for migratory water birds, Saskatchewan's prairie mudflats and lakes are a desirable stopover. The popularity of the area is demonstrated by the volume and varieties of birds which stop there.

On average 3,400 songbirds, representing 76 species, are netted and banded so their migration patterns may be monitored in North and South America. Monitoring migration helps scientists in the ongoing discovery of how and why birds migrate. Migration monitoring also provides insight into population trends and longevity; and the health of the eco-system.

In addition to banding, all netted songbirds are recorded; the Bird Observatory is one of few stations in North America which feeds recorded information into an international (Western hemisphere) songbird database.



*Girl Guides and Scouts participate in Nature Saskatchewan's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations when this new interpretive sign was erected in site.*

SaskEnergy has been involved with the Last Mountain Bird Observatory since 1999, supporting their songbird banding and tracking efforts. SaskEnergy's annual sponsorship of the Last Mountain Bird Observatory also supports education programs for school and youth groups who learn about the research and the various species recorded on site. Visiting youth also participate in retrieving birds from the nets, weighing and banding them before releasing them into the wild.

