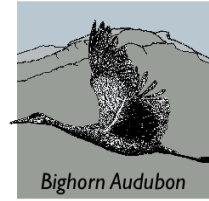


Bighorn Audubon Society Annual Report to the Membership May, 2021



Dear Members and Friends of the Bighorn Audubon Society,

As Bighorn Audubon Society's fiscal year ends, our gratitude extends to many but mostly to you, Bighorn Audubon Society Members. Your continued support, and that of the community, gives us the ability to fulfill our mission for future generations.

Our organization works diligently for the advocacy and protection of birds and habitats for the benefit of our communities and the region, offering educational opportunities to our members and the public, and participating in citizen science. As a local Audubon chapter, we continue to work with our regional and national organizations, Audubon Rockies and the National Audubon Society.

Recognition also goes to our Important Bird Area (IBA) partners. Relationships with The Brinton, Ucross, Falxa, the Kerns and Amsden Wildlife Habitat Management Areas, the growing Little Goose IBA, and other IBA partners have created community cooperation and have added a critical layer of protection for birds and their habitats. Through the leadership of Dr. Jackie Canterbury, along with the Bighorn Audubon Board of Directors, and Alison Holloran, Executive Director of Audubon Rockies, these IBAs have become an important aspect of the Audubon mission. Jackie has worked to bring our community of Big Horn together for a common purpose—a purpose that emphasizes the importance of birds in our landscape. According to Alison Holloran, "The Little Goose Creek IBA has the largest number of individual landowners within the designation boundaries, creating a shared community network and a vision to support our local bird populations".

We are encouraged by our developing relationships with the Bighorn National Forest (BHNF). However, in June 2020, the BHNF produced a notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to disclose the effects of the control of noxious, invasive, and select native plants through aerial herbicide spraying. The agency concluded, "There are select native plant species, such as sagebrush and larkspur, in need of management to meet desired condition through the use of herbicides and the other actions." Bighorn Audubon comments focused on the fact that larkspur is one of our native plants important for hummingbirds, and that the sagebrush ecosystem is critical for birds and other wildlife, including the Greater Sage-Grouse, which are sagebrush obligates. In an effort to stop the spraying of toxic chemicals into our environment, and to protect birds, we initiated a collaborative process and provided comments to the agency. Joint comments were provided to the BHNF by: Audubon Rockies, Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics (FSEEE), Council for the Bighorn Range, and Bighorn Audubon. There will be more to this effort in the coming months, and we hope all members will become engaged to stop this BHNF project.

We are especially excited to announce that Bighorn Audubon has acquired a wetland property at the Powder Horn. We were able to purchase this biologically significant land through a generous donation as well as the kindness and outpouring of support from many others throughout the process. Powered by everyone's love for the area and enthusiastic spirit for conservation, the purchase came together

such that Bighorn Audubon can continue to protect a wetland for our birds. Thank you again to all who made this possible!

Another important highlight of the year is the addition of Andy Sutphin to our Board of Directors. With his background, dedication, and knowledge of birds and of the Brinton, Andy is a fantastic addition to our board. Welcome, Andy!

In spite of a year of challenges and hindrances due to COVID, the Bighorn Audubon Society had another great year. The following are our accomplishments for the fiscal year ending May 1, 2020, listed by our three areas of emphasis:

Advocating for and protecting birds and their habitats:

- Important Bird Areas (IBAs)
- Purchase of the Powder Horn wetland
- Continued engagement in local, regional, and national conservation issues impacting birds and the environment
- Participation in Audubon Rockies Tri-State Chapter Leader two-day workshop
- Establishment of Advisory Board, consisting of a valuable group of individuals to be called upon for advice and support by the president and/or the board of directors, and also to honor former board members who have contributed greatly to the Bighorn Audubon Society
- Addition of Andy Sutphin to Board of Directors
- Establishment of a Chapter Historian on our Board of Directors to maintain the history of our organization
- Donation of bird books from Jean Daly to be auctioned at our annual meeting

Offering educational opportunities to our members and the public:

- Conducted Birding at the Brinton walks and counts every third Saturday, although three walks were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions
- Educational outreach
- Development of a Youth Committee to engage younger members
- Native plant surveys and presentations.
- Maintained active website at bighornaudubon.com **and** social media via Facebook
- Distributed monthly newsletter
- Reprinted Helen Downing's classic book: *Birds of North-Central Wyoming and The Bighorn National Forest*

Participating in citizen science:

- Conducted the Spring Bird Count, Christmas Bird Count, BLM Bald Eagle Survey, Breeding Bird Survey, and the Great Backyard Bird Count
- Ongoing participation in e-Bird, which continues to be an important online database for bird observations
- Bighorn Audubon has become the custodian of Mountain Bluebird and Tree Swallow nest boxes in the Bighorn region due to the retirement of Dr. Scott Johnson, an ornithologist from Towson University, who has done research here for over three decades. Dr. Johnson's detailed manual for the continuation of his work on bluebirds and swallows is being passed to Audubon so it may continue in perpetuity.

In addition to all the good news, it is with great sadness for us, yet happiness for her, that we report Jackie Canterbury, our fearless leader and President of Bighorn Audubon for over a decade, will be leaving us. Jackie is returning to her home state of Washington for the next chapter and adventure in her life. We will all miss her tremendously. We wish her much happiness and plentiful days filled with excellent birding and joyful birdsong. Jackie has been an extraordinary force of good in our community and region, and is leaving our organization in good hands. Jackie will be named a Bighorn Audubon Advisory Board Member, and her phone number will continue to be on speed dial for many of us! (Please see *Heartfelt Farewell to Dr. Jackie Canterbury*)

Your membership helps us to continue our mission for generations of birds and humans to come. We thank you again! Donations can be made via PayPal on our website bighornaudubon.com or by contacting us at bighornaudubon@gmail.com.

Please share this email with friends or family who are not yet members and encourage them to join. We look forward to seeing you at one of our events and/or connecting with you online.

Questions or comments? Please contact us at bighornaudubon@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jackie Canterbury
President

Jennifer Williams
Director

JoAnne Puckett
Vice President

Anne Montgomery
Director

Pam Moore
Secretary

Annie Dunn
Director

Tina Toth
Treasurer

Sidney Taylor
Director

Rob Davidson
Director

Andrew Sutphin
Director

Ariel Downing
Director