



Bighorn Audubon Society Annual Report to the Membership June, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of Bighorn Audubon Society,

The mission of Bighorn Audubon is to support the efforts of our National Audubon Society. We work for the protection of birds and habitats for the benefit of our communities and the region, with an emphasis on advocating for and protecting birds and their habitats, offering educational opportunities to our members and the public, and participating in citizen science.

In spite of the current climate of uncertainty, Bighorn Audubon Society had another fantastic year. We thank you, our Audubon members and friends, for your continued support, which allows us to further advance our mission.

We continue our work toward establishing Important Bird Areas, or IBAs. This year we partnered with local landowners to designate an additional IBA, the Little Goose IBA, along the foothills of the Bighorn Mountains region and the Little Goose Creek and its valley. This new IBA encompasses about 12,000 acres of prime habitat, with the possibility of an additional 15,000 acres to be added at a later date. We owe a debt of gratitude to Alison Holloran, Executive Director of Audubon Rockies, to our local chapter and its' members, and to our local landowners for their support in this journey. Special appreciation goes to Annie Montgomery for her assistance in establishing this IBA.

Thank you also to Christina Schmidt of Wyoming Game and Fish, and Jackie Canterbury of Bighorn Audubon, who worked collaboratively to establish two additional IBAs: Amsden Creek Wildlife Habitat Management Area (4,147 acres) and Kerns Wildlife Habitat Management Area (4,995 acres). Also, thank you to Audubon member Jean Daly for her 1983 survey work in these areas, which made the designations possible. Additional areas included in Bighorn Audubon's IBA program are The Brinton (620 acres), Ucross (20,000 acres), Valley View subdivision (266 acres), Falxa Land Company (41,000 acres), and Kleenburn Recreation Area (77 acres).

The following are our accomplishments for the fiscal year ending June 1, 2020, listed by our three areas of emphasis:

Advocating for and protecting birds and their habitats

- Establishment of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) as detailed above
- Continued engagement in local, regional, and national conservation issues impacting birds and the environment. We are grateful to Rob Davidson, Council for the Bighorn Range, and Jackie Canterbury, for representing our chapter on these crucial matters. We also thank our participating members for voicing their concerns on government decisions impacting birds and their habitats.
- Continue to provide bird seed to longtime Audubon volunteer Vistara Parham
- Jackie Canterbury was recently elected to the Audubon Rockies Board of Directors, where she will represent Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado. Congratulations, Jackie

Offering educational opportunities to our members and the public

- Birding at the Brinton every third Saturday of the month
- Presentation by Dr. Scott Johnson, *Understanding Nesting Habits of Mountain Bluebirds*, held at the Sheridan Fulmer Library

- Educational outreach programs offered by Pam Moore, Education Chair, which included children's bird walks at Trail End as well as an owl presentation at Story school. Pam is also currently writing a bird book for children
- Native plant presentation by Jenny Williams, Conservation Chair
- Audubon board member Tina Toth, in partnership with Sheridan Land Trust, conducted a virtual Happy Hour on our favorite topic—birds!
- We maintain our website at bighornaudubon.com
- Our Facebook page remains active and includes the popular 'Bird of the Week' offered by Tina Toth
- Our monthly email newsletter, organized by JoAnne Puckett, is a great source of chapter updates, events, and information

Participating in citizen science

- Cleaned and repaired Mountain bluebird boxes on Red Grade Road
- Guided by Dr. Scott Johnson, volunteers monitored Mountain Bluebird boxes along 14-A in the Bighorn Mountains
- Conducted Spring Bird Count, Christmas Bird Count (with gratitude to Ariel Downing and Annie Dunn as CBC leads, and Liz Howell for her past position as lead), BLM Bald Eagle Survey, Short-eared Owl Count, 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, providing scientific information about bird distribution in Wyoming

Due to COVID-19, our chapter postponed the following: the Bighorn Audubon Society Board of Directors' all-day retreat, our annual meeting at the Powder Horn, the National Audubon Photo exhibit at The Brinton, Dr. Paul Johnsgard's talk on Sandhill cranes, and the wildflower and birding walk at the Wagon Box site.

We place emphasis on the word *postponed*! Please continue to visit our website for any updates and/or sign up for our email newsletter, if you have not already done so.

Your membership helps us to continue our mission, and we thank you again for your continued support. Additional 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? Please contact us at bighornaudubon@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jackie Canterbury
President, Bighorn Audubon Society