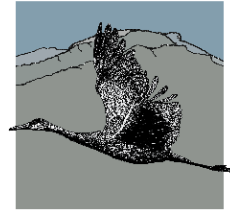


The Bighorn Audubon Society Member Report

May 2022



Dear Members and Friends of the Bighorn Audubon Society,

With deep gratitude to Bighorn Audubon Society's members, dedicated board of directors, and advisory board, this past year has been one with enormous accomplishments that directly benefit and advocate for birds and their habitats, which is the core of our mission. Although in this changing world of climate challenges and environmental concerns, our board and members have stood as strong advocates for our feathered friends and our communities. Partnerships have expanded and new relationships are being developed to seek common ground and solutions that may better serve Bighorn Audubon's mission.

It has been through the continued support of our members and the board of directors' hard work that we are able and pleased to share our fiscal year-end accomplishments. We also share our appreciation for Audubon Rockies' guidance this past year.

- Bighorn Audubon's chapter expanded to include Big Horn County, in addition to eastern Washakie, Johnson, Sheridan, Campbell, Weston, and Crook Counties. County representative partnerships continue to be developed.
- Bighorn Audubon Note Cards were created, using art by regional artists Carol Guzman, Molly Burke Clark, and Jenny Williams. These gorgeous ten-pack notecards have been an enormous success, with special thanks to Kay Wallick for her organizational skills, and to Annie Montgomery's and Kay's excellent taste in art!
- "Birds of the Rocky Mountain Region" art exhibit at The Brinton Museum in partnership with the Bighorn Audubon Society is being planned. This juried exhibit of 40 pieces, with awards for the top four, will open on May 4, 2023, and continues through July 2, 2023. An educational lecture on conservation activist George Bird Grinnell (1849-1938), presented by nationally-known journalist John Taliaferro is scheduled for June 8. Taliaferro is the author of the highly regarded publication, "Grinnell, America's Environmental Pioneer and His Restless Drive to Save the West". Grinnell's deep connection to birds, Sheridan County, and his relationship to the Northern Cheyenne People helped to preserve much of what are now public western lands.

A series of outdoor programs on birds and birding organized by Bighorn Audubon will be offered at The Brinton Museum during the time period of this exhibition. A reception for the artists, free and open to the public, takes place in conjunction with the opening of the show. A color-illustrated catalog will be published to accompany this event and will include biographical information on participating artists as well as educational commentary about birds represented in the exhibit.

- Dr. Chris Kiro's outstanding and in-depth presentation on Greater Sage-Grouse habitat needs and survival threats in the Powder River Basin on March 23rd was a highlight this year. A recorded version is being produced. Over the course of his career, his research has focused on applied science including

critical habitat mapping, measuring the effectiveness of mitigation, and assessing bird responses to reclamation. His research can be found in peer-reviewed journals such as *Ecological Applications*, *Avian Conservation Ecology*, and the *Journal of Wildlife Management*. We greatly appreciate Chris as a board member, and his 20-year dedication focusing on wildlife species dependent on the sagebrush ecosystem.

- We partnered with Wyoming State Parks and the Fort Phil Kearny/Bozeman Trail Association to build a public Native Plant Garden at Fort Phil Kearny State Historic Site in the early spring of 2023. Plans are underway which include highlighting native plants beneficial to birds and other pollinators, with ample educational signage.
- The Powder Horn property is undergoing large-scale habitat improvements, thanks to Jennifer Williams, Annie Montgomery, and Sid Taylor. Enormous thanks to Jennifer and Annie for their contributions.
- A local Habitat Hero program is being developed, in partnership with Bighorn Audubon, Audubon Rockies, and Piney Island Conservation. Our Native Plant Committee Chair, Jennifer Williams, will be announcing details soon.
- Several Citizen Science bird surveys were conducted which included the Christmas Bird Count, BLM's Winter Eagle Count, Breeding Bird Survey, and the Spring Count. The latter has expanded from 10 to 18 routes this year and now includes Johnson, Campbell, and Weston Counties. Big thanks to all compilers and participants for your continued time, knowledge, and dedication to collecting this critical data.
- We conducted, in cooperation with The Brinton, monthly Birding at The Brinton. We are delighted that attendance has increased since July 2021 due to relaxed Covid restrictions and mostly thanks to our guest birders and the birding community.
- Our board and members actively engaged in issues that affect birds and their habitats via submitted comments, public awareness, meetings, and media releases. These issues include the Bighorn National Forest DEIS Invasive and Other Plant Management Project, the Bureau of Land Management's Conservation Management Plan Revisions, and the sage-grouse private farm issue. Some of us also attended the insightful monthly webinar series (12) by USFWS "Forest for the Birds".
- The Bighorn Audubon Society, along with the Bighorn National Forest, sponsored the *Bird Checklist of the Bighorn National Forest*, prepared by Jackie Canterbury and C.J. Grimes and developed from Orabona and Rudd's 2016 *Wyoming Bird Checklist* (see Orabona et al., 2021, *Atlas of Birds, Mammals, Amphibians, and Reptiles in Wyoming*), J. Canterbury and P. Johnsgard's 2013 *Birds and Birding in Wyoming's Bighorn Mountains Region*, D. Faulkner's 2010 *Birds of Wyoming*, H. Downing's 1990 Regional Checklist, and eBird. This checklist is now being formatted, with release expected in June.
- Our website bighornaudubon.com was rebuilt, updated, and informational pages were added. We continue with our monthly email newsletters and utilize our Facebook page. Business cards were produced to increase membership and awareness of Bighorn Audubon's mission.
- A Feeder Checklist of birds that may be found at or nearby feeders in Sheridan and Johnson Counties was created. Images of common feeder birds and care for feeders accompanies this checklist.
- Thanks to Ariel Downing, Helen Downing's "*Birds of North-central Wyoming and the Bighorn National Forest*" continues to be available through local retailers. This book presents a detailed record of birdlife in the area, using data collected and meticulously collated from 1966 through 1990.
- Pam Moore and Andy Sutphin led bird walks at the Brinton for the Big Horn Middle School Outdoor Science program.

- Andy Sutphin participated in the 2021 Wyoming BioBlitz three-day event at The Brinton.
- In partnership with the City of Sheridan and Kendrick Golf Course, Western Meadowlark educational signs will be placed at the Kendrick Golf Course in late spring. Pam Moore has spearheaded this project, thank you, Pam!
- In cooperation with the Bighorn National Forest, Bighorn Audubon conducted Tensleep Canyon raptor surveys in areas where nesting raptors may be disturbed by rock climbing activities. We began our second year of raptor surveys in April 2022. Bighorn National Forest news release: “The Bighorn Audubon Society has been a valuable partner this spring in assisting the Forest with raptor surveys in Tensleep Canyon. This partnership ensures the protection of nesting raptors and enhances our knowledge of bird habitat in the Canyon. In addition, their support for recording public bird sightings on the Bighorn National Forest as part of our Community Science project will increase our understanding of bird occurrence and distribution in the Forest to help us maintain and improve bird habitat and promote public enjoyment of public lands.” C.J. Grimes’ professional skills have been important in this effort.
- Bighorn Audubon continues as the caretaker of Mountain Bluebird and Tree Swallow nest boxes in the Bighorn National Forest. With the help of dedicated volunteers, our goal is to provide, maintain, and monitor the nest boxes to ensure the continued success of these species in our area. Thousands of young have been fledged from these boxes over the years helping to maintain healthy populations of the two species. We are thankful for Dr. Scott Johnson’s continued support as an advisor.
- Monitoring began for potentially three new Important Bird Areas.

Again, THANK YOU for helping us help the birds! We look forward to your continued support and advocacy for birds and our communities. Please feel free to share this with friends or family who are not yet members and encourage them to join.

Donations can be made via PayPal on our website bighornaudubon.com or by mail at PO Box 535, Sheridan, WY 82801. Questions or comments? Please contact us at bighornaudubon@gmail.com

With appreciation,

JoAnne Puckett, President

Anne Montgomery, Director

Kay Wallick, Director

Ariel Downing, Vice President

Jennifer Williams, Director

Chris Kirol, Director

Pam Moore, Secretary and Co-Treasurer

Sid Taylor, Director

Jill Morrison, Director

Andy Sutphin, Director