

Audubon Rockies Quarterly Update

April - June, 2019

Audubon Rockies protects birds across Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah during every point of their lifecycle, but spanning such a large region is complex. To achieve the greatest impact for the greatest number of birds, we organize our work into six core programs.

These programs cover the breadth of landscapes that our birds need to thrive, including rivers, wetlands, sagebrush steppe, grasslands, and urban habitat strongholds that will provide shelter to birds now and into the future.

Here are few highlights from our fiscal year 2019 fourth quarter. Thank you for making them possible.

Alison Holloran
Executive Director



Western Meadowlark on Rockin' 7 Ranch, certified by Audubon's Conservation Ranching Initiative.
Photo: Evan Barrientos/Audubon Rockies



Wyoming BioBlitz 2019 participant. Photo: Evan Barrientos/Audubon Rockies

OUR CORE PROGRAMS' HIGHLIGHTS



With school programs, public events, and tabling at festivals around several counties, this was a busy quarter. We hosted 57 education events and reached more than 4,800 people at them.

Among those events, Wyoming BioBlitz 2019 drew 80 participants and documented more than 103 species! In Pagosa Springs, we recruited more than 100 local students to help build and install pollinator nesting structures and release more than 700 native bees.

Bird banding season began in June. More than 538 people attended our four banding stations and we recruited and trained eight new volunteers. Across all Community Naturalist programs, 258 volunteers supported us this quarter.

We raised \$29,500 for education programming.



Habitat Hero Coordinator Jamie Weiss hosted 51 events, reaching more than 1,522 people. That's a 111% increase in events compared to the same quarter last year!

Sixty-one volunteers helped us plant and promote native gardens.

In addition, we certified 13 new Habitat Heroes and improved 9 acres with native plants. Three notable plantings were at Shepardson Elementary School, Leshler Middle School, and Rigden Farms in Fort Collins, Colorado.

We co-organized a six-week project with Shepardson Elementary that focused on pollinator conservation. We also partnered with Colorado State University to help a class complete five projects supporting Habitat Hero.

We worked with the Town of Erie, Colorado, to adopt native landscaping and low-irrigation practices.

We raised \$25,260 for Habitat Hero.



Greater Sage-Grouse. Photo: Evan Barrientos/ Audubon



Western Rivers Initiative

Western Rivers Regional Program Manager Abby Burk advocated for expanded instream flow legislation in Colorado, an important water-sharing tool for river health. In this quarter, Audubon's network took 1,003 actions in support of this effort.

To forward Colorado's role in the Upper Colorado River basin Drought Contingency Plan, Abby was recruited to serve on the statewide Demand Management Environmental Considerations work group.

Our annual river trip inspired 25 participants on the Colorado River and raised more than \$23,000.

Abby moderated the water panel at the Outdoor Retailer Summer Market, a high-profile event with key water and outdoor industry players present.

On the banks of St Vrain Creek in Longmont, Colorado, volunteers removed invasive tamarisk and Russian olive at a workday in partnership with Wildlands Restoration Volunteers.



Conservation Ranching Initiative

In June, the initiative grew to 17 enrolled ranches in Colorado and Wyoming, totaling 496,950 acres. Dusty Downey also enrolled the 1 million-acre Winecup Gamble Ranch in Nevada and the 52,000-acre McFarland & White Ranch in Montana.

To guide and assess our ecological impact, bird monitoring was conducted on twelve ranches in Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. This year we also began vegetation monitoring on nine ranches and soil monitoring on two.

We held five workshops that helped 169 attending producers manage their lands ecologically and profitably.

We also on-boarded two interns in partnership with Wyoming Cattlewomen. The internship aims to give them diverse experience in ranching operations, land management, and conservation outreach.



Sagebrush Ecosystem Initiative

In April we co-organized a bipartisan tour for congressional staff of a sage-grouse lek and an active oil and gas field. The tour gave participants a direct look at the challenges and efforts to conserve Greater Sage-Grouse.

We have been helping create the Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies's in-depth Sagebrush Conservation Strategy, which will be the comprehensive resource for this ecosystem's management.

As a member of the Wyoming Sage-Grouse Implementation Team, we continued to engage experts and partners in the analyses of the state's management plan as part of Governor Gordon's decision to review the 2015-4 Sage-Grouse Executive Order.

The federal administration's energy dominance policy for public land management has resulted in a dramatic increase in oil and gas leasing. We have been actively monitoring and submitting protests where environmental conflicts occur in sagebrush country.