

Audubon Rockies Mid-Year Update

January - June 2021

Once again, we have made progress in a difficult year. From the pandemic, to climate change impacts, to polarized political views, we have all felt shaken and unsteady in some way. However, no matter the issue, Audubon Rockies continues to move forward. We have realized again and again that we all can and need to come together for conservation. It is our simple but necessary mantra; *where birds thrive, people prosper*.

Thank you for coming together, we need unity in conservation now more than ever.

Alison Holloran
Executive Director



Greater Sage-Grouse. Photo: Evan Barrientos/Audubon Rockies



**Community
Naturalist**

Our first printing of [Rockie's Migration Adventures](#) sold out, reaching 2,000 kids. More than 1,400 additional copies of [Rockie's Sagebrush Adventures](#) have also been distributed. With both books now translated into Spanish, we're reaching new audiences.

We led more than 60 in-person and virtual events that reached more than 7,500 participants. More than 140 students attended our monthly Audubon Afterschool virtual programs.

We founded the Wyoming Naturalist Program with partners and met high demand. There is a two-year waiting list for new registrations.

We helped launch Lights Out Colorado, a program to help save nocturnally migrating birds. Ten news outlets published 13 stories about it.



Habitat Hero

We led 27 virtual and in-person events that had more than 5,400 participants. We also led twelve Colorado State University Native Plant Outreach Workshops, attended by 1,072 participants. On several occasions, we hosted well-known speakers, including the authors Douglas Tallamy and John Shewey.

We received \$19,660 from private donations, Habitat Hero applications, and corporate sponsors.

We presented on *Talkin' Birds*, a radio show with 14,000 national listeners that features expert guests and news from the world of birds.

The mayor of Pagosa Springs, Colorado, recognized native plant proclamation articles and Native Plants Week at the ribbon-cutting of our Terry Hershey Memorial Native Plants Garden.



**Conservation
Ranching Initiative**

With the certification of 4M Ranch in Colorado, our program expanded by 137,000 acres for a total of 951,000 across the Rockies. Our partnerships also expanded to include the Colorado Coalition to Enhance Working Lands and the Rocky Mountains High Plains Collaborative.

We hosted six workshops with Ranching for Profit that more than 100 landowners attended.

We finalized monitoring on 18 ranches, updated eight habitat management plans, and are working on two additional plans.

Aaron Maier joined our staff as the new range ecologist.

We received a \$317,000 grant for three habitat restoration projects.

We continue to develop a guide to Conservation Ranching data analysis with our contractors.



American Avocet at Gillmor Sanctuary. Photo: Evan Barrientos/Audubon Rockies



Sagebrush Ecosystem Initiative

As the country transitioned to a new presidency, we developed materials on sage-grouse and sagebrush ecosystems for the new administration. In February, Audubon's Nada Culver became the temporary director of the Bureau of Land Management.

We submitted comments to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on a proposed eagle take permit for a Wyoming wind farm.

We amplified the need for collaboration and funding to combat invasive grasses through a [film](#) featuring ranchers, hunters, and the Eastern Shoshone Tribe that reached Congressional leaders.

We shared with nearly one million members the science that found Greater Sage-Grouse populations have declined 80% since 1965.

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Western Rivers Initiative

We collected 2,735 signatures to stop a proposed change to Colorado's anti-degradation rule, setting a new engagement record. Current water protections were upheld for at least 10 years, safeguarding water quality for birds and people. Our network also submitted more than 900 signatures that helped a Colorado Water Plan funding bill pass into law.

We highlighted river health assessments, data, and science in the first Colorado Water Plan update. We also co-hosted the Colorado Water Plan Environmental & Recreational Workshop.

We are on the first-ever Water Equity Taskforce to understand equity, diversity, and inclusivity challenges involving Colorado water.

We hosted the Water Legislator Webinar series, which reached more than 230 legislators, staff, and community members.



Gillmor Sanctuary

A land [donation](#) worth 1.1 million dollars added a critical 413 acres to Gillmor Sanctuary. We have designed a restoration plan for the site and secured \$58,000 in project funding.

We coordinated with Salt Lake City Mosquito Abatement to research the abatement's impacts on birds, habitat, and macroinvertebrates.

We worked with Salt Lake County and Mountainous Planning District commissioners to advance awareness of the impacts of nighttime artificial light on migratory birds.

We engaged with major decision-makers and participated in the county planning of the shoreline area, the Water Policy Advisory Committee for Salt Lake City and Inland Port, and the steering committee of a crucial nearby developer.