

Year-end Update

July – December 2021

As we all continue to deal with issues beyond our immediate control—like new COVID variants and climate change—it's easy to feel stuck. However, it is said that without hope, we have nothing. The accomplishments in this update give us the hope we need. With supporters like you, we have been able to keep birds and the places they need at the forefront of conservation in the Rockies. Thank you for making them possible. I hope you'll continue to help us move forward in 2022.

Alison Holloran
Executive Director, Audubon Rockies



Burrowing Owl. Scott Gilbert/Audubon Photography Awards



Community Naturalist

We led 79 events that nearly 12,000 people attended, including Wyoming BioBlitz, which had 220 participants. We also recorded nearly 4,000 volunteer hours.

The inaugural class of the Wyoming Naturalist Program graduated in October and has contributed 600 volunteer hours to the state.

Our southwest Colorado Community Naturalist, Keith Bruno, received an Outstanding Educator Award from the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education.

We translated our Rockie's Adventures books into Spanish. More than 200 copies were distributed in December alone.

With Weminuche Audubon Society and volunteers, we conducted forest bird monitoring and the Christmas Bird Count, which had a record-setting 82 contributors.

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Habitat Hero

We completed the Habitat Hero garden at Jack's Solar Garden in Longmont, Colorado, with the help of our partners, Earth Love Gardens and United Ecology. The solar garden features more than 3,200 solar panels surrounded by a living fence of more than 3,000 native plants—making this our largest Habitat Hero demonstration garden yet.

We began planning our next solar garden in Johnstown, Colorado. In this new effort, we are pioneering a new model for advancing renewable energy while creating wildlife habitat.

We hosted 26 virtual and seven in-person events that were attended by 4,500 participants.



Conservation Ranching Initiative

We certified 48,000 acres in Colorado and 27,000 acres in Wyoming. Rockies staff have now certified 31 ranches encompassing more than 2.5 million acres.

We updated four habitat management plans and continued habitat enhancement projects on three Colorado ranches.

We presented to the Western Governors' Association, Wyoming Stock Growers Association, and Natural Resources Conservation Service Wyoming.

We developed resources for landowners, including the wind energy and range analysis guides and the ag-water toolbox.

Audubon-certified ranches sold 2,000 calves between August and December.



Yellow-breasted Chat. Photo: Evan Barrientos/Audubon Rockies



Sagebrush Ecosystem Initiative

Nearly 13,000 supporters asked Congress to pass an appropriations bill without a rider that hamstring U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service from listing Greater Sage-Grouse under the Endangered Species Act. In October, a draft of the bill was passed without the rider.

In November, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was passed with \$50 million earmarked for sagebrush ecosystem restoration and over \$4 billion for general ecosystem restoration.

We provided strong analyses to the Bureau of Land Management that helped protect priority sage-grouse habitat from oil and gas leasing.

We joined a Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission working group to integrate biological resource considerations into their permit review process.

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Western Rivers Initiative

In July, the Colorado Water Conservation Board approved an instream flow lease to support 43 stream miles of Big Beaver Creek and White River in Rio Blanco County. In this extreme drought year, these waterways urgently needed these flows.

We held 12 meetings with state water decision-makers, moderated a panel at the daylong Water Equity Taskforce workshop, and gave six public water presentations reaching 225 attendees.

We engaged with basin roundtable members in partnership with Water for Colorado to submit Basin Implementation Plan update comments in eight out of nine basins.

We secured \$75,000 in new funding for river and wetland conservation.



Gillmor Sanctuary

We devised a restoration plan for the 413 acres of land that was donated to Gillmor Sanctuary in late 2020. The plan will add berms and water control structures to create five separate water management units.

We dredged one mile of canal to increase water flows to shorebird habitat at the sanctuary.

We continued large-scale removal of tamarisk, an invasive plant covering a large portion of the sanctuary.

We secured substantial funding for our restoration projects, including \$150,000 from Connie Morehouse, \$50,000 from the Eccles Foundation, \$50,000 from an anonymous donor, \$8,000 from the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, and \$3,000 from Salt Lake County Fish & Game Association.