

Year-end Update

July – December 2022

As 2022 ended, all of us at Audubon Rockies took a moment to look back on what we have been able to accomplish. The list is impressive. But more than just a pat on the back and saying “job well done,” the look back helps us focus on the future. With so much accomplished, we realize there is so much more to do. So, as we look back, we also look forward and to another year of ensuring our birds and the places they need continue to thrive. Thank you for being a part of it.

Alison Holloran
Executive Director, Audubon Rockies



American Goldfinch. Photo: Evan Barrientos/Audubon Rockies



Community Naturalist

Graduates of the Wyoming Naturalist Program completed more than 1,250 volunteer hours, contributing an equivalent of more than \$36,000 in conservation work.

We recruited several new volunteers to our Four Mile Ranch team to provide education programs to four regional schools and 800 students in September and October.

269 people participated in Wyoming BioBlitz 2022, observing 833 species of plants, animals, and other organisms at state parks, backyards, and other areas across the state.

Field outings with the Environmental Pathways program and Southwest Conservation Corps trail crew demonstrated the transformative nature of birding. High school students showed up with little interest in birds and walked away with an incredible enthusiasm for birding.

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Habitat Hero

We successfully planted two bird-friendly gardens in northern Colorado. The Children’s Garden at The Gardens on Spring Creek in Fort Collins received a makeover, and a new healing garden for staff and victims at the Sexual Assault Victim Advocate Center in Loveland was supported by new donors at Comcast & Ken Garff Ford.

We hosted 44 virtual and in-person events that were attended by 7,048 participants.

We led eight pollinator monitoring surveys at two Habitat Hero gardens in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Forty-two volunteers participated and we are now analyzing the results and refining training protocols for 2023.



Conservation Ranching Initiative

After certifying 3,074,247 acres in five states, we began securing hundreds of thousands of dollars for implementing habitat restoration on these ranches. With Rafter W Ranch in eastern Colorado, we completed a soil health and reseeding project to boost their drought resilience.

We provided funding to install four miles of water line needed to improve Flying Diamond Ranch’s grazing management in eastern Colorado.

We distributed \$35,000 from the Colorado Department of Agriculture to certified ranches for improving their soil’s health.

We secured \$417,000 for sagebrush habitat restoration on Lone Tree Ranch in western Wyoming.

We received \$330,000 to restore degraded wetlands on High Lonesome Ranch in western Colorado.



Belted Kingfisher. Photo: Evan Barrientos/Audubon Rockies



Sagebrush Ecosystem Initiative

We worked with congressional leaders to send letters to the Department of the Interior calling for funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act to be directed to sagebrush restoration.

We submitted science-based comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on a wind farm expected to cause significant Golden Eagle mortalities in Wyoming.

Alongside Bighorn Audubon Society, an Audubon chapter, we successfully fought the U.S. Forest Service on a plan to kill sagebrush with herbicide in Bighorn National Forest.

With partners, we submitted strong comments to the BLM on Gunnison Sage-Grouse habitat, a federally protected bird found only in Colorado and Utah.

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Western Rivers Initiative

We achieved record-breaking member engagement on the Colorado Water Plan. 3,437 people signed our petition and 446 submitted free responses.

Western Rivers Regional Program Manager Abby Burk was awarded the Riparian Hero Award from the Colorado Riparian Association for outstanding river advocacy and diplomacy.

We and Grand Valley Audubon Society received \$150,000 to restore a wetland for birds and endangered fish on the Colorado River mainstem in Grand Junction, convening multiple agencies to achieve project goals.

Colorado Water Conservation Board granted us \$329,000 to begin critical post-fire restoration work on a Western Slope tributary on an Audubon-certified ranch.



Gillmor Sanctuary

With \$100,000 from the Eccles Foundation and an anonymous donor, we created seven new water management ponds with berms and water control structures. We also made major repairs to existing infrastructure.

One of the water control structures was partially funded by the Salt Lake Fish and Game Foundation, and 21 volunteers helped clear out invasive tamarisk debris from the wetlands in the donated area through our new volunteer event series.

We organized an event in which 20 volunteers replaced boundary signs around Lee Creek Natural Area, which will help reduce traffic in this sensitive bird habitat.

Relocation of the Utah state prison to Great Salt Lake's fringes created a serious mosquito problem for the prisoners. We developed a plan with Salt Lake City Mosquito Abatement District that minimizes impacts on wildlife.