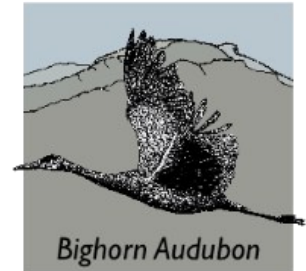


BIGHORN AUDUBON'S ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS

JUNE 4, 2026



As our fiscal year comes to an end, we reflect on **all the good** that Bighorn Audubon members, supporters, volunteers, and partners do for the love of birds. Together we inspire our communities with a deeper understanding of birds and greater connection to nature. Genuine interest, admiration, and appreciation of birds within our chapter's region is growing considerably.

Thanks to you.

We see it in the faces of children and in the words of adults as they learn more about birds. We see it in the volunteers who share their enthusiasm and dedicate hours of their time to helping birds. We see it in the advocacy for birds and habitat preservation on challenging government policy proposals. We see it in the generous support of our mission to help protect birds and the habitat they need.

Thanks to you.

The summary of our fiscal year activities is as follows:

Education: With gratitude to the Wyoming Community Foundation, and author and fellow board member Pam Moore, ***Wyoming Birds for Kids*** was sent to all elementary, middle and junior high school libraries and public libraries in Wyoming. Pam also presented wonderful educational programs in several schools and libraries, much to the delight of children and adults. The appreciation expressed from the book's recipients and Pam's programs are heartwarming.

Programs and Walks: Bighorn Audubon values partnerships with organizations who share our passion for birds and nature. With these partners, we led over 20 community bird walks and programs, including the monthly Birding at the Brinton, and assisted in children's and family activities. Participants of all ages and skill levels continue to be inspired by, and learn and marvel in the wonder of birds.

A highlight this year was hosting special guests Birdie Real Bird, Bill Yellowtail, and Maggie Carlson in partnership with the Ucross Foundation. Birdie, an acclaimed beadwork artist and cultural educator and language leader, shared with over 75 attendees the relationship between birds and the Apsáalooke people.

The Bighorn Region Checklist was updated, printed, available upon request, and is on our website. Paralleling with an increasing interest in birds, we remind birdwatchers and photographers of the **Ethics of Bird Watching**, which is on our website, too.

The Powder Horn Habitat Area has been growing with an abundance of native plants and support within the Powder Horn community. Signage was placed at the habitat, and educational material on the benefits of native plants for birds and our communities has been widely shared.

Advocacy: Birds are indicators of our ecosystem's health. With their complex songs, beauty, and extraordinary navigational skills, they remind us daily that our actions matter. Actions to conserve the habitat that is essential to birds' health and welfare, as well as actions to address the hazards birds face in this ever-changing world are of great importance.

With recent federal policy changes and proposals in environmental protections, Bighorn Audubon has engaged in and/or commented on federal and state sage-grouse and sagebrush habitat management, including advocating for powerline pole removal; Bureau of Land Management policies; proposed large-scale selling of public lands; proposed rescinding of the Roadless Rule; Bighorn National Forest Climbing Management Plan; proposed reduction of the Endangered Species Act; National Forest Service proposal to reduce and remove public input; local wetlands management and other policy issues that impact birds in so many ways. The need is intensifying for organizations and individuals to advocate for sound land management practices and policies.

Community Science: Christmas Bird Counts and Bighorn Audubon's 18-route Spring Count were conducted again this year with huge thanks to the many participants and all the compilers. Members also participated in Eagle Surveys and Breeding Bird Surveys. Each count is important, detecting indications of bird population trends, migration patterns, and habitat quality.

Nestboxes: We take this opportunity to thank all the nestbox caretakers who clean, repair, replace and keep careful eyes on hundreds of nest boxes in the Bighorn Forest, assuring best conditions for successful nesting. These boxes and their caretakers help hundreds of Mountain Bluebirds and Tree Swallows successfully fledge every year. Special recognition goes to long-time caretakers Timi and Andy Park, who visit their nest box route often weekly, monitoring and documenting the birds' successes; Melanie Zimmerman who had built and replaced 31 boxes on her route after the boxes were displaced due to the Elk Fire preventative measures; and to Fred and Janet Cherni who built over 30 beautifully built boxes to donate to other route leaders, and who also dedicate their time and hearts to these birds. These caretakers' great work, generosity, and dedication are very much appreciated by Bighorn Audubon and the birds.

Forest and Sagebrush Habitat Monitoring: Since 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bighorn National has collaborating with the Bighorn Audubon Society on various bird monitoring efforts across the Bighorn National Forest, including but not limited to sagebrush and forest dwelling species.

In partnership with the Bighorn National Forest, Tensleep Canyon raptor surveys and Goshawk surveys continued with a great team of volunteers last year, with special thanks to Jennifer Walker, Brian Rhodes, and Jeannette Reina. Surveys this spring kicked off with a volunteer meeting of 10 in the Canyon, along with FS climbing ranger, Ryan Sorenson.

Bighorn Audubon’s acoustic monitoring project was elevated this spring thanks to project leaders Tom Stanton and Bonnie Allision who have detected interesting bird species in the Forest, including sensitive species or species of concern. Data collected offer a better understanding of Forest bird species and assists management. Our focus is on sensitive species; however, data collected on all species heard, understanding that some not considered sensitive now may be in the future.

Detailed multi-day sagebrush habitat surveys in the Forest continued for the 3rd year thanks to C.J. Grimes, with transects selected by USFS personnel to align with projects and management objectives. The Brewer’s Sparrow, considered both a sensitive species and a management indicator species in the Rocky Mountain Region, is of particular interest during these surveys.

Bighorn Audubon helped support wildlife ecologist and biologist Dr. Chris Kirol’s fine work on post House Draw Fire sagebrush habitat monitoring and reclamation efforts. We are beyond grateful for Chris and his research on Greater Sage-Grouse and sagebrush habitat, particularly in NE Wyoming.

In closing, we once again extend our sincere appreciation to our members, supporters, volunteers, and partners. **It is because of you** we are able to continue with our mission.

The Bighorn Audubon Board of Directors,

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