

WYOMING NATURALIST



GENERAL INTEREST EVENTS

- APRIL 16TH @ 5:30PM - HAWK TALK - BEAR RIVER SP
- APRIL 17TH - WILDFLOWER WATCH - GRAND TETON NP CHARLOTTE.CADOW@TNC.ORG
- APRIL 27TH @ 6PM - SAGE GROUSE LEK VIEWING - [CHEYENNE AUDUBON](#)
- MAY 4TH 9AM-2PM - ALBANY COUNTY CONSERVATION EXPO [FLYER](#)
- MAY 11TH 10AM -12PM - MIGRATORY BIRD DAY @ SINKS CANYON SP
- JUNE 1ST - HEART MOUNTAIN HIKE WITH THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
- JUNE 13TH-15TH - BioBLITZ 2024 @ WIND RIVER BUFFALO INITIATIVE [REGISTER](#)
- JUNE 28TH-30TH - LEAVE NO TRACE SPOTLIGHT @ SINKS CANYON SP [FACEBOOK](#)
- JULY 19TH-22ND - STATEWIDE BioBLITZ [INATURALIST](#)
- AUGUST 2ND-4TH - WOMEN WHO HIKE @ SOUTH PASS CITY SHS [REGISTER](#)
- SEPTEMBER 20TH-22ND - WOMEN WHO HIKE @ MEDICINE LODGE SP

ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- APRIL 27TH 10AM-12PM - TURKEY VULTURE COMM. SCIENCE PROJECT [REGISTER](#)
- MAY 6TH-8TH - IMBCR IN GILLETTE (SEE ARTICLE) - ZACH.HUTCHINSON@AUDUBON.ORG
- MAY - NATIVE PLANT ID WALK LARAMIE
- MAY - BIRD BANDING (SPRING MIGRATION) - [DATES & REGISTRATION](#)
- JUNE - NATIVE PLANT ID WALK LARAMIE - POLE MTN.
- JUNE 18TH-19TH - PROJECT LEARNING TREE EDUCATOR TRAINING - SINKS CANYON SP
- SEPTEMBER - BIRD BANDING (FALL MIGRATION)

IN THIS ISSUE:

- E-BIRD MOBILE APP
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- BOOK BUZZ!
- GILLETTE ADVANCED TRAINING
- BIRD BANDING DATES
- WY NATURALIST WEBSITE**
[HTTPS://WYOMINGNATURALISTS.WYOMINGBIODIVERSITY.ORG/](https://wyomingnaturalists.wyomingbiodiversity.org/)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

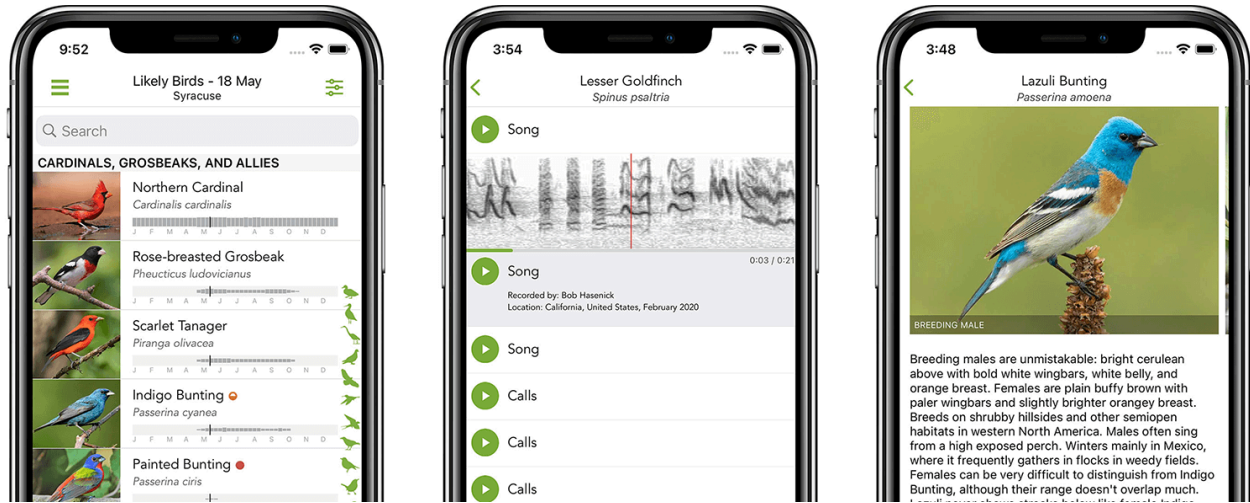
- LARAMIE SALAMANDER MIGRATION INITIATIVE [REGISTER](#)
- PROJECT FEEDERWATCH - THROUGH APRIL 30TH - [PARTICIPATION INSTRUCTIONS](#)
- APRIL-JUNE - AIS WATERCRAFT INSPECTION STATEWIDE [WY GAME & FISH](#)
- TURKEY VULTURE COMMUNITY SCIENCE PROJECT - TRAINING ON APRIL 27TH FROM 10AM-12PM. [REGISTER](#).
- WY GAME & FISH BREEDING BIRD SURVEY ROUTES (STATEWIDE) SUBMIT INTEREST BEFORE MAY 1ST TO COURTNEY RUDD (COURTNEY.RUDD@WYO.GOV) OR ZACH WALLACE (ZACH.WALLACE1@WYO.GOV)
- MAY 11TH MIGRATORY BIRD DAY @ SINKS CANYON SP JACELYN.DOWNEY@AUDUBON.ORG
- MAY 17TH & 18TH BUILDING A BOND WITH BIRDS, BATS, & POLLINATORS @ BEAR RIVER SP JACELYN.DOWNEY@AUDUBON.ORG
- [VOLUNTEER.GOV WYOMING](#) NPS, BLM, NFS, ETC.
- [NRCS EARTH TEAM](#) - VOLUNTEER WITH YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT!
- THE WYOMING NATURALIST PROGRAM HAS A [STORY MAP](#) OF THE CONSERVATION WORK/TRAINING THAT WYOMING NATURALISTS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH. FOR **EACH** SUBMISSION OF A SERVICE PROJECT **OR IN-PERSON** ADVANCED TRAINING, YOU CAN EARN 1 HOUR OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE. TO SUBMIT YOUR STORY PROJECTS, USE THIS [EASY FORM](#).



IF YOU SEE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP GROW/ORGANIZE/LIFT THE WYOMING NATURALIST PROGRAM IN ANY WAY AND WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT ZACH HUTCHINSON (ZACH.HUTCHINSON@AUDUBON.ORG). OPPORTUNITIES COULD INCLUDE ORGANIZING THE ANNUAL MEETING AND/OR THE OUTDOOR TRAINING, FINDING ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, CURATING VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROJECTS, OR ASSISTING/ADMINISTRATING OTHER TASKS TO KEEP THE MACHINE RUNNING. THE PROGRAM ONLY GROWS WITH YOUR HELP!

eBird

If you're not familiar with the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology's](#) FREE mobile resources yet, you're in for a treat. The first place to start is with the [eBird](#) app. *"The eBird Mobile app provides a fast, convenient, and accurate way for you to submit bird sightings where you need it - in the field. Supporting both online and offline use, eBird Mobile lets you track your sightings anywhere, anytime."* This app allows you to explore birds near you, create and manage lists, and share within the community. It is a key tool when participating in the annual Great Backyard Bird Count, and your account can connect you to other useful resources, like the [Merlin Bird ID](#) app.

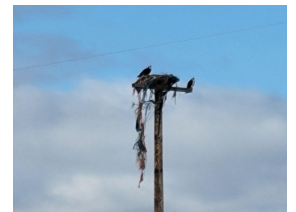


EARTH DAY: HIGHWAY CLEAN UP



Image credit: James Tolley - October 2021

Do you have plans for volunteering on Earth Day this year? An excellent opportunity to be a steward for the planet is collaborating with a local group to do highway clean up! Not only are you making space for native plants to thrive along our Wyoming roadsides, you are caring for the wildlife that depend on these thoroughfares for resources. Although the importance of highway easements may not be as visible as the vast acreages of sagebrush, or the alpine meadows filled with wildflowers in the spring, they are still natural environments that support life. As you well know, wildlife will take advantage of whatever resources they have access to, and when those resources include roadside litter, the results can be devastating. For example, an [August 2023 study published by Global Ecology and Conservation](#) showed that 44% of Osprey Nests that were surveyed along the Yellowstone River in Montana included baling twine. This polypropylene material is more durable than the natural nesting materials normally used, and the



Osprey Nest - Jaci Harkink - May 2022

result is the entanglement and potential death of both nestlings and adults. Humans are solely responsible for the impact of plastics in our environment, and Earth Day is an excellent reminder that we can help mitigate some of our damage. If you're interested in volunteering, check with your local organizations to see if they participate in the highway clean up program, look for the "Adopt-A-Highway" signs on the side of the road, or get a group of like-minded people together and apply for your own 2 mile stretch of road at the [WYDOT site](#). This is a recognized volunteer opportunity that allows you to log your hours for the Wyoming Naturalist Program, as well!

REMINDERS!

Volunteers are needed for educational activities celebrating birds and pollinators in May. Sinks Canyon State Park will host their annual World Migratory Bird Day on May 11th at 10am, and Bear River State Park will have a 2 day pollinator event on May 17th & 18th. If you are interested in lending your time to either of these fun, family events, please contact Jacelyn Downey for more information. Jacelyn.downey@audubon.org

May 11th, 2024 – World Migratory Bird Day at Sinks Canyon State Park
May 17th & May 18th - Building a Bond with Pollinators at Bear River State Park

Wyoming BioBlitz 2024 registration has officially opened! [REGISTER HERE](#) for June 13-15.

From the Audubon Rockies event page - *“Join us for Wyoming BioBlitz 2024 at the Wind River Reservation! Wyoming BioBlitz is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for families and friends, students, and all nature lovers to learn about plants and wildlife and help scientists survey them. During this weekend-long event, participants will team up with biologists to search for and document as many plants and animals as possible on Wind River Tribal Buffalo Initiative Land on the Wind River Reservation near Kinnear.” Register by May 24th.*

Contact Courtney Rudd (courtney.rudd@wyo.gov, 307-335-2635) or Zach Wallace (zach.wallace1@wyo.gov, 307-335-2613) at the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to learn more about registering for a Breeding Bird Survey route (or two). In order to ensure timely delivery of survey packets, **please let us know if you are interested by May 1**. Additional information about the survey, including results from previous years and a map of routes can be found at: <https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/>. ****Please let Zach & Courtney know you’re signing up as a volunteer coming from the Wyoming Naturalist Program.**

UPGRADED ADVENTURE LOCATIONS: GOOSEBERRY BADLANDS

As Naturalists, we like a location that has all the aspects of Wyoming that we can enjoy and steward. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages many of these locations and due to the Great American Outdoors Act, they are getting facelifts. This act addresses deferred maintenance, increased recreation, and improvement of the conservation of our waters and lands. The Gooseberry Badlands are located in the southwest corner of Washakie County. The badlands contain impressive geologic formations created by the Wilwood Formation. This formation is composed of different layers of mudstone and sandstone deposited between 50 and 55 million years ago. These layers respond in different ways to the forces of erosion. In a June 2023 press release, Mike Phillips, Worland Field Manager, stated *“I think people will enjoy the safer, more sustainable trail when the work is complete, and we’ll be able to more easily maintain it in the future.”*



Gooseberry Trail- Jaci Harkink - 3/2024

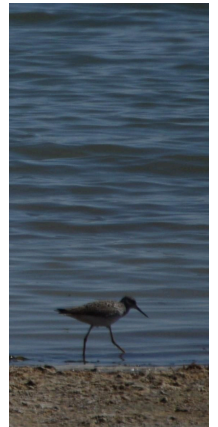
Recently, I spoke with Sarah Beckwith from the BLM for an update. She said, “...it’s safe to say that the Gooseberry Trail underwent a major facelift last fall. Return hikers will notice improved trail surfaces that blend with the colors of the landscape, rerouted sections of trail, and new steps, bridges and benches. Up top overlooking the badlands, visitors will find permanent binoculars and new sheltered picnic areas.” If you have an adventure location that you would like highlighted, please email Angela or Jaci at Angela_leone1@yahoo.com or jacihark@gmail.com.



Gooseberry Trail - Angela Leone - 3/2024

REFLECTIONS OF A WYOMING NATURALIST - INTERMOUNTAIN WEST SHOREBIRD SURVEYS

The Intermountain West Shorebird Survey isn't just an opportunity to document migration numbers of American Avocets, Spotted Sandpipers, Willets, and Lesser Yellowlegs, it is also a comprehensive Naturalist and conservation experience. Surveys like these encourage us to explore areas of our regions that we may never have fully appreciated before - reservoirs and lakes that seem more "recreational." But, the biodiversity that we discover in these overlooked ecological wonders are just as valuable to the Wyoming Naturalist as the shorebird data that we are there to collect. For example, during the trek around Deaver Reservoir in April of 2023, our survey team accidentally startled a Great Blue Heron out of a culvert, got an up-close view of the horn on the bills of breeding American White Pelicans, and picked up trash from the waterfront.



Solitary Sandpiper - Angela Leone - 4/2023



American White Pelicans - Angela Leone - 4/2023

This year, we are contemplating getting out on the water to reach more areas of the reservoir and keep an eye out for the invasive Curly Pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus* L.) that has been recorded at this location. Data is the most valuable resource, and we can best protect our ecosystems by recording what's included in them.

Relationships are also an amazing reward of surveying. Establishing connections with the agencies that partner for the events, as well as the people who volunteer to participate, allow us to expand our community of nature lovers and conservationists. We are much more likely to follow our passions when we have the support and encouragement of others. We are fortunate to have so many opportunities here in Wyoming to interact with our natural environment and make a positive impact through survey data collection. The information that we gather and the experiences that we share will benefit Naturalists and our environment in ways we can't even imagine.



American Avocets - Angela Leone-4/2023



Great Blue Heron - Kurt Warmbier - 4/2/2024

*****CALL FOR PHOTOS!!*****

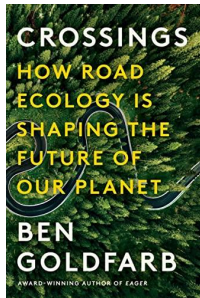
The Wyoming Naturalist Program Steering Committee is calling on naturalists to share photos from the field. Share photos of your volunteering or recreational activities. If you are a photographer, please share photos we might be able to use in the newsletter, website, and promotions for the program. All images will be credited. [Upload images to Box](#)

Please title images using the following format:

Image title or species name -your name- date image was taken

Example: Red Crossbill - Zach Hutchinson - Jan 19 2024





BOOK BUZZ! REVIEW BY ESTHER GILMAN-KEHRER

CROSSINGS: HOW ROAD ECOLOGY IS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF OUR PLANET BY BEN GOLDFARB

We all utilize roadways in our daily lives but may never consider their impact on everything around us. They are so much a part of our environment and infrastructure that we do not give them a second thought. Many of us live in rural areas of Wyoming, travel in remote areas of the state, and encounter animals crossing the roads. We may encounter animal crossings in the streets of our neighborhoods. All manner of beasts, from vertebrates to invertebrates' crawl, slither, fly or run across roadways to get to the other side, but do we consider how the design of a road, then fencing alongside it, the choice of location, or how the adjacent environments and its inhabitants may be impacted?

The impact of roads on wildlife is in the news a lot recently. Many of you may have read the recent articles in WyoFile entitled "Highway crossing threatens unique pronghorn herd" <https://wyofile.com/highway-crossing-threatens-worlds-most-unique-pronghorn-herd/> or the High-Country News article "For these mammals, migration is a means of survival" https://www.hcn.org/issues/april-2024-epic-journeys/_trashed/. Alternatively, you may be familiar with past articles on the spring tiger salamander migration across 9th street in Laramie called "Salamander crossing" <https://wyofile.com/salamander-crossing/>. Sadly, we all see the results of what happens when an animal is unable to cross a roadway safely, a bird hits a car window, or do not even notice if an amphibian is crushed by a tire of a vehicle, but do we understand how a lack of research regarding road ecology has affected so much around us.

On a recommendation from a friend, I recently read, "Crossings, How Road Ecology is Shaping the Planet's Future" by environmental journalist Ben Goldfarb. The opening chapters launched immediately into the impact roadways have had on the migration of mule deer in northern Wyoming and the groundbreaking research done by the University of Wyoming's Matthew Kauffman in tracking and mapping migration. I was immediately taken aback when I realized that even in a wide-open place like Wyoming; one highway in Fremont County could have a devastating impact on ancient migratory patterns of hundreds of deer, elk, moose, bighorn sheep and our iconic antelope.

The book examines the repercussions of roads worldwide and how a new scientific discipline, road ecology, is trying to address how we might rethink design and accommodations for wildlife and people. As Goldfarb noted, roads are "not merely a symptom of civilization, but a distinct disease" and examining the impact of roads on everything around us is "empathy manifested as science." Goldfarb examines how roads have affected migration patterns of millions of mammals, marsupials, amphibians, birds, and fish, as well as how roads have contributed to habitat loss, increased pollutants in soils and water as well as the impact of plant ecology along roadsides. Goldfarb also examines how road design has affected communities, divided people along racial lines, and impacted health, access, and economies.

As an amateur naturalist, I was profoundly affected by this book and it has made me look more critically at something we all take for granted, the roads we travel. I strongly encourage other naturalists to read this book.

Esther Gilman-Kehrer is a member of the 2022 Wyoming Naturalist Cohort



Mountain Bluebirds
Kurt Warmbier
4/2/2024



Audubon Rockies would like to invite Wyoming Naturalists to an advanced training opportunity that will fulfill all advanced training requirements. - Gillette, WY

Every year, biologists and technicians work across mountains, prairies, and deserts to survey breeding birds under the Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions ([IMBCR](#)) program. The program, coordinated by Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, is the second largest breeding bird monitoring program in North America, stretching across private and public land from the Great Plains to the Great Basin. Audubon Rockies uses these surveys for private ranchlands to help [monitor grassland bird health](#).

- **Monday, May 6 – Indoor instruction from 12pm to 4:30pm covering IMBCR Strata Design and Habitat and Vegetation data collection**
- **Tuesday, May 7 – Field visit for habitat/vegetation sampling between 8am and 12pm, followed by indoor instruction from 1pm to 4:30pm covering IMBCR data collection**
- **Wednesday, May 8 – Field visit for avian surveys from 6:30am to 9am**

Participants will be responsible for travel costs to Campbell County Library in Gillette, but Audubon Rockies will cover the class cost. Two meals will be provided.

To register, email Zach at zach.hutchinson@audubon.org.

WY Naturalist Program Steering Committee

- Brian Sebade**
University of WY Extension
- Jennifer Thompson**
University of WY Extension
- Brett Addis**
University of WY
- Mason Lee**
University of WY
- Zach Hutchinson**
Audubon Rockies
- Jacelyn Downey**
Audubon Rockies
- Ashley Leonard**
WY Game & Fish Dept.
- Jennie Lawrence**
Wyoming Naturalist
- Dan Bach, MA, RPA**
WY State Parks & Cultural Resources

2024 TENTATIVE BIRD BANDING DATES

- MIGRATION/TRAINING (SPRING) – 5/14, 5/20 TO 5/23, 5/28-5/30
- MAPS EKWS (CASPER) – 6/4, 6/11, 6/20, 7/8, 7/16, 7/23, 7/30
- MAPS BART (CASPER MTN) - 6/5, 6/12, 6/21, 7/9, 7/17, 7/24, 7/31
- MAPS KEYS (KEYHOLE STATE PARK) - 6/1, 6/12, 6/23, 7/4, 7/11, 7/25, 8/3
- HUMMINGBIRDS (CASPER MTN) – TBD (CONTACT ZACH IF INTERESTED)
- MIGRATION/TRAINING (FALL)* – 9/3 TO 9/6, 9/9 TO 9/13

*MORE DATES MIGHT BE ADDED BY FALL

OWLS - 9/23 TO 11/7 (REGISTRATION WILL BE SENT AT THE END OF SUMMER)

ATTENDING TRAINING QUALIFIES FOR ADVANCED TRAINING HOURS, AND ATTENDANCE AT MAPS AND HUMMINGBIRD DATES CAN BE SUBMITTED AS VOLUNTEER HOURS. A TYPICAL MAPS DAY IS WORTH 6-10 VOLUNTEER HOURS. MOST OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES START BETWEEN 5-6 AM AND ARE FINISHED BETWEEN 12-1 PM. ATTENDANCE AT THE FULL DAY IS NOT REQUIRED.

IF INTERESTED IN ATTENDING ANY OF THE SPRING TRAINING DATES, PLEASE FILL OUT [THIS FORM](#)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER AT A MAPS STATION CONTACT

ZACH (EKWS/BART) AT ZACH.HUTCHINSON@AUDUBON.ORG

JACELYN (KEYS) AT JACELYN.DOWNNEY@AUDUBON.ORG

