

# WYOMING NATURALIST



## GENERAL INTEREST EVENTS

- MARCH 21ST - AUDUBON AFTER DARK - BIRD STORY HOUR [VIRTUAL](#)
- MARCH 22ND - BIODIVERSITY INSTITUTE SCIENCE CAFE - LANDER [FACEBOOK](#)
- MARCH 23RD & APRIL 6TH - BOULDER CHOKE CAVE TOUR - SINKS CANYON SP [REGISTER](#)
- MARCH 28TH - WILD & WORKING LANDS FILM FESTIVAL - GRYPHON THEATER [LARAMIE](#)
- UNTIL MARCH 31ST - [WYOMING GAME AND FISH ART CONTEST](#)
- APRIL 3RD - UW IMAGINE - INVASIVE GRASSES WORKSHOP [VIRTUAL](#)
- APRIL 16TH @ 5:30PM - HAWK TALK - BEAR RIVER SP
- MAY 11TH 10AM -12PM - MIGRATORY BIRD DAY @ SINKS CANYON SP
- JUNE 13TH-15TH - BioBlitz 2024 @ WIND RIVER BUFFALO INITIATIVE IN MORTON, WY
- JULY 19TH-22ND - STATEWIDE BioBlitz
- AUGUST 2ND-4TH - WOMEN WHO HIKE @ SOUTH PASS CITY SHS
- SEPTEMBER 20TH-22ND - WOMEN WHO HIKE @ MEDICINE LODGE SP

## ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- MAY - NATIVE PLANT ID WALK LARAMIE
- MAY - BIRD BANDING (SPRING MIGRATION) - [DATES & REGISTRATION](#)
- JUNE - NATIVE PLANT ID WALK LARAMIE - POLE MTN.
- JUNE - PROJECT LEARNING TREE EDUCATOR TRAINING - SINKS CANYON SP
- SEPTEMBER - BIRD BANDING (FALL MIGRATION)

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- WY NATURALIST WEBSITE**  
[HTTPS://WYOMINGNATURALISTS.WYOMINGBIODIVERSITY.ORG/](https://wyomingnaturalists.wyomingbiodiversity.org/)



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- 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](#).
- [VOLUNTEER.GOV WYOMING](#) NPS, BLM, NFS, ETC.
- [NRCS EARTH TEAM](#) - VOLUNTEER WITH YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT!
- MARCH 19TH @ 6:30PM - PINYON JAY SURVEY TRAINING - [VIRTUAL](#)
- PROJECT FEEDERWATCH - THROUGH APRIL 30TH - [PARTICIPATION INSTRUCTIONS](#)
- INTERMOUNTAIN WEST SHOREBIRD SURVEY - APRIL 24TH-30TH - EMAIL [ZACH.HUTCHINSON@AUDUBON.ORG](mailto:ZACH.HUTCHINSON@AUDUBON.ORG)
- NATIONAL ELK REFUGE IN JACKSON - MAY - OCT. [APPLY BEFORE APRIL 1ST.](#)
- TURKEY VULTURE COMMUNITY SCIENCE PROJECT - THE BIODIVERSITY INSTITUTE WILL HOST A TRAINING ON APRIL 27TH FROM 10AM-12PM. MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW.
- WY GAME & FISH BREEDING BIRD SURVEY ROUTES (STATEWIDE) SUBMIT INTEREST BEFORE MAY 1ST TO COURTNEY RUDD ([COURTNEY.RUDD@WYO.GOV](mailto:COURTNEY.RUDD@WYO.GOV)) OR ZACH WALLACE ([ZACH.WALLACE1@WYO.GOV](mailto:ZACH.WALLACE1@WYO.GOV))

*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](mailto: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!*



Have you downloaded the [iNaturalist](#) app yet? If so, are you using it to record your observations to the Wyoming Naturalist Program Project? iNaturalist provides a place to record and organize nature findings, meet other nature enthusiasts, and learn about the natural world. It encourages the participation of a wide variety of nature enthusiasts, including, but not exclusive to, hikers, hunters, birders, mushroom foragers, park rangers, ecologists, and fishermen. Through connecting these different perceptions and expertise of the natural world, iNaturalist hopes to create extensive community awareness of local biodiversity and promote further exploration of local environments.

**How to join WNP on the app:**

*From the menu (upper left) select “Projects” and then search for “Wyoming Naturalist Program”*

*When inputting an observation, select “Add to project” and check the box next to “Wyoming Naturalist Program”*



## STATE LEGISLATIVE NEWS

On March 7th, Governor Gordon signed the [Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund Administration Bill](#). This Bill fully establishes and implements the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund that was created by 2023 Wyoming Session Laws, and creates the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund Income Account. There is a suggested recurring biennial appropriation of six million dollars from the WY Tourism Reserve and Projects Account. The board of the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund is authorized to use income generated by the Trust Fund to make grants to develop, supplement, and promote outdoor recreation infrastructure and opportunities in Wyoming.

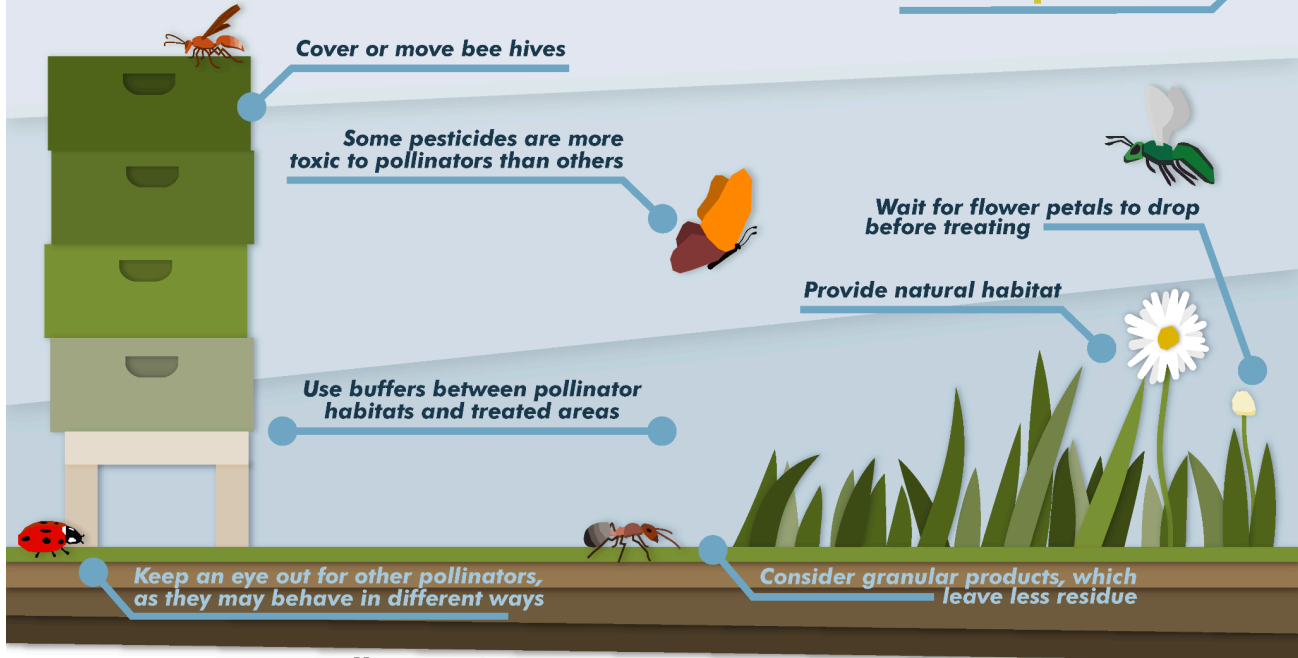
This funding will help to support the efforts of The Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation, which facilitates several [outdoor recreation collaboratives](#) throughout the state (currently, there are 8). These collaboratives bring together local community members, stakeholders, federal agencies, and state agencies to support sustainable outdoor recreation growth. Driven by Governor Mead’s 2017 Outdoor Recreation Task Force, the collaboratives are involved with several ongoing projects that will expand outdoor recreation opportunities in the state. These projects include the [Blueway Trail Project](#) in the Bighorn Basin, a pedestrian bridge over the North Platte River in Natrona County, and increasing accessibility of existing trails at the Flying V Trail System in Weston County.

The mission of the Wyoming Naturalist Program is to cultivate a community of volunteers to steward the state’s natural resources through conservation, education, and service. The program provides education and training to participants in biodiversity, ecology, conservation, management, and interpretation so that they can become leaders in the effort to protect our natural resources and the special places where we live.

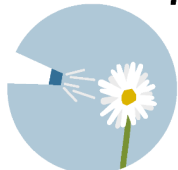
# Pollinator protection and pesticides

Insects are essential for pollinating many plants that produce food. Some crops depend on pollinators for fruit and seed production. It is estimated that pollinators contribute to 1 of every 3 bites of food you take. What steps can you take to protect pollinators from pesticides?

**npic** 800.858.7378 ?  
NATIONAL PESTICIDE INFORMATION CENTER [npic.orst.edu](http://npic.orst.edu)



## How can I protect pollinators?



Don't spray flowers directly



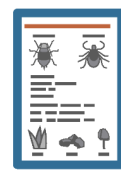
Use when pollinators are not active



Spray as close to the pest as possible



Long lasting products may have higher risks



Follow the label - including use sites and methods

## PLANNING FOR POLLINATORS

Spring is almost here and insects will be emerging from their winter resting places. You may be cleaning up your garden soon, or planning for invasive plant removal volunteer activities in your local area. While you are preparing for planting, maintaining, or removing flowers and grasses, be sure to plan for the pollinators. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has a terrific [guide](#) for considering pollinators that reminds us when we build our gardens - *“think about more than just the summer growing season. Pollinators need nectar early in the spring, throughout the summer, and even into the fall. Choosing plants that bloom at different times will help you create a bright and colorful garden that both you and pollinators will love for months!”* Additionally, be thoughtful about pesticide usage in existing gardens or community weed-clearing projects. The graphic above from the National Pesticide Information Center illustrates some helpful tips for using pesticides (which include herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides). As Naturalists, we are well aware that pollinators are essential to the function of our natural ecosystems so we have to ask ourselves how we can be more mindful in personal practice to plan for and protect them.

## REMINDERS!

Contact Courtney Rudd ([courtney.rudd@wyo.gov](mailto:courtney.rudd@wyo.gov), 307-335-2635) or Zach Wallace ([zach.wallace1@wyo.gov](mailto: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 from the Wyoming Naturalist Program.**

The Pinyon Jay Community Science Project, coordinated by the Great Basin Bird Observatory, is now attempting a comprehensive survey of habitats that Pinyon Jays use throughout the year across the western US. The project enlists volunteers as community scientists to monitor habitat usage and document Pinyon Jay behavior. Once you sign up, you can collect data whenever you are out birding or make a special trip to explore a new part of the state!

**This virtual training is for an ongoing volunteer opportunity to seek out and record Pinyon Jay data as part of an effort to stop the STEEP decline of Pinyon Jay.**

Location: Zoom

Date/Time: March 19th, 2024 6:30 PM MT

Registration: <https://audubon.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYqdumtpj0qHNEXpKzhrsWATTqyhd96xYFu>

## COMMUNITY COLLABORATION IN CASPER [PART 2]

*(Continued from the February issue)* Joanne Theobald's expectation for the stakeholder meeting regarding interpretive signage at Rotary Park in Casper was that partners would provide input on design, get approval from Natrona County Parks, and move forward. She prepared for the presentation by working with Natrona County Weed & Pest on sign locations, the Tate Geological Museum for artwork, and WNP's Geology instructor, Melissa Connelly, on content. Joanne definitely didn't anticipate the scale of enthusiasm and support that this idea received. According to Joanne, "They were excited, and it was actually such good timing because the Rotarian Committee for signage in the park had kind of stalled. They need to update them, and in one guy's words, I 'breathed life' back into it by bringing up the interpretive signage." The presentation inspired the stakeholders to form an official Rotary Park Improvement Committee which will be able to implement larger projects in the future. Not only that, but it will ensure that all signage and updates to the park have continuity under the committee umbrella. The next steps include creating and distributing a needs assessment survey to stakeholders, inviting additional groups and individuals to participate, and managing the logistics of mapping and sign design. Joanne would like to include other WY Naturalists in this collaboration and she plans to reach out for content and design suggestions in the future. She says, "I appreciate so much the way WNP has opened up all the ways I can learn about so many things...I'm most excited about this committee, as I love collaboration, something I miss about my career as a Social Worker. One of the key roles Social Workers play is 'the initiator,' when we see a need, so it's really neat that I can transfer that skill to volunteering and serving the natural world."

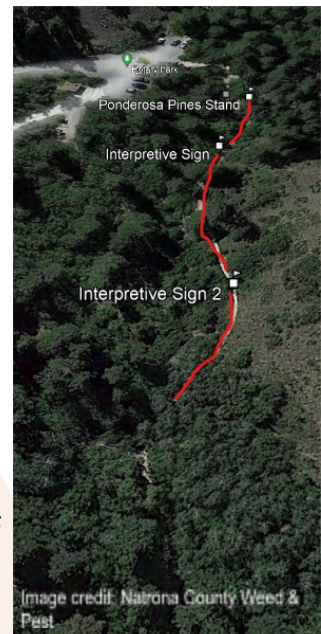


Image credit: Natrona County Weed & Pest

\*\*\*\*\*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



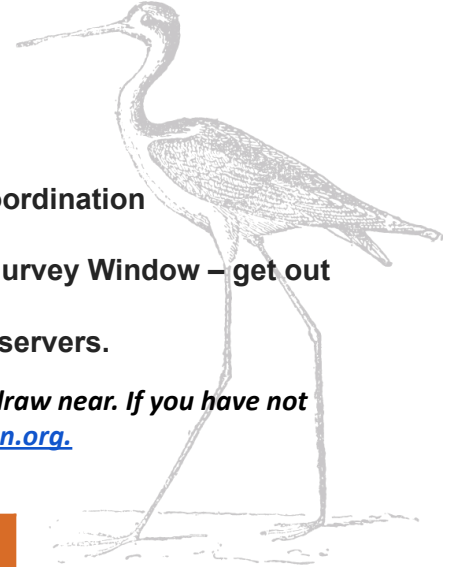
## INTERMOUNTAIN WEST SHOREBIRD SURVEYS - SPRING 2024

The Intermountain West is an oasis for our migratory shorebirds. A comprehensive shorebird survey was last completed across the region in 1989-1995, but much has changed in the past 25 years. This Shorebird Survey is replicating the census of the past so we can better manage shorebirds into the future. The goal of the Intermountain West Shorebird Survey is to sustain shorebird populations.

### How can you help?

1. **We need more shorebird observers!**
2. **Save the dates!**
  1. **February and March – Sign up for surveys**
  2. **March and first two weeks of April – Site assignment coordination**
  3. **April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – Shorebird Training and Office Hours**
  4. **April 24<sup>th</sup>-April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024: Spring 2024 Peak Shorebird Survey Window – get out and count shorebirds!**
3. **Mileage reimbursement is available for volunteer shorebird observers.**

*If you have participated in the past, you will be contacted by Max as the dates draw near. If you have not participated but would like to, please contact Zach at [zach.hutchinson@audubon.org](mailto:zach.hutchinson@audubon.org).*



### 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](mailto:ZACH.HUTCHINSON@AUDUBON.ORG)

JACELYN (KEYS) AT [JACELYN.DOWNNEY@AUDUBON.ORG](mailto:JACELYN.DOWNNEY@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

