



ESTABLISHED IN : 1999, to support National Audubon Society activities in Colorado
 STATE BIRD : Lark Bunting, *Calamospiza melanocorys*
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The Western Landscape Initiative: Audubon Colorado and the Sage-Grouse

Across the West, there is a battle against time, with oil and gas companies trying to gain development access to as much of our public lands as they can before there is a change in administrations. State-wildlife agencies and conservation organizations, on the other hand, are trying hard to conserve vanishing numbers of one of the western wildlife icons—Sage Grouse.

The Bureau of Land Management is struggling under this administration to fulfill its obligations to conserve wildlife while allowing other compatible uses. (for more on Audubon's response to this particular issue, see our website at www.auduboncolorado.org).

The National Audubon Society has recently initiated a project to frame the discussion on energy development on public lands in the west, by focusing specifically on protection of the Greater and Gunnison Sage-Grouse populations and the sagebrush steppe ecosystem on which they rely.

Audubon's ultimate desired outcome is to ensure that healthy populations of Greater and Gunnison Sage-Grouse persist along with sustainable use of the land throughout its historical range well into the future. The Sage-Grouse needs big, undisturbed landscapes to breed and nest.

Audubon will coordinate a three-pronged approach to ensure the protection of sage-grouse:

1. **Policy.** Working with our national policy office in Washington DC, as well as leading Audubon scientists at the national level, we will engage with federal and state decision makers to define and implement necessary protections. We will apply existing, or develop new, legal and policy actions to slow or temporarily halt oil and gas development in critical parts of the sagebrush ecosystem.

2. **Action.** Audubon will empower our members to engage locally in conservation issues and projects, educate landowners on conservation protection, engage in the already active Sage-Grouse working groups, and convey a powerful conser-

vation message to local, state and national media. We will also launch a national media campaign to regularly focus attention on this critical issue.

3. **Science.** We will work with local, state and federal agencies, private landowners, oil and gas companies, and our conservation partners to protect and preserve existing habitats and Sage-Grouse populations across Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Montana, with a particular focus on leks, or Sage-Grouse breeding grounds. Audubon will encourage conservation easements, land acquisition, best management practices and on-the-ground restoration projects as our main strategies for habitat conservation.

The western landscape is very important ecologically and culturally to our entire nation. Audubon believes that healthy Sage-Grouse populations can coexist with the extraction of oil and gas resources; however, not in the manner or at the pace that energy extraction is occurring today.

The Jake and Terry Hershey Audubon Outreach Program

Audubon Colorado, in coordination with Four Mile Ranch, is coordinating a hands-on environmental education program for youth in grades two through four in the Pagosa Springs Elementary School District. Starting in the spring of 2008, students will be engaged in an experiential environmental education curriculum both in their classrooms and on-site at the Ranch.

Audubon hired its 5th employee, Linda Newberry to coordinate our policy and outreach activities in southwest Colorado and start a new chapter out of Pagosa Springs. The new chapter has already met several times and is hosting informative and/or wildlife viewing events. Contact Linda at the Southwest Regional Audubon Office at 970-884-8555. If you're in the area or just passing through, let us know and we can coordinate a visit to the Four Mile Ranch.

Audubon and Global Warming: A New Campaign

Audubon Colorado is teaming up with Audubon chapters, our national policy office, other Audubon state offices and several environmental organizations in Colorado to develop strategies on how to address global warming. First, Audubon is assessing its personal carbon footprint, looking at ways to reduce energy use, office waste and carbon emissions. Second, Audubon is working at the state and federal level to pass legislation that will implement renewable energy and fuel efficiency standards. Also, Audubon has been working with local chapters to encourage greater awareness of global warming issues, impacted bird species and on-the-ground activities.

For more specific information on what Audubon is doing about global warming, check out our website at www.audubon.org/globalwarming.

If you are interested in using our materials or hand-outs for your classroom or group or in finding out how you can participate with your local chapter, please contact us at 303-415-0130.



The Audubon Center for Conservation Careers

In 2007, the groundwork was laid for the start-up of the Career Development Program at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. This past year, Audubon completed our Business Plan and solidified partnerships with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Commerce City and National Parks Service.

The heart of the Audubon Center for Conservation Careers and the program that we are launching in 2008 is the Conservation Career Development program. This program will change the face and voice of conservation by providing a long-term career development program to guide students from inner city and other underserved communities into conservation and science-related careers. Audubon will play a key role in helping a new generation develop lifelong learning skills linked to a steward-

ship ethic; ultimately creating a more environmental informed and committed citizenry.

As of September 2007, we have already received funding commitments of \$95,000 and are planning on bringing on a Center Director in the beginning of 2008!

Conservation Partners: Audubon and Shell Oil on the White River

Along with new renewable energy sources, people will continue to use some traditional fossil fuel-based energies for the foreseeable future; so, it's important to develop energy resources in ways that are compatible with other societal needs. Audubon Colorado is pleased to be working with Shell, Rio Tinto, and Xcel in ways that ultimately benefit the earth and wildlife we all treasure.

Audubon has teamed up with Shell Oil this year to complete the planning and launch the implementation of a multi-year effort to enhance critical bird habitat areas along the White River near Meeker. Director of Conservation, Ken Strom, has been meeting with representatives from Shell Oil to work with them on restoring wetland/meadow habitats and riparian woodlands along the White and Colorado Rivers. Ultimately, Audubon is planning on coordinating a larger Joint Venture project, that would include government agencies and landowners in the region.

Featured Colorado Bird: Evening Grosbeak



Evening Grosbeak populations have declined by almost 95% since 1967. They are found in montane forests and therefore are susceptible to all the incursions into those habitats: logging, mining, drilling, acid rain, and human development for transportation and housing. This bird's future will depend on keeping Colorado's mountain forests healthy.