**Female Narrator:** [00:00:00] Welcome to the Lawn and Garden podcast with University of Wyoming extension specialist, Jeff Edwards and co-host, Jerry Erschabeck. Originally aired on KGOS and KERM in Torrington, join Jeff, Jerry, and their special guests as they talk all things gardening in the Wyoming. Our Lawn and Garden Podcast helps you improve your home garden or small acreage. [MUSIC]

**Jeff Edwards:** Good morning everybody. This Jeff Edwards and Tom McCreery for the Lawn and Garden program. How are you, Tom?

**Tom John McCreery:** I'm good. How are you, Jeff?

**Jeff Edwards:** Good to see you today. I'm doing [OVERLAPPING].

**Tom John McCreery:** I love birds [LAUGHTER].

**Jeff Edwards:** Our topic today. Well our guests, let's get to our guests first, is Jacelyn Downey. She is from Audubon of the Rockies. We will be spending time talking about birds and sharing wisdom about birds. Good morning, Jacelyn.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Good morning. Thanks for having me.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yes, great to have you here today. We are going to take a few minutes for our sponsors and we'll be back in a moment. [MUSIC]

**Female Narrator:** You are listening to the Lawn and Garden podcast presented by University of Wyoming extension, extending the land-grant mission across the state of Wyoming with a wide variety of educational programs and services. Visit us at wyoextension.org. [MUSIC]

**Jeff Edwards:** All right. Good morning everybody. Welcome to the KGOS KERM Lawn and Garden program. I'm Jeff Edwards along with Tom John McCreery and Jacelyn Downey this morning from Audubon of the Rockies. All right, so let's talk about birds. [LAUGHTER]

**Jacelyn Downey:** Okay. Fantastic. Well, I guess one of the first things I'll mention is one of the things that's happening right now is that people are asking if it's happening here in Wyoming, and I haven't heard of it happening yet, but in New Mexico, I'm not sure if you heard about this, New Mexico and Southern Colorado and parts of Texas, there's massive deaths of songbirds recorded. They are finding them all over the place. It's thousands of birds that they're finding. The big question is, what happened to them? Right now, US Fish and Wildlife Service is doing a bunch of testing on those birds, but it's thought that maybe the wildfires had something to do with it, that these birds were just settling, getting ready for migration, and they weren't quite ready for it. It wasn't quite time, but we forced them to leave their spots. That there was a cold snap and that may have had something to do with it. There's thoughts that there was a heat wave and [LAUGHTER] that could have had something to do with it. Also a lot of high winds in areas that it hasn't been. It could be that those four things all conversed at once and sadly, all of these birds were unable to survive. So it's kind of sad thing. Hopefully we'll learn a little bit more about what's happening.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah, that is very [OVERLAPPING] unfortunate. So it was Texas, [00:03:00] New Mexico, Southern Colorado?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. That's where they found them so far. I haven't really heard about it happening in other places, but I guess we'll kind of keep an ear out for that.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah, hopefully we'll find out what's going on.

**Tom John McCreery:** Jacelyn, as far as global warming, could that be a situation where the birds are migrating differently?

**Jacelyn Downey:** I mean, it could [NOISE] that it's definitely thoughts that that will happen long-term effects for that. There's been some projected reports about, so if this is happening and this is what's been going on, certain specific species of birds, what will they do? How will they react? [OVERLAPPING]. Some birds will be fine, obviously. The birds that can live anywhere and can withstand a lot of change. Then you have your very specific types of birds that maybe only come to a certain area because they have a certain type of food that they need at a certain time because it helps them go onto their migration. Birds like that, that have these really specialized diets and specialized needs, obviously if everything changes for them, it's not going to go well. But what just happened this year, I think they do think it's very specifically a onetime event in what happened to them.

**Jeff Edwards:** One time event this year. Let's hope. [LAUGHTER] [OVERLAPPING]

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yes. Who knows what's going to happen when you have such a huge impact, like the fires that have been happening here in the West. I imagine we're going to see the long-term effects of this for years to come. Right now we're all worried about all the families in their homes, but I'm sure it's going to have an effect.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, it would impact all the wildlife, so that's there, and I'm sure if there are things they're trying to get away from it and if we can't breathe, they can't breathe either, right?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Right. Yeah. Might be interesting to see what comes this way, if everything's trying to escape. We may find ourselves with some pretty interesting animal sightings later this fall.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. When we had Zach on the program last time, he mentioned that there were some birds showing up in Wyoming earlier this year that don't normally travel through or spend time here. We get weird things every once in a while. [LAUGHTER]

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah.

**Tom John McCreery:** When Eric was on, he talked about keeping your bird feeders clean. So I cleaned them all up and sprayed them with light Clorox solution. I was very proud of myself because I think it's with diseases, we'll just spread them, and so during the winter months, I haven't put them out yet. I've got some other stuff out. But when should I put those out, any time?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Well, yeah. Well, first, it depends on where you live. If you're in bare country, you want to wait until October to place your feeders out again. If you're not, then now is a great time to start putting feed out for birds. I guess the thing to [00:06:00] always remember is I get a lot of questions about, if I'm feeding these birds, I'm I just delaying the migration? Are they going to find themselves in a bad situation if they think there's food here all year round and they don't get a move on? But that will not happen. That's not something that, you may have your opportunistic birds like Robins, which have kind of weird migration things anyway, but for the most part, the birds have that internal clock that lets them know, regardless. That's just kind of helps them get moving on their way. You're not going to stop birds with that.

**Jeff Edwards:** A buffet is not close, but you need to move. [LAUGHTER].

**Jacelyn Downey:** That one, who knows? Well, the thing with the birds that they found that died in New Mexico and the other states, they're actually insectivores, so feeders would not have helped them necessarily. I mean, they may have been able to, but if they found themselves starved in their situation, that's not what their diet would have been anyway.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah, interesting. We talk a lot about low insect populations, I don't know Tom, if you've notice this year, where we are, we didn't have a lot of mosquitoes. Normally, we have biting flies, but I think that there's some folks that have been trying to work on that and get those under control.

**Tom John McCreery:** We have had an abundance of hoppers, grasshoppers.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yep. Grasshoppers [OVERLAPPING] their numbers are building. Yeah. I think the birds that are in our area and were feeding on the grasshoppers early on decided that they'd have had enough and moved on. [LAUGHTER]

**Tom John McCreery:** Jacelyn, do you have had a lot of hoppers up there?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. We have. We have. I've definitely noticed a lot of lark sparrows. They tend to like grasshoppers. I saw a lot more lark sparrows this year, than I have, in years past. It seems like the birds that nest around our place here, so are robins are, Say's Phoebes, are Lark sparrows. They all just seem to have so much to feed their young this year. We also have chickens. I mean, it is hilarious to watch them pick down grasshoppers. It's a little bit satisfying. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** The chicks are sitting in the nest going" Grasshoppers again!" [LAUGHTER]

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. All these nestlings. Every two minutes that they have not received a new bite to eat, they're screaming and crying in their nest.

**Jeff Edwards:** I believe I mentioned to Zach that right before he came on the air with us, there was a robin that was out and it just looked like it had been run through a ringer. Its feathers were all disheveled and it had a mouthful of insects, I think. It was taking a moment for itself [LAUGHTER] before it went back [00:09:00] to the nest.

**Jacelyn Downey:** [LAUGHTER] I can relate.

**Jeff Edwards:** You can relate Jacelyn. [LAUGHTER]

**Tom John McCreery:** Jacelyn, I was at the country club and they have an outdoor space. There were barge full of house swallows and there were six little guys in there, their parents were just grabbing insects, they're fun to watch. I really enjoyed it. Their nest is unbelievable. The way they do the mud.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah.

**Tom John McCreery:** They were on top of line up there and it was pretty cool.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Swallows are amazing how fast they can actually build those nests. That's incredible to me that one day it's not there, the next day it is. [LAUGHTER]

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. Whenever we do our bird banding station, as for those who don't know what that is, we have stations throughout Wyoming. This year we only did two because of we didn't have as much volunteer, we didn't want to expose volunteers to potential COVID risks. So we just toned it down a bit how many we did, putting nets out. The idea is put these nets out, and they're like big volleyball nets that reach from the floor to about 12 feet up. We catch birds and we've put them individually numbered tags on their legs, the little bands, and get awesome information and then we release them. Then the idea is that someone, somewhere either at the same station to know they've come back every year or at different stations. For example, in Costa Rica, right now, they're going to be getting ready to see all of our orioles, our Bullock's orioles. So they'll be going down there. If we tagged them here in Wyoming, and they tagged them down in say Costa Rica, then we'll know that they made a successful migration that year. If we get them back, even if we don't know where they went, we get them back 2-3 years and really know, "Hey, they have a successful migration three years in a row." and it really is a cool thing to do. But my point there is that we do catch swallow sometimes. Sometimes the cliff swallows and all the different types of swallows we have in Wyoming. They're so funny, their legs are literally like maybe an inch. They're just little tiny. It's just like if you think about a T-Rex who doesn't have very long arms compared to its body, its little legs are the same kind of a thing, it's got these real long wings compared to its body. They also don't really have a neck. All of that is so that they can fly, of course, and just catch. They have a neck of course, but compared to other birds, it's like a little stumpy thing. So they can go out and be voracious insect catchers out there, and they are so fun to watch. They're just speed machines built for what they do.

**Jeff Edwards:** Forgive my ignorance, but how many types of swallows do we have in Wyoming?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Well, we have the violet green, which are just beautiful. As just as it sounds, they have a teal [00:12:00] and a purple color. We have the tree swallow, we have cliff, bank and barn swallow, and also ruffling swallow. I believe that might be it. We also have a couple of varieties of swifts.

**Tom John McCreery:** I have Petersons bird back, it's a field guide to Western birds. They show six different types of swallows. It's kind of neat, it's just a real interesting book. This one is not up to date, my dad habit. That's years ago, 1934.

**Jeff Edwards:** But it haven't changed much since then Tom.

**Tom John McCreery:** Right. [LAUGHTER] But it has a real good, some colored pictures, which I like pictures. It's just a fascinating book and give you a lot of insight on what we have around here. The orioles, you get orioles up at your your place?

**Jacelyn Downey:** We do. We get Bullock's orioles. It's interesting, what we've found recently at our bird banding station, we would always catch Bullock's orioles, lots of Bullock's orioles. That would be the only oriole we would catch. Slowly over the last 10-12 years, we've been catching orchard orioles more frequently, which is interesting. We've even, the last two years, started to see Baltimore orioles, which are not supposed to be this far West. That's interesting, I don't why or happening there, but I love to see the orioles, they're beautiful. So I'm happy to have them.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah, that's interesting that the other species are showing up.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. I think last year or this year, both years. The orchard orioles have outnumbered Bullock's orioles, from what we've caught. I don't know if that's just anecdotal, some turf war is happening over Keyhole State Park.

**Jeff Edwards:** I'm going to have to look up what a orchard oriole looks like.

**Jacelyn Downey:** They're not as brilliant. You think about if Baltimore orioles or the Bullock's orioles, they're that black. At least the males are black with the bright orange. The orchid orioles are just a little more muted, and they're more yellowy.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay. All right. I hate to admit it, I don't spend a whole lot of time watching the birds and trying to figure out which ones are different from others. If I can recognize them pretty quickly, then I'm okay.

**Jacelyn Downey:** The Bullock's orioles are fun because they like to nest in cottonwood trees, at least they do around here. They are the kind of nest builders that build the pendence, like little basket weavers.

**Jeff Edwards:** Woven, yeah.

**Jacelyn Downey:** I just think that it's just beautiful. Of course, you don't see them at all until winter when everything goes away and all you can see are just the limbs of the trees, and then you can spot them, and then it's like, "Wow, this has been happening all around me [00:15:00] and I haven't even noticed."

**Jeff Edwards:** We have quite a few cottonwoods in our place and they nest in our cottonwoods. I think one of their favorite nesting materials is baling twine.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** It's pretty tough stuff, and you see these orange and yellow nests up in the trees. [LAUGHTER] So it's pretty obvious that it's them making them out of the baling twine.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah, very cool.

**Tom John McCreery:** Do you have any owls? Any raptors where you live?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Oh, yes. We have nesting bald eagles. I live on a ranch, so we have nesting bald eagles in this one particular area. The way that where they nest is really great because the trees are down in a canyon where you stand up and you can see almost eye level with them. It's kind of fun to watch them. We've got some great blue heron rookery nest, so that's been kind of fun to watch them. We actually had Zach came up and he was able to film the rookery. Of course, Jeff, you do a lot of video things. When we went up there, they were everywhere, just all around and you can hear them. The moms and dads are feeding the babies and the babies heads were up and they were doing all kinds of things. We turn on the video for this live Facebook-

**Jeff Edwards:** Nothing.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Like they went silent. [LAUGHTER] There was one part where all these vultures were flying by two. Again, because we're on a rim rock and they were flying at eye level, Zach started talking about the vultures. As soon as he turned the film camera over here, they disappeared. [LAUGHTER] It's like, "I'm sorry, you guys aren't seeing what we're seeing, but we're seeing some amazing bird life here. Too bad for you guys." [LAUGHTER] in Facebook.

**Jeff Edwards:** At that point, you just encourage people to go out and look on their own. Sorry about the video.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Right, yeah.

**Tom John McCreery:** Well, the turkey vultures, currently Wyoming is really at the lake, high mountain. They are the coolest flyers. Like you, were 500 feet off the ground. So they're at eye level, and you'll go around the corner and they nest or roost in pine trees. It's a fascinating situation, I've always liked turkey vultures. They're carrying eaters, and that in itself is, they clean up our highways and our byways.

**Jeff Edwards:** Sunday, Diane and I got a bike ride in and there was the turkey vultures were out circling near the airport. Something must have brought them him in out there.

**Tom John McCreery:** Yeah.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. Well, that's a real danger. Plane versus birds. It's not only is it dangerous for the birds, but it's dangerous for people. A lot of these bigger planes, they can deal with a couple of strikes, but the [00:18:00] little plane, sometimes they don't win that battle. I know there's all sorts of new technologies, especially at the airports that they're doing to mitigate that. Things like robo raptors and actual falcons that are trained and, you know, lasers, and all this different kind of stuff.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, interesting.

**Tom John McCreery:** It is.

**Jacelyn Downey:** I imagine in Torrington, though, at the airport they don't have a raptor or robo raptor. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Probably not.

**Tom John McCreery:** Yeah, probably not.

**Jeff Edwards:** Let's see. Jacelyn, I know that speaking of roboraptors, have you had any issues with people using drones to try to get closer to birds that you know of?

**Jacelyn Downey:** I haven't really heard a whole lot about that. I know that that's the sound. A lot of the drone sound like a formula or a dirt bike.

**Jeff Edwards:** They sound like angry bees to me.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. It's something that a lot of birds, they'll get flushed before I think the drones are able to really get a look.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay.

**Jacelyn Downey:** But I'm sure that that's been something. I know they are even using the drones to do hunting, to spy, so things like that. I haven't really heard of any complex. Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Sorry, weird question. It just came to my brain when you were talking about birds at the airport, so anyway. This morning on our bike ride, in the distance, we were able to see a group of turkeys that were out and are in our neighborhood, and a bald eagle, and other raptors out this morning. There's quite a few things up flying around. [LAUGHTER]

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. In Wyoming, we've got a place in southwest Wyoming in Kemmerer. I'm not sure if you guys are familiar with the area there. There's Commissary Ridge. A lot of raptors when they're going to migrate, they used the updraft of where the mountains are.

**Jeff Edwards:** Like [inaudible]

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. So they will all converge in areas and do these mass migrations. Here, next month, they're going to start to be going through that area. There's people who go to these these raptor watches and they'll count them. Commissary Ridge is not that busy, as not as busy as some of the other mountain ranges. In Pennsylvania, there's a mountain range where it's just like thousands of raptors coming through every day. You go out there, there's little clickers, then people just sit down there and they know and they can tell. It's amazing. I have a hard time telling just from silhouette on a lot of the raptors, but they can tell it. They are just so far away, all they can see is practically a black smudge and they can tell what kind of raptor it is based on shape and how they're moving and even where [00:21:00] they're at. So that's a cool thing that happens coming up here pretty quick.

**Jeff Edwards:** They're counting and keeping track and those types of things?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Very cool. Hey, I think it's time to take a break. Listen to our sponsors and we'll be back in a bit and talk a little bit about more birds. [MUSIC]

**Female Narrator:** Looking for the best way to keep up with all the news from University of Wyoming Extension, The College of Agriculture, and Wyoming AG Experiment Stations, the uwagnews.com website features real-time education, research, and extension events, and feature stories from across the state. Bookmark uwagnews.com today and subscribe to our monthly e-mail newsletter. Uwagnews.com: Growing people, knowledge and communities.

**MALE\_1:** Boys and girls, green thumbs of all ages. Gardening and growing in Wyoming can be challenging, but yet a rewarding experience. The University of Wyoming extension is here to help with a vast amount of how-to videos and resources to better assist you with all your gardening questions and needs. Our playlist is extensive and includes resources on flowers and bulbs, fruit trees, grass and turf management, pest problems, soil and composting, starting your garden, and herbs and vegetables. All these resources are free of charge and on our website for you to use to make your gardening experience green and prosperous. Find all your gardening needs and resources at www.uwyocnp.org\gardening-videos. Remember, happy gardening and green thumbs.

**Jeff Edwards:** All right, good morning everybody. This is Jeff Edwards and Tom McCreery this morning for the KGOS/KERM Lawn and Garden program. We've been talking with Jacelyn Downey from Audubon of the Rockies about birds. Last little segment, we were talking about raptors and other things, drones. [LAUGHTER] Jacelyn, before we started the program, you mentioned citizen science project. Do you want to delve into that a little bit further?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Sure, yeah. Tom, you were mentioning having the bird book, and of course those are super helpful, especially if you've got a feeder, or if you're driving around, you've got it. So if you're seeing birds, you can use it to identify. But I will tell you that the latest in bird ID technology is using iNaturalist, which is a citizen science app and it's not just birds. I'm not saying that we have to get away with the eBird because I love eBird as well, which eBird is very specifically for documenting birds that you find. But if you don't know what you're looking at, then iNaturalist is great. If you can get a good picture of a bird, it will [00:24:00] automatically generate possibility of what you're looking at. So often it's correct or at least it gets you in the same category so that you can then use your identification books to figure out what it is that you have. No one knows [inaudible] side is that. Sometimes with a phone, it's hard to get a good picture of a bird if it's farther away. If you're using a regular camera, you can use the regular camera for a picture and then upload those pictures and use that to identify. [OVERLAPPING]

**Tom John McCreery:** That is a wonderful technology. It's like they also have for looking at the stars, same type of technology, and you can figure out where you are in the sky. But the bird one, I'm getting a new phone very soon, because mine ran out of memory.

**Jeff Edwards:** Loaded with photos.

**Tom John McCreery:** I'm got it loaded up and it sounds like a great idea, Jacelyn. [OVERLAPPING]

**Jeff Edwards:** I use iNaturalist for weed ID, tree ID, [OVERLAPPING] insect ID. So there's a lot of different uses for iNaturalist. It's a very good app for your phone. If you're interested and you're out and you go, "Hey, what's that tree?" It's very good. [OVERLAPPING]

**Jacelyn Downey:** It is very good. All the information is useful to the scientific community. We usually do a bio blitz which is, we go somewhere in Wyoming and, we partner with the Nature Conservancy and the Biodiversity Institute, and Game and Fish, and Wyoming Natural Diversity Database, State Parks. Usually, we pick somewhere new every year. Of course this year everything got canceled so we decided to do it statewide with just using the iNaturalist app for that weekend, which was in July. Normally, we get about a 100 people, maybe 80 to a 100 people participate, this year we had over 229 observers, which could be entire families. They observed over 5,000 species. Excuse me, made 5,000 observations with almost 2,000 different species in the state just over the weekend. So it was a 10 times increase from the way that we done it in the past. We'll still continue to choose one location to focus on but I think will also continue to do it. It was just amazing what we were able to see and find or all of the people of Wyoming will see and find.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. Citizen science projects, you recruit people from the public to help you document birds or whatever that project might happen to be, and it's usually in a particular time frame, right? Correct?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay. How do people find out about these projects?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Well, that's great. Obviously, Audubon Rockies, we have a lot of events going on. On Labor Day Weekend, it was hummingbird. The Hummingbird Day was on the Saturday of Labor [00:27:00] Day Weekend. We used iNaturalist. Anybody who used iNaturalist in the states of Wyoming, Colorado, or Utah, who observed hummingbirds, it went into the database just to see where the migration is. It's pretty commonly thought that there are no hummingbirds left in Wyoming that weekend, for the most part, except for maybe in the southwest corner of the state, and low and behold, we did see no hummingbird observations. All of them were in southern Colorado and southern Utah, which is what we expected. This next month in October, it's going to be Owl-tober. Anybody who observes owls that weekend, they're go into that database. What's more is we partnered with the Biodiversity Institute, UW Extension, and State Parks and Game and Fish to do a, excuse me, Wyoming Naturalist program, where starting in February, you can take classes on different subjects, like say, birds, rocks, plants, mammals, all of those things. Then you'll be a highly skilled and trained volunteer for all of those different organizations out there who do things like, Moose Day I know, happens in your guys' neck of the woods with Biodiversity Institute. Game and Fish has these two different types of events as well where they're looking for volunteers. We've also partnered with Serve Wyoming, Volunteer Wyoming, to get the word out there. We're really excited, it's new project. Because there's people out there who really enjoy doing these things and they want to be part of it. They want to be able to do these different community science projects. Some of them, you have to be just a little bit more trained than just the casual observer of hummingbirds on Labor Day Weekend.

**Jeff Edwards:** Sure. Tom, I think that's a new hobby for you.

**Tom John McCreery:** Oh, I'd love it. Once I get my new phone, I know I keep talking [inaudible] [LAUGHTER] I will load the app and I may have to call on you for a little tech help, Jeff.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** It's easy. You take a picture, you upload it, and it goes, "Okay, it's this.".

**Tom John McCreery:** Okay. [LAUGHTER] Jacelyn, how many of you people are in the rocky mountain area, the National Audubon Society?

**Jacelyn Downey:** There's three of us in Wyoming, and then, there are eight of us in Colorado, and there are three of us in Utah.

**Tom John McCreery:** Awesome. Very good.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yes. We're considered field staff for National Audubon in the Rocky Mountain region.

**Jeff Edwards:** Do you work cooperatively with all these other folks in other states too?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah, we do. Then, there's the chapter network and there's the different chapters throughout in every state, and there are volunteer organizations like a club, and they do a variety of things. Some [00:30:00] are really involved in education and going out to schools, some are doing field trips, or the meetings, and some get involved with advocacy or policy work. It really just depends on, I guess, the whim of that particular chapter. Then, there's also all of these state and regional offices that are staff of National Audubon.

**Tom John McCreery:** I might mention, Jacelyn, that the National Audubon Society is on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. That's very helpful as far as just increasing your knowledge, and that is awesome. They have a National Audubon Society, it protects the birds and we will protect the Earth, the birds. It's just a wonderful organization, and I'm so glad you're out there, so we have a better understanding.

**Jeff Edwards:** Tom, I know that you have been looking forward to Jacelyn visits since about July.

**Tom John McCreery:** [LAUGHTER] I had. I'm very excited.

**Jeff Edwards:** What questions do you have for her?

**Tom John McCreery:** Well, I've got the bird feeders and then I've got a bird box, and I put pegs in, so they have some place to stand. The hole may not be big enough in the bird box. Do you have any suggestions?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Well, I guess the question is what is the bird you're trying to attract? For example, mountain bluebirds, they don't need a perch, they don't need a little peg. They need nine sixteenths size of a hole or 1.5 inch. Now, bluebirds are slightly larger or slightly smaller? I think it's slightly larger than the western and the eastern bluebirds. They have a specific size hole just for them, but they will also use 1.5, which is what you could buy in the stores. That's fine. It's not a big deal. It's just about excluding other birds from the nest box that you don't want. Though the bluebirds, they will happily use bird boxes. Trees fall as well, so use those bird boxes. Sometimes they get a little vicious with each other, and I find that if you just put up a variety and a number of houses, then that can stop with some of the nest predation and fighting that can happen. [LAUGHTER]

**Tom John McCreery:** Mine is three quarters of an inch, maybe it's just not big enough for a hole.

**Jacelyn Downey:** That would work for the chickadees and the house wrens.

**Tom John McCreery:** That's what I'm looking forward. Yeah.

**Jacelyn Downey:** They will like that and you'll find that you'll have better look if you put the nest near something shrubby because those birds like that. Chickadees will like it if it's on a conifer. Honestly, house wrens are so funny. They will use a old pot that's been left on the side of your barn to nest in or they'll aboot, they will use pretty much anything [00:33:00] if they really want to nest where you're at.

**Tom John McCreery:** Should I put bedding in the bottom of the box like wood chips or something?

**Jacelyn Downey:** No. They may not like what you put in there, number 1, and number 2, they have their own specifications of what they like, different materials. Some birds use just grass, some are going to use twigs. Hummingbirds are amazing. They use spiderweb so that it can stretch to allow the growth of the nestlings. Also, will want to have spider eggs in there so that when they can hatch, and then the hatchlings [OVERLAPPING] They will eat the mites and other parasites that might be in there and then, the nestling birds will eat the spiders. [LAUGHTER]

**Tom John McCreery:** Is that a symbiotic relationship?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah.

**Tom John McCreery:** With different species of insects and birds, it's fascinating.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. It is. Well, and you mentioned owls. Owls and woodpeckers have a relationship wherein the woodpecker species will create a hole in a tree cavity in a dead tree or maybe a live tree, and a specific species of owl is usually matched with a specific species of woodpecker to make it home. There's a lot of thought that flickers and great horned owls go together. In the Southwest, it's things like the galah, woodpecker, and the pygmy owl. They have a relationship, it's very cool.

**Jeff Edwards:** So woodpeckers are the contractors of bird world? [LAUGHTER]

**Jacelyn Downey:** That's right.

**Jeff Edwards:** They build my house for me. [LAUGHTER].

**Tom John McCreery:** Jacelyn, the other thing I want to ask you, I had a couple of woodpeckers this spring, and one of my trees had gotten hit by a tornado, and the wood was real poppy, and these woodpeckers went in, and then they went down. Is that normal? Is that what they normally do? I just don't know much about woodpeckers.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. They had really amazing ways to get there. Usually, they like the beetle grubs in the trees, and they have very long barbed tongues that they can use to really get into the cavity of the trees. They may peck down and they move away all the wood pulp to get to an area where there's going to be a lot of grubs. Yeah, they do.

**Tom John McCreery:** Can they hear the grubs or they just dig until they find?

**Jacelyn Downey:** I don't know the answer to that question.

**Tom John McCreery:** I don't know either, obviously. [LAUGHTER]

**Jacelyn Downey:** Probably.

**Tom John McCreery:** Fascinating watching.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** I'm going to say yes because, well, entomology geek here.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Okay.

**Jeff Edwards:** You can hear [00:36:00] tree feeding insects feed on the trees. [LAUGHTER]

**Jacelyn Downey:** Okay.

**Jeff Edwards:** If I really heard. I'm guessing that birds entirely in tune to that. I think that they probably can.

**Tom John McCreery:** Well, robins, it can hear the worms in the yard because they turn their head [LAUGHTER] into a certain angle, [LAUGHTER] and they listen, and then they, I don't know. I just have watched them enough.

**Jeff Edwards:** You're pretty successful at pulling worms.

**Jacelyn Downey:** No. Like you said, those nestlings are not taking any patience between [LAUGHTER] the time that they get their first one and the next one. It always amazes me how. Those robins are just hoping, trying to keep up with the needs of their nestlings. [LAUGHTER]

**Tom John McCreery:** They are.

**Jeff Edwards:** Demanding. Those children are demanding. [LAUGHTER] Let's see. What else would you like to cover, Jacelyn?

**Jacelyn Downey:** I don't know. Well, I can report on we had red-tailed hawks that had a nest down on one of the canyons. It's really fun to watch the mom and talk about young screeching. My goodness, the juvenile was just screeching and then it would come up here to our place where we've got a pond and the trees, and screech. I am very disappointed to report that the red-tailed hawk got not one but two of our chickens.

**Jeff Edwards:** Man.

**Jacelyn Downey:** It really hasn't happened in a while. Last year, one of the chickens that was eaten by some sort of raptor, we didn't see what happened, was the very chicken that my daughter was going to show for fair that week. So we were really upset about that. [LAUGHTER] But this year, the grand champion trio of pullets, two of them, lost their lives to feed the screechy red-tailed hawk juvenile.

**Jeff Edwards:** Man. How does [OVERLAPPING].

**Tom John McCreery:** The red tail hawk was big enough to get it? Were they little chickens?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Well, no. But red-tailed hawks are one of our larger hawks that we have.

**Tom John McCreery:** Okay.

**Jacelyn Downey:** They know what they're doing. Yeah, very sad but I'm happy now, I guess, that the red-tailed hawk will go off and live a happy life and maybe have a successful migration.

**Jeff Edwards:** Be a permanent predator of chickens elsewhere? [LAUGHTER]

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yes. My goodness. [LAUGHTER] You know what? If it's not one thing, it's another. If it wasn't the raptor, it would have been some hog, or a fox, or a skunk, or a raccoon. It's a hard life down here for our chickens. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Yes, it is. Yes. Right. It's particularly hard before fair week. [00:39:00] [LAUGHTER]

**Jacelyn Downey:** Exactly, yes.

**Jeff Edwards:** Let's see. So you mentioned owls a little bit earlier.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** I just mentioned to my wife, this morning, that the hoot owls were back. They have a little different life cycle than what we think. Don't they nest and rear their young more in the fall and winter? Is that correct or am I totally wrong with that?

**Jacelyn Downey:** Well, it just depends on the species. For example, the burrowing owls are already on their way out.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Then the great horned owls, they stick around. So they have no need to get moving and be busy about their nesting. It's just species by species there. Can you give us a sound impersonation of the owls that you are hearing?

**Jeff Edwards:** That's like a hoot owl. Hoot. It's just a hoot. [LAUGHTER].

**Jacelyn Downey:** Okay.

**Tom John McCreery:** Jeff, we see a lot of [OVERLAPPING].

**Jeff Edwards:** That's my dagger. What's that, Tom?

**Tom John McCreery:** Well, we see a lot of great horned owls and some of the smaller ones. I'm not that familiar with the smaller ones, but you can always tell the great horn. They are huge.

**Jacelyn Downey:** They are, yes.

**Tom John McCreery:** They're great predators

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. I don't think these are horned owls. They're not that big. They're large, but they're not as big as a horned owl.

**Tom John McCreery:** Yeah.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Saw-whet owls are what we'll start to see now as well. But we also have screech owls and I didn't know where you're at, if its Eastern or Western screech owls that you get. I assume that it's Western. But you can say, in that area you have such a different ecosystem. You guys get things that we don't get in the west because I've heard you guys also get barn owls sometimes; is that true? We don't get it in the rest of the state.

**Jeff Edwards:** I believe so, yeah.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. You guys also get possum; is that correct?

**Jeff Edwards:** Yes.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. See now, you guys are the only ones. When I was growing up in California, we had a dog and the dog was a great possum hunter. We would get them in our backyard and he wouldn't eat them, he would just leave them there. I always thought that possums with the most terrifying creatures. When they are dead, they've got those just the teeth and it always looks like they want want to [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. Let me show you my teeth. Yeah. [LAUGHTER] They are interesting creatures, that's for sure.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. You guys have all the fun there [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Maybe not all the fun, but we have our own version. [LAUGHTER]

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah. Then here in the northeast part of Wyoming, we also get a lot of interesting birds and other animals because of the Black Hills. We get a lot more eastern species than the whole rest of the state gets and just different weird things that we have.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah.

**Tom John McCreery:** You get cardinals?

**Jeff Edwards:** We don't get cardinals. Are you seeing them?

**Tom John McCreery:** Occasionally. I've got a friend that scatters feeder and he's a bird guy. I think in the years we've talked about and he has seemed two or three [00:42:00] going through.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Sure.

**Tom John McCreery:** They don't stay very long. It's like [OVERLAPPING]. They're here for a very short period of time and then they're gone, and they're really fun to watch.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah.

**Tom John McCreery:** Yeah.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Cardinals are another one of those species that they're reporting more and more sightings, specifically in Colorado, and that's not a place they'd been before. They're not been in Wyoming. So it's just a new or at least in the numbers that they are now. It's a great occurrence really.

**Tom John McCreery:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Not just occasional, but they've basically established themselves.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Well, I think so. Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah.

**Tom John McCreery:** The thing that amazes me is we have a lot of goals here around the dump, and in the Laramie it was unbelievable, because they'd fish almost mountain lakes and then they'd go to the dump because there's a lot of food there.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Yeah.

**Tom John McCreery:** Just have tons of goals. If a person is plowing, they'll follow to get the worms and the insects out.

**Jeff Edwards:** Insects, yeah.

**Tom John McCreery:** Yeah.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Right. I know there are some people who have lifeless, these beggars who have lists that they keep track of all the species they've ever seen, and they want to see the one that they haven't had a chance to worry, maybe for that year. They all head to dumps to get there because there is sometimes this diversity of their goals and whatnot, that will descend upon that area.

**Tom John McCreery:** Yeah.

**Jacelyn Downey:** Now it's just really an open buffet for birds. Unfortunately, sometimes they can make them sick and sometimes they can really boost the population of bird that can have a drastic effect on other species.

**Tom John McCreery:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Interesting.

**Tom John McCreery:** If you go up the mountain lakes, you guys [OVERLAPPING].

**Jeff Edwards:** What's that?

**Tom John McCreery:** If you're fishing in a mountain like up in Laramie, gulls just hang around. If you catch a fish, they will help you [LAUGHTER].

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah.

**Tom John McCreery:** [OVERLAPPING] where they grab that fish. The burden that fish are going away, all of a sudden that ends quickly.

**Jacelyn Downey:** I haven't experienced that here in Wyoming. I see them obviously with state park right here, and at Keyhole, and other places I go. But growing up in California, when you meet the beach, you better be watching your food because they will, 100 percent, take it right out of your hand.

**Tom John McCreery:** Yeah.

**Jacelyn Downey:** That's one of those lessons you learn pretty quickly.

**Jeff Edwards:** You need to guard your food.

**Jacelyn Downey:** That's right.

**Jeff Edwards:** Tom, any other questions for Jacelyn?

**Tom John McCreery:** I'm sure I'll think them after we finished the program, but it was really good having you on Jacelyn. I just love to talk about birds.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yes. We do appreciate having you with us today. Tom, have you been [00:45:00] paying attention to things that are happening in the community that we need to let folks know about?

**Tom John McCreery:** I haven't heard much. I've been working for a long time, so I miss out on a lot.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay. All right. Well, we apologize for that if we aren't doing our duty in keeping people informed about what's going on in the county.

**Tom John McCreery:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** But hopefully, the folks at the radio station are keeping up with that and we don't have to worry about that.

**Tom John McCreery:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Again, Jacelyn, thank you for being here. I think we're going to wrap it up and call it a week.

**Jacelyn Downey:** All right. Well, thanks so much for having me.

**Tom John McCreery:** Thank you.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. Thank you, Tom, for being my co-host today.

**Tom John McCreery:** Welcome to that.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay. Well, see you all next week.

**Female Narrator:** You've been listening to Lawn and Garden with the University of Wyoming Extension specialists to Jeff Edwards and co-host Jerry Erschabeck. Catch next week's episode, Tuesday at noon on Spotify or extensions horticultural page.