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Narrator: Welcome to the Lawn and Garden podcast, with University of Wyoming Extension Specialist, Jeff Edwards, and co-host, Jerry Erschabek. Originally aired on KGOS and KERM in Torrington, join Jeff, Jerry, and their special guests as they talk all things Gardening in Wyoming. Our Lawn and Garden podcast helps you improve your home garden or small acreage.

Jeff: Good morning everybody. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabek. This is the KGOS/KERM Lawn and Garden program. On the line this morning, hopefully still there, we have Jacelyn Downey. Good morning, Jacelyn.

Jacelyn: Good morning.

Jeff: Hey, great to hear your voice. Sorry, we didn't get started right on time, but we had the legislative report, which I wasn't aware of. So, we've told Greg we're going to go a little bit long.

Jacelyn: No problem.

Jeff: Okay. All right. So good morning, Jerry. How are you?

Jerry: Good morning, Jeff. I'm doing really well. [00:01:00]

Jeff: Fantastic, let's take a little bit and listen to our sponsors and we'll be right back. Okay?

Jerry: Okay.

Narrator: University of Wyoming Extension events will not be held in person, through May 15th, 2020. Our educators are hard at work planning virtual education and activities. We will continue with much of our programming digitally on our website and official Facebook pages. See what we're up to this week at wyoextension.org or visit your county Facebook page. [MUSIC]

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Jeff: Good morning everybody. This is Jeff Edwards, Jerry Erschabek, and Jacelyn Downey this morning on the KGOS/KERM Lawn and Garden program. Jacelyn, I didn't do a proper introduction of you, but you are the Education Programs Manager for Audubon of the Rockies. Is that regional [00:03:00] or is that just in Wyoming?

Jacelyn: It is Wyoming, and that's where I'm based. I'm over by the Devils Tower area.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: But we also are the National Audubon Society's regional office of Colorado and Utah.

Jeff: Oh, okay. Fantastic. So, as a guest today, what would you like to talk about?

Jacelyn: Well, you know, one of your sponsors there, I'm sorry, I didn't catch what the full name was of the sponsor. But they sound like a home and garden store. It's that time. I think we're all starting to think about gardens and crossing our fingers that it's going to be green and lush again and not be so stark and white out.

Jeff: I think you guys are still dealing with a little bit of snow, aren't you?

Jacelyn: Well, we are. And I hate to complain about it, but it just doesn't seem like it's been a snowy has been in the past.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: So, I've always [00:04:00] been of the mind, if it's going to be winter, it might as well be cold and snowy, and get it over with so we can have spring.

Jeff: Correct. I'll look forward to the first greening up and the birds coming, right?

Jacelyn: Yeah. Actually, we're right about there for, at least in our area and for a lot of parts of Wyoming, one of the first spring migrants that comes back is the mountain bluebird.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: So, this week, or next week, or the week after is when, if you're paying attention, you might be able to spot the first ones coming back.

Jeff: Excellent. Jerry is much more of a birder than I am. He brought in a whole list of birds that he feeds. Is that correct?

Jeff: That is correct. Jacelyn, thank you for talking about birds. I just wanted to ask about this mountain bluebird. My brother had, and what we thought was just a blue, blue jay. You think that might be a [00:05:00] mountain, what you call it, mountain bluebird?

Jacelyn: Mountain bluebird, yeah, probably.

Jerry: Well, I'll be darned. And that was in Guernsey. But he stopped feeding birds because the deer was coming to his feeder, disrupting his feeder, and then eating his roses. So, he says, okay, something's got to give.

Jacelyn: Yeah. You think you're doing a good thing and before you know it, it's like you have a buffet for all the others.

Jerry: For everybody.

Jeff: Yeah. The good thing turn bad, right? [**Jacelyn:** Right.]

Jerry: So, my wife said, and I don't really care for the common grackle but, she says, "Hey, they have little babies, and they're hungry too," and so we feed them as well. But my favorite are the American goldfinch, and just the regular blue jay that we have around here.

Jacelyn: Right. Well, I like the goldfinch because they don't abandon us in winter. They stick around.

Jerry: They just change [00:06:00] colors, don't they?

Jacelyn: They do, yeah. But they don't abandon us, so that's nice. We can still see them especially if we put out feeders in the wintertime. Sometimes, you can lure them to stick around, so that's kind of nice.

Jeff: Jacelyn, do you recommend putting out feeders?

Jacelyn: You know, I think it's a combination and I think it just depends. If it seems like you're feeding more mice, deer, turkeys or anything else you don't want to, then probably you can take them down.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: I always think that it's best to also be sure you're planting in your garden the things that your birds maybe attracted to first before anything else.

Jeff: Sure. If you do recommend feeding them, are there particular bird seed mixes that you would recommend?

Jacelyn: Yes. Well, first, I would say no mixes.

Jeff: No mixes.

Jacelyn: That can be a [00:07:00] reason why deer and mice and others come around. Because our birds in Wyoming are picky and they only like a certain type of a seed. Other birds, and say, in the east part, eastern part of our country, they love millet. The cardinals and other birds like that. They love millet. [Okay.] Others do not like millet. So many mixes are mostly millet. Our birds will just throw them out of the feeders and they'll be scattered along the ground, and that's one of the reasons why. [OVERLAPPING]

Jeff: I've witnessed that. They go through it and they swing their heads back and forth and pitch all that stuff out looking for the ones that they like. [LAUGHTER]

Jacelyn: Yeah, but they do like, they like thistle seed. And those are the really tiny, small, black seeds that you can put in the sock style or the hanging style of feeder. Most of our birds really like just the black [00:08:00] oil sunflower seeds that you can put in most any type of feeder.

Jeff: Okay. So now, thistle seed. Is bird seed— has it been sterilized or are you setting yourself up for problems?

Jacelyn: [LAUGHS] Well, you know, most bird seed, and you can look to make sure, and I recommend that, that they are safe and they're not going to be sprouting. More so, that I've never had a problem really with the thistle seed sprouting, but I have had some rogue sunflowers that sprout.

Jeff: Sure. Okay.

Jacelyn: That kind of thing, but you can look and make sure that the package should say.

Jeff: What would it say on the package?

Jacelyn: That they are sterile.

Jeff: Okay. All right.

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jeff: How did they do that? Do you know?

Jacelyn: You know, I don't know.

Jeff: Hey, it's tough question day.

Jacelyn: Maybe, yeah.

[00:09:00] **Jerry:** That's a subject I never even considered. I've always heard that if you don't feed year-round, that you should probably consider cleaning [your bird feeders] out prior to your first filling, and do you like to do that as well? Do you use Clorox or what do you use?

Jacelyn: Well, you can use a little bit of Clorox and that's one of the things you have to be careful with, you don't want to have any residue because that makes the birds sick as well.

Jerry: Right.

Jacelyn: I think that one of the things that we benefit from in Wyoming that, let's say, maybe Arizona bird feeders don't benefit from, is that we are so cold. I think a lot of the bad bugs and everything like that actually is not a problem once it survives one winter.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: But certainly, you can [00:10:00] clean out your feeders. The ones that you need to be the most careful with are the hummingbird feeders. Those are the ones that can become just really nasty pretty easily just because they're full of sugar and they're typically in the sun, and that just the breeding ground for all sorts of bad stuff.

Jerry: So, you make wine, isn't it?

Jacelyn: Yeah, it's on the way. So, my mother loves hummingbirds and she has attempted multiple times to give us hummingbird feeders. I don't think it's intentional, but for whatever reason, I've broken every single one of them.

Jerry: Throw them my way before you break them. [LAUGHTER]

We have a red bush and I'm not really sure what its name is, but we have some hummingbirds coming to it, and they're just fascinating to watch.

Jeff: I prefer to let that happen naturally and hummingbirds come to our place too. So, if I'm not feeding them, they can find their own food, and then I'm not damaging the feeder.

[00:11:00] **Jerry:** There you go.

Jacelyn: Right. Hummingbirds are a good one and easy one to really, sort of gear your garden into attracting them.

Jeff: Sure.

Jacelyn: You can put a feeder out, and this happened to me once where I was on my porch and I had just that night before planted a flower. I think it was a penstemon in my little garden, my little potted garden that was right there. And I was enjoying coffee, and we don't get that many hummingbirds around here.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: I swear as I was drinking my coffee, a hummingbird and I had an encounter near the hummingbird did not come back, but I was just like, well, really, if you planted, they really do come, I guess.

Jeff: That's usually what happens, right? Nobody sees anything until you make an effort to try to lure them in or entice them in.

Jerry: And a lot of people think that you [00:12:00] should be quiet around birds. I find that to be just opposite. You can talk, you can do whatever you want, but you shouldn't move.

Jeff: No, you're supposed to be quiet around fish.

Jerry: Oh, yeah. Okay. [LAUGHTER]

So, my brother and I, we drink coffee and our bird feeders are Niger feeder, and that's the thistle, [Yep] we'd sit there and watch those birds come and go and they don't seem to mind as long as we're real slow about drinking our coffee.

Jeff: No aggressive movement.

Jerry: Yeah. So here's an interesting, well, interesting to me— We have cats. We have quite a few cats, as a matter of fact, and we find that if we don't let the cats out right away, we get most of our birds coming first thing in the morning, crack of dawn until about 9 o'clock. Do you have any ideas about— because cats [00:13:00] are ferocious hunters.

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jerry: I've heard that a vast majority of our birds are decimated by household and feral cats.

Jacelyn: Yeah, I think it's something like 3 billion is what one of the estimates was of birds killed each year by cats.

Jerry: Wow.

Jeff: Yeah, that's a lot.

Jacelyn: It's a lot. Yeah.

Jerry: It's the cycle of life. Yeah. When you're thinking, "Oh, there's my little bird, oh! No, it's not. There's my little favorite bird."

Jacelyn: I live on a ranch and you walk into the barn, and my mother and father-in-law have some barn cats there, and it's like a massacre there, feathers everywhere.

Jeff: A feather zone.

Jacelyn: In fact, their favorites are the mountain blue birds that we get around here. So [00:14:00] that brilliant blue, so you can't miss them.

Jeff: Yeah, that's really unfortunate.

Jacelyn: It is unfortunate. It's hard in Wyoming, we're just set-up for the necessity of having barn cats around.

Jerry: Right. Yeah. [OVERLAPPING]

I think you probably see different birds in the town versus different birds, edge of town as opposed to farmland. We live on the edge of town, it's kinda open, and so we had the opportunity to see a peregrine falcon strike a ring neck dove in mid-flight, and it's just amazing how agile and formidable that.

Jeff: The raptors really are?

Jerry: That raptor is, yeah.

Jeff: Raptors are very cool birds.

Jerry: Then they were walking on their legs with their wings spread out, really, just going after [00:15:00] this dove, and I'm like, "Holy cow! Glad it's him and not me."

Jacelyn: [LAUGHTER] Yeah.

Jeff: So, Jacelyn—

Jacelyn: [OVERLAPPING] Yeah.

Jeff: No, go ahead.

Jacelyn: Yeah. A similar thing that's really cool to watch is just some of the smaller raptors that you think about, the kestrel. I don't know if you are familiar with them, but they're a really small little falcon and they're just tiny little ferocious predators, so we see them when they're going after their prey. It's amazing to see them.

Jeff: I think kestrels are pretty common in this area.

Jerry: They look like little jet airplanes.

Jeff: Yeah.

Jerry: They're quick.

Jeff: Yeah. Very cool. So, if the blue birds are number one to show up, what's next?

Jacelyn: Well...I would get into an argument with one of my co-workers who believes that it's the meadowlarks that come first.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: But in our area, it [00:16:00] tends to be the bluebirds. Meadowlarks are right there behind them, and I think they're really easy to tell that they're around because they're so noisy. It's usually the male of the bluebirds that come in first, and typically, it's the males of the meadowlarks that you hear first.

Jeff: Their songs are very distinctive.

Jacelyn: They are very distinctive. To me, it signals springtime.

Jeff: Yeah, I agree.

Jacelyn: It's kind of sad— Sometimes, you can hear them, they'll also be singing as they leave and you're a little sad because you know that you're not going to hear them. If you hear them for a long time, it's going to be silent out there.

Jerry: Snow is coming.

Jacelyn: Yes.

Jeff: Are robins migratory?

Jacelyn: They will move around the state. They don't necessarily leave Wyoming. They may move from a higher elevation to a lower elevation, or they may move to an urban area where there may be... [Jeff: protected] more opportunity to be around [00:17:00] food that they're interested in. But typically speaking, the majority of them will stick around, or at least not go too far.

Jeff: Okay, interesting.

Jacelyn: So, they may disappear from your area and then come back.

Jeff: I seem to think that they stick around our place, whether they're eating worms or things in the lawn, because they're always hopping around in the lawn. They're always the first ones to wake up in the morning and start yakking and singing.

Jeff: Fighting over French fries in a parking lot someplace.

Jerry: And the last ones to go to bed.

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jeff: So, at our place, we have Bullock's orioles. Are you familiar with those, Jerry?

Jerry: Yes. I told my neighbor, "Hey, we should start feeding grape jelly to them." He goes, "What?"

Jeff: He's never heard that?

Jerry: Yeah. Well, he hadn't, but I had, and he started putting them out, and if you put out the feed, they come.

Jeff: Yeah, it's amazing. So [00:18:00] Jacelyn, if I remember correctly, Bullock's, their nest is a woven nest, is that correct?

Jacelyn: Yeah. It's a pendant-shaped thing hanging in the tree.

Jeff: Yeah. Right. A hanging woven nest. So, in our country, if you happen to see baling twine in a pendant-type shape thing hanging out of a tree, it's usually a Bullock's Oriole nest.

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jerry: I've never seen that.

Jeff: Yeah. While we have a couple at our place. But we learned how to feed them when we live back East. But they will also consume oranges. So, if you cut oranges in half, plus the grape jelly, they'll come in and hang out, and it's really cool to watch.

Jerry: I've also heard that fruits, cut up an apple, there are some birds that like fruit.

Jeff: Ask the expert, is that correct?

Jerry: Is that correct?

Jacelyn: Yeah, absolutely, and that's why right now, we can be jealous [00:19:00] of the Orioles since they're having a wonderful time eating fresh fruits in Costa Rica right now, or similar locations, because that's what they do. They follow their food.

Jeff: Yeah.

Jerry: What about bread? Some people say feed it, some people say don't feed it.

Jacelyn: Well, in small quantities, it's not a problem. It's not ideal. It's a processed food that's not similar to what birds typically eat. It's not a huge problem unless it's continuous.

Jeff: The neighbor's dog might find that too.

Jerry: Well, it depends on where you put it on your feeder, [LAUGHTER] because we have a platform feeder that's, I don't know, five feet up in the air. I seem to think that the birds like that platform feeder. It's just an open feeder on top of a pole, and they also like a barn [00:20:00] feeder. You flip up the top and fill it from the top and they eat it from the bottom.

Jeff: You can see the cats coming in.

Jerry: The cats go, "Hey, look at that." Is there type of feeder that you would recommend, Jacelyn?

Jacelyn: Depending on— I have two. I think if you have the two styles of feeders, you'll attract the most of the birds. One of them is what you described there, the hopper style, which just looks like a little barn with a lid that you lift up. That's the one that you use for the black oil sunflower seeds. And that will attract really the majority of all the bird species that we have in Wyoming that like bird feeders. Then the other one being the hanging sock style, or sometimes, they're like a hanging tube style, and those are the ones that you put the Nyjer/thistle seed in and that attracts a variety of birds as well. Particularly, the goldfinches, [00:21:00] that's one of their favorites, or the finch species that we get.

Jerry: Yeah, we get the yellow and it's a brilliant yellow breast, and then we get a red-breasted, red-headed finch kind of thing.

Jacelyn: Yeah. That would be—

Jeff: That's funny, Jerry. [OVERLAPPING]

Jerry: They're on this list. [INAUDIBLE]

We have 15, 16 different birds that seem to come around.

Jeff: As you can tell, Jacelyn, we're not the bird experts so we're glad we have you. [LAUGHTER]

Jacelyn: Well, I also am not a bird expert. I appreciate birds, and I maybe know more about birds than somebody who's not particularly interested in birds. But there's certainly many people in Wyoming that are just real experts for sure.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: There are whole listservs of people, they talk to each other and they announce the different [00:22:00] things that they've seen, and what's happening, or ask questions, or they show bird pictures, and that's a level that's a little above me.

Jerry: Yeah, it's above me as well.

Jeff: Is that part of the citizen science project or is it something completely different?

Jacelyn: Yeah. So eBird is a type of citizen or community science project where anybody at any time can be somewhere and either pull out their phone or take notes and enter it in a computer later on, but just records the bird that you're seeing. Then it's shared in real-time with anybody who wants to know. So, for example in Torrington, if you went to eBird, you could look up what has been found recently by the birders in your area, and you could also be part of that and you can just sign up, and you can start contributing to that.

Jeff: So [00:23:00] is that ebird.com?

Jacelyn: Yeah, it's ebird.org, I believe, actually.

Jeff: .org. Okay. All right.

Jacelyn: Yeah. There's an app, it's free. Since we're on that subject, I could recommend a few apps that are really awesome to try and figure out what bird is at your feeder. The first one I would say is an app, again free, Merlin, and that's like the bird or the wizard. That is by Cornell, and again, it's free, and it's so nice. You just enter in what day is it, what color was this bird, what was it doing, what was its general shape and size, and then it generates a list a possible birds that you might be seeing based on the data you gave it, and it's usually pretty spot on. It's easy for beginners. It's great for kids. It's great for anybody, really, who just wants to know what is that bird.

Jeff: Well, that's pretty cool.

Jacelyn: Audobon also has its bird ID that's free. [00:24:00] So there's some really great resources out there so that you can know what it is you're looking at.

Jeff: Okay. Instead of a little red bird. Yeah.

Jerry: little red bird with a red head.

Jeff: That looks like a finch. [LAUGHTER]

Jerry: You have to have a description first. Jeff found a plant identifier on his phone and I thought at the time, we had a bird identifier. Do you remember that?

Jeff: We didn't talk about a bird identifier.

Jerry: Okay.

Jeff: Is there a way that if you were lucky enough to get a picture of one, is that part of the identification process for this phone app?

Jacelyn: You know, there's another app also called iNaturalist that I will mention that can do that as well.

Jeff: Yes. I've downloaded iNaturalist just for plants, [Right.] but it also has birds as well?

[00:25:00] **Jacelyn:** Yeah. On that Merlin app, and I have not used it myself, but on that Merlin app, you're also supposed to be able to have it analyze that picture that you've taken of a bird.

Jeff: Oh, okay.

Jacelyn: Similarly, eBird, you can take a picture of a bird. So, there are people in Wyoming, I don't know what their term is, but when you submit information, they actually look it over

and make sure that obviously, you're not seeing an albatross, for instance. So, they will monitor that to make sure that things are accurate and you're not seeing things that are wrong [OVERLAPPING]

Jeff: They're data verification people, right?

Jacelyn: Yes.

Jeff Yeah. Okay. Interesting.

Jacelyn: So, you can also put things on there, they will let you know. You can send pictures to— I can't tell you the number of bird pictures I get sent to me. "What's this bird?" Then I immediately sent it to my coworker, Zach Hutchinson, and [00:26:00] then we go from there.

Jeff: Okay, cool. I hate to do this, but I think we're going to have to take a break. We've already have warned Greg that we're going to go over a little bit today, but we're going to take a break and listen to the rest of our sponsors and then we'll get right back at it. So, hold on, Jacelyn.

Jacelyn: Okay.

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Jeff: All right. We're back. This is Jeff Edwards from the University of Wyoming Extension. Jerry Erschabek from Erschabek Chiropractor. Chiropractic, excuse me.

Jery: Thank you so much.

Jeff: Yeah. And Jacelyn Downey from Audubon of the Rockies today on the KGOS/KERM Lawn and Garden Show. And other topics we'd like to touch on before we have to say goodbye.

Jerry: So Jacelyn, I had heard, I've not ever tried this, but if people are having trouble with mice and squirrels trying to get into their bird feeders, they suggested to pour a bottle of cayenne pepper into your feeder and seeds as the birds won't be affected, but the mammals will be affected because they have that sensory perception [00:28:00] of something that's hot and taste. Have you heard of that?

Jacelyn: Yeah, I have heard of that.

Jeff: What's your feelings on that?

Jerry: How do you feel about that?

Jacelyn: I think when you get to the point that you're contemplating how am I going to discourage all these mice? If you're thinking that you can't get rid of the feeder, then I think that's a perfectly fine thing to do. I think it's hilarious the people who do the squirrel deterrent, when they have the squirrels have to go through all these things and eventually the squirrels get so good they can walk the tightline, you know. [LAUGHTER]

Jeff: And they carry the key with them to get through the [OVERLAPPING, INAUDIBLE]

Jacelyn: Right. It starts to feel like you are Elmer Fudd trying to outsmart the pest. I say, good luck to you.

Jeff: If you are [00:29:00] a bird feeder, should you feed all year round? Should you just feed in the winter? I don't know. What are your thoughts on that?

Jacelyn: Yes. As I said, I think the best step is to have garden plants and year-round opportunities for birds. That's number one. The feeders should just be supplemental for the bird. It's not going to make them stick around longer or anything like that. But is it ideal for them? Probably not. It may expose them to a variety of different things. They're a target for being eaten. Disease could be a situation. There's lots of little things that just are not the ideal thing for that. But I think it's perfectly fine. If you are in bear country, you don't want to have feed out when they're around, that's just asking for trouble.

[00:30:00] **Jeff:** Yeah... We don't mess with bears

Jacelyn: Early in the spring and late in the fall is a real help for them especially when there's migrating because then they are a tired, travel weary bird. It's a nice welcome for them to have the feeders. Hopefully, also, along with the feeders, they may have some strawberry, trees, or some plant that they like that also will be a welcoming respite for them. I think that's when it's the most useful for birds is when they're migrating. During the rest of the year, it's just a perk.

Jeff: Okay. Is providing water critical as well?

Jacelyn: Yeah. Water is a tricky one. The best option is to have some sort of natural water source that is, like say, a pond or, obviously, a lake or a stream, something that's moving. The feeders can provide a source for mosquito larva. [00:31:00] So it's just something that you want to be cleaning out all the time. It's something you have to be pretty diligent with, maintaining it, making sure. Of course, it's difficult in Wyoming, we freeze most of the year. So, most of the year your waterers are not going to be useful for birds. [OVERLAPPING]

Jeff: What if you put a heated water source into it or a heat source?

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: Absolutely. Yeah.

Jerry: Now, I'm here to tell you, you don't need a heated water source, but you do need a pump to keep that water flowing so you just have a little small open area. We have a small, kidney-shaped pond that we operate year-round and we have, I don't know, seven, eight goldfish in there and maybe some of them are koi, some of them aren't. We get a lot of water. We get a lot of birds coming to the pond and drink as well as neighborhood dogs and cats and stuff. And the deer. They seem to come around and [00:32:00] have a drink. But that water source really does bring a lot more birds to our area.

We have a tendency to feed year-round. So, we like to watch those birds and see who's coming, see who's coming around. We watch those yellow goldfinches turn colors and, yeah, we really enjoy bird feeding.

Jeff: When we lived in Iowa, we had a water feature that I created and put goldfish in it.

Jerry: Yes.

Jeff: Our dog used it as a water bowl. The goldfish, as we fed them, they would come to the surface, it was fun to watch. One day, we came home and there was a blue heron sitting on the edge of the water feature [LAUGHTER, OVERLAPPING] and ate all of our goldfish.

Jerry: They are— vicious.

Jacelyn: They are.

Jeff: They are doing what they are supposed to be doing.

[00:33:00] **Jerry:** What good fishermen.

Jacelyn: Yes. Just watching them with frogs is really a horrifying thing. You don't want to have children present It's just terrible.

I was wondering when you said you had a pond in your backyard, I was curious if those goldfish are ever mysteriously disappearing from time to time.

Jerry: Ours is close to what we call a well shed and it's fairly protected, but still, I think that they're vulnerable.

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jeff: Ours was inside a pergola with a screen on one side.

Jerry: You're kidding.

Jeff: No.

Jerry. And this heron found it.

Jeff: Yes.

Jerry: I'll be darned. [LAUGHTER]

I have a friend up north on top of the hill that they have given up on fish because of that.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: Yeah. And if you build it, they will come.

Jerry: Yeah, they will. That is correct. So, my friend built [00:34:00] a raised bed in their yard and she says, "Now, I have turkeys come into there. How do you get rid of them?"

Jeff: A raised garden bed?

Jerry: A raised garden bed. It's like a four by eight garden bed, three-foot tall. She says, "Now, these wild turkeys come in and want to roost in—

Jeff: Because it's the highest spot in the yard? [LAUGHTER]

Jerry: I don't know, it's comfortable.

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jeff: Interesting.

Jacelyn: Occasionally, we will have turkeys roost in our trees, which is always, I think, a funny sight.

Jerry: Some people like them and some people don't.

Jeff: How would you deter turkeys from showing up, Jacelyn?

Jacelyn: Well, I guess you'd have to fence them out. Then again, maybe they would perch on the fence in which case you have to be, get a little bit trickier with your fence design.

Jeff: A big dog?

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jerry: Motion detected water [00:35:00] sputter?

Jeff: A large cat.

Jerry: Two large cats. [LAUGHTER] Interesting.

Jacelyn: Typically, a lot of the time, your presence is a good detractant to a lot of these types of birds. It's like when get [INAUDIBLE], you can do all the different things. You can try and put things out. But typically, it's you, you are the deterrent and if you come out and show that you're there and you're the one who's in that area, that's your space. Or a dog, whatever.

Jerry: Sure. Claim your space.

Jacelyn: Claim your space, exactly.

Jeff: Can we go back to the citizen science project discussion a little bit? [Sure.] Are there days of the year when people go out and do counting or sightings of everything they see and does that occur?

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: We just had a big one. We had the [00:36:00] Great Backyard Bird Count, which always happens President's Day weekend.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: It's simple. You go anywhere, you spend 15 minutes, it could be in your backyard, it could be at a park, it could be in your school, anywhere, and you just record what birds you're seeing. It's a pretty simple thing. You can go online and schools can do it, kids can do it, families can do it, anybody can do it. And you're just taking stock of what you're seeing. The biggest, longest running one is the Christmas Bird Count, which happens mid-December to the beginning of January, and it's been going for over 100 years. It's the longest running citizen science project and we know so much about birds and what they're doing because of it.

Jeff: How are the data being used?

Jacelyn: Most [00:37:00] are trends, population trends, where birds are, where historic numbers and abundance. We've learned a lot, and I know certain duck species, we've learned a lot about their rise and decline in certain areas, just any number of things.

A lot of these community or citizen science projects, it's like everyday folks are providing the information and then scientists are teasing it apart to learn things. So if I'm a researcher and I want to know what's really happening with these Bullock's orioles. And this is how we learn things like actually Bullock's and Baltimore orioles used to be one and the same and then we realized, actually, these are quite different, and they behave different, and they stay in their own little areas. So now we have Bullock's, which we get and then we have Baltimore, which are our East Coast. And they're very similar.

[00:38:00] **Jeff:** Similar but different.

Jacelyn: Similar but different. We learn that cardinals are actually starting to invade us. So, they're in Colorado now.

Jerry: Interesting.

Jacelyn: They've never been in that area.

Jeff: I love cardinals, they're really pretty.

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jerry: When I was in school in Chicago, we saw them a lot. They're wonderful birds. They're just pure red. They're beautiful.

Jeff: When we lived in the East, we would see them a lot. So, as an invader, are they displacing other species? Do we know of that type of behavior?

Jacelyn: I don't think we know that, and here again, that's where this data will tell a tale.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jerry: Jacelyn, and I've heard that we've seen a decline in the overall population of birds.

Jacelyn: Oh, yeah, it's [00:39:00] astounding. The number one type of birds that are disappearing are arbors or grassland birds. [Hmm.] As our range lands and just our open space, which we expect in this area. As it disappears, that land for the birds that need that also will disappear.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: You know. But there's different projects that are going on. I know Audubon has the conservation ranching program where, helping ranchers tell their story— Beef is not bad, and that having this open space is a good thing and if it's done in a proper way it is beneficial to our landscapes and our people and our birds.

Jeff: Yeah.

Jacelyn: Things like that.

Jeff: Yeah.

Jacelyn: Also, we have the habitat hero program, which is Audubon's, where you're doing just [00:40:00] what you guys are doing, it sounds like. You have your gardens in your backyards helping to fit together a little bit of that fragmentation, put it back together a little bit so birds have places to go. And other wildlife. So, mark the things that I think we're all doing as we notice the things that are happening around us.

Jeff: Sure.

Jerry: Something we haven't touched on is suet.

Jacelyn: Yes.

Jeff: There may be a reason for that.

Jerry: No. [LAUGHTER] We feed a downy woodpecker. They look like a little bird with a tuxedo on it. Some of them have little red splotches on their head and on the side of their head, and they're just fun to watch, especially on a suet feeder.

Jacelyn: Yeah. Typically, we can get away with it longer than other parts of the country because we're not as hot.

Jerry: Right.

Jacelyn: But they're great in the wintertime. [00:41:00] Fun projects with kids is just taking a pinecone and lathering it in either peanut butter or Crisco, and then rolling it in seeds. The woodpeckers and the chickadees, different birds like that, just love it.

Jeff: Rolling it in what type of seed? One of the two that we've talked about?

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: Actually, if you wanted to be really nice, you could get the whole sunflower seeds. So, without the husks. If you roll it, that's like a special treat. [OVERLAPPING]

Jerry: We've handed out peanuts before, and I understand that even the salted ones aren't so bad for birds, but we try to get the unsalted peanuts, and blue jays really come to that and they gobble up three or four of those and fly away, and I think they bury them. Do they?

Jacelyn: Oh, yeah. So many birds, [00:42:00] that's what they do. The whole reason why we have ecosystems the way they are, certain birds have a relationship with certain trees and they would not exist without each other.

Jerry: Yeah.

Jeff: Isn't there a bird in the Southwest that collects, is it pinyon pine nuts and sticks them in the tree? Are you familiar with that, Jacelyn?

Jacelyn: Wait, to store them?

Jeff: Yeah.

Jacelyn: Yeah.

Jeff: Okay.

Jacelyn: Yeah. There's like the acorn woodpeckers and they'll take the acorn they'll stick it in and see if they have— They have little selection of food that they can just grab and go with.

Jerry: Their memory is pretty good?

Jeff: Apparently.

Jacelyn: It depends on the bird. They've done a lot of research on this and some birds are really great at remembering and others are not, and it's good that they're not because that's how they're able to come on.

Jeff: As low as [00:43:00] 40 percent and as high as 80 percent probably. [LAUGHTER]

Jerry: It's a bell-curve.

Jeff: Yeah. Exactly. I'm guessing Greg's getting anxious for us to wrap it up. So, he's not out of out of time for the rest of the day. Jacelyn, thank you very much for being our guest today.

Jacelyn: Well, thanks for asking me.

Jeff: Yeah. We may have you again on in the fall.

Jerry: Yeah. We'll ask you again.

Jacelyn: Sure. Absolutely.

Jeff: Fantastic. Thank you very much. Good to see you again, Jerry.

Jerry: Thank you so much.

Jeff: We are back March 13th.

Jerry: March 13th. I need to announce one little thing. Can I?

Jeff: Go ahead.

Jerry: All right, so there's a spring garden conference produced by the Goshen County Master Gardeners. It's Saturday, March 28th. There's going to be speakers on Andy Corbin who did the giant pumpkin record winning giant pumpkin. We have Jeff Edwards.

Jeff: I don't know who that is.

Jerry: Currently in studio, talking about strawberries and raspberries, [00:44:00] Jim Callaway, wine grapes, Don Williams, golgi?

Jeff: Golji.

Jerry: Goji.

Jeff: Goji berries.

Jerry: Berries and honey berries. And so it's going to be a really fun event, 8:30 to 2:00, \$30. Come on over. If you have questions, please call one of us and we'll go from there.

Jeff: Sounds good to me. Thank you very much, Jerry.

Jerry: Thank you.

Jeff: Thanks, Greg, for putting up with us. Thank you Jacelyn, we'll talk to you later.

Narrator: You've been listening to Lawn and Garden with the University of Wyoming Extension Specialist, Jeff Edwards, and co-host, Jerry Erschabek, presented by KGOS and KERM Radio in Torrington and by University of Wyoming Extension, growing people, knowledge, and communities. If you have questions for our experts, visit wyoextension.org to find your local educator.