

# Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society

Chartered by the National Audubon Society since 1974

Serving southeastern Wyoming Audubon members

## Flyer



### February 2018

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The CHPAS Flyer is published monthly as a benefit of chapter membership. Submissions are welcome. The current issue is available online at [www.CheyenneAudubon.wordpress.com](http://www.CheyenneAudubon.wordpress.com).

**Please become a CHPAS member**—Send \$12 and your name and mailing address to the chapter. Include your e-mail address to get your newsletter digitally to save resources and see the photos in color. All chapter memberships expire Aug. 31.

**Cheyenne-High Plains Audubon Soc.**  
P.O. Box 2502  
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[www.CheyenneAudubon.wordpress.com](http://www.CheyenneAudubon.wordpress.com)

**Wyobirds e-list** - Subscribe, post and/or read interesting sightings: <http://home.ease.lsoft.com/scripts/wa-HOME.exe?A0=WYOBIRDS>.

#### **Feb. 20—Program:** **“The effects of anthropogenic and environmental stressors on nesting raptors: Lessons for Wyoming”**

**- Cameron Nordell**

**5 p.m. No host dinner** with the speaker at 2 Doors Down, 118 E

17th Street. Call Mark and Barb (634-0463) if coming to dinner so that we can make reservations.

**7 p.m., Cottonwood Room, Laramie County Public Library, 2200 Pioneer Ave.**

Cameron worked extensively with Ferruginous Hawks breeding in the Canadian prairies and Peregrine Falcons breeding in sub-arctic Canada. He is a graduate student at the University of Wyoming.



#### **Feb. 24—Field Trip to Wyoming Hereford Ranch:**

We leave from the Lions Park parking lot at the Children's Village at 8 a.m. Carpooling may be available. We should return by noon, but if you drive, you can leave whenever you need to.

Bring water and dress for the weather.. Please contact George Cardon for more information, 307-634-5269, and to be on the list of participants to be notified of any change in plans due to weather.

#### **Feb. 16-19—Great Backyard Bird Count**, info at <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>

Do you have 15 minutes to count the birds in your backyard one or all four days? Enter all your data online. It's free.

**Feb.23—Cheyenne Country Club Survey 8 a.m.** Contact Chuck Seniawski if you wish to take part or be on his email notice list: 638-6519 or [chuckski@aol.com](mailto:chuckski@aol.com). You are welcome to join the group, but please register with Chuck the week before the survey so that we can arrange golf carts for the survey.

**Feb. 27—Board Meeting, 7 p.m., Windflower Room, Laramie County Public Library, 2200 Pioneer Ave.** Anyone who is interested in being involved in planning chapter activities is welcome to come to the board meetings.

**Mar. 17—Habitat Hero Workshop, LCCC, see page 2.**

#### **Mar. 20—Program: The case for invasive bird species in Hawaii**

7 p.m., Sunflower Room, Laramie County Public Library, 2200 Pioneer Ave., Becky Wilcox, University of Wyoming: Novel ecosystems in Hawaii and the case for invasive species as the only hope for the conservation of endemic Hawaiian plants.

**April 17—Program: Fun with eBird**, Barb & Mark Gorges, 7 p.m., library.

**May 14—Special program: Noah Strycker and Birding Without Borders**

**May 19—Cheyenne Big Day Bird Count**

## Chapter News

**Education:** Belinda Moench and Jim Hecker reviewed projects at the Laramie County School District #1 Science Fair and did not find any projects that met the criteria for our Audubon Awards.

**Education:** The chapter purchased 25 pairs of binoculars for Kerry Peterson's third grade classroom at Prairie Winds Elementary School in Cheyenne. She will have her students studying birds at feeders outside their classroom.

**Habitat Hero:** The chapter received a grant of \$500 from the National Audubon Society to help purchase plants at the Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities' building as a Habitat Hero demonstration garden. To meet the grant requirements, the chapter will match that \$500.

June 2 is the planting extravaganza at the BOPU's office; everyone is welcome.

**Habitat Hero:** Another project that we are assisting with is Cheyenne's Pumphouse Wetlands, just northeast of the Ames Ave. underpass.

We are helping them file for Habitat Hero status. The project is planted with 100% plants native to Wyoming. It will not be open to the public until safety rails are installed.



### Habitat Hero workshop Saturday, March 17:

In conjunction with the Wyoming Bee College conference (See <https://2018wybeeuniversitybeecollege.eventbrite.com> or contact Catherine Wissner, [cwissner@uwyo.edu](mailto:cwissner@uwyo.edu)) at Laramie County Community College.

Separate registration for the Mar. 17 Habitat Hero track includes the Wyoming Bee College keynote speakers at 8 a.m. and 6:45 p.m.

### Habitat Hero Speakers:

--Jane Dorn—native perennials,  
--Barb Gorges—creating a bird friendly yard and Habitat Hero application,  
--Dena Egenhoff—Board of Public Utilities' Habitat Hero garden,  
--Jessica Goldstrohm of The Bees Waggle on native bees,  
--Wanda Manley—how to manage your piece of prairie.

**Registration is \$20, includes lunch but not dinner,**

<https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3224320>

For additional information, contact Mark Gorges at 307-287-4953, [mgorges@juno.com](mailto:mgorges@juno.com).

## Jan. 27—Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge report by Mark Gorges

It was a cool but nice day for the nine chapter members who went on the trip. At the wildlife refuge we saw a lot of raptors; some sitting at a distance with their backs to us.

On the way home we saw many more raptors along the interstate. Stopping at the rest area in Ft. Collins we saw four species of raptors including a Northern Harrier and an American Kestrel to add to the day's list.

Arsenal: 33 degrees, partly sunny, calm. Lots of deer, several coyote, buffalo herd.

17 species (+2 other taxa):

Canada Goose 60  
Northern Shoveler 6  
Common Goldeneye 6  
Hooded Merganser 2  
Bald Eagle 4  
Red-tailed Hawk 1  
Rough-legged Hawk 6



hawk sp. 4  
American Coot 16  
Ring-billed Gull 8  
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 5  
Northern Flicker 1  
woodpecker sp. 1  
Prairie Falcon 1  
Black-billed Magpie 8  
American Crow 1  
Horned Lark 8  
European Starling 6  
Western Meadowlark 1



*Stopping along the Wildlife Drive at the Arsenal and (upper right) Bald Eagle eating lunch by Mark Gorges.*

## Jan. 26—Cheyenne Country Club survey results

By Chuck Seniawski

29 degrees, wind 24 mph. Partly cloudy. Snow cover near 99%. Art Anderson, Bob Cybulski, Richard Gilbert, Mark Gorges, Chuck Seniawski. 8 species: Canada Goose 179 Flyovers by many small groups of from 5 to 53.

Downy Woodpecker 1  
Black-billed Magpie 2  
American Crow 5  
Common Raven 1 heard  
Mountain Chickadee 5  
Red-breasted Nuthatch 5  
Pygmy Nuthatch 12

*Pygmy Nuthatch by Mark Gorges*



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## Migratory Bird Treaty Act under attack

By Barb Gorges

2018 is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The U.S., along with co-signers Mexico, Canada, Japan and Russia, agree to protect birds that cross our borders and theirs.

A hundred years ago there was a battle between conservationists and industrialists and the birds won. Industry is now held accountable for “incidental take” – birds killed unintentionally during the course of business. That has included birds

hooked by long-line ocean fishing, birds attracted to oily evaporation ponds in oil and gas fields and birds hit by wind turbines.

These kinds of hazards can add up and make a population-threatening dent. Instead, the MBTA has forced industries to pay fines or come up with ingenious solutions that save a lot of birds.

However, Wyoming’s Congresswoman Liz Cheney is backing U.S. House

Resolution 4239 which would remove the requirement to take responsibility for incidental take. Here we are, 100 years later, fighting the battle again.

If you would like to speak up for the birds, please call Cheney’s office, 202-225-2311. The polite person who answers the phone only wants to know your name, address and your opinion, so they know which column to check, anti-bird, or pro-bird and the MBTA.

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## Toads’ progress: Secret to raising Wyoming toads revealed

By Barb Gorges

After years of raising and releasing thousands of Wyoming toad tadpoles, only to have 97 percent of them succumb to predators and chytrid fungus, our January program speakers, Jason Palmer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Heidi Meador, Saratoga Fish Hatchery, have taken a more successful approach. They are now releasing 1-year-old toads —big

enough to dig themselves into the dirt and hibernate 3 or 4 feet down, eight or nine months of the year, out of reach of predators.

Chytrid fungus tends to spread on their skin while they are hibernating, but the bigger the toad, the less of their total skin area is covered by the time they emerge and then exposure to sunshine will kill the fungus.

To raise larger toads economically breeders also have to raise food sources: cockroaches and bean weevils and all kinds of cool creepy crawlers.

Zoos around the country are also raising Wyoming toads. Pit tags inserted under the skin help researchers track released toads to determine optimum habitat for survival on the Laramie Plains.



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## More about our visiting May 14 author and birder, Noah Strycker, and his book “Birding without Borders”

When Noah Strycker set out to break the world Big Year record in 2015, he needed a stack of field guides nearly as tall as he was. But thanks to modern technology, he fit them all into his laptop.

Another piece of technology came in handy for planning: eBird. Now that it is global, Noah was able to figure out where to go, and when to go, to see the most bird species in the least amount of time. A map of his route shows he traveled mostly in the tropics and subtropics

where species diversity is greatest. He counted many of our North American birds while they were still in South America with the species that live year round there—kind of a two for one.

But probably the biggest key to success was the Birding Pals website. Here he was able to find birders in every country happy to help him find their local specialties and certify that he saw them.

Visit Noah’s website at:

[www.noahstrycker.com](http://www.noahstrycker.com).

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## Winter/spring gardening classes, lectures, conferences offered in Cheyenne

### LCCC Life Enrichment classes

Catherine Wissner, Laramie County Extension horticulturist, \$10 and 2 hours each. Sign up for one or more: 307-778-1236, [lccc.wy.edu/workforce/LifeEnrichment](http://lccc.wy.edu/workforce/LifeEnrichment).

Feb. 10 – Extending the Growing Season

Feb. 17 – Gardening for Butterflies, Bees and Birds

Feb. 24 – Garden Success in Laramie County .

### High Plains Gardening Lecture Series

Cheyenne Botanic Gardens’

Grand Conservatory, 710 S. Lions Park Dr., 1 p.m., \$15 each, available at CBG’s Tilted Tulip gift shop, Wed.-Sun., 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., or call 307-637-6458.

Feb. 24 – Ruthless Gardening: Tough Love for Better Gardens, Shane Smith, CBG director.

March 24 – Crevice Gardens, Kenton Seth.

### High Plains Organic Farming Conference – Feb. 27-28

Laramie County Community College, \$50 includes lunches, [www.highplainsorganic.org](http://www.highplainsorganic.org), Jay Norton [jnorton4@uwyo.edu](mailto:jnorton4@uwyo.edu).

### Gardening for Success Conference 2018 – April 14-15

30 classes for gardeners of all levels, Laramie County Community College, \$125 registration fee, <https://gardeningforsuccess2018.eventbrite.com>, Catherine Wissner [cwissner@uwyo.edu](mailto:cwissner@uwyo.edu).

### Laramie County Master Gardeners Plant Sale May 12

Laramie County Archer Complex, includes free series of short gardening lectures.

Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 2502  
Cheyenne, WY 82003



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## Year of the Bird celebrates 100th anniversary of Migratory Bird Treaty Act

By Barb Gorges <https://cheyennebirdbanter.wordpress.com/>

This is the Year of the Bird. It's been declared by four august organizations: the National Audubon Society, the National Geographic Society, Cornell Lab of Ornithology and BirdLife International. A hundred other organizations have joined them.

My husband Mark and I have been members for years of the first three, and I'm on the email list for the fourth so I've heard the message four times since the first of the year.

The Year of the Bird celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that protects birds. Read the act at <https://www.fws.gov/birds/policies-and-regulations/laws-legislations/migratory-bird-treaty-act.php> (remember "take" is a euphemism for "kill").

The Year of the Bird is also about advocating for birds. Today you can go to the National Geographic website, <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/projects/year-of-the-bird/>, and sign the Year of the Bird pledge. You'll receive monthly instructions for simple actions you can take on behalf of birds. The official Year of the Bird website, [www.birdyourworld.org](http://www.birdyourworld.org), will take you to the National Geographic page, and the other sponsors' websites will get you there as well.

You may not be aware of National Geographic's bird credentials. When the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America came out in the 1980s, it was a must-have sensation. You can find the latest edition at local bookstores and online.

The National Audubon Society, <http://www.audubon.org/yearofthebird>, is your portal to these articles so far: How Birds Bind Us, The History and Evolution of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, The United States of Birding and Audubon's Birds and Climate Change Report. My favorite—Why Do Birds Matter?—quotes dozens of well-known authors and ornithologists.

BirdLife International, <http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/flyway>, offers ways to think about birds. When you see your next robin, think about where it's been, what it's flown over. Think about the people in other countries who may have seen the bird too. Think about the work being done to protect its migratory flyways.

On the other hand, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology begins the year addressing bird appreciation. At one of their websites, <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/6-resolutions-to-help-you-birdyourworld-in-2018/>, Hugh Powell recommends getting a de-

cent pair of affordable binoculars after reading this guide on how to shop for them, <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/six-steps-to-choosing-a-pair-of-binoculars-youll-love/>.

Powell also recommends CLO's free Merlin Bird ID app to get to know your local birds better (or see <http://www.AllAboutBirds.org>). Then you can keep daily bird lists through CLO's free eBird program, including photos and sound recordings.

While you watch birds from your kitchen window, drink bird-friendly, shade-grown coffee. There's an in-depth article at <https://www.allaboutbirds.org>.

Or play CLO's new Bird Song Hero game to help you learn how to match what you hear with the visual spectrograph, <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org>.

Finally, Powell suggests "pay it forward"—take some-one birding and join a bird club or Audubon chapter (locally, I'd recommend my chapter, <https://cheyenneaudubon.wordpress.com/>).

Here in Wyoming our lone U.S. Representative, Congresswoman Liz Cheney, has attempted to take the teeth out of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act with H.R. 4239. She thinks protecting birds should not come at the expense of business.

Earlier threats to birds caused conservationist Aldo Leopold to write in his 1949 book, *A Sand County Almanack*, "We face the question whether a still higher 'standard of living' is worth its cost in things natural, wild, and free. For us of the minority, the opportunity to see geese is more important than television, and the chance to find a pasqueflower is a right as inalienable as free speech."

I would say that people who appreciate birds are not a minority. And many of us agree with biologist and biodiversity definer Thomas Lovejoy, "If you take care of birds, you take care of most of the environmental problems in the world."

If it is too cold for you to appreciate the birds while outside, check out National Geographic's January issue with photos by Joel Sartore. More of his bird photos for National Geographic's Photo Ark project, studio portraits of the world's animals, will be in a book coming out this spring written by Noah Strycker, "Birds of the Photo Ark." Strycker will be speaking in Cheyenne May 14.

Now go to [www.BirdYourWorld.org](http://www.BirdYourWorld.org) and take the pledge and find out each month what simple action you can take on behalf of birds.

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