



February 2021 "Flyer" Cheyenne - High Plains Audubon Society

Chartered by the National Audubon Society since 1974

Serving southeastern Wyoming Audubon members

Mission Statement: *The Cheyenne-High Plains Audubon Society promotes the conservation and appreciation of birds and wildlife through education, science, advocacy, and habitat stewardship in Southeast Wyoming.*

Vision Statement: *The Cheyenne-High Plains Audubon Society envisions a community where birds, wildlife, and their habitats are valued, protected, and enjoyed by the general public.*

Officers and Committee Chairs 2020-2021

Terry Harper, President

Dennis Saville, Vice president

Lorie Chesnut, Secretary

Chuck Seniawski, Treasurer

Pete Arnold, Audubon Rockies Board

Jack Palma, Audubon Rockies Board

Terry Harper, Conservation Education, *open*

Donna Kassel, Historian

Grant Frost, Field Trips, Bird Compiler

Mark Gorges, Newsletter, Habitat Hero

Art Anderson, Important Bird Areas

Wanda Manley, Member at Large

Elaine Grings, Social Media

Barb Gorges, Programs, Publicity

Lorie Chesnut, Hospitality, Website

The CHPAS Flyer is published on line monthly as a benefit of chapter membership. Submissions are welcome. The current issue is available online at www.CheyenneAudubon.wordpress.com.

Contact Us at cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com

Please become a CHPAS member (Have you renewed your membership for 2020-2021?)

Send \$12 plus any optional donation and your name, email address and mailing address to Cheyenne-High Plains Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2502, Cheyenne, WY 82003.

All chapter memberships expire Sept. 1. Any membership dues sent in after May 1 will pertain to the remainder of the current membership year and the following year.

Join the National Audubon Society

Send \$20 to Cheyenne - High Plains Audubon Society to join the National Audubon Society and you will receive NAS membership and NAS will return the \$20 to CHPAS.

"Wyoming Bird" chat group

Subscribe, post and/or read about interesting sightings on this Facebook public group site: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/403337446664409/>

Calendar

February 12-15 – Great Backyard Bird Count - <https://www.birdcount.org/>

Participating is easy, fun to do alone, or with others, and can be done anywhere you find birds. Simply **watch birds for 15 minutes or more, at least once over the four days**, February 12-15, 2021, and tell eBird what you see!

The Great Backyard Bird Count uses eBird, one of the world's largest nature-databases with more than 100 million bird sightings contributed each year and used by professionals for science and conservation. Contribute your lists to eBird and become a citizen scientist.

Great Backyard Bird Count results from 2020: 268.674 Estimated Participants, 27,270,156 Total Birds Counted, 6,942 Bird Species Identified, and 194 Countries.

February 16, 7p.m.– Program on Zoom – Update on Sage-Grouse Conservation

Vicki Herren is the recently retired Bureau of Land Management National Sage-Grouse Coordinator who is still contracted to help with sage-grouse plans.

She will discuss how every Friday, she joins a group of sage-grouse biologists, researchers and managers from across the west to ensure that the Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment will describe the wide variety of efforts underway to manage populations and habitats to keep them from being listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Also, on Fridays, Vicki joins another team call to improve the way we all measure and describe habitats where sage-grouse gather on the leks, nest and raise broods, and move to late summer and wintering areas.

Access the program on the evening of February 16 by clicking here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82977852481>



Sage-Grouse by Brian Rutledge

February 20, 8 a.m. – Field Trip to Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge

We will tour the visitors center in Commerce City, Colorado, and look for bison, prairie dogs, bald eagles, other raptors and other wintering birds on the refuge. There should be open water for viewing waterfowl and gulls.

We will leave from the Lions Park parking lot at the Children's Village at 8 a.m. We will drive south on I-25 to the Arsenal; it is about an hour and a half drive. We should return by 3 p.m., but you can leave whenever you need to. Bring water and your lunch, if you like.

If you are interested in going, contact Mark Gorges, 307-287-4953, so that we have a list of those expected, and can let you know if the plans change for any reason such as poor driving conditions.



Bison at the refuge by Mark Gorges

February 23, 7p.m.– Virtual Board Meeting,

Contact Terry Harper, cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com, if you would like to participate in helping to plan chapter activities.

February 26, 8 a.m.– Country Club Bird Survey,

Contact Chuck Seniawski to take part or to be on his email notice list: 307-638-6519 or chuckski@aol.com. The count will start in the County Clubhouse's main parking lot.

March 16 – Program on Zoom - Birding by Ear with Nathan Pieplow, author of the “Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Western North America”.

Chapter News

Chapter President's message

Dear CHPAS Members and Friends,



It's that time of the year when we're noticing the days slowly get longer, reminding us that the future of spring marches forward. One day soon we hope to get back to in-person meetings and carpooling for field trips.

While we are still somewhat homebound, please consider that our society best functions with new ideas from members. So, let us know what you want to see happen over the next year with events and field trips. And we are always in need of volunteers that could assist on committees or the board, so send us your ideas and interests in volunteering.

Yours,
Terry Harper, CHPAS President

Cheyenne - High Plains Audubon Society logo, Mountain Plover, drawn by Michelle LaGory.

Advocacy Network

Environmental Issues Update

By Terry Harper, CHPAS President

There's good news that with the Biden administration in Washington D.C., we are already seeing Presidential executive orders that will review or roll back the harmful Trump environmental and climate policies.

For us western dwellers, the major impact of climate change has been drought, extreme weather, and wildfires, which all impact our water. Audubon's Western Water policy will be an inclusive opportunity to advocate for local, state, and national actions in the future. Consider signing up to get involved at: <https://rockies.audubon.org/rivers>.

Wildlife agency rewrites 10-year-old document to better address conflicts with an increasing number of wind and solar projects. Read More Here: <https://www.wyofile.com/new-game-and-fish-guidelines-aim-to-reduce-renewable-energy-impact/>

Education and Conservation

Chapter Grants

For information on our education and conservation grants, see our chapter website at: <https://cheyenneaudubon.wordpress.com/>.

Habitat Hero



Report on the 7th Annual Cheyenne Habitat Hero Workshop: Nature's Best Hope

The 7th Annual Cheyenne Habitat Hero Workshop was a success.

Number registered: 312 (Typically, 30-50 percent of registrants attend free webinars they sign up for.)

Highest number of participants at one time/Zoom's record of participant numbers:

Douglas Tallamy – 177/220

Jim Tolstrup – 156/182

Michelle Bohanan – 104/unavailable

More than \$2200 was collected in donations for the Cheyenne Habitat Hero Committee and the Audubon Rockies Habitat Hero program.

Links to recordings of all three talks are available on the Habitat Hero page of our chapter website, <https://cheyenneaudubon.wordpress.com/>.

Bird News

Bert Raynes

Bird lover, skilled naturalist and Jackson Hole News & Guide “Far Afield” columnist Bert Raynes died Jan. 1 at the age of 96. Raynes authored a half-dozen books, including the noted “Birds of Grand Teton National Park and the Surrounding Area.” He was the founder of the Jackson Hole Bird and Nature Club.

In 2007, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department inducted Raynes and his wife, Meg into their hall of fame for their support to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department’s Nongame Bird Program through educating the public and providing records over the years on bird occurrence, distribution, and natural history. See the full story about his contributions here. https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/valley/obituaries/raynes-96-lived-a-life-of-science-shared-a-love-of-nature/article_2cc4240c-2a65-5737-b6b1-0e3e8ab027c9.html

Trumpeter Swans near Lingle

Jane Dorn, a long-time chapter member now living in Lingle, WY, recently sent us this picture with the following note: “These three Trumpeter Swans have been in a cornfield south of Lingle regularly since about Christmas. They feed in among the cattle and do not seem to pay much attention to vehicles on the highway. Sometimes they are in with Canada Geese, sometimes alone.

If you want a location where you might see them, contact Jane at linglebird@yahoo.com.



January 23 – Field trip to Wyoming Hereford Ranch

Due to weather, our planned field trip to Curt Gowdy State Park was redirected to WHR. All seven people who had signed up for the trip were notified of the change that morning and showed up at the ranch.

In the two hours that we birded we saw 13 species.

Canada Goose 34
Mallard 6
Redhead 1
in a stream.
Eurasian Collared-Dove 8
Red-tailed Hawk 1
Northern Shrike 1
American Crow 3
Mountain Chickadee 4
Brown Creeper 2
European Starling 30
House Sparrow 25
Dark-eyed Junco 22
White-crowned Sparrow 1



Northern Shrike by Mark Gorges

January 29 – Cheyenne Country Club survey results

By Chuck Seniawski

7:53 AM - 9:40 AM

Protocol: Traveling

2.5 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 35 degrees. Mostly sunny. Finished the route with a mixed flock of small birds -- all 3 nuthatches, Mountain Chickadee, and Brown Creeper. Grant Frost, Mark Gorges, Vicki Herren, Chuck Seniawski and Pete Stokolosky.
13 species

Canada Goose 4
Red-tailed Hawk 1
Hairy Woodpecker 1
Northern Flicker 1
Black-billed Magpie 9
American Crow 15
Mountain Chickadee 4
Red-breasted Nuthatch 2
White-breasted Nuthatch 1
Pygmy Nuthatch 9
Brown Creeper 1
House Sparrow 1
House Finch 4



Figure 1 Brown Creeper by Mark Gorges

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S80098267>

A Very Vulture Gala & Benefit Auction

Although 2020 was a little pukey, you are cordially invited to this online benefit auction February 1-21 with a live Gala February 20 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. benefitting the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program in Fort Collins.

The online event is free, but registration is required at:

<https://www.biddingforgood.com/auction/auctionhome.action?vhost=rmp>

World Migratory Bird Day

A short video showcasing this year's World Migratory Bird Day artist, Sara Wolman, and how birds and other wildlife inspire her art can be seen at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkUYYdF1KKA&t=11s>

"Every single one of us has a story of our personal experience with birds to share. To be able to channel that onto paper through artistic medium really gives tangible meanings to that connection. It provides us all a space to celebrate these birds." - Sara Wolman

Virtual Wings & Wetlands Birding Festival: March 24-26

Take part in this year's Wings & Wetlands Festival from wherever you are. Through a series of Zoom classes, we will bring you leading experts on birds, wetlands, and conservation messages and resources to enhance your next wetland visit.

Featured presenters include Kenn Kaufman (field guide author, naturalist, and artist), Alvaro Jaramillo biologist, conservationist, guide), Sharon "The Bird Chick" Stiteler (birder, speaker, author) and others. Topics of presentations will include the link of Kansas wetlands to bird migrations, the psychology of birding, humorous birding stories, bird identification, Kansas wetlands, Kansas raptors and Smart Phone birding.

The Wings & Wetland Festival virtual event will take place on March 24 - 26, 2021. Registration is \$20. Proceeds from the Wings & Wetlands Festival will benefit conservation efforts at Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. For information and registration go to: <http://www.wingsandwetlands.com>.

Great Backyard Bird Count causes columnist to ponder diversity

By Barb Gorges

The Great Backyard Bird Count is coming up Feb. 12-15. You can now take part by watching and reporting the birds you see at your bird feeders...or anywhere in the world...the real Great Backyard!

Now that the GBBC has gone global, it has a fresh website, <https://www.birdcount.org/>. Becca Rodomsky-Bish, with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, charged with its redesign, wanted comments from a small group of reviewers and I was invited. I have in the past contacted CLO for information about their programs for these columns and I've taken part in the GBBC since nearly the beginning.

This is also the year that major environmental organizations are looking at their lack of diversity—both staff and outreach—because of incidents like Black birder Christian Cooper's experience in Central Park, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Park_birdwatching_incident.

I think CLO's plan to invite GBBC participants around the world to submit photos of themselves and their families and friends birding during the event will do much to illustrate diversity.

Normally, birders talk about bird species diversity and how to protect and improve it.

To measure human diversity in the local birding community, we can look at our local Audubon chapter. This is what we see: participants in events, members and board members are evenly split between male and female. In photos from the chapter's beginnings almost 50 years ago, it has always been like this. Human sexual orientation isn't as visible and hasn't come up during meetings and field trips.

We usually have a diversity in age, at least between 50 and 90 years old with the occasional younger outlier. Mark and I were unusual, bringing our kids along on field trips starting when they were infants. We've met teenagers occasionally who are into birds. But the lack of kids I think is more about how families choose to spend their limited time together. It's when the kids leave home that parents finally look for new activities. In the 39 years I've been involved in Audubon chapters, we've never run out of people in the upper age bracket.

A few years ago, the chapter established a grant program for education and conservation projects in Laramie, Goshen and Platte counties. We've had several teachers successfully use our grants. Their students might be who will join when they are 50. But we could certainly use ideas and volunteers to help us reach more younger people.

Birding is adaptable for the disabled, though being able to see and/or hear a bird, however poorly, is rather necessary for birdwatching. No need to take a bird hike. A little black oil sunflower seed on the ground or in a feeder will help bring the birds in viewing range. You might start feeding the birds a couple weeks before the GBBC.

What about socio economic diversity?

Birdwatching at its most basic doesn't cost a thing. Birds are everywhere. You can check out a field guide from the public library. The CLO has many free resources online. I'm beginning to think of the internet as a public utility like water and everyone needs a device, a digital bucket, to capture some of the flow.

Old or cheap binoculars can be helpful, but not necessary for watching birds at a backyard feeder. Our local field trips are free and except during pandemics, carpooling is often available.

I've talked to people at every socio economic level who enjoy watching birds, whether it's the flock that comes every afternoon for their black oil sunflower seed handout or the flock that flew over their tour group in some exotic location. Some birdwatchers tune in to backyard bird behavior, some strive to add to their global bird life list.

Birds attract people from all walks of life. However, there is a higher percentage of wildlife biologists among birders than in ordinary social circles. I'm happy to say over the years there is an increase in the percentage that are women.

Our Audubon chapter is not as racially diverse as Cheyenne. I'm not sure how to change that. We advertise our existence (www.cheyenneaudubon.wordpress.com) and wait for people who have made a connection to birds and who want to meet other bird-happy people and learn from each other and share sightings and support the well-being of birds (and other wildlife and people).

Many birders point to a "spark bird," the bird they noticed and then wanted to find out more about, eventually finding more and more interesting birds—and finding they are all interesting birds.

Birds bring together all sorts of people. Let's put on our binoculars as birdwatching badges, whatever quality they are, and find each other where the birds and birders gather. Maybe we'll see each other outside during the Great Backyard Bird Count.

Barb Gorges invites readers to share their bird sightings and stories.

Email bgorges4@msn.com, call 307-634-0463 or search <http://cheyennebirdbanter.wordpress.com>. She is the author of "Cheyenne Birds by the Month," available through outlets listed at www.YuccaRoadPress.com.



For the 2020 Great Backyard Bird Count, Mark Gorges, Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society member, set up his spotting scope for two young participants to get a close look at waterfowl on

Sloans Lake in Lions Park. The waterfowl included Canada goose, northern shoveler, mallard and common goldeneye. Photo by Barb Gorges.

Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society P. O. Box 250 Cheyenne, WY 82003

