



April 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

Jordyn Sorrow, Student Advisory Member

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

April 17, 5:30 a.m. – Field Trip Sage Grouse Lek off Rogers Canyon Road

We will leave from the parking lot on the East side of the Wyoming Game and Fish Headquarters at 5:30 a.m. Plan to caravan, not carpool, north on Horse Creek Rd. then west on Rogers Canyon Rd., a total of about 60 miles one way. There will be some hiking on uneven ground.

We hope to catch the grouse on their lek right after sunrise. On the way back you should be able to do some birding along Rogers Canyon Rd.



Photo by Dennis Hammer/ Audubon Photography Awards

Wear your mask when outside your vehicle with the group. Bring water and clothes for changing weather. We expect to be finished by 8 a.m., but you can leave whenever you need to.

Please contact Grant Frost at 307-343-2024 if you plan to join us, 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.

April 20, 7p.m.– Program on Zoom – Jesse McCarty, “The 2020 Mullen Fire and How it Might Change Wildlife Habitat in the Medicine Bow National Forest”

The Zoom program will begin at 7 p.m. **Access the program on the evening of April 20 by clicking here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87081305204>. You are welcome to join 15 minutes early.**



Mullen Fire/US Forest Service photo

Jesse McCarty is a Laramie-based wildlife biologist with the forest.

On September 17, 2020, smoke reports were received by the Laramie Ranger District of the Medicine Bow National Forest in the area near Mullen Creek in the

Savage Run Wilderness in the Snowy Range Mountains, approximately 35 miles west of Laramie.

The Mullen fire became the largest in the history of the Medicine Bow National Forest. The final acreage was 176,878 acres in Albany and Carbon counties in Wyoming and Jackson and Larimer counties in Colorado. What's happening to the wildlife? What is the Forest Service doing after the wildfire?

April 27, 7p.m.– Virtual Board Meeting

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

April 30, 7 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.

May 8, 8 a.m.- International Migratory Bird Day

We will meet up with the Laramie Audubon Chapter at the Wyoming Hereford Ranch and spend the morning birding with them.

May 14 – Book Signing with Nathan Pieplow – Wyoming Hereford Ranch, evening

May 15 – Annual Big Day Count

Details in the May newsletter

Chapter News

Chapter President's message

Dear CHPAS Members and Friends,



Hi Folks! We have a welcome change of leadership in the U.S. Department of Interior with Deb Haaland, our first Indigenous cabinet member at the helm. We're excited to work with her on critical issues affecting the West.

Welcome to Melissa Robel, the Outreach and Events Organizer for Wyoming Game and Fish, who has joined our chapter and is full of great ideas and is assisting with a variety of activities, like revising our brochure and following up with grant recipients. Melissa responded to the call last month for an educational committee member and we're grateful.

We still need folks to assist in other areas and for board positions - is that you?

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

President Biden, in an attempt to impact climate change in the U.S., has put a 60-day moratorium in place on oil and gas leasing on federal lands to review current leases. The majority (90%) of new oil and gas development in the U.S. occurs on private or state land. Almost one-half of Wyoming, however, is federal public land. Oil and gas development in WY has significantly impacted

wildlife habitat and wildlife numbers. Wyoming has sued the federal government over the moratorium.

For more information on this issue go to:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/066be2164cdc4f258af176912e4fc360?sourceid=1067239&emci=9c300871-b78c-eb11-85aa-00155d43c992&emdi=ecd769b9-e68c-eb11-85aa-00155d43c992&ceid=9693566>

Education and Conservation



Inspire Kids with Conservation Career Day

Do you know a 7th to 12th grader who is interested in a career that helps the Earth? Let them know about the FREE Virtual “Careers in Conservation” Day on April 18, 2021, hosted by the Cornell Lab K-12 team!

This interactive fair will feature Cornell Lab staff and partners who will give the inside scoop about their diverse jobs in education, science, technology and wildlife. Attendees will learn about careers they may never have considered and will have the opportunity to ask questions.

For more information and to register, go to: <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/k12/career-day?>

Chapter Grants

At our March board meeting the chapter awarded a \$500 grant to the town of Fort Laramie for a project they are calling “Garden Stop along the Trail”.

They will landscape the grounds around their Town Hall using native plants in order to teach xeriscaping, to enhance habitat for pollinators, to reduce chemical use, and to improve aesthetics for the health and well-being of community members.

For information on our chapter 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 for our program:

Douglas Tallamy – 220

Jim Tolstrup – 182

Michelle Bohanan – 104

More than \$2200 was collected in donations for the Cheyenne Habitat Hero Committee and the Audubon Rockies Habitat Hero program; the net receipts were evenly split between the two organizations. Our chapter now has seed money for more Habitat Hero activities.

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

Bird News

March 26 – Cheyenne Country Club survey results

By Chuck Seniawski

7:50 AM - 10:03 AM

Protocol: Traveling

2.8 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 32 degrees. Partly cloudy. Light breeze. Lake is free of ice. Art Anderson, Grant Frost, Mark Gorges, Vicki Herren, Ray Milczewski, Chuck Seniawski, Pete Sokolosky, Susan and Roy West.

30 species

Canada Goose 24

Gadwall 20

American Wigeon 6

Mallard 24

Northern Pintail 1

Green-winged Teal 3

Canvasback 1

Redhead 24

Ring-necked Duck 5

Lesser Scaup 4

Common Merganser 21

Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 2

Eurasian Collared-Dove 3

Killdeer 3

Red-tailed Hawk 1

Hairy Woodpecker 1 male

Northern Flicker 7

Black-billed Magpie 8

American Crow 21

Mountain Chickadee 6

Red-breasted Nuthatch 5

White-breasted Nuthatch 2

Pygmy Nuthatch 2

Brown Creeper 1

European Starling 5

American Robin 3

House Sparrow 2

House Finch 5

Dark-eyed Junco 23

Red-winged Blackbird 5



Hairy Woodpecker by Mark Gorges

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S84137605>

March 27 – Field trip report – Goshen Hole Waterfowl Research Station

By Mark Gorges

Due to the snowstorm the week before our original planned date, our field trip was rescheduled. Nine of us made the trip to the Springer/Bump Sullivan Wildlife Habitat Management Area. On the way there we saw a flock of turkeys near Hawk Springs.



Snow Geese by Mark Gorges

In about an hour and a half at Goshen Hole Reservoir we saw 13 species.

Snow Goose 9000 probably under counted.

Canada Goose 30

Gadwall 9

American Wigeon 6

Mallard 60

Northern Pintail 70

Green-winged Teal 30

Common Merganser 2

Sandhill Crane 4

Ring-billed Gull 6

Northern Harrier 2

Red-tailed Hawk 1

Western Meadowlark 5

We stopped at a couple of other sites in and around the WHMA and saw a few other species:

Double-crested Cormorant

Bald Eagle

Ring-necked Pheasant

Eurasian Collared-Dove

Great Horned Owl

Blue Jay

European Starling
American Robin
Red-winged Blackbird
Common Grackle

Birds in the news: salmonella, predator aversion, wind turbines, song identification

By Barb Gorges

I get bird news in so many more ways now besides mail: Facebook, podcasts, blogs, emails. And even from friends and the radio.

Kathy Jenkins asked if I'd heard the National Public Radio report on an outbreak of salmonella at bird feeders around the country. You can tell the bird victims because they will often sit quietly all fluffed up on a feeder perch when other birds have flown away. They are usually finches.

It's a disease passed around from bird to bird where they congregate at feeders. The cure, when you see sick birds, is as simple as taking down your feeder for a week and scrubbing it well with a solution of soapy water and a little bleach and rinsing it well before refilling.

There are a variety of other communicable bird diseases and cleaning of feeders every couple of weeks—and bird droppings in the vicinity—is good preventive maintenance and avoids having to suspend feeding because there are signs of disease.

On the other hand, painting stinky stuff around the nesting territories of endangered shorebirds is a good idea.

Researchers in New Zealand found that the enticing scent of chicken and other easily procured prey species mixed with petroleum jelly and slathered on rocks attracted predators. After a month of constant reapplication, the predators, ferrets and feral cats, learned that the smells offered no food rewards. They seemed to have moved on, before the double-banded plovers, wrybills and South Island pied oystercatchers came in to nest.

Successful hatching doubled for the plovers and wrybills and tripled for oystercatchers. Keeping up this aversion training each season may lead to population increase over time instead of the current decreasing numbers. Read more

at <https://www.audubon.org/news/false-scents-can-trick-predators-ignoring-nesting-shorebirds>.

The impact on birds of a proposed wind turbine project in Albany County was recently incorrectly compared by someone quoted for a Wyoming Public Radio story.

Wind energy proponents frequently cite the statistics that more birds are killed by cats than by wind turbines. The problem is that the kinds of birds killed by cats are more likely to be common birds in urban and suburban areas than the long-distance migrants like shorebirds (though they are also at risk on breeding grounds), raptors and warblers.

And since wind generation continues to increase and companies are not required to make public how many birds are killed, we only have their word for the comparison. For more, see <https://www.wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/albany-county-wind-debate-rife-misinformation>.

I still think we should fill current infrastructure with solar panels before littering the landscape with turbines, especially with their massive concrete pedestals, miles of underground cables and unrecyclable components.

I'd like to apologize to everyone who tried to attend the virtual Cheyenne Audubon meeting in March and was stymied by our human-caused technical error.

We hope to have the evening's guest speaker, Nathan Pieplow, visit Cheyenne later this spring for birding and a book signing. [Book signing scheduled for May 14, 2021. Details to be announced at <https://cheyenneaudubon.wordpress.com/>.]

Pieplow is the author of the Peterson Field Guide to the Bird Sounds of Western North America (and the eastern version). You can learn to hear an unfamiliar bird and look it up in his field guide, or at least narrow it down to a category of sound type and then compare with the bird sounds at <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/peterson-field-guide-to-bird-sounds/>.

The field guide has spectrographs of bird sounds, very much like musical notation. The introduction gives you instructions on how to learn to "read" spectrographs. You can also use a

phone app like Song Sleuth to record birds and see the spectrograph and get an identification suggestion.

Pieplow's March talk was on interpreting common bird sounds. Who knew that the sound of red-winged blackbirds in the spring in the cattails is actually a duet, the female joining in midway to declare "My mate is taken!"?

The more bird sounds are studied, the more variation is found. Brown thrashers can go off on a riff for over an hour and never repeat themselves.

A group of red-winged blackbird males in a marsh will use a series of call notes to keep in touch and apprise each other of danger, but another group 50 miles away uses a different set of calls.

Cowbird nestlings, hatched from eggs dropped in other bird species' nests, don't sound the same as the host nestlings, but get fed anyway.

We don't hear what birds hear because their hearing is better and more discriminatory. Kind of like the way they can see more "frames per second" than we can, they can hear more nuances than we can.

There is endless room for more research, including uploading your phone recordings of birds you hear to eBird.org. As Pieplow said, there are 10,000 bird languages— at least as many as there are bird species in the world.



The House Finch is a common feeder bird susceptible to salmonella. Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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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.

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