



May 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/>

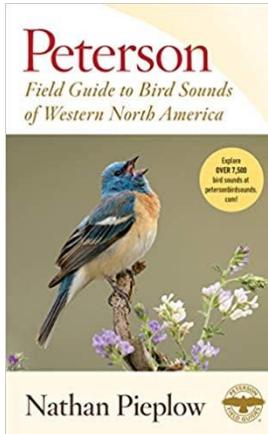
Calendar

May 8, 8 a.m. – Joint Field Trip with the Laramie Chapter at Wyoming Hereford Ranch to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day

We will meet at the Wyoming Hereford Ranch Headquarters at 8 a.m. We should be able to find some warbler species as well as migrating thrushes and other colorful migrating songbirds.

Wear your mask when outside your vehicle with the group. Bring water and clothes for changing weather. We expect to be finished by noon, 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 bad weather.



May 14, 6 p.m. – Book Signing with Nathan Pieplow – Wyoming Hereford Ranch, 1101 Hereford Ranch Road

Our guest speaker in March, Nathan Pieplow, will join us for a little talk and book signing at the WHR. He will have copies of his “**Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Western North America**” available for purchase.

Thanks go to the Hales who are lending us use of the Horse Barn, diagonally across from the office which has a restroom.

Bring your lawn chair. If it is a nice evening, we’ll be out on the nearby lawn. If it is a nasty evening, we’ll be in the hayloft (stair access only). Bring your own refreshments.

You are welcome to arrive early and stay late to do a little birding—WHR is famous, especially among Wyoming and Colorado birders.

May 15, 6:30 a.m. – Annual Cheyenne Big Day Bird Count

Starting at Lions Park, we will cover birding hot spots throughout the Cheyenne area **If you want to join us later than 6:30 a.m., please call Mark, 307-287-4953, to get a location update.** We also encourage people to report all bird sightings during the 24 hour period beginning at midnight on the free app at eBird.org. The middle of May is the high point of the spring migration of birds to their nesting areas from their winter homes.



Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Cheyenne, May 2015 by Mark Gorges

We will leave from the Lions Park parking lot between the Children’s Village at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens and the picnic shelter to hike around the park for about an hour or two. We will then head to the Wyoming Hereford Ranch. At about lunch time we will head out to the Agricultural Research Station and the Arboretum west of the Air Force Base.

Bring a lunch or pick one up on the way; bring water and dress for variable weather. Everyone, no matter what your birding skills, is invited. Bring binoculars if you have them. The more eyes we have,

the more birds we will see. We may finish the planned routes by 3 p.m. However, you may join us for as long as you wish and leave when you need to.

May 22, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. – Greenway Cleanup

Cheyenne Audubon is hosting a Greenway cleanup event, Saturday May 22 as part of the 30th anniversary of the greenway. The public is invited to help. The starting location is the parking lot adjacent to the intersection of Van Buren Avenue and Laramie Street (just north of East Lincolnway and east of its intersection with Pershing Blvd.). Work will proceed to the north along Dry Creek.

Trash bags and light-weight gloves will be provided. Participants should wear sturdy footwear (preferably waterproof) and heavy gloves and bring rakes and hoes, if available, for fishing trash out of the creek. Masks and social distancing are recommended.

May 25, 7p.m.– Virtual Board Meeting

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

May 28, 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.

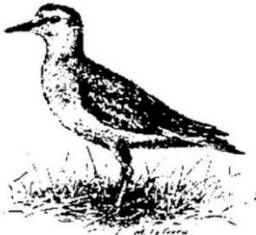
June 5, 8 a.m. – Wyoming Hereford Ranch

The Foothills Audubon Society from Colorado will be visiting the Hereford Ranch. We have been invited to join them and show them around.

Chapter News

Chapter President's message

Dear CHPAS Members and Friends,



Hi Folks! It finally feels like spring and your Board has been busy. We approved a \$500 grant for pollinator plants to the Laramie County Conservation District wetland project east of town along Dry Creek between Campstool and I-80. When completed there will be field trip opportunities to observe birds and wildlife in the enhanced habitat.

We also approved the annual donation of \$200 to the Cheyenne Botanical Gardens Children's Village for bird educational materials.

Finally, we approved a letter to the Governor and State Engineer on the proposed high capacity wells east of Cheyenne. We've asked that they specifically find that the wells will not be detrimental to the N. and S. Platte watersheds and consequently endanger birds and their habitats.

Lots of good work that's being done, and we still need good people to help. We need folks to assist on committees and for board positions - specifically the Presidency as my term ends in June. Please consider this!

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

Please let Representative Liz Cheney know that the "Recovering America's Wildlife Act" will help support wildlife through habitat protection.

<https://www.audubon.org/news/audubon-supports-us-house-bill-fund-wildlife-recovery>

Education and Conservation

Chapter Grants

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

Chapter Fundraiser

By Barb Gorges

Over the years, CHPAS has received donations of all kinds of birdy items: bird books, bird prints, bird stamps, bird china, hummingbird feeders, etc. In the past, we have found homes for items or put them in silent auctions at one of our events.

This winter, I met Janet DeFlores and found out that she has a booth at the Eclectic Elephant called "Jan's Nature Booth." A little lightbulb went off over my head. Would she be interested in some of the donated bird-related items Terry was currently storing? She was, and she made us an offer which we accepted and put in the bank to support future chapter endeavors.

If you would like to support Janet's support of us, visit her booth downtown, 112 W. 18th Street, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Tuesday – Saturday, and Sunday noon – 5 p.m. Some of her items, including those from her booth of vintage items, are listed on eBay under "Bluebird Vintage and Dry Goods."

Habitat Hero



With spring come April flowers and garden work. In our Habitat Hero site at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens, the spring bulbs have been blooming. We went in among the flowers and seedlings and new growth to cut down the old growth that had helped collect snow during the winter.

We cut up the old plant material and spread it around as mulch to help protect the soil from drying too quickly. We also did that at the BOPU Habitat Hero Demonstration Garden. Thank you to the volunteers who helped with the work.



Left: Cheyenne Botanic Gardens Habitat Hero Demonstration Garden, Grape Hyacinth, May 2.

Right: Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities Habitat Hero Garden, daffodils, May 2.

Bird News

Wyoming Game and Fish looking for Breeding Bird Survey Help

They have available routes near Lingle and Yoder. If you are interested or need more information, please contact Courtney Rudd before May 10 at CourtneyRudd@WYO.gov

April 17 – Field trip report – Cheyenne Area Hot Spots

By Mark Gorges

Again the weather caused our plans to change. Instead of impassable muddy or snowy roads and sage grouse viewing, 18 of us settled for Lions Park and the Wyoming Herford Ranch.

Here is the combined list for the day.

50 species

Canada Goose
Blue-winged Teal
Cinnamon Teal
Northern Shoveler
Mallard
Gadwall
American Wigeon
Mallard
Green-winged Teal
Canvasback
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck
Lesser Scaup
Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye
Common Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Horned Grebe
Eared Grebe
Western Grebe
American Coot
Least Sandpiper
Greater Yellowlegs
Franklin's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Common Loon
Double-crested Cormorant
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Belted Kingfisher
Downy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
American Kestrel



One of four Osprey at Sloan's Lake that morning by Mark Gorges

Peregrine Falcon
Say's Phoebe
American Crow
Red-breasted Nuthatch
American Robin
House Sparrow
American Pipit
Song Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Red-winged Blackbird
Common Grackle

April 30 – Cheyenne Country Club survey results

By Chuck Seniawski

6:46 AM - 9:45 AM

Protocol: Traveling

3.35 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 46 degrees. Clear skies. Calm as it ever gets. Perfect morning. Art Anderson, Grant Frost, Mark Gorges, Vicki Herren, Jerry Johnson, Sue Lowry, Ray Milczewski, Chuck Seniawski, Pete Sokolosky, Christy Wilkinson, Roy West. Unusual that we should see ZERO warblers at this time of year, although they have not been coming in great numbers yet in our general area.

38 species (+1 other taxa)

Canada Goose 11
Blue-winged Teal 7
Northern Shoveler 7
Gadwall 11
American Wigeon 4
Mallard 14
Green-winged Teal 5
Lesser Scaup 1
Eurasian Collared-Dove 4
Mourning Dove 1
American Coot 1
Killdeer 1
Ring-billed Gull 2
gull sp. 13 Flying overhead.
Likely Ring-billed and/or California.
Great Blue Heron 1
Turkey Vulture 1
Cooper's Hawk 1
Belted Kingfisher 1
Downy Woodpecker 1
Hairy Woodpecker 1
Northern Flicker 17
Black-billed Magpie 7
American Crow 18
Black-capped Chickadee 1
Mountain Chickadee 6
Barn Swallow 3
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1

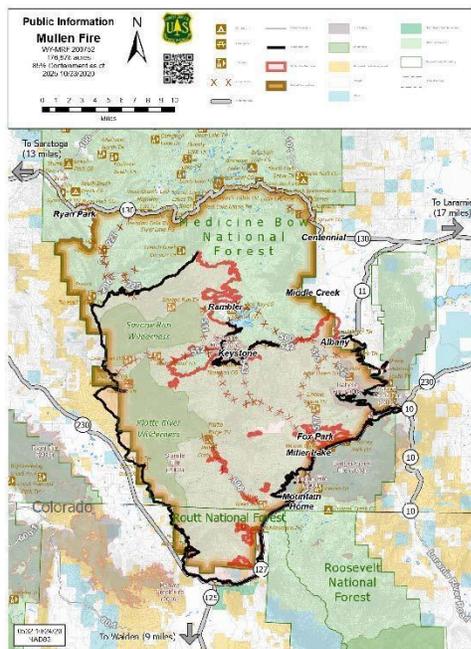


Yellow-headed Blackbird by Mark Gorges

Red-breasted Nuthatch 4
 European Starling 6
 American Robin 12
 House Sparrow 2
 House Finch 6
 Chipping Sparrow 6
 Lincoln's Sparrow 1
 Yellow-headed Blackbird 2
 Western Meadowlark 1
 Red-winged Blackbird 34
 Common Grackle 1
 Great-tailed Grackle 8

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S86737729>

Mullen Fire changes forest habitats



Mullen Fire containment map, Oct. 23, 2020.

*Published May 1, 2021, in the Wyoming Tribune Eagle
By Barb Gorges*

It isn't good, it isn't bad. We can't make moral judgements. It just is. This is the message Jesse McCarty had for us about the Mullen Fire.

McCarty is a wildlife biologist and on the natural resources staff of the Medicine Bow – Routt National Forest's Laramie Ranger District. The Mullen Fire started Sept. 17, 2020, on the forest in the Savage Run Wilderness Area. The source of ignition is still under investigation.

From there, firefighters were able to keep it from burning an area around Lake Owen critical to the safety of Cheyenne's water supply. But on Sept. 26, the wind pushed the fire down and around on a one-day, 30,000 acre-run to the east. That's a swath 6 miles wide and 8 miles long.

That was the day Cheyenne's skies turned orange, even though we were 70 miles downwind of the fire. That is the day that if you breathed that orange air, your lungs didn't feel right for a couple months afterwards.

To see the extent of the fire, go to the website that tracks wildland

fires, <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/maps/7208/>.

The Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society invited McCarty to talk about what the effects of the fire were and will be on wildlife, especially birds, and what restoration work is planned.

This forest has been using particular bird species as indicators of habitat. Not all bird species specialize in a narrowly described habitat, but each species monitored is tied to a particular one. For instance, the Lincoln's sparrow is found around wet mountain meadows. As the meadow fills in with trees over time, there will be more forest species such as the brown creeper.

After a fire, the American three-toed woodpecker moves in. A species of the spruce-fir habitat, it is most numerous where insects are taking advantage of dying trees. When the flush of those insects is over and low growth is sprouting, another bird species will move in. On it goes until the spruce-fir forest is re-established and golden-crowned kinglets are at home again.

The Forest Service is continuing its bird surveys this summer. It also keeps an eye on threatened and endangered species and others in special, protective categories.

Field biologist Don Jones of Laramie asked an important question. In view of the warming climate (the forest was experiencing another drought year in 2020), will areas that were once spruce-fir come back, or will the vegetation of a drier climate prevail, like pine-juniper? Jones is young enough that he may see the answer in his lifetime.

The more than 55 people (not counting instances of more than one person per screen) around the state and beyond who were participating in the Zoom meeting were also concerned about other wildlife, such as the large mammals. McCarty said that there didn't appear to be large mammal carcasses in the wake of the fire. The new vegetative growth after the fire will attract big game.

The insect life will have taken a hit where it couldn't find moist places to hide, McCarty said, but there is not much fire science related to insects.

When McCarty visited the forest in December, he found green growth. Sometimes, he said, this is from the caches of seeds squirrels and other small animals make. Also, the heat of the fire will have opened the serotinous cones of lodgepole pine, releasing seed. Aspen growth is also stimulated by fire.



Mullen Fire, burned area/US Forest Service photo

The spread of cheatgrass is a concern and so the forest is using applications of Rejuvra, an herbicide that keeps it from germinating. There will also be grass seeding and tree planting in critical areas such as steep slopes.

Burned areas in the Savage Run Wilderness Area will not be repaired—the definition of a wilderness area is that people do not interfere with ecological processes there.

For most of us in the audience, the Medicine Bow is our forest, and we want to know how we can volunteer to help it recover. This year, the forest is not allowing volunteers within the burn area, but you can find other volunteer needs by contacting Aaron Voos, aaron.voos@usda.gov.

As the summer recreation season gets started, we will find trails and campgrounds in the fire area that are closed. Please honor the forest's directives for your own safety until hazardous trees have been dropped and burnt slopes are stabilized.

And make sure you don't cause the next forest fire.

xxx

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.

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

