



October 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.*

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Education, open

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Mark Gorges, Newsletter, Habitat Hero

Art Anderson, Important Bird Areas

Elaine Grings, Social Media

Barb Gorges, Programs, Publicity

Lorie Chesnut, Hospitality, Website

Jordyn Sorrow, Student Advisory Member

Advocacy, open

Terry Harper, Past president

The CHPAS Flyer is published online monthly. Submissions are welcome. The current issue is available online at www.CheyenneAudubon.org.

Contact Us at cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com

Please become a CHPAS member

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

October 19, 7 p.m. – Program: Dry Creek: “Evolution of an Urban Stream in Cheyenne” given by Jeff Geyer, Laramie County Conservation District water specialist - Cottonwood Room, Laramie County Library

The Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society invites the public to a free, in-person program, Oct. 19 at 7 p.m. in the Cottonwood Room of the Laramie County Library, 2200 Pioneer Avenue. The program will also be accessible via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87615181165>.

Cheyenne's increased development over the last 20 years means increased impervious surfaces, which in turn means higher flows in drainages through town. Dry Creek drains two-thirds of Cheyenne which equates to 12 square miles of roof tops, roads, and driveways. Stormwater runoff has changed the shape and behavior of Dry Creek, degrading it. The Laramie County Conservation District is using best management practices (BMPs) to restore and rejuvenate Dry Creek to a functioning system within its Cheyenne Business Park Natural Area.

Jeff Geyer is the Water Specialist at the Laramie County Conservation District. He tinkers with every aspect of the hydrologic cycle within the bounds of Laramie County. He works with water development for improved range condition, aquifer recharge and conservation issues, riparian recovery, water-wise landscaping and stream restoration. Jeff has a Bachelor's in Fisheries and Wildlife Management and an MS in Rangeland Ecology and Watershed Management, both from the University of Wyoming.



Dry Creek by Jeff Geyer

This watershed project is partially funded with grants from both the Cheyenne High Plains Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society.

October 23, 8 a.m. – Field Trip to Front Range Lakes

We plan to leave from the parking lot next to the Children's Village at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens in Lions Park at 8 a.m. Following Covid protocols, car pooling may be available at the discretion of drivers.



Waterfowl flock to the front range lakes because some of the lakes can stay open all winter. Photo by Mark Gorges

We will be looking for a variety of wintering waterfowl (geese, ducks, grebes, etc.) on lakes down to Wellington and beyond depending on time. Although we should turn back north by noon, you can leave whenever you need to. Dress for changing weather; bring water and snacks. Also, bring a lunch if you want to stay longer.

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.

October 26, 7 p.m. – Board Meeting: Laramie County Library, Sage Room, on the 2nd floor

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

October 29, 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.

November 16, 7 p.m. – Program: Eric Dalton from the Common Outdoor Ground group

Eric, the president of the board of Common Outdoor Ground, will speak about the work they have done on Pole Mountain.

The program is planned for the Laramie County Library in the Cottonwood Room.

December 18 - Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count

More information in our December newsletter.

December 19 – Guernsey/Ft. Laramie Christmas Bird Count

Chapter News

Chapter President's message



Greetings everyone,

Wow!! And just like that, summer is over and fall is creeping in. The leaves are changing and still attached to the trees for a few more days. I think of a "long" fall as the length of time the trees have leaves, not the number of mild days. Hopefully, we will have both.

We still have meadowlarks in the pasture and a couple of lark buntings and horned larks, but it's quieter out there already.

We have great speakers with interesting topics lined up for you. In September, Pete Arnold shared fabulous photographs of their birding trip to Costa Rica. We are trying to Zoom these presentations also. It was a bit of a bumpy ride in September, but Barb and Melissa have worked out the technical bugs, and we are hoping October will be smoother.

On October 19th, we have Jeff Geyer of the Laramie County Conservation District with us. He will be speaking about the restoration of Dry Creek. Jeff procured grant money from several sources and has already done a tremendous amount of work on slowing the stream, reducing erosion, and increasing diversity in the plant community. It promises to be an interesting evening.

In November, we will have Eric Dalton from the Common Outdoor Ground group, and he will speak about the work they have done on Pole Mountain.

We still have committees that need chair people. Please contact any board member if you would like to sit in on a board meeting. We would love to collaborate with you.

Happy October, please join us on the 19th at the Laramie County Library, Cottonwood Room.

Wanda
CHPAS President

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

Advocacy Network

Bird Safe Buildings Act -- Bill in Congress

The federal Bird Safe Building Act is good legislation to save millions of birds. The bill needs our support to become a law. Attached is a YouTube video on it and how to help. Go to:

<https://youtu.be/6Js-XIJ4nzM>

Education and Conservation

Cheyenne Greenway update

The chapter did have a few people out on our Dry Creek section of the Greenway on September 25th for the semi-annual cleanup day.

Commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Greater Cheyenne Greenway by purchasing one of these keepsakes: Cheyenne Greenway T-shirt, Travel Tumbler, Greenway Coffee Mug. Order them online at <https://www.cheyennegreenwayfoundation.org/shop-our-store> or get them at Cheyenne City Hall (2101 O'Neil Ave) during business hours.

Also, when pick up your purchases, you can get a yard sign reminding people to vote on the 6th Penny tax referendum which includes Greenway projects. Propositions #7 and #8 have specific Greenway projects.

Chapter Grants

For information on our chapter education and conservation grants, see our chapter website at: www.cheyenneaudubon.org.

Habitat Hero



Save The Date - January 29: "How to Nurture the Prairie in Town and Country"

We will be hosting the 8th Annual Habitat Hero Workshop at Laramie County Community College.

Keynote: Aaron Maier (Range Ecologist for Audubon Rockies)– Regenerative Ag and Landscape Practices (soil health, carbon cycling, small acreage or garden).

Other topics:

Prairie Birds and Their Needs
Buffalo-grass Lawns
Soil Testing: at home in a jar or by a lab
Winter Sowing
Individual Site Planning Q&A
Native Plants

Watch for details on registration in the coming months.

Bird News

October 9 - October Big Day/World Migratory Big Day

Big Days are a 24-hour opportunity to celebrate birds near and far. Wherever you are on 9 October, take a few minutes to join the world of birding on October Big Day.

By taking part in October Big Day you're also joining the second-ever Global Bird Weekend and celebrating World Migratory Bird Day. Be a part of the global team; help set a new record for birding.

For additional information about October Big Day go to: <https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-2021>.

Also from Environment for the Americas, this beautifully shot video features World Migratory Bird Day 2021 artist, Sara Wolman. She highlights the connection between birds and art and how birds bring us all together.

"Birds are a universal language—they connect us," says Sara. "Every single one of us has a story of our personal experience with birds to share."

Take a few moments to sing, fly, and soar like a bird as you watch this short inspirational film. Watch the video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkUYYdF1KKA&t=11s> . You can skip the one or two adds at the beginning.

September 24 – Cheyenne Country Club survey results

By Chuck Seniawski

7:48 AM - 10:46 AM

Protocol: Traveling

3.2 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 50 degrees. Clear. Calm. Grant Frost, Greg Johnson, Jerry Johnson, Carol Mayer, Chuck Seniawski, Pete Sokolosky, Roy West, Christy Wilkinson
29 species (+1 other taxa)

Canada Goose 6

Blue-winged Teal 5

Gadwall 4

American Wigeon 4

Mallard 19

Pied-billed Grebe 1

Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 4

gull sp. 8 high overhead

Red-headed Woodpecker 1 juvenile

Downy Woodpecker 1 female

Hairy Woodpecker 2

Northern Flicker 12

Blue Jay 1

Black-billed Magpie 8

American Crow 22

Mountain Chickadee 1

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2

Red-breasted Nuthatch 10

White-breasted Nuthatch 3
Pygmy Nuthatch 2
Gray Catbird 1
Townsend's Solitaire 1
American Robin 23
House Finch 3
Chipping Sparrow 3
White-crowned Sparrow 9
Lincoln's Sparrow 2
Red-winged Blackbird 10
Yellow-rumped Warbler 1
Wilson's Warbler 4

View this checklist online
at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S95103598>



White-breasted Nuthatch photo by Mark Gorges

September 25 – Report: Field Trip to Wyoming Hereford Ranch

By Chuck Seniawski

7:50 AM - 12:12 PM

Protocol: Traveling

3.8 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 50 degrees, warming to 71 by noon. Sunny, with light haze. CHPAS field trip, 13 participants.
30 species

Canada Goose 128 Flying over in groups of 30 or so

Mallard 12

Common Merganser 4 swimming in Crow Creek

Eurasian Collared-Dove 6

Mourning Dove 2

Turkey Vulture 19 kettling to the south

Red-tailed Hawk 1

Downy Woodpecker 1 female

Northern Flicker 4

Blue Jay 1

Barn Swallow 3

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 3

Red-breasted Nuthatch 2

European Starling 17

Townsend's Solitaire 2

Hermit Thrush 1

American Robin 5

House Finch 9

American Goldfinch 17

Chipping Sparrow 13

Dark-eyed Junco 1

White-crowned Sparrow 40

Vesper Sparrow 1

Song Sparrow 1

Western Meadowlark 6

Red-winged Blackbird 1

Orange-crowned Warbler 3



White-crowned Sparrow photo by Mark Gorges

Yellow-rumped Warbler 4
Townsend's Warbler 1
Wilson's Warbler 7

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S95159607>

Cheyenne birders search Pennsylvania and New York woodlands for eastern birds

By Barb Gorges

Mark and I couldn't hear any birds over the sound of wind in the leaves. That's not unusual for Wyoming, but we were in Pennsylvania where the trees will grow a complete canopy without anyone planting them. Finding birds is dependent on hearing them, even more so than here.

We were at the Churchville Nature Center in Bucks County, my favorite place to bird when visiting my aunt. The goldenrod and purple asters were in full bloom in the little meadow and robins were picking fruit from all kinds of shrubs. But in the trees, it seemed birdless until we reached a little swale protected from the wind and suddenly there was a swarm of chickadees, titmice and warblers for a few minutes.

There were no birds to be seen on the reservoir. The waterbirds and shorebirds must have already tucked in for the coming storm, waiting for the afternoon's deluge.

We counted only 11 species altogether. For the Saturday morning bird walk before our visit, 19 local birders listed 64 species. Timing and experience make a big difference. I keep forgetting to look into hiring local bird guides when we travel.

In the Ithaca, New York, area, we had the help of our son Bryan and his wife, Jessie, both avid birders. They have experience identifying birds we rarely see in Cheyenne, like the black-throated green warbler. They pointed out the sound of a Carolina wren, unseen in the brush. They also pointed out that sometimes one-note calls in the trees are chipmunks or tree frogs.

The Finger Lakes region has a plethora of public land to explore and bird. We hiked the gorge at Watkins Glen State Park our first morning, as early as Jessie could get us on the road. It is black shale sculpted by water, dim and deep and deafening—no birds could be heard over the numerous waterfalls full of rain. The sun rarely reaches into the gorge at 9 a.m. but later the steep trail is crowded with people.

Have you heard of Finger Lakes National Forest? It's a scattering of parcels between Seneca and Cayuga lakes, tiny compared to any of the national forests in Wyoming, but then again, with all those trees in the way, the boundaries are not very noticeable. We hiked the Potomac trails where in late September fall color was just beginning to show.

Our second day of birding hikes began with the Dorothy McIlroy Bird Sanctuary northeast of Ithaca. A creek and wetlands attract a lot of birds to this property owned and managed by the Finger Lakes Land Trust. It commemorates a woman who had a significant role in the early days of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The shrub fen and peat swamp were bordered by hemlock trees, unusual for the immediate area, but old friends of mine from my central Wisconsin days.

Next, we hiked and birded nearby Bear Swamp State Forest Park. Didn't see any bears but found interesting mushrooms and Jessie found a red eft, the teenage stage of the eastern newt.

I've read that the overpopulation of deer has affected eastern forests, browsing the shrub and young tree understory layer of vegetation to the point that you can see quite a way through the tree trunks. It must negatively affect birds that specialize in that layer.

Where there was normal understory, I made a new friend, a small tree, striped maple, named for the vertical ridges on its stems. It is also known as moosewood. It's a favorite moose food and the name of my favorite Ithaca restaurant.

One stop we made between Philadelphia and Ithaca was to see the Rodale Institute, a proponent of organic gardening and farming beginning in 1947. Back in 1978 I contributed a story to their magazine, an interview with the designer of a safer bluebird house. Mark and I opted for the self-guided tour of the fields and greenhouses, which you can hear at their website.

Rodale is now a proponent of organic regenerative agriculture, as well as planting for pollinators. However, they apparently haven't banned outdoor cats yet, so they aren't entirely bird-friendly. Ironically, in the shrubbery by the creek there were a lot of catbirds.

While we wistfully compared the unwanted extra precipitation the East has had lately with our western drought, we are still happy with our choice to live in Wyoming, where the horizon stretches much farther.



Spotting a flock of Eastern Bluebirds in Pennsylvania was a treat for Cheyenne birders Barb and Mark Gorges. Photo by Mark Gorges

Barb Gorges is the author of "Cheyenne Birds by the Month," www.YuccaRoadPress.com. Her previous columns are at <http://cheyennebirdbanter.wordpress.com>. Contact her at bgorges4@msn.com.

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