



# January 2022 "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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Wanda Manley, President

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Grant Frost, Field Trips, Bird Compiler

Mark Gorges, Newsletter, Habitat Hero

Art Anderson, Important Bird Areas

Elaine Grings, Social Media

Barb Gorges, Programs, Publicity

Lorie Chesnut, Website

**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](http://www.CheyenneAudubon.org).

**Contact Us** at [cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com](mailto: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

### January 15, 8:00 a.m. – Birding Trip to the Buford area

We will leave from the Lions Park parking lot at the Children's Village at 8 a.m. Carpooling may be available based on Covid guidelines. We will drive west on I-80 to Buford, about 27 miles.

We will hike through open ponderosa pine and aspen woodlands looking for winter birds such as crossbills and woodpeckers. We should return by noon or 1 p.m., but if you drive, you can leave whenever you need to. Bring water and dress for the weather and snow on the ground.

If you are interested in going, contact Grant Frost, 307-343-2024, so that he has a list of those expected, and can let you know if the plans change for any reason.



Feb 2020 near Buford by Mark Gorges

## **January 18, 7:00 p.m. – Program: Tanner Hoffman - Investigating plants and soil microorganisms after the Mullen Fire**

Cottonwood Room at the Laramie County Library, 2200 Pioneer Ave. It can also be accessed virtually by using the link available at <https://cheyenneaudubon.org/>: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86976431363?pwd=OXUvMkd1ajJQbGRNZFNWlirVzhmUT09>.

University of Wyoming graduate student Tanner Hoffman is investigating relationships between plants and soil microorganisms after the Mullen Fire. He is in UW's Soil Microbial Ecology Lab under Linda van Diepen.

There is also a community science component to Hoffman's work on the Mullen Fire scar, giving participants the opportunity to engage in the scientific process through educational fieldtrips, laboratory workshop, and plot adoption and data collection.

Hoffman explains he was drawn to this area of work "through a deep curiosity to learn more about the unseen world of microorganisms, and how these fascinating forms of life shape the natural ecosystems that I spend most of my free time in."

## **January 25, 6:30 p.m. – Board Meeting, Windflower Room, Laramie County Public Library, 2200 Pioneer Ave.**

Contact Wanda Manley, [cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com), if you would like to participate in helping to plan chapter activities.

## **January 28, 8:00 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](mailto:chuckski@aol.com). The count will start in the County Clubhouse's main parking lot.

## **Jan. 29, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. – 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Cheyenne Habitat Hero Workshop**, see below on page 4.

**February 15, 7:00 p.m. – Program: Ben Robb**, Wyoming Migration Initiative, I-80 study, Laramie County Library, Cottonwood Room

## **Chapter News**

### **Chapter President's message**



Greetings everyone,

We have a busy month ahead. There will be a birding trip on January 15th. Watch our website, <https://cheyenneaudubon.org/> for a meeting place. This month the field trip is before the presentation at the library, so we won't have an opportunity to remind everyone where/when to meet. Dress warm, it looks like winter has finally arrived.

The CHPAS speaker on January 18th at library, is Tanner Hoffman with information about a science initiative for the Mullen Fire. The project is supported by the University of Wyoming Biodiversity Institute. Check out their webpage about this project if you have time, <https://www.wyomingbiodiversity.org/index.php/community-science/mullen-wildfire-community-science-initiative>.

The Country Club bird survey is the last Friday of every month, so that will be January 28th. Meet at the Country Club at 8:00 am. Again, dress warm.

The Habitat Hero workshop is on January 29th at LCCC. Don't forget to register soon, <https://rockies.audubon.org/events/how-nurture-prairie-town-and-country>. It will be a fun and interesting day, with a lot of timely information. You can attend in-person or virtually through Zoom.

In December, we learned of the passing of the CHPAS founding president, John Cornelison. This Audubon Society chapter was started in 1974 because of John's vision. He led a tremendous life, and we were fortunate he had the foresight and drive to start this chapter all those years ago.

With all that being said, we have much to look forward to in 2022. We appreciate you all as members and supporters. Please consider filling or co-chairing a board position. We have several projects in the planning and implementation stages. If you would like to volunteer, or if you have a project in mind, please contact one of the board members, or email [cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com)

Happy New Year and I hope to see you soon.

Wanda  
CHPAS President

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

## **John Cornelison, 1939-2021**

Our chapter's founding president, John Cornelison, died Dec. 5, 2021. John was part of the group that pursued chapter status, culminating in the National Audubon Society charter granted in 1974.

John always had a thoughtful outlook on whatever topics came up at board meetings. He and his wife Joanne hosted many Christmas Bird Count tally parties at the Westgate community center. Although in recent years John was not an active member of the board, he still wanted to be on the board's email list.

John's full obituary, including his journalism and Wyoming Army National Guard career, is available here: <https://www.wrcfuneral.com/obituaries/Col-Ret-John-Cornelison/>.

The family suggested donations in John's name may be made to the Wyoming National Guard Museum and to us, the Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society.

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## **Education and Conservation**

### **Chapter Grants**

For information on our chapter education and conservation grants, see our chapter website at: [www.cheyenneaudubon.org](http://www.cheyenneaudubon.org).

### **Donations, Memorials, Grants**

*By Barb Gorges*

Good causes attract funds effortlessly, it seems. Our chapter has the task of spending money to make sure we keep our non-profit status.

First, we have many generous members who add donations to their \$12 annual dues. They have been funding \$500 grants for education (primarily teachers) and conservation projects like the work we have been doing with the Laramie County Conservation District on Dry Creek.

Our Habitat Hero and conservation committees have been successful in getting three competitive grants from the National Audubon Society over the last five years.

This fall, Mitch Daily, project manager for the Roundhouse wind energy development on the city's Belvoir Ranch, pushed us to accept a \$5,000 donation, no strings attached. We accepted once we could come up with a spending plan that reflected our concerns about the impact of wind turbines on the minor bird migration route through the development. We split the sum between the conservation district (Dry Creek project) and the city (East Park project), our partners in prairie improvements like reseeding and education.

We are partnering with the conservation district on a much larger grant and we will let you know if we are successful in getting it.

Unexpectedly, we now have a memorial fund established in the name of our chapter's founding president, John Cornelison (see obituary above). How should we use it in a way that honors John? If you have ideas, please contact chapter president Wanda Manley, [wandamanley@hotmail.com](mailto:wandamanley@hotmail.com).

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## Habitat Hero



### 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Cheyenne Habitat Hero Workshop How to Nurture the Prairie in Town & Country

**Saturday, January 29, 2022, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm**

Laramie County Community College

1400 E. College Drive, Cheyenne - Pathfinder Building

**Registration: \$25** includes lunch, limit 100 people

Zoom registration for free available for morning talks only.

#### **Morning talks:**

**Developing a Regenerative Land Use Ethos - Principles and Practices**—Aaron Maier, Audubon Rockies Conservation Ranching Initiative Range Ecologist

**The Soils in Your Garden and Landscape**—Catherine Wissner, Laramie County Extension Horticulturist

**Don't be Buffaloed into Bluegrass Turf**—Jeff Geyer, Laramie County Conservation District Water Specialist

**Prairie Birds and Their Needs**—Zach Hutchinson, Audubon Rockies Community Naturalist

#### **Afternoon breakout sessions:**

-Winter Sowing & DIY Soil Testing

-Individual Site Planning Q&A

-Favorite Native Plants

**Registration:** To register for the in-person day-long workshop or for the morning Zoom, go to:

<https://rockies.audubon.org/events/how-nurture-prairie-town-and-country>

Sponsored by the Cheyenne-High Plains Audubon Society and Audubon Rockies

For additional information go to: <https://cheyenneaudubon.org/habitat-hero/> or call Mark at (307) 634-0463

### **Did you leave flower stalks for winter birds in your garden?** *By Mark Gorges*

Besides providing winter interest in your garden areas, those stalks help capture snow which provides some thermal protection for your perennial beds.

In addition, those seed heads may provide some winter feed for birds such as this American Goldfinch adding color in our Habitat Hero garden on Christmas Day.



# Bird News

## Audubon Rockies' Blog

For stories, news, birding information, activities, and more related to birds and bird conservation in Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah, go to <https://rockies.audubon.org/blog>.

### December 18 – Report: Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count

*Compiled by Grant Frost*

41 total species, 5 count week, 36 species counted on Dec 18; 15 people reporting. CW (Count Week) refers to species seen during the count week, three days before or three days after the official count day, but not seen on the count day.



*Some of the Cackling Geese, Canada Geese and Mallards on Sloans Lake by Mark Gorges*

Snow Goose CW	Downy Woodpecker 1
Cackling Goose 781	Northern Flicker 14
Canada Goose 1512	Northern Shrike 2
Northern Shoveler CW	Blue Jay 11
Mallard 226	Black-billed Magpie 53
Northern Pintail 2	American Crow 87
Ring-necked Duck CW	Common Raven 8
Common Goldeneye 19	Mountain Chickadee 8
Common Merganser CW	Horned Lark 13
Rock Pigeon 230	Red-breasted Nuthatch 5
Eurasian Collared-Dove 162	White-breasted Nuthatch 2
Wilson's Snipe 1	European Starling 233
Cooper's Hawk CW	Townsend's Solitaire 14
Northern Goshawk 1	American Robin 8
Bald Eagle 2	House Sparrow 170
Red-tailed Hawk 7	House Finch 75
Rough-legged Hawk 4	American Tree Sparrow 26
Ferruginous Hawk 1	Dark-eyed Junco 53
Eastern Screech-owl 1	Song Sparrow 2
Great Horned Owl 3	Red-winged Blackbird 24
Belted Kingfisher 1	

## December 19 – Report – Guernsey-Fort Laramie Christmas Bird Count

*Compiled by Jane Dorn*

Total for count day was 32 species, plus 11 additional for count week. Count day was hard birding with winds sometimes in excess of 50 mph. It is a good thing we scouted during count week, both before and after count day to pick up 11 additional species.

The food crop was very poor, no cones on the ponderosa pine, almost no Russian olive berries, almost no juniper berries, and no buffalo berries. When we went into Guernsey State Park, the area was silent with no birds, a very unusual experience on our counts.

Canada Goose - 4,073  
Gadwall - CW  
Mallard - 301  
Green-winged Teal - 55  
Common Goldeneye - 28  
Hooded Merganser – 6  
Common Merganser - 6  
Wild Turkey - 45  
Rock Pigeon - 85  
Eurasian Collared Dove - 91  
Ring-billed Gull - 2  
Golden Eagle - 3  
Northern Harrier - CW  
Sharp-shinned Hawk - CW  
Bald Eagle - 8  
Red-tailed Hawk - 1  
Rough-legged Hawk - CW  
Great Horned Owl -CW  
Belted Kingfisher - CW  
Downy Woodpecker - CW  
Northern Flicker - 2  
American Kestrel - 1  
Prairie Falcon - 1  
Northern Shrike - CW  
Blue Jay - 2  
Black-billed Magpie - 4  
American Crow – CW  
Common Raven - 1

Horned Lark - 9  
Black-capped Chickadee - 2  
White-breasted Nuthatch - CW  
Townsend's Solitaire - 8  
American Robin - 28  
European Starling - 231  
Cedar Waxwing - 45  
House Sparrow - 4  
House Finch – 37  
Pine Siskin - 1  
American Goldfinch - 17  
Dark-eyed Junco - 32  
White-crowned Sparrow - 33  
Song Sparrow - CW  
Western Meadowlark - 5



*Cedar Waxwing by Mark Gorges*

## December 31– Cheyenne Country Club survey results

*By Chuck Seniawski*

8:00 AM - 9:51 AM

Protocol: Traveling

3.0 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 27 degrees. Cloudy. Light breeze. 100 percent snow cover. Mark Gorges, Chuck Seniaowski, Pete Sokolosky.  
8 species

Canada Goose 83  
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 1  
Red-tailed Hawk 1  
Northern Flicker 1  
Black-billed Magpie 3  
American Crow 4  
Red-breasted Nuthatch 1  
Dark-eyed Junco 5

View this checklist online  
at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S99774263>



*Geese at the Country Club by Mark Gorges*

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## **Ghosts of Christmas Bird Counts past visit local birdwatcher**

*By Barb Gorges*

Christmas 1989 was Mark's and my first Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count and the first time we met most of the people attending the tally party afterwards.

May Hanesworth, then in her mid-80s, was the count compiler and we met at her apartment. It was a scary place for me, the mother of two boys, ages 1 and 4, because it was filled with breakable figurines of birds. But May, a retired music teacher, was not concerned, and the boys and I often visited on Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society business after that. Later, I learned that she and her husband, Bob, secretary of the Cheyenne Frontier Days Committee for 25 years, had had a gracious home on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

When May could no longer handle the job of compiler, Jane Dorn took over. She and her husband, Robert, are the authors of "Wyoming Birds." When Jane retired, they moved to Lingle and started the Guernsey – Fort Laramie CBC. We were planning to drive over to help this year, but both of our vehicles developed unroadworthy symptoms the day before.

Our next compiler was Greg Johnson, but he's moved on to bigger things—he's the CBC editor for our region. Grant Frost has the Cheyenne job now.

As the business end of the 1989 tally party got going, the Lebsack girls, maybe middle school age, took our boys into the kitchen to play. Their dad, Fred, was one of those birders who loved to geek out on subjects like the finer points of feather coloration. He died prematurely in 2011 and his widow, Judy, and his daughters now live in California.

The one person we had met previously was Nels Sostrum, thanks to the regional Audubon director whom we knew through our old chapter in Miles City, Montana.

We always thought we would see more of Nels when he retired from the state, but he jumped straight into his other hobby, painting. And then he met Anne and through her he acquired stepchildren and step-grandchildren. I hadn't seen him for a long time when his obituary showed up in the paper this fall. Nels's painting of Battle Creek in the Sierra Madre Range hangs on our wall and will always remind me of birding with him.

John Cornelison was at that tally party, too. After tallying the birds, the discussion turned to electing a new chapter president. John volunteered. Mark volunteered to be vice president and me, program chair. Later, we learned that John was the founding president back in 1974.

For many years, John and his wife, Joanne, invited the chapter to hold the tally party at the Westgate community building where there is a large living room with plenty of space for tables and chairs and laying out potluck contributions. Mark and I saw John and Joanne at an event last fall and were saddened to learn of John's death in December. The family asked that our chapter be one of two organizations receiving memorial donations.

I'm guessing that Jim and Carol Hecker were also at our first Cheyenne tally party. Jim was one of the pediatricians our boys saw at the Cheyenne Children's Clinic. He encouraged me to drop the "Dr." when addressing him outside the office and it took a while. When the boys were young, we had a CBC tradition to stop by mid-morning at their house to warm up, eat Christmas cookies and drink hot chocolate—and count the birds at their feeders. We still enjoy their hospitality.

In 1989 Mark and I were younger than the usual Audubon demographic. People with children spend most of their organized social time in kid-related groups. But there is something to be said for hanging out with people old enough to be your kids' grandparents and great-grandparents, especially when the real relatives live far away. And yes, we raised two sons who are assets to the Cheyenne CBC, whenever their families' Christmas travel schedules coincide with the date (not this year).

This Christmas, our toddler-aged granddaughter received her first pair of binoculars--from her maternal grandfather. This birding thing can be infectious!

Whatever your age and birding ability, look up [www.CheyenneAudubon.org](http://www.CheyenneAudubon.org). Join us for hybrid programs, field trips and other activities such as the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Cheyenne Habitat Hero Workshop Jan. 29 at Laramie County Community College, also available virtually.



*Mark Gorges (left) and Dennis Saville (center) count geese Dec. 18, 2021, for the Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count on Sloan's Lake at Lions Park. Pete Sokolosky (right) keeps a lookout for birds in the trees. Photo by Barb Gorges.*

Barb Gorges is the author of "Cheyenne Birds by the Month," [www.YuccaRoadPress.com](http://www.YuccaRoadPress.com). Her previous columns written for the Wyoming Tribune Eagle are at <http://cheyennebirdbanter.wordpress.com>. Contact her at [bgorges4@msn.com](mailto:bgorges4@msn.com).

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