



June/July 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.*

Officers and Committee Chairs 2021-2022

Wanda Manley, President

Dennis Saville, Vice 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.

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

June 10-12 – 2022 Wyoming BioBlitz at Guernsey State Park

Join Audubon Rockies (one of the co-sponsors of the BioBlitz) at Guernsey State Park this year to discover this Wyoming gem, survey wildlife, and have a blast with your family and friends! Registration information below.

The Wyoming BioBlitz is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for families, students, and all nature-lovers to learn about plants and wildlife and help scientists survey them. During this weekend-long event, participants will team up with biologists to search for and document as many plants and animals as possible at Guernsey State Park.

Registration is now closed, but you can get on their wait list. For more information and the full schedule go to: <https://rockies.audubon.org/naturalist/wyoming-bioblitz>

June 18, 7 a.m. – Field Trip: Red Mountain Open Space.

We will leave at 7 a.m. from the Lions Park parking lot between the Children's Village at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens and the picnic shelter. We will be hiking about 3.5 to 4.5 miles on trails and uneven ground.

Bring a lunch, water and dress for variable weather. We expect to be back to Cheyenne by 3 p.m.

We can expect to see hawks, scrub-jays, towhees, and some warblers in the riparian areas.

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.



Spotted Towhee at Red Mountain in 2020 by Mark Gorges

June 28, 6:30 p.m. – Board Meeting

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

June 24, 7:00 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. The count will start in the County Clubhouse's main parking lot.

July 13, 8:30-10 p.m. – Bat Walk with the Biodiversity Institute at Mylar Park, Cheyenne

Join The Biodiversity Institute and Bat Conservation International to learn all about local bat species and go on a short stroll to listen for bat calls. You may even get the chance to see one as they fly overhead!

All ages welcome. **Registration is Required**

June 23, Veteran's Island Park in Saratoga, 8:30-10:00 p.m.

July 13, Mylar Park in Cheyenne, 8:30-10:00 p.m.

July 19, South Park Open Space in Sheridan, 8:30-10:00 p.m.

Aug 1, Pete's Pond in Dubois, 8:30-10:00 p.m.

For more information and to register go to:

<https://www.wyomingbiodiversity.org/index.php/outreach/bat-walks?>

July 15-18 – On-line BioBlitz

You can use [iNaturalist](https://www.inaturalist.org/) to observe species anywhere in the state of Wyoming from July 15th through the 18th. More information coming soon at <https://rockies.audubon.org/events>.

July 16, 8:00 a.m. – Field Trip: Birding and Picnic, Medicine Bow National Forest

This will be an all-day trip. If you drive, you can leave whenever you need to. We'll drive to Laramie and then to Don and Belinda Moench's cabin on Miller Lake, near Fox Park.

—Bring a side dish to share; hamburgers will be provided.

—Bring a folding chair to sit on for the potluck.

—Be prepared for the weather.

—You must sign up with Grant Frost at 307-343-2024 at



Calliope Hummingbird at the Moench's, by Mark Gorges

least a week before so that we know how many to expect, and so that we can let you know if the trip is canceled for some reason.

July 26, 6:30 p.m. – Board Meeting

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

July 29, 7:00 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. The count will start in the County Clubhouse's main parking lot.

Chapter News



Chapter President's message

Greetings Everyone,
June is here!

Now if summer weather would show up, it would be perfect. We're off to a blustery start, but always hopeful we will get measurable precipitation out of these fronts. Just a reminder, this is the June/July issue. The next newsletter will appear in August.

Now that the growing season has arrived, this is my gentle reminder for you to do your part to support our environment. Now is the time to be planting native forbs, grasses, and shrubs. Think about reducing the size of your lawn and put in something more beneficial to nature.

Have you seen the price of fuel? That is reason enough to shrink your lawn and reduce your fuel costs for mowing that water thirsty beast and reduce herbicide costs to keep the weeds out of the bluegrass monoculture. Many positive things happen by simply going to a smaller lawn area and using native plants in the reclaimed space. Watch and wait for nature to show up with the shift in your landscape, you will be amazed and thrilled!

That being said, those of you with acreage of any size, please radically reduce or eliminate mowing the native grassland. Contrary to popular belief, mowing does not reduce fire danger. Quite the contrary, native grasses may still be green at the crown during drought and can be quite resistant to damage from fire. But every time you mow and the native grasses fail to complete their life cycle, cheatgrass and Japanese brome will move into those areas. Those invasive grasses from Asia will burn, and burn dramatically, leaving the soil bare and scorched.

Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) and Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicus*) are often classified as winter annuals, but look around in any season, even winter, and you will find them in every stage of their life cycle, even seeding in the coldest driest months.

So, until August, enjoy the great outdoors!!

Wanda,
CHPAS President

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

Education and Conservation

Chapter Grants

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

Habitat Hero



Habitat Hero Garden at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens

By Mark Gorges

It is June and things are greening up all over town, including our Habitat Hero Garden at CBG. We are looking forward for sustained warmer weather.

There are a lot of our perennial plants and seedlings coming up in the garden. The flax is blooming. The columbine was hit by recent frosts, but it should recover.

Let's hope for some summer weather and some precipitation without the hail.



The CBG garden, May 31 by Mark Gorges

Bird News

What do ducks eat? Learn the diets of dabbling and diving ducks

By Zach Hutchinson, Audubon Rockies' Community Science Coordinator

This commonly asked question has a variety of answers. However, one answer we can offer with certainty is: [DO NOT FEED BREAD!](#) Now, learn the different foods wild and domestic ducks eat.

To read this article go to: <https://www.flockingaround.com/post/what-do-ducks-eat>

May 14 – Report: World Migratory Bird Day and Global Big Day

Compiled from eBird by Mark Gorges

In Laramie County on May 14, there were 106 species reported on 22 checklists submitted by eight people.

In Wyoming, there were 206 species reported on 391 checklists covering all 23 counties

For the lower 48 states there were 672 species reported on 70,296 checklists submitted by 30,419 people.

For more information about specific counties, states or countries, go to:

<https://ebird.org/news/global-big-day-2022-a-global-celebration>

May 21 – Report: Cheyenne Big Day Count

by Mark Gorges

Despite the snow the day before, our count day turned sunny, not much wind and warmer. Our most exciting bird was the Red-throated Loon on Sloan's Lake in Lions Park. It is a very rare bird for Wyoming, but it had been on the lake for a few days.

Be sure to read the Bird Banter column at the end of this newsletter for more details on the Cheyenne Big Day Count.



Red-throated Loon on Sloans Lake by Grant Frost

125 species, 19 participants

Cackling Goose
 Canada Goose
 Wood Duck
 Blue-winged Teal
 Cinnamon Teal
 Northern Shoveler
 Gadwall
 American Wigeon
 Mallard
 Northern Pintail
 Green-winged Teal
 Redhead
 Ring-necked Duck
 Lesser Scaup
 Common Goldeneye
 Ruddy Duck
 Pied-billed Grebe
 Eared Grebe
 Western Grebe
 Clark's Grebe
 Rock Pigeon
 Eurasian Collared-Dove
 Mourning Dove

Broad-tailed Hummingbird
 American Coot
 American Avocet
 Killdeer
 Marbled Godwit
 Least Sandpiper
 Semipalmated Sandpiper
 Western Sandpiper
 Wilson's Phalarope
 Red-necked Phalarope
 Spotted Sandpiper
 Solitary Sandpiper
 Greater Yellowlegs
 Willet
 Ring-billed Gull
 California Gull
 Common Loon
 Red-throated Loon
 Double-crested Cormorant
 American White Pelican
 Great Blue Heron
 Black-crowned Night-Heron
 Turkey Vulture
 Osprey
 Northern Harrier
 Cooper's Hawk

Swainson's Hawk
 Red-tailed Hawk
 Great Horned Owl
 Belted Kingfisher
 Red-headed Woodpecker
 Downy Woodpecker
 Northern Flicker
 American Kestrel
 Olive-sided Flycatcher
 Western Wood-Pewee
 Willow Flycatcher
 Dusky Flycatcher
 Say's Phoebe
 Western Kingbird
 Eastern Kingbird
 Warbling Vireo
 Blue Jay
 Black-billed Magpie
 American Crow
 Common Raven
 Black-capped Chickadee
 Mountain Chickadee
 Horned Lark
 Northern Rough-winged Swallow
 Tree Swallow

Violet-green Swallow
 Bank Swallow
 Barn Swallow
 Cliff Swallow
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet
 Red-breasted Nuthatch
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
 Rock Wren
 House Wren
 European Starling
 Gray Catbird
 Northern Mockingbird
 Townsend's Solitaire
 Swainson's Thrush
 Hermit Thrush
 American Robin
 House Sparrow

House Finch
 Pine Siskin
 American Goldfinch
 Chipping Sparrow
 Lark Sparrow
 Lark Bunting
 White-crowned Sparrow
 Harris's Sparrow
 Vesper Sparrow
 Savannah Sparrow
 Song Sparrow
 Lincoln's Sparrow
 Green-tailed Towhee
 Spotted Towhee
 Yellow-breasted Chat
 Yellow-headed Blackbird
 Western Meadowlark

Bullock's Oriole
 Baltimore Oriole
 Red-winged Blackbird
 Brown-headed Cowbird
 Brewer's Blackbird
 Common Grackle
 Great-tailed Grackle
 Orange-crowned Warbler
 MacGillivray's Warbler
 Common Yellowthroat
 Yellow Warbler
 Yellow-rumped Warbler
 Wilson's Warbler
 Western Tanager
 Black-headed Grosbeak
 Lazuli Bunting
 Indigo Bunting

May 22 – Greenway Cleanup

The chapter had 10 people come out to help with our annual spring cleanup along our section of the Cheyenne Greenway on Dry Creek. The weather was a little cool but sunny.

Although there seemed to be less trash than in past years, we did pull quite a bit out of the water. We left two piles of large garbage bags and larger trash for the city to pick up.

Vicki Herren, Mark Gorges and Lyle Keto are here with one pile of trash in the photo by Pete Sokolosky.



May 27 – Cheyenne Country Club survey results

By Chuck Seniawski

7:02 AM - 9:42 AM

Protocol: Traveling

2.49 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 50 degrees. Art Anderson, Vicki Herren, Jerry Johnson, Sue Lowry, Bob Luce, Ray Milczewski, Chuck Seniawski, Pete Sokolosky.
 35 species (+1 other taxa)

Canada Goose 30
 Blue-winged Teal 8
 Cinnamon Teal 2
 Gadwall 4
 Mallard 10
 Ring-necked Duck 2
 Ruddy Duck 2
 Eurasian Collared-Dove 3
 American Coot 1
 California Gull 2
 Black-crowned Night-Heron 1
 Turkey Vulture 5



The survey group by Pete Sokolosky

Northern Flicker 3
Western Wood-Pewee 2
Cordilleran Flycatcher 1
Black-billed Magpie 11
American Crow 11
Mountain Chickadee 3
Barn Swallow 1
swallow sp. 1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2
Red-breasted Nuthatch 1
European Starling 5
Swainson's Thrush 1
American Robin 13
Cedar Waxwing 4
House Sparrow 3
House Finch 8
American Goldfinch 5
Chipping Sparrow 1
Clay-colored Sparrow 1
Song Sparrow 1
Yellow-headed Blackbird 6
Red-winged Blackbird 21
Common Grackle 4
Yellow Warbler 3



Yellow-headed Blackbird by Pete Sokolosky

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S111407479>

Cheyenne Big Day Bird Count catches Arctic visitor

By Barb Gorges

I'm sure our Cheyenne Big Day Bird Count compiler for Cheyenne Audubon, Grant Frost, was thinking to avoid cold, nasty weather when he picked May 21 instead of the 14th for the count. But it snowed the day before anyway. Our total of 125 species is not too shabby considering the weather was chilly, but not windy.

We had several highlights:

- Red-throated loon juvenile was seen at Sloans Lake for several days before and on the count. It is considered rare in Wyoming, wintering on either coast and nesting in the Arctic.
- Common loon juvenile same place.
- Broad-tailed hummingbird was trying to get nectar out of frozen crabapple blossoms at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens.
- Harris's sparrow may winter next door in Nebraska but is seldom seen here.
- Red-headed woodpeckers showed up in two locations, including a pair in one.
- Baltimore oriole, the eastern counterpart to our Bullock's, came by with a female.



This Red-throated Loon spent several days on Sloans Lake in Lions Park. Photo by Mark Gorges

-No eagles were seen.

I came across the scan of a "Tribune Eagle" article about the 1982 Big Day, held a week earlier than this year's, with 40 people counting. The total number of species seen was nearly the same, 124.

The difference between which species were seen in 1982 but not this year, 29, was close to how many were seen in 2021 but not this year, 27. But if you look at eBird for the first three weeks of May this year in Laramie County, 185 species are listed. Some species passed through before our count day and some could have still been here count day but in less abundance and we missed them.

Besides all the species name changes in the last 40 years, what's interesting is what isn't on the 1982 list but is in 2022:

-Cackling goose was split from Canada goose in 2004.

-Eurasian collared-dove was first observed in Wyoming here in Cheyenne in 1998.

-Great-tailed grackle in 2003 was my first Cheyenne observation.

-Common raven, though they have always been reliably seen starting about 10 or 15 miles west of town, my first Cheyenne observation wasn't until 2010.

The 1982 count lists five winter species we didn't see this count: bufflehead (duck), rough-legged hawk, northern shrike and at the time what are now subspecies of dark-eyed junco listed as two species, Oregon junco and gray-headed junco. Maybe they migrated earlier this year thanks to weather or climate change.

Evening grosbeak made the 1982 list, but it is hard to find them anywhere these days. They are listed as a globally threatened species.

Black-bellied plovers and mountain plovers, grassland species recorded in 1982, rarely make our count anymore, but eBird has sightings recorded for April 2020—when everyone was out birding more than usual.

Our Big Day count area is essentially the same as our Christmas Bird Count, a 7.5-mile diameter circle centered on the Capitol building. There are more trees to attract birds than in 1982, or in 1956 when only 85 species were counted, according to early compiler May Hanesworth. But as the surrounding grasslands are built upon, mowed and invaded by free-roaming dogs and cats, the grassland birds will be harder to find.

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.

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

