



# September 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

**Social Media, open**

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

### September 17, 8 a.m. – Field Trip: Wyoming Hereford Ranch Birding Hike

We will meet at 8 a.m. at the ranch headquarters & museum (1114 Hereford Ranch Road). We will be hiking about 2 miles on trails and uneven ground.

Bring water and dress for variable weather. We expect to be done by noon.

We can expect to see raptors and woodpeckers, like the Red-headed woodpeckers that probably nested there this year. If the late summer weather holds, we could still find some warblers and other fall migrants.



Red-headed Woodpecker by Mark Gorges

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.

### **September 18, 10:00 a.m. till Noon – Cheyenne Greenway Cleanup**

Cheyenne Audubon is hosting a Greenway cleanup event, Sunday, September 18th. 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.

### **September 20, 7:00 p.m. – Program: Snapshots from Wyoming's Wildernesses with Kirk Miller, Willow Room, Laramie County Library, Cheyenne**

The Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society invites the public to a free, in-person program, Sep. 20 at 7 p.m. in the Willow Room of the Laramie County Library, 2200 Pioneer Avenue. The program will also be accessible via Zoom at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82077997335?pwd=RUR1SVpyL1QrYjhFVzdGZCtXWnhYZZ09>.

Kirk's pictures and stories from a pack trip into Wyoming's southern Wind River Range will be shared followed by thoughts for capturing interesting photographs with a cell phone.

For most of his life, Kirk has been venturing into the wilds for play and work. Growing up in Cheyenne, the Laramie and Snowy Ranges were his playground. After graduating from the University of Wyoming, Kirk worked for 34 years as a hydrologist for the U.S. Geological Survey getting to know the streams and rivers of Wyoming and Montana.

The picture is of Deep Creek Lakes in the Popo Agie Wilderness in the Wind River Range, Wyoming, July 22, 2022, and was taken by our speaker.



**Sept. 20 Show and Tell** – Pick your favorite nature shot from this summer to share with us at the meeting. Please email it by Sept. 18 to Barb at [bgorges4@msn.com](mailto:bgorges4@msn.com) so we can project it at the (hybrid) meeting. We will give you a minute or two to talk about it and answer questions.

**September 27, 6:30 p.m. – Board Meeting** - Contact Wanda Manley, [cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com), if you would like to participate in helping to plan chapter activities (Windflower Room, Laramie County Library).

## **September 30, 8:00 a.m. – Country Club Bird Survey**

Contact Chuck Seniawski 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.

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## **Chapter News**



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

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to September. I have to say, I think fall is the best season here. Even though some years we have a wind storm and the trees lose their leaves early and it looks dismal, the temperatures are fabulous. And it's the end of fly season (horse person here).

Last month I talked about the native prairie plants Eric Dalton has been using at Bella Fuoco. This month I will talk about the Native Prairie Island Project (NPIP) in general. CHPAS received a grant from ChangeX (a part of Microsoft) in February. I might add, we received 30% more than we asked for. We used those funds to buy a new seeder for the Laramie County Conservation District (LCCD).

The seeder is designed to be pulled behind a 4-wheeler. The hopper drops the seed at a constant rate and then covers it to assure good soil/seed contact. We also bought native wildflower (forb) seed and some native grass seed (mainly bunch grasses). Typically, the LCCD rents out the seeder and supplies the seed depending upon the needs of each site.

With the NPIP, we targeted the zone over the septic systems in the new rural subdivisions popping up all over the county. As you've probably noticed, the leach fields that serve the septic tank are not very far under the soil surface and this results in a green zone, as the plants can reach the added moisture. It is our hope that seeding these areas will result in a thriving plant community that will provide a seedbank to the adjacent properties, as well as pollinator habitat, and all of the great things a healthy prairie provides for all of us.

I'm pleased to say, when we closed out the grant in July, the seeder had been to 27 different properties around the county, as well as seeding the area around the new LCCD building off of Campstool. Rex Lockman is the Range Specialist at LCCD and in charge of their part of the project. He has visited some of the locations and we have germination and strong growth on these sites.

So, we have some seed left over, and we can apply for the ChangeX again in a few months for 2023. We will continue with the rural residential properties, but we are also wanting to have a presence in the urban areas (I use urban very loosely here). If you drive by a spot and think it would be a great place for a natural area of native wildflowers, let me know through [cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com).

The islands on Nationway and the area in front of the composting facility on Windmill have come up a couple of times already, but we will have to talk to the city about that first.

Enjoy the last dog days of summer!

Wanda  
CHPAS President

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

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## Education and Conservation

### Wildlife Guzzlers above Pine Bluffs

In October we will be working with the Laramie County Conservation District installing a couple of new wildlife guzzlers in the hills above Pine Bluffs.

Watch for more information in the October newsletter.

### Chapter Grants

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

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## Habitat Hero



### Habitat Hero Garden at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens

*By Mark Gorges*

Zach Hutchinson, Audubon Rockies' Community Science Coordinator, has already started a community science survey of our Habitat Hero gardens this summer. You can join us at the CBG to see how many kinds of insects we can find. Please email Zach if you'd like the dates and times for surveys at: [Zach.Hutchinson@audubon.org](mailto:Zach.Hutchinson@audubon.org).

At the Botanic Gardens, we are adopting a site for a new flower bed to the right, adjacent to our current bed. It's approximately the same size as the current garden. This month we will be doing the initial work to prepare the bed, removing the rock mulch in the area.

The next **Cheyenne Habitat Hero Workshop is Feb. 4, 2023, at LCCC**. We have our keynote speaker lined up, Jim Tolstrup, Director of the High Plains Environmental Center in Loveland, CO. Watch for more information on the workshop as we get closer to winter.



*Site for our new bed, by Mark Gorges*

## Bird News

### News from Audubon Rockies

Check out the Audubon Rockies blog page for up-to-date news on conservation issues in our part of the West. Go to: <https://rockies.audubon.org/blog>

Be sure to read the articles on "Learning to Bird Band in Wyoming", "Habitat Management Assistance for Western Wyoming Ranchers", and "Goodbye Turf Grass, Hello Birds and Water", as well as the other informative articles on western environmental issues.

### August 20 – Turtle Rock Field Trip report

*By Mark Gorges*

Fourteen people came on this 3-mile hike. The weather was perfect, warm sunny skies with just enough breeze to keep us comfortable.

9:13 AM - 11:44 AM

2.92 mile(s)

15 species (+1 other taxa)

White-throated Swift 1

Turkey Vulture 3

Red-tailed Hawk 2  
 Northern Flicker 4  
 Western Wood-Pewee 1  
 Empidonax sp. 1  
 Clark's Nutcracker 6  
 Common Raven 1  
 Mountain Chickadee 4  
 Red-breasted Nuthatch 2  
 White-breasted Nuthatch 5  
 House Wren 1  
 Townsend's Solitaire 3  
 Dark-eyed Junco 1  
 Song Sparrow 2  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler 9



*Townsend's Solitaire by Grant Frost*

View this checklist online at  
<https://ebird.org/checklist/S117383563>

### **August 26 – Cheyenne Country Club survey results**

*By Chuck Seniawski*

6:58 AM - 9:00 AM

2.9 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 63 degrees. Sunny. Calm. Art Anderson, Mark Gorges, Vicki Herren, Greg Johnson, Chuck Seniawski and Pete Sokolosky.

19 species

Mallard 17  
 Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 10  
 Eurasian Collared-Dove 1  
 Mourning Dove 1  
 Common Nighthawk 1  
 Double-crested Cormorant 7  
 American White Pelican 4  
 Swainson's Hawk 1  
 Northern Flicker 7  
 Western Wood-Pewee 1  
 Black-billed Magpie 1  
 American Crow 18  
 Mountain Chickadee 4  
 Red-breasted Nuthatch 1  
 American Robin 9  
 Cedar Waxwing 1  
 House Finch 3  
 American Goldfinch 5  
 Wilson's Warbler 2



*Common Nighthawk by Chuck Seniawski*

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S117612829>

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## How will the IRA affect birds?

By Barb Gorges

People affect birds, individual birds and whole populations, all the time.

Sometimes, we have a negative effect on birds, such as glass walls and bright lights that steer migrating birds to their deaths.

Sometimes we have a positive effect, such as growing windbreaks across the Great Plains that encouraged blue jays to follow the trees west. Or we create reservoirs to store water and the ducks and other water birds use them.

I've been looking at what the environmental organizations have to say about the new Inflation Reduction Act and how it will affect birds.

The IRA should help birds (and people) affected by climate change as it encourages actions for cleaner air. Clean air reduces climate change effects such as severe weather and the timing of seasonal changes.

Encouraging the switch to electric vehicles is good. Electricity can come from any source of fuel. If the source is a fossil fuel power plant, then pollution controls can be centrally located rather than depending on gazillion vehicle owners to attend to maintenance. I don't know about you, but diesel fumes from the truck ahead of me at the stop light is something I won't miss.

But it looks like the fossil fuel industries are losing out because they spent their money the last 50 years fighting clean air regulations instead of finding technology to keep air clean.

Birds will certainly benefit from clean air, but I wonder how much that will be offset by the drawbacks of solar and wind energy production—the emphasis of the IRA. Can we make smart changes?

If you remember, in 2019 I signed up to testify on behalf of Cheyenne Audubon at the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality hearing on NextEra's Roundhouse wind development. It is located partly on the City of Cheyenne's Belvoir Ranch property.

What I discovered was that NextEra was required to show the impact on wildlife of wind turbines and the numerous new roads. Yes, the state asks for certain information, but it seems to me that a state or federal agency rather than the company should be performing the field investigations on the public's behalf, and in much more depth. And the results should be put in context with nearby developments, like the other windfarm adjacent to Roundhouse on the north side of I-80.

Wyoming, famous for its wind, is slated to be covered with wind turbines. Our big empty is also slated to be covered with industrial solar developments. Solar will affect grassland birds though it will be an army of graduate students who discover exactly how.

A new study on the effect of industrial solar fields on Wyoming's hoofed wildlife was recently examined by a Wyofile reporter, <https://wyofile.com/report-industrial-solar-disrupts-big-game-movements/>. The study shows that the chain link fence required by the National Electric Code kept migrating antelope out, essentially losing that amount of habitat.

Let's say you don't care about birds or other wildlife. Let's say you care more about Wyoming's economy. Our second largest economic sector is tourism.

During the pandemic years, tourists have discovered more of Wyoming than the Tetons and Yellowstone. They are finding our favorite local recreation areas. The tourists I talk to appreciate our wide-open natural spaces and wildlife the way most of us do. But I don't think thousands of acres of wind turbines and solar panels are going to enhance the views that tourists come here for, especially when they come from states that are already covered in industrial and agricultural development.

I still think smart clean energy development is about integrating it with current infrastructure.

Currently, solar is more people-friendly, the source to concentrate on. No possibility of flying blades or deep vibration noises.

Think about the acres of parking lots that could be roofed with solar panels. Think about the acres of roofs everywhere, especially the giant warehouses we have in Cheyenne. And Walmart's warehouse also has a lovely south-facing wall. Or maybe fill in the uninhabitable acres around wind turbines. The Germans are looking at solar canopies over their

autobahns, <https://www.rechargenews.com/transition/solar-panel-covered-autobahn-could-speed-german-energy-transition/2-1-854215>.

Even our (electric) cars could have solar energy-collecting skins someday. You would go to the carwash to wash away dirt to improve your energy production. Although I suppose then no one would want to park in a solar-panel-roofed parking lot.

Yes, solar and wind have energy storage issues. But there are many brilliant minds in the world and the rewards of the marketplace to spur them on. Let's hope their solutions are bird-friendly, wildlife-friendly and at the very least, people-friendly.

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



Wind farm in California from wikipedia

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