



October 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 2022-2023

Wanda Manley, President

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Chuck Seniawski, Treasurer

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Jack Palma, Audubon Rockies Board

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Education, open

Donna Kassel, Historian

Grant Frost, Field Trips, Bird Compiler

Mark Gorges, Newsletter, Habitat Hero

Art Anderson, Important Bird Areas

Social Media, Kirk Miller

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

October 15, 8 a.m. – Field Trip: Colorado State University Environmental Learning Center

We will leave at 8 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 trails and some uneven ground.

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

The 212-acre property offers visitors the opportunity to explore four distinct ecosystems: riparian, cottonwood forest, wetland and grassland.



Yellow-rumper Warbler by Mark Gorges

We can expect to see waterfowl and a variety of other birds including some of our summer birds, like the Yellow-rumped Warbler, that has been reported in that area through the fall. The area is an eBird hotspot boasting a list of 265 bird species.

Please contact Mark Gorges at 307-287-4952 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.

If you plan to drive, copy these directions: from I-25, take the Harmony Road exit. Head west on Harmony for approximately two miles, to Ziegler Road. Turn right (north) on Ziegler. You will go through a light and a roundabout, continuing north. Take a right on Environmental Drive. After crossing a one lane bridge, take a sharp left on the gravel road (you will see the ELC sign), crossing the railroad tracks. Parking lot is at the end of the gravel road.

October 18, 7:00 p.m. – Program: with Zach Hutchinson, Cottonwood Room, Laramie County Library, Cheyenne

The Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society invites the public to a free, in-person program, Oct. 18 at 7 p.m. in the Cottonwood Room of the Laramie County Library, 2200 Pioneer Avenue.

Zach Hutchinson, community science coordinator for Audubon Rockies, will present on past, current, and future community science projects conducted by Audubon Rockies and their partners. He will focus on projects in Wyoming but also touch on projects occurring outside of the state that might be used in the Cowboy State in the future.



Zach with a humming bird

The program will also be accessible via Zoom at:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84716468658?pwd=N1d5dkE5Y0pLZzJGUjM2T2xDckNxQT09>

October 25, 6:30 p.m. – Board Meeting - Contact Wanda Manley, cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com, if you would like to participate in helping to plan chapter activities.

October 28, 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. The count will start in the County Clubhouse's main parking lot.

December 17 – Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count

Christmas decorations are already on the shelves in some of the big box stores. So, it's time to plan for our Christmas Bird Count.

Mark your calendar for December 17. Although this is an all-day count, you will be able to join us at various times throughout the day, or you can count on your own.

We will get together to consolidate checklists from all participants. Watch for specific information in the next couple of newsletters.

Chapter News



Chapter President's message

Hello Everyone,

Fall is officially here and we're having our first cool days. It seems like summer was long and hot, but over too soon! Now as we settle into cooler weather, I'll give you a few updates on some of our conservation projects.

First, the Dry Creek project with the Laramie County Conservation District (LCCD) was partially funded by the National Audubon Society and has been completed. At least our part is, the trees have been planted, and part of Dry Creek has been rerouted and native riparian plants have been planted. If you drive east on Campstool, just past the State of Wyoming Liquor Commission, you can see this piece of property lies between Campstool and I-80. If you look to the north, you will see lots of new housing. The new infrastructure will dramatically increase the amount of water runoff coming down into Dry Creek, hence the interest in that piece of property.

Next, the ChangeX grant from Microsoft enabled us to purchase a new seeder for LCCD to rent out to any resident of the county to reseed or overseed their rural property with native pollinator mix also provided by CHPAS and LCCD. This program has been well received by the new residents of the many new rural subdivisions sprouting up all over the county. LCCD has also seeded the ground around their new building with this pollinator mix. We're anxious to see what it looks like next spring.

As many of you know, our founder, John Cornelison passed away early this year. We are working closely with the City of Cheyenne to install a bird watching blind in his honor, near the pond in Kiwanis Park on east Pershing, as well as signage describing the various bird species that are routinely seen in the area.

Next Tuesday, we are working with LCCD and Pine Bluffs residents to remodel two guzzlers in the bluffs and install a new guzzler in the same general area. This is not a big project, but there is more wildlife above the rest area on I-80 than one might think.

There are many more projects that have been supported or completed by CHPAS members over the summer. We appreciate everyone's efforts to improve and enhance our environment. Carry on!!

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

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. The rock mulch in the area has been removed, and the Juniper bushes have been cut back.

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.

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>

September 17 – Wyoming Hereford Ranch Field Trip report

By Mark Gorges

Twelve people participated in the field trip. The weather was very nice with a steady breeze. One of the highlights of the day was the large number of Wilson's Warblers that seemed to be everywhere we looked; we probably undercounted them as they kept moving around.

Five Red-tailed Hawks kept us entertained for well over a half an hour. They were using the updrafts over the hill behind the events barn, interacting with each other, soaring and diving. A few of the hawks were probably young birds like the one in the picture below. They were easily identified by the dark feathered belly band, despite not yet having any noticeable red on the tail.

7:43 AM - 10:29 AM

1.16 mile(s)

27 species

Canada Goose 2
Mallard 4
Eurasian Collared-Dove 10
Mourning Dove 1
Killdeer 1
Great Blue Heron 1
Sharp-shinned Hawk 1
Red-tailed Hawk 5
Belted Kingfisher 1
Downy Woodpecker 2
Northern Flicker 1
Prairie Falcon 1
Hammond's Flycatcher 1
Western Kingbird 2
Black-billed Magpie 1
Barn Swallow 4
Red-breasted Nuthatch 4
White-breasted Nuthatch 1
House Wren 1
European Starling 21



Red-tailed Hawk at the ranch by Mark Gorges

American Robin 6
Cedar Waxwing 3
House Sparrow 6
House Finch 3
American Goldfinch 6
Western Meadowlark 3
Wilson's Warbler 11

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S118903844>

September 30 – Cheyenne Country Club survey results

By Chuck Seniawski

Sep 30, 2022 7:50 AM - 10:22 AM

3.15 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 55 degrees. Calm with sunshine early, cloudy and light breeze at end. Art Anderson, Grant Frost, Barb and Mark Gorges, Vicki Herren, Kirk Miller, Ray Milczewski, Chuck Seniawski, Pete Sokolosky, Roy West.

24 species

Canada Goose 25
Blue-winged Teal 7
American Wigeon 1
Mallard 34
Eurasian Collared-Dove 1
Turkey Vulture 1
Broad-winged Hawk 1
Northern Flicker 5
Prairie Falcon 2
Blue Jay 5
Black-billed Magpie 9
American Crow 25
Mountain Chickadee 6
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1
Red-breasted Nuthatch 7
American Robin 2
House Finch 8
Dark-eyed Junco 1
White-crowned Sparrow 7
Common Grackle 2
Yellow-rumped Warbler 5
Townsend's Warbler 1
Wilson's Warbler 4
Western Tanager 1



American Wigeon by Chuck Seniawski

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S119739710>

Audubon volunteer reflects on last 40 years

By Barb Gorges

Forty years ago this month, October 1982, I attended my first Audubon meeting—as president.

My husband of one month, Mark, had been the first president the previous two years of a new chapter, the Rosebud Audubon Society. It covered Miles City and southeastern Montana.

Mark and his friends wanted to start an environmental club and Audubon appealed to them, especially birdwatching field trips.

Miles City in 1980 had 9,600 people (2020 census, 8,300). The closest other incorporated town is Forsyth, 46 miles west, population 1,600 today. The closest big city is Billings, 146 miles west, population 66,000 then and 117,000 today.

We were very creative in finding programs for our monthly meetings. We had natural resource professionals to call on from the offices in town: Custer County Conservation District, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Fort Keogh Research Station and the Natural Resource Conservation Service, as well as Miles Community College.

We could also borrow films from Audubon's Rocky Mountain Regional Office in Boulder, Colorado. First it was those big reels in metal cans, later VHS cassettes.

Our early newsletters were typed, duplicated, folded, stuffed into envelopes with address stickers and stamps applied. Later, we did without the envelope.

Mark took me on my first Christmas Bird Count two months later. We were covering some area near either the Tongue or Yellowstone rivers which converge outside town. It was zero degrees. Because Mark, the wildlife biologist, was better at bird i.d., I got to keep the list—with pencil and paper. I couldn't manage them without taking off my mittens and it was soon painful. A few years later we took our older son along, using snowdrifts as diaper changing tables.

The chapter got involved in local projects, city parks, if I remember. I don't have the old newsletters—but we used to mail a copy each month to the state archives.

Then in 1989, Mark took the fisheries biologist job with BLM's state office here in Cheyenne, a big city which presumably would have a big Audubon chapter where we could simply volunteer for a committee or two.

Cheyenne High-Plains Audubon Society was founded in 1974 and celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2014. But in 1989 it was at a low point. The founders were tired. We finally met them at the 1989 Christmas Bird Count tally party.

To revive the chapter, Mark volunteered to be vice president, I volunteered to be program chair and 10 other people stepped in to fill other positions. In the 33 years we've been with Cheyenne Audubon, Mark has been president 9 years and me 7.

Cheyenne is a great location for finding speakers for monthly programs. In addition to all the county, state and federal offices corresponding to the ones in Miles City, we are less than an hour's drive from the University of Wyoming and graduate students looking for audiences.

National Audubon's regional office was still in Boulder in the 1990s and staff would come up to visit. Later, it was abolished and we had our own state office in Casper. That's gone now and we work with staff at the regional Audubon Rockies office in Fort Collins.

We have members who can do travelogs of their nature-based trips. And there are staff from several other environmental organizations in town to speak about issues. We host speakers seven times a year.

I started writing this column in 1999 and thanks to Cheyenne Audubon, I've never lacked for topics beyond the birds in my backyard.

The chapter has grown. We now average 150 dues-paying members per year with another 300 friends on our email mailing list (see www.CheyenneAudubon.org).

We've lobbied local, state and federal governments on environmental issues. We add our expertise to city park and conservation district plans. We offer educational and conservation grants. We invite the public to join us for our programs and monthly birdwatching field trips. We are planning our ninth Habitat Hero workshop in February.

After 40 years, newsletters are digital, programs can be offered in-person and virtually, field trip bird lists are entered on the eBird phone app and grant money seems to be attracted to us. We work hard to get it spent on worthwhile projects that support our view that what is good for birds and other wildlife will be good for us too.

What hasn't changed is the need to speak up for the welfare of birds, other wildlife and people. New threats to our mutual health and safety seem to show up every day. But at least

watching birds gives us mental health breaks. Those birds and the people who love them have taught me a lot these last 40 years.

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.



The celebration of Cheyenne - High Plains Audubon Society's 40th anniversary in September 2014 included a birding field trip to the Wyoming Hereford Ranch. Photo by Barb Gorges.

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

