



# November 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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Social Media, Kirk Miller

Barb Gorges, Programs, Publicity

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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

### November 15, 7:00 p.m. – Program: "Cheyenne's Water Supply – from the source to you" with Sarah Bargsten, Cottonwood Room, Laramie County Library, Cheyenne

We will be taken on a journey through time and across Wyoming to learn how Cheyenne gets its water.

Sarah brings technical knowledge and a collaborative spirit from a career in environmental science to her position as Water Conservation Specialist for the City of Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities. In this role, she is working with stakeholders in careful stewardship of our water resources to ensure a sustainable future for Cheyenne.

The program will also be accessible via Zoom at:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84716468658?pwd=N1d5dkE5Y0pLZzJGUjM2T2xDckNxQT09>



Cheyenne Audubon takes our guest speakers out to a no-host dinner before our meetings. If you would like to join us at 5 p.m. at 2 Doors Down, 118 E. 17<sup>th</sup>, please call Barb at 307-287-4952 so that we can reserve enough room. We usually sit upstairs where there are fewer people. It's a good way to meet a few of our members.

*Photo Middle Crow Creek in winter, part of our water supply, provided by BOPU*

### **November 19, 8 a.m. – Field Trip: Birding Curt Gowdy State Park**

Leaving 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 drive to the Curt Gowdy Visitor Center. We will be mainly on hiking trails with uneven ground.

Bring water and dress for variable weather. We expect to head to town by noon.

We hope to see Red Crossbills and a variety of other wintering birds including three types of nuthatches.

Please contact Mark Gorges at 307-287-4953 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, be aware that you will need a day pass which you can buy there if you do not have an annual pass for your vehicle.



*Female Red Crossbill by Mark Gorges*

### **November 22, 6:30 p.m. – Board Meeting – Laramie County Library,**

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

### **November 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 Country Clubhouse's main parking lot.

## December 17 – Cheyenne 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 our December newsletter.

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## Chapter News

**If you have not sent in your 2022-23 Chapter Renewal**, please 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.



### Chapter President's message

Hello Everyone,

Wow!! What a super fall we've had, even with the cool down of the last week or so, it's been nice, especially in the mornings.

Earlier this month, 7 volunteers and the Range Specialist from the Laramie County Conservation District (LCCD), Rex Lockman, had a workday in the bluffs above the I-80 rest stop in Pine Bluffs. The Town of Pine Bluffs owns about 400 acres south of the rest stop. It's a general use recreation area with picnic areas, an old volksmarch hiking trail, remnants of an archery course, an extensive disc golf course, and a 9-hole golf course. It's open to walkers, runners, bikers, horseback riders, and part of it is accessible by vehicles. The western edge loops over to the Pine Bluffs Archaeology Site with a concrete walking path. The property can be accessed through the rest stop or off of Beech Street.

At one time there was an active Pheasants Forever chapter in Pine Bluffs, and as a habitat enhancement project, they installed 4 guzzlers for wildlife on this piece of property. A guzzler is a large collection platform (think of a 10'x10' piece of metal roofing on a frame) that slopes into a tank or reservoir and stores water after a thunderstorm. Initially, two guzzlers were installed along the west side of the golf course and later the youth group of the Pheasants Forever chapter installed two more guzzlers near the northwest point of the bluffs.

We have a volunteer who walks the area frequently and he had noticed guzzlers on the golf course were in good repair, but the two guzzlers on the west side needed some work. Rex and CHPAS organized a workday and LCCD had materials for the installation of a fifth guzzler. The two guzzlers were remodeled to increase their water collection efficiency and the third guzzler was installed in a secluded and shady location. Our local volunteer organized to have a town employee bring 250 gallons of water to the new site, so we were able to build and fill the guzzler that day. The town also sent a loader in the afternoon with topsoil and fill dirt (so a



*Wanda Manley, Kirk Miller, Rex Lockman, Tyler Therkildsen, Thomas Tepkes, Joshua Tangeman, Jeremy Manley, and Nova; photo by Lorie Chesnut*

ramp could be built on the downside of the tank), so the site is accessible to small wildlife and birds too. We also improved the ramps on the other guzzlers. The wildlife ladders were reinstalled to make them more effective for small animals and birds to get out, should they happen to fall in the tank.

Our local volunteer raked and seeded the fresh dirt with the Native Prairie Island Project (NPIP) pollinator seed mix and installed a trail camera. If you follow the Cheyenne - High Plains Audubon Facebook page there are photos from the workday and the local wildlife enjoying the new water source.

It was a great day to see a group of people come together and complete a habitat enhancement project in such a short time, and then to see the wildlife using it immediately. We need more of this!!

Wanda

CHPAS President

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

## **Kirk Miller shares photos and photo how-to tips for backcountry trip at September's meeting**

*By Barb Gorges*

Kirk Miller usually lugs around big cameras – for capturing sports action shots and birds. But last summer he took only his cell phone.

Kirk packed into the Popo Agie (pronounced po-**po**-sha) Wilderness in the Shoshone National Forest for mid-July fishing and the wildflowers. For the second part of his trip, llamas from Lander Llama carried his load.

Photography with a cell phone can be as successful as using a big camera if you use Kirk's tips.

1. Depth of field – Use the “portrait” mode or focus on your subject by tapping on it on the camera screen. That will help make the background fuzzy and separate the subject from it.
2. Timing – Get there during the “golden hour” – before sunrise and after sunset. That's a good reason to camp out, so you don't have to hike in or out in the dark. Early in the day, reflections on the water will be clear – less wind.
3. To take photos at sunrise or sunset, use the focus feature (tapping on the subject on the screen) to select the sun so that other colors won't be blown out. In this case, “Focus” is also the light meter.
4. Sometimes you want the effect of the flare of light from the sun. Sometimes you can hide the sun behind an object like a tree or change your angle to avoid it.
5. It's OK to edit your photos either on your phone or after you download them to your computer, especially to straighten them – it's hard to get lakes and other lines straight while taking the photo. Or sometimes you realize the real photo is just part of the photo you took.
6. Find leading lines – like shadows, trails, or as in Kirk's photo, a fishing pole, to lead the viewer into the photo.
7. Perspective – Look on your screen when taking photos for the icon changing the photo dimension ratio. 1:1 is a square photo, 16:9 is usually the full, rectangular screen. The wider the photo, like 16:9, the more distortion you'll see. If you have the phone sideways, upright elements on either side of the photo will lean towards the middle of the photo.
8. Try taking photos at ground level. Your eye doesn't have to be at ground level – just the phone.
9. Look at other photographers' work for inspiration.

See Kirk's photos, including the ones from his September presentation for CHPAS, at [www.kirkmiller.smugmug.com](http://www.kirkmiller.smugmug.com).

Kirk also had recommendations for how to stay powered up in the wilderness, for cell phones and navigation devices. Contact him via [cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com).

And thanks, Kirk, for volunteering to take care of the chapter's social media connections.

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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).

## Habitat Hero



### Habitat Hero Garden at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens

By Mark Gorges

At the Botanic Gardens work is being done on our new flower bed to the right of our current bed. It's approximately half the size of the current garden. The rock mulch in the area has been removed, the juniper bushes have been cut back, and now new wood mulch has been laid for the winter. We will plant next spring.

Photo by Mark Gorges



### 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.

Our agenda will include groundwater, wildflower seeding, rain gardens, pollinator monitoring, winter sowing, lunch and more.

Watch for more information on the workshop and registration in our December newsletter.

## 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>

### The 2022–23 FeederWatch Season Starts November 1!

Counting for the 36th FeederWatch season begins Tuesday, November 1. Join anytime. You can find everything you need to know at: <https://feederwatch.org/>. They want to hear about the birds coming to your feeders or bird-friendly habitat!

### October 15: Colorado State Univ. Environmental Learning Center, Field Trip report

It was another beautiful fall day for the seven people on the trip. The highlight was probably the dozen Wild Turkeys that we watched for a while. Besides birds we also watched three white-tailed deer as they browsed in one area.

Oct 15, 2022, 8:53 AM - 11:08 AM

Protocol: Traveling

1.73 mile(s)

15 species

Canada Goose 30

American Wigeon 9

Mallard 26  
Wild Turkey 12  
Mourning Dove 5  
Great Blue Heron 2  
Red-tailed Hawk 3  
Northern Flicker 4  
Blue Jay 5  
Black-billed Magpie 4  
Black-capped Chickadee 5  
White-breasted Nuthatch 1  
European Starling 10  
American Robin 6  
House Finch 7

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S120744758>  
By Mark Gorges



Wild Turkey by Mark Gorges

## October 28 – Cheyenne Country Club survey results

By Chuck Seniawski  
8:00 AM - 10:50 AM  
3.25 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 28 degrees. Sunny, with a gentle breeze. Frost Delay on the course, so we ran reverse route. Barb and Mark Gorges, Vicki Herren, Kirk Miller, Chuck Seniawski, Roy West.  
21 species

Canada Goose 18  
Blue-winged Teal 5  
Mallard 5  
Ring-necked Duck 2  
Ring-billed Gull 1  
Red-tailed Hawk 1  
Belted Kingfisher 1  
Northern Flicker 4  
American Kestrel 3  
Black-billed Magpie 3  
American Crow 5  
Mountain Chickadee 7  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2  
Red-breasted Nuthatch 2  
White-breasted Nuthatch 1  
European Starling 30  
Hermit Thrush 2  
American Robin 20  
Dark-eyed Junco 6  
White-crowned Sparrow 1  
Red-winged Blackbird 1



Hermit Thrush at the Country Club by Mark Gorges

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S121464879>



At Lions Park last December while on the Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count, Mark Gorges uses a scope to count geese resting around open water on Sloans Lake, Dennis Saville looks for hawks in the distance and Pete Sokolosky checks overhead for songbirds on tree branches. Photo by Barb Gorges

## **Audubon Rockies' Zach Hutchinson discusses community science in local presentation**

*By Barb Gorges*

Zach Hutchinson is Audubon Rockies' community science coordinator. He is currently located in Casper, although he plans to relocate to Cheyenne as soon as local real estate prices are realistic.

He spoke at Cheyenne Audubon's October meeting about community science, which started out being called "citizen science." The new name is more inclusive – you don't have to be a U.S. citizen to participate – or be a college-educated scientist.

Zach said community science contributed to Bird Migration Explorer, <https://explorer.audubon.org/>. I'll have more about this new endeavor in a future column.

Community science has also contributed data to the State of the Birds 2022 report, [www.stateofthebirds.org/2022](http://www.stateofthebirds.org/2022).

Most groups of birds, including our grassland birds, are still losing population, while others increased during the last couple decades. For instance, waterfowl increased because they benefitted from concentrated efforts by sporting groups, although you don't have to be a hunter to buy a Federal Duck Stamp to contribute.

This year's report highlights North American species that are at the "tipping point" which means, after having lost 50 percent or more of their population since 1970, the report said, "These 70 species are on a trajectory to lose another 50% of their remnant populations in the next 50 years if nothing changes."

Thirteen of those tipping point species occur in Wyoming regularly either as residents or migrants, some considered common and others uncommon on this scale: abundant, common, uncommon, rare. I didn't include the species that are rare in our state in this list of 13:

Greater Sage-Grouse  
Western Grebe  
Rufous Hummingbird  
Mountain Plover

Long-billed Dowitcher  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Olive-sided Flycatcher  
Pinyon Jay  
Evening Grosbeak  
Black Rosy-Finch  
Chestnut-collared Longspur  
Bobolink

The primary causes of downward population trends are:

1. Habitat loss.
2. Cats (2.6 billion birds a year).
3. Windows, (624 million).
4. Vehicle collisions (214 million).
5. Industrial collisions, including wind turbines (64 million).

Zach went over the seven ways we can help birds:

1. Make windows safer day and night.
2. Keep cats indoors.
3. Reduce lawn, plant natives.
4. Avoid pesticides.
5. Drink shade-grown coffee.
6. Protect our planet from plastic (Think of waterbirds mistaking floating plastic for food.).
7. Watch birds, share what you see.

For more about each point, see [www.birds.cornell.edu/home/seven-simple-actions-to-help-birds/](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/seven-simple-actions-to-help-birds/).

“Watch birds, share what you see,” means taking part in community science. Zach said this is how we find out about population trends, range expansion, and if there are losses, we can see where in the life cycle it happens so that action can be focused.

You’ve probably heard me talk about [www.eBird.org](http://www.eBird.org) before. Birdwatchers submit lists of birds they’ve seen, anywhere and anytime, using smart phones or computers.

I can delve into the data on the website and discover 272 species have been observed at the Wyoming Hereford Ranch headquarters, 216 at Lions Park and 151 at the High Plains Grasslands Research Station where the Cheyenne Arboretum is located.

The Christmas Bird Count is the most famous annual community science project, with this year’s being the 123rd.

Two years ago, Zach said, 80,000 people took part, counted 2,355 species (world-wide), and travelled 500,000 miles on foot, by skis and by other means.

Check <https://cheyenneaudubon.org/> to find out about participating in the Cheyenne count in December.

The Great Backyard Bird Count, a snapshot of where birds are in late winter, celebrated its 24th anniversary last February. In 192 countries, 384,641 people participated and 7,099 species were counted on 359,479 checklists submitted. It’s held over Presidents’ Day weekend.

Zach runs bird banding stations every summer and people sign up to help (<https://rockies.audubon.org/>). Birds are caught in fine “mist nets,” and then are measured and banded.

Bird banding provides data on demographics, productivity, recruitment (adding individuals to the population) and survival – when a bird previously banded is recaptured, or a band is recovered from a dead bird.

This year, 54 species were netted at Zach’s stations. Usually, 500 new birds are banded but this summer it was only 340, probably because the drought has affected breeding and recruitment, Zach said.

Audubon Rockies launched a new community science project last summer on the Yampa River in Colorado. People on commercial float trips, including Zach, counted birds: 55 species and

732 individual birds. Stopping for a few minutes in a calm eddy in otherwise inaccessible places to count birds will add richness to the tourists' experiences and give science a new perspective.

There are other community science endeavors, such as iNaturalist, which is interested in plants as well as animals. Some have been very specific, such as The Lost Ladybug Project.

Consider becoming a community science participant in one or more ways.

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).

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