

January 2023 "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

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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

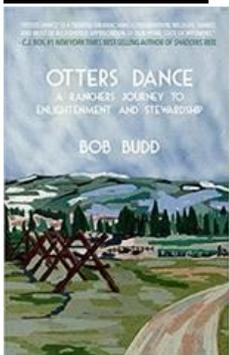
Send \$20 to Cheyenne - High Plains Audubon Society to join the National Audubon Society and you will receive NAS membership and NAS will return the \$20 to CHPAS.

“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



January 17 – Program: “Otters Dance: A Rancher’s Journey to Enlightenment and Stewardship” book talk by Bob Budd

Jan. 17, at 7 p.m., at Laramie County Library in the Cottonwood Room, at 2200 Pioneer Ave. Books will be available for sale.

Bob is a fifth-generation Wyoming native who has been executive director of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, managed ranches for The Nature Conservancy and currently is executive director of the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, a state agency. He’s also served as chair of the Wyoming Sage-Grouse Implementation Team.

The program is also available via Zoom at:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89411124547?pwd=OVlkaTBOOWJBTGN6QmdkUC9VQ1loUT09>

The Zoom link will also be posted at the Cheyenne Audubon website, <https://cheyenneaudubon.org/>.

January 21 – Field Trip: Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge

We will tour the visitors center in Commerce City, Colorado, and look for bison, prairie dogs, bald eagles, other raptors and other wintering birds on the refuge.

We will leave from the Lions Park parking lot at the Children's Village at 8 a.m. We will drive south on I-25 to the Arsenal. We should return by 3 p.m., but if you drive, you can leave whenever you need to. Bring water and your lunch if you like.

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.

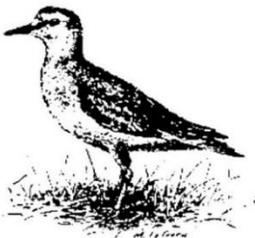


Bald Eagle at the refuge, January 2018: by Mark Gorges

January 27, 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 Country Clubhouse's main parking lot.

Chapter News



Chapter President's message

Happy New Year everyone,

2023 has arrived! Every year seems to be a particular kind of milestone: weather, political strife, disease. I wonder what surprises lurk in the calendar for this year? But we have much to be thankful for in this country, in this state, and in this community. The attitude of gratitude will take you a long way in life.

While the days are lengthening once again, it's a great time to get out the calendar and make decisions about where to be, when to be, and what to do when you get there. We hope one of the first events on your calendar will be the Habitat Hero workshop at LCCC on February 4th. There will also be a North American Prairie Conference (NAPC) in Altoona, IA June 25-29, 2023 (<http://www.northamericanprairie.org/>).

In the meantime, there is lots of activity at the bird feeder. With all of the cold, snowy, and windy weather we have had, our feathered friends are always looking for food, water, and cover. Be sure you are providing them with something in your landscape.

Until next month, find a good book and stay warm!

Wanda,
CHPAS President

Education and Conservation

Chapter Grants

The chapter grant to Rustin Rawlings to build bluebird boxes and install them as an official Bluebird Trail at the High Plains Arboretum just west of Cheyenne has moved forward. Eight bluebird boxes have been installed.



Bluebird box by Rustin Rawlings

The project is being done as part of Nest Watch. NestWatch, developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, is a nationwide nest-monitoring program designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds, including when nesting occurs, number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive. To learn about NestWatch, go to:

<https://nestwatch.org/about/overview/>

We will be looking for volunteers to assist with monitoring their use through the spring and summer. If you are interested in being contacted about helping, please contact us at cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com, leaving your contact information.

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

Habitat Hero



9th Annual Habitat Hero Workshop

Landscaping for Water Realities on the High Plains
Learn how native plants can help us
adapt to a drier future and support pollinators

February 4, 2023

Laramie County Community College, Clay Pathfinder Building, Rooms 108/109
1400 E College Dr. Cheyenne Wyoming 82007

Cost: \$25 for in-person registration includes lunch
Virtual attendance is free
(No virtual streaming after the 2:30 p.m. break)

[Register here](#)

or go to <https://rockies.audubon.org/events/landscaping-water-realities-high-plains>
February 2 is the final day to register.

AGENDA

7:30 Coffee/Sign-in

8:00 Introduction

8:15 **Keynote: Jim Tolstrup, Director, High Plains Environmental Center "Prairie Reconciliation"**

Jim will track the historic transformation of the Short Grass Prairie from a landscape carefully managed by indigenous tribes, to first contact with Euro-Americans, to farming and development, and the subsequent loss of habitat. He will explore the ways that we can reconcile the land, wildlife, and people, from large-scale restoration projects to wildlife gardening in our own backyards.

9:45 Break

10:00 Cheryl Miller, Hydrologist with USGS “Groundwater Essentials”

Cheryl will be using a physical model that looks like an ant farm to describe how groundwater flows and how it can be impacted by different types of pollution. She will present information about Laramie County groundwater quality, as well as results from a 25+ year project sampling pesticides in Wyoming’s water.

11:00 Rex Lockman, Wildlife and Range Specialist for LCCD – “Native Prairie Islands”

Rex will explain the Native Prairie Island Program (NPIP) and discuss native wildflower seeding for pollinators and grass seeding in Laramie County.

11:45 Lunch (included in registration)

1:00 Nancy Loomis, Local Master Gardener “Urban strategies for caching water in the soil”

Rain gardens, snow gardens and saucer gardening are all techniques for capturing and storing water in the soil. Learn how these strategies reduce the need for supplemental irrigation in the urban landscape. This will be a fun layman’s class and not a scientific dissertation!

1:45 Zach Hutchinson, Audubon Rockies “Habitat Hero Pollinator Monitoring”

Zach will share how to use the newly developed Habitat Hero pollinator monitoring protocols with those who wish to contribute community science data on pollinators visiting native plant gardens.

2:30 Break

2:45 Hands-on and One-on-one

Winter Sowing/Prairie Seeding program and seeding machine

Ground Water specifics (desk top display)

Jim Tolstrup one on one discussion with Jim

4:00 Close out/Cleanup

If you have questions, call Mark Gorges at 307-287-4953

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>. Also, be sure to watch the Audubon Rockies’ 2022 Year-end Video at [Our 2022 Year-end Video | Audubon Rockies](#)

Olympic BirdFest, Thurs.-Sun., April 13-16, 2023

Enjoy guided birding trips on the North Olympic Peninsula, art and photography classes, overnight trips to Neah Bay and the San Juan Islands, and a gala banquet at the Dungeness River Nature Center, 1943 West Hendrickson, Sequim, WA.

Saturday night banquet speaker is Dr. Scott Pearson, research scientist with the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, seabird colony specialist presenting “A Tale of Two Puffins.”

BirdFest events fill fast! For detailed information on numerous events, and to

register, visit www.olympicbirdfest.org.

National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count - Live updates

As results are sent in for Christmas Bird Counts around the world, the results can be found at <https://netapp.audubon.org/cbcobservation/>

Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count Results

See "Bird Banter" on the last pages of the Newsletter.

December 30 – Cheyenne Country Club survey results

By Chuck Seniawski

7:50 AM - 9:35 AM

Protocol: Traveling

2.88 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 30 degrees. Light breeze. Mostly clear skies. Bill Gerhart, Vicki Herren, Kirk Miller and Chuck Seniawski. Only a few days after the storm with sharp temperature drop to -25 degrees.

8 species (+1 other taxa)

Canada Goose 22

hawk sp. 1 Only a quick glimpse of a raptor flying away through the trees. Never seen again.

Hairy Woodpecker 1

Black-billed Magpie 6

American Crow 3

Mountain Chickadee 3

Red-breasted Nuthatch 2

European Starling 4

Townsend's Solitaire 1

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S124907840>



The bushtit made its first appearance on the Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count Dec. 17, 2022. A small flock has been hanging out at Lions Park this fall. Photo by Grant Frost.

Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count had several remarkable observations

By Barb Gorges

Perhaps somewhere in the archives of Rocky Mountain National Park is my signature on a piece of paper from the cylinder on Hallett's Peak, proving I made it to the top in August 1973.

Short of birth, death and graduation records, most of us don't lead a permanently, well-documented life. But if you participate in a Christmas Bird Count, you can look yourself up online, at least back to 2005. More important are the number of birds counted, distances traveled and the weather conditions. That data goes back to 1900 (1974 for Cheyenne).

Explore the data at <https://netapp.audubon.org/cbcobservation/>. The address changes whenever the sponsor, the National Audubon Society, reorganizes its website.

This year was the 123rd Christmas Bird Count, straddling the year end of 2022-2023. The Cheyenne count was held Dec. 17, 2022, within a 7.5-mile-diameter count circle centered on the State Capitol.

The 20 participants together walked 26 miles, drove 76 miles and watched feeders for 15 hours.

Here is the list of 51 species and how many were seen of each, plus a few notes.

Cackling Goose 97

These geese used to be lumped with Canada geese as four smaller subspecies, sometimes as small as a mallard, and are showing up more often.

Canada Goose 1,148

These may be a mix of a non-migratory local flock and some migrating here when there's open water.

Snow Goose 1

Oh no – is this species of goose thinking about wintering here too?

Mallard 354

Northern Shoveler 8

Redhead 1

Ring-necked Duck 2

Green-winged Teal 22

Common Goldeneye 7

Gadwall 2

Rock Dove (pigeon) 129

There's a much larger flock in northeast Cheyenne that eluded us.

Eurasian-collared Dove 181

Wilson's's Snipe 3

They know where there's a spring providing open water.

Northern Harrier 5

Sharp-shinned Hawk 2

Cooper's Hawk 1

Bald Eagle 4

Red-tailed Hawk 12

Rough-legged Hawk 4

Ferruginous Hawk 2

Eastern-screech Owl 1

Great-horned Owl 2

Good showing of raptors, including the merlin and kestrel listed below.

Belted Kingfisher 2

Always a couple along Crow Creek.

Downy Woodpecker 5

Hairy Woodpecker 1

Northern Flicker 15

American Kestrel 1

Not all of them migrate farther south.

Merlin 1

Northern Shrike 2

Blue Jay 13

This eastern bird continues to increase in numbers here.

Black-billed Magpie 80

It should really be the state bird since it stays year round and cleans up carcasses.

American Crow 133

Common Raven 30

Lorie Chesnut videoed a flock of 25. Jane Dorn, who studied ravens for her masters degree, said young birds may flock, otherwise, ravens hang out in ones and twos. To tell them apart from crows, listen for the raven's croak compared to the crow's caw. Also, when flying, the raven's tail looks like the point of a diamond. The crow's looks like a half-circle fan. Crows are only 17.5 inches from beak tip to tail, ravens are 24 inches.

Black-capped Chickadee 14

I need to be more careful in assuming all the chickadees I see are mountain and check for their white "eyebrows," which the black-cappeds don't have.

Mountain Chickadee 22

Horned Lark 9

Red-breasted Nuthatch 4

White-breasted Nuthatch 4

Brown Creeper 2

These are very hard to see. They are like a moving piece of bark on a tree trunk.

European Starling 444

Townsend's Solitaire 10

This relation of the robin is more slender and is all gray. It likes to sit at the tip top of trees, especially junipers, eating their berries.

American Robin 5

Every year there are a few that winter here. We aren't sure if these birds spent the summer here or if these are birds that came from farther north.

Cedar Waxwing 6

Waxwings only show up when they find fruit still on the tree or shrub so seeing them is very lucky.

House Sparrow 432

House Finch 119

American Goldfinch 2

American Tree Sparrow 42

In summer, small flocks of sparrows are often chipping sparrows. But they leave in fall and the tree sparrows come for the winter.

Dark-eyed Junco 59

Song Sparrow 2

They are almost always year round, by a creek.

Bushtit 10

This is the flock our Christmas Bird Count compiler, Grant Frost, has been watching this fall. We are happy they stayed for their first count here. If they make it through the winter, they might decide to stay and make a state breeding record.

Pine Warbler 1

This is the same bird that has been hanging out in Chuck Seniawski's backyard this fall. Nice it could stick around and provide a count record.

Golden-crowned Kinglet count week

Not an unusual bird in winter, but there are not many to be seen, plus they are tiny and not noticeable in the treetops where they hang out.

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

