



March 2024 "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 2023-2024

Grant Frost, President

Dennis Saville, Vice president

Lorie Chesnut, Secretary

Chuck Seniawski, Treasurer

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Donna Kassel, Historian

Grant Frost, Field Trips, Bird Compiler

Mark Gorges, Newsletter, Habitat Hero

Vicki Herren, Important Bird Areas

Kirk Miller, Social Media,

Barb Gorges, Programs, Publicity

Lorie Chesnut, Website

Advocacy, open

Wanda Manley, 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

Join our Facebook Group, Cheyenne-High Plains Audubon Society Group

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

March 19, 7:00 p.m. – Cheyenne Audubon Program: The Dawn Chorus: Birdsong i.d. with Barb Gorges

Cheyenne Audubon invites the public for a free talk by Barb Gorges, author of "Cheyenne Birds by the Month," about "The Dawn Chorus: Learn to i.d. birdsong," Mar. 19, 7 p.m., in the Cottonwood Room at the Laramie County Library, 2200 Pioneer Ave.



American Robin by Mark Gorges

Barb will review how to identify common Cheyenne birdsongs—the sounds of the songbirds. If you recognize many birdsongs already, come share the techniques and resources you use to learn them.

For more information about this and other Audubon activities, please see www.CheyenneAudubon.org.

March 26, 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting:

Contact us, cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com, if you would like to attend and participate in helping to plan chapter activities. This meeting will be in the Sage Room at the Laramie County Library, 2200 Pioneer Ave., Cheyenne.

March 29, 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 Club's clubhouse's main parking lot. These counts are free and open to everyone, but please let Chuck know you are coming.

March 30, 3:00 p.m. – Field Trip: Table Mountain Wildlife Management Area: Sandhill Crane Migration

We will leave the Lions Park parking lot south of the Children's Village at 3 p.m. Carpooling should be available but check with Grant (see below) if you will need a ride.

We are going to Table Mountain to watch Sandhill Cranes return in flocks to their nighttime roosting area after they spend the day feeding in grain fields. We will also be looking for migrating waterfowl along the way.

The management area is about 75 miles north of Cheyenne, near Yoder, WY. The trip is free, open to the public, and non-birders of all ages are encouraged to join us to learn about the birds we see.

We expect to be back in Cheyenne by 9 p.m. Be sure to bring water, something for yourself to eat and dress for changing weather.

If you want to carpool but don't want to leave your car in the parking lot in the evening, when you call Grant, let him know if you want a ride or riders and let's see if we can make arrangements to arrive at the park already matched up.

If you are interested in going, please contact Grant Frost, 307-343-2024, so that he has a list of those expected, and he can let you know if the plans change for any reason like bad weather.



Sandhill Cranes at Table Mountain 2023 by Mark Gorges

Mark your calendars and buy dinner tickets now for this upcoming special event:

May 11, Cheyenne-High Plains Audubon Society 50th Anniversary

Morning and afternoon field trips - more information next month.

5:00 to 9:00 p.m. – Dinner, Laramie County Community College, CCI Rooms 129/130.

Land and Sea dinner with vegetarian option, guest speaker Chris Madson, silent auction, and two donated door prizes (a pair of Maven binoculars and a guided day tour of Rocky Mountain National Park). Everyone attending will get two door prize tickets.

Tickets – There are 94 dinner tickets on sale now at TicketLeap for \$38 each (includes all fees, etc.) Go to:

<https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/cheyenne50th/cheyenne-high-plains-audubon-society-50th-anniversary-dinner>

Dinner - Pan Seared Top Sirloin with Herb Butter Sauce, Honey Lime Salmon with a Mango Pineapple Salsa, and Couscous Primavera Stuffed Acorn Squash with Parmesan Cheese (Vegetarian). Comes with a Spring Mix Salad with Ranch and Italian Dressing, Grilled Caribbean Vegetable Kabobs, Roasted Rooted Vegetables, Freshly Baked Dinner Rolls and Butter, Coffee, Hot and Iced Teas. Key lime Pie and Coconut Cream Pie Shooters for Dessert.

Speaker - Chris Madson, former, long-time award-winning editor of Wyoming Wildlife magazine

"From the grass up." Chris will take a look at several of the folks who were important in the early Audubon Society, maybe George Bird Grinnell, T. Gilbert Pearson, and Frank Bond, folks that got Audubon started by sheer force of will.

At the dinner we will have a running tableau of photos of birds, chapter events and outings. If you have any of your own photos you would like to donate to the chapter for this show, please send them to our chapter mailbox at:

cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com

Chapter News



*Mountain Plover, drawn by
Michelle LaGory*

Chapter President's message

If you are old enough, you might remember a couple of advertising slogans for the military. For the sailors, it was "Join the Navy and see the world". For the soldiers it was "We do more before 6 than most people do all day". Or something along those lines.

You may not realize it, but every summer a small army of volunteers goes out, sees Wyoming, and does a lot before 6 AM. The cause is Breeding Bird Surveys, or BBS, and there are over 100 designated routes in the state.

BBS data is used to look at trends in bird populations and changes in distribution, and is used by researchers and resource managers. Some routes have data going back to the mid-1960's, and that kind of information can't be found anywhere else.

The problem is that about 20% of the routes currently don't have volunteers collecting data on them. The causes are many, but the Wyoming Game and Fish Department is looking to get those routes covered. WGFD wants you to join the birding army!

The uncovered routes can be found across the state. Are you looking for a challenge, or a chance to see some new life birds or a new part of our beautiful state? This could be your opportunity. Each survey takes one morning between late May and mid-July, depending on the route. It starts early – I'm talking can't hardly see the data sheet in front of you early, but you're done by 10. They are all road-based, so there's no hiking around.

The qualifications are being able to ID the local birds by sight and sound. This admittedly can be a hurdle, but I look at it as a challenge. There are so many resources now to help with that, and you could really up your bird ID game.

I have two routes currently. One close to home here, and the other up by Lusk. It's one of my favorite things to look forward to each summer. For the Lusk route, I now have a tradition of going up the night before, sleeping in the back of the truck and watching the stars and planets periodically through the night. I also hear birds such as owls and common poorwills. I've also been doing it long enough now that I'm truly invested in what's happening with the birds and habitat that supports them.

If you are curious you can talk to me about it or go to the USGS website at www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs. Get yours now, routes are filling up fast!

Grant
CHPAS President

Chapter Programs Recorded

We have attempted to record our monthly chapter meetings/programs since January 2023. If you have missed any of those meetings, you can find them at our chapter web page, www.CheyenneAudubon.org, under Programs in the Activities heading, Or you can just go to <https://cheyenneaudubon.org/programs/>.

Education and Conservation

Education Chair Activities

Kim has a list of ideas for kids' programs for the coming year. What we need are volunteers to work with Kim on these projects.

If you are interested in joining Kim on a project, or you have some ideas of your own, contact the chapter at: cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com. Kim will get in touch with you.

Chapter Grants

White-faced Ibis chapter grant report.

By Patrick Donnelly

Hello Audubon white-faced ibis supporters, I wanted to provide everyone with a brief update on the project.

We were able to deploy approximately 80 GPS-tags last summer thanks in part to the support your chapters provided. New release sites in California and Wyoming were part of this cohort in addition to ongoing 2023 efforts in Nevada, Oregon and other Western states.

We are already learning that white-faced ibis breed where the water is as we saw dramatic differences in wetland conditions and some bird distributions between 2022 and 2023. I have provided a link to a USFWS story outlining the 2023 summer field season and larger project goals. <https://www.fws.gov/story/2023-10/white-faced-ibis-and-climate-change>

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

Habitat Hero



10th Annual Cheyenne Habitat Hero Workshop, Feb. 3, Laramie County Community College:

“Ways to Make and Keep a Garden for the Birds and Bees Plus Advice on Trees”

Despite the weather, we had a great in-person turnout for the workshop. Because of problems with Zoom at LCCC, we lost our Zoom

audience. However, we had excellent exit reviews on our speakers and their presentations, and, of course, as usual, everyone enjoyed the food at lunch.

If you were not able to get tickets, you can still get the plant lists from the event at: <https://cheyenneaudubon.files.wordpress.com/2024/01/2024-chey-hh-workshop-plant-list.pdf>.

Also, we have a recap of the entire workshop pulled together by Barb Gorges at <https://cheyenneaudubon.files.wordpress.com/2024/02/2024-chey-hh-recap-1.pdf>

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, including a 2023 year-end update on Audubon Rockies' activities.

Go to: <https://rockies.audubon.org/blog>

February 16-19 – Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) report

From the Cornell Team

We want to **send a huge thank you** to everyone who participated. More than **600,000 people** from **209 countries or regions** were out birding February 16-19, and **found 7,842 species**. We had more than **350 community birding events** reported. Birds truly brought the world together for GBBC.

And we were blown away by so many great photos in four days you shared more than **130,000 images and sound recordings!**

Keep your eyes out for the final report! After March 1, we'll pull all the data and create a final summary of the global accomplishments from GBBC's 27th annual count. [Here's where we currently stand.](#)

Want to look-up results from your local area? [Follow this guide](#) to use eBird in your corner of the world to see results close to home.

Next year's GBBC is February 14-17, 2025. Mark your calendars.

February 23 – Country Club Survey Results

7:53 AM - 9:25 AM

Protocol: Traveling

2.71 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 31 degrees. Clear but breezy. Teresa and Austin Authier, Bill Gerhart, Barb and Mark Gorges, Vicki Herren, Nancy Higgins, Kirk Miller, Chuck Seniawski, Janet Thompson, Kurt Warmbier.

10 species

Canada Goose 37

Mallard 4

Eurasian Collared-Dove 5

Downy Woodpecker 1

Northern Flicker 9

Black-billed Magpie 15

Mountain Chickadee 2

European Starling 2

House Sparrow 2

Dark-eyed Junco 1

View this checklist online

at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S162652729>



Black-billed Magpies at the Country Club by Mark Gorges



Two white ibises patrol a hotel patio in Key West, Florida, recently. Photo by Barb Gorges.

Friendly Florida birds make best memories.

By Barb Gorges

My husband Mark acts as our travel agent, arranging plane tickets, hotels and birding routes.

Last month we went to Florida to visit his brother and Mark used it as an opportunity for us to bird more of the Everglades, plus Key West and the Dry Tortugas. Maybe add flamingoes and brown noddies to our life lists.

No new birds this trip though. My world (we once went to Costa Rica) life list is stuck at 690 species.

The next best thing when visiting Florida is to see all the large wading birds. We did see a flash of pink, a roseate spoonbill, but missed many of the others: snowy egret, reddish egret, green heron, the two night-herons, glossy ibis, limpkin, wood stork.

We drove to the very south end of Everglades National Park our first day, to what was once the town of Flamingo, and saw no flamingoes.

But my first ever crocodile was sunning itself on the dock at the marina at the Everglades visitor center. Alongside that dock was a herd of manatees. You wouldn't have known to look unless you noticed the manatee jam (like a Yellowstone bear jam with everyone stopped to look). The water was so turbid, all we could see was their nostrils coming up for air so briefly I couldn't even point them out to someone else.

At stops along the way we did get some of the waders: little blue heron, cattle egret, the spoonbill, white ibis. At one mucky beach Mark identified black-bellied plover, semipalmated plover, willet, dunlin and western sandpiper.

Almost every time on this trip a large bird flew overhead, it turned out to be a turkey vulture, sometimes a black vulture.

Our second day we navigated Highway 1 across the Florida Keys. A bike trail is marked alongside the entire 100 miles of the "Overseas Highway."

One of the birding stops along the way Mark discovered through eBird.org was the end of Blimp Road on Cudjoe Key. The road also leads to a military installation where a blimp with border surveillance cameras is tethered. It wasn't very birdy there, but we were visited by a small flock of ruddy turnstones. These are the almost tame shorebirds that enchanted me on our first trip to Florida 10 years ago. Six of them still greet me every time I open my laptop.

Another flock scuttled around us the next day while we ate our sack lunches by the beach at Dry Tortugas National Park. The centerpiece there is the enormous hexagonal brick fort that encompasses most of Garden Key. At one time it protected a population of nearly 2,000 people supporting its mission to defend our country.

But Mark and I were more interested in the birds: brown pelicans, sandwich and royal terns and more shorebirds. A neighboring key was a rookery, swarming with mostly magnificent frigate birds. Some of the males were inflating their red balloon-like throat pouches. No brown noddies, though according to eBird, two days later someone did report many. Not our day. But who could stay unhappy on a tropical island on a sunny day, surrounded by shallow water in all the shades of turquoise?

Five hours is a long time to sit on a ferry so we chatted with some of the other 175 passengers, including a woman who grew up in Cheyenne. Across from her was a family from Laramie.

Mark saved us a full day on Key West for checking out birding hotspots, but they weren't very hot. Migration hadn't started yet. But I did make the acquaintance of a rooster in the parking lot of the park downtown. I think he would have jumped right in our rental car. Technically, these chickens are red junglefowl, escapees from domestication.

We also met a young great blue heron standing on the railing on the pier, waiting for the fisherman 10 feet away to drop anything fishy. I don't think I've ever seen the entire extent of a great blue heron's legs before. They are long.

My other favorite birds on Key West were the white ibis patrolling the hotel grounds. You see small flocks of them all over coastal Florida using their long, skinny orange bills to pick invertebrate critters out of lawns.

There were three that had morning patio patrol, picking up after people eating breakfast out there, even though the hotel had laced much of the opening between the half wall and patio roof with clear fishing line to try to discourage birds.

It's not many mornings a bird gives me a clear, eye-to-eye look, bringing a new definition to "bird watching."

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.

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