

June 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.*

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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

June 15, 8:00 a.m. – "Big Sit" Field Trip to Hynds Lodge in Curt Gowdy State Park

We will leave the Lions Park parking lot south of the Children's Village at 8 a.m. and drive about 30 minutes to Hynds Lodge. Carpooling should be available but check with Grant (see below) if you will need a ride.

The "Big Sit" part of the trip is sitting quietly for an extended period and letting the birds come to us. Do bring camp chairs if you do not want to sit on the ground.

Recent sightings in that area include hummingbirds, woodpeckers, flycatchers, vireos, and assorted open forest birds. There will also be an opportunity for an hour-long hike in the area.

The trip is free and open to the public. We expect to be back in Cheyenne by 1 p.m. Be sure to bring water and dress for changing weather.

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.

June 25, 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 held at the Laramie County Library in the Windflower Room.

June 28, 7:00 a.m. – Country Club Bird Survey

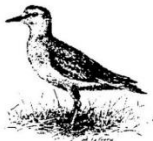
Contact Chuck Seniawski to be on his email notice list: 307-638-6519 or chuckski@aol.com. The count will start in the Country Club's clubhouse's main parking lot. These counts are free and open to everyone, but please let Chuck know you are coming.

July 19-July22 – Wyoming Statewide BioBlitz 2024

Contribute to conservation science from anywhere in Wyoming! Friday, July 19, 2024 - Monday, July 22, 2024, 12:00am - 12:00am - Online Event. Or go to: <https://rockies.audubon.org/events/wyoming-statewide-bioblitz-2024> for all the information about this event.

Chapter News

Chapter President's message



*Mountain Plover,
drawn by Michelle
LaGory*

Wow! The chapter celebrated its 50th anniversary on May 11, and what a day it was. Two field trips, a banquet, prizes, great speaker, and lots of fun. It was wonderful to look back on the history of the chapter, and even further back to the beginnings of the Audubon movement with our speaker, Chris Madson, and the prominent role that Wyoming and people from here played in it.

But, what's even more inspiring is the present and the future. The chapter is not only continuing the usual programs and field trips, but we have members working hard to help with weed control at the Hereford Ranch, one of our two Important Bird Areas (IBA), and coordinating with the city forestry to save large tree trunks as snags for cavity nesting birds at Lions Park, the other IBA.

We have purchased the binoculars and other supplies for Birding Backpacks that can be checked out through Cheyenne, Burns and Pine Bluffs libraries. They include state park passes, guides, and high-quality binoculars for both an adult and younger person. These are meant to make birds and birding more easily accessible to youth and families. One family has already checked one out and joined us on the Cheyenne Big Day.

These are just two examples of recent activities. There are so many things this chapter can do, and it may only be limited by our imaginations. We encourage anyone with ideas to relay them to me or any of our outstanding board members. Or better yet, sit in on a board meeting or volunteer to be on the board! We are always looking for new people, ideas and inspiration.

Grant
CHPAS President

Chapter's 50th celebration well-attended

By Barb Gorges

Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society celebrated its 50th anniversary May 11 with a dinner at Laramie County Community College.

We had about 75 people, ranging in age from 7 (two couples each brought a grandchild) to 80-plus. At the last minute, people asked about the dress code but we didn't have one so a couple people came in brand new bird t-shirts and a handful wore skirt or jacket and tie and the rest were in between.

We had a few activities for the social hour. Dennis and Timi Saville brought bird-style cornhole, complete with bird beanbags. Lorie Chesnut organized a silent auction to raise funds for our birding backpacks for the county library, and she organized the slideshow that ran from 5 to 7.

Kim Parfitt and Lorie organized the spark bird project, asking people what their spark bird was and the story with it. A spark bird is the bird that sparks someone's interest in birds and birdwatching. We'll be sharing those stories in the newsletter in months to come and invite more participation in the fall at our meetings. We also had a whiteboard set up, asking people what their best bird this spring was so far. We had two field trips earlier in the day.

Our scrapbook from our 40th anniversary was open for perusal, as well as a binder of old newsletters.

We had 16 door prizes. One was the pair of Maven binoculars, won by Jeremy Manley, husband of our past president, Wanda Manley. He helps us with Zoom and recording our meetings. The guided nature trip to Rocky Mountain National Park was won by Kim Lane who is just starting to get active with our chapter—she came on the Greenway cleanup the week before. One of the Maven hats was won by one of the 7-year-olds, chapter president Grant Frost's granddaughter. The other was won by Jane Gilbert, wife of one of our longtime members, Richard Gilbert.

The rest of the door prizes were the 12 table centerpieces. Vally Gollogly, who sells cut flowers at the summer Tuesday farmers markets (starting June 11, 3-6 p.m. at the mall by JCP) made them with flowers almost exclusively from her yard. The vases were squat Mason jars sold as hummingbird feeders. Vally added a red bow to each to make them more attractive to hummingbirds.

Grant Frost presented a framed photo print of a kestrel to me and Mark, thanking us for our 35 years of active membership in the chapter. The current board members signed it.

I gave a short talk on the origins of our chapter. Joanne Cornelison, the widow of our first chapter president, John Cornelison, was able to join us for dinner and was introduced, as were early chapter members George and Yoshiko Cardon. I mentioned the first people Mark and I met in 1990, which included several of the 1974 people. And I introduced the current board.

Chris Madson was the main speaker. He took us back to the origins of our country's conservation movement—it wasn't just Teddy Roosevelt, but a lot of people working behind the scenes. He introduced Frank Bond, who was an influential birder in Wyoming at the turn of the last century. He was one of many people important to the beginnings of the Audubon movement. We hope to share more of Chris's historical research in the future.

Thank you to our anonymous sponsor, thank you to everyone contributing to the silent auction, thank you to Maven for donating a pair of their binoculars, thank you to Ryan Dibala for donating one of his nature trips, thank you to Grant Frost and Vicki Herren for leading the field trips, thank you to Chris Madson for speaking, thank you to everyone who could join us for the dinner, thank you to all of you who have supported our chapter all these years. Here's to a bright future for our chapter and the birds.

Spark Birds as listed at the dinner

- Western Tanager, Green Heron, Wood Duck, Chukar, American Egret, Anna's Hummingbird, Hooded Oriole, Great Horned Owl
- Meadowlark – I love hearing their songs in the morning. It reminds me of my grandmother's farm as a kid
- Mountain Bluebird, Great Horned Owl

- My spark bird was a Great Horned Owl. When I was very young, my grandmother and uncle (who was 21 years older) adopted a baby Great Horned Owl who had been in a tree removed by a road crew. We helped raise the owlet all summer and released it when able to fly and hunt. We named it Yeep! – Dennis Saville
- Seeing Bald Eagles on the ice-covered Pelican Lake southwest of Vernal, Utah – Pete Sokolosky
- A barred owl stopped me on a hike by staring me down from a limb over the trail. It was almost dark & I had no water, “wiser” to turn back to hike another day! – Pat McIlwain
- Sandhill Crane from my first visit to the Bosque del Apache, San Antonio, New Mexico – Nan Gile
- From the time my children were very small, we spent time in nature. They loved the sound of the Mountain Chickadee and to mimic the sound. “Chick-a-dee-dee-dee”. Looking for the black-capped beauty on hikes and in the yard is a favorite activity. Singing out the sound of the chick-a-dee-dee-dee will always be the sound of my summer – Kim Lane
- Evening Grosbeak – I saw several at my birdfeeders during spring migration. They are stunning and unmistakable! I was thrilled!
- Black-crowned Night-Heron at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens.
- Believe it or not...Black-billed Magpie
- My spark bird is the Bohemian Waxwing. One day while walking back from a dog walk in Alaska, I saw hundreds of the most striking birds I had ever seen in the winter. I raced home so I could get my binoculars and ran back to identify them. Now whenever I see them it brings me joy.
- Harlequin duck – in 1988 I got to hold a harlequin duck that was about to be marked for a study by a wildlife biologist. It changed my life! I went back to college, got a MS in wildlife management and worked 20 years as a biologist – Vicki Herren
- Northern Flicker – nested in our house; penguin – (any species); Prairie Chicken (watching on lek with our young kids in South Dakota).
- Magpie – My grandfather cut down a dead, decaying cottonwood. There were 3 baby magpies which hit the ground but survived. We picked them up, put them in a cage and reared them. One even learned to say hi and bye and they hung around the yard and outbuildings all summer and would harass my grandmother’s cat and my grandfather’s hound dogs continually. One learned to say cat. They would wake you up and demand food every day. They remained until late fall. – Bill Gerhart
- Too many to pick one – in part: Mountain Bluebird, Brown Pelicans, red cardinals, meadowlarks!

Name Your Best Bird So Far This Spring

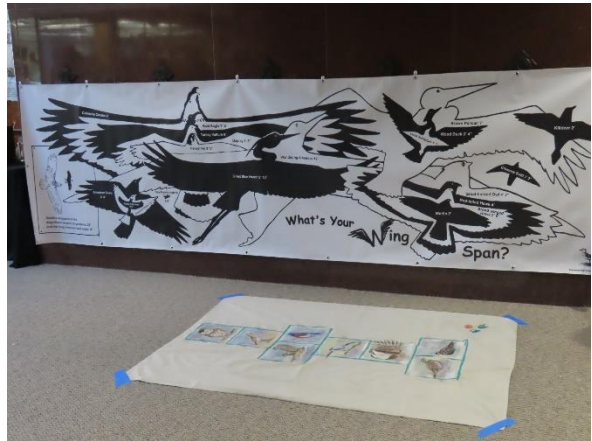
- Belted Kingfisher – Claire & Aaron Enriquez
- Blackpoll Warbler (today, May 11) – Vicki Herren
- Bullock’s Warbler – Becky O’Leary
- Chukar – Sarah Delgado
- Elegant Trogon – Donna Griffin DeGroot
- Great Blue Heron – Nan G
- Great-tailed Grackle (Henderson, Nevada) – Jen Mayer
- Hooded Warbler – Mark Gorges
- Lazuli Bunting (backyard) – Barb Gorges
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak – Kevin Sadler
- Yellow Warbler – Brian Dykstra

Education and Conservation

Education Chair Activities

Our Education Committee and volunteers were again active at the Wyoming State Museum on Saturday, May 4th, for their “Family Day: Home on the Range” celebration.

They had a variety of activities for everyone. There was the “Prairie Dog Cornhole Throw”, the bird hopscotch game and the new Wing Span wall hanging that the chapter recently purchased.



Birding Backpack Spring Kick-Off! A success!

On May 14th the public was invited to explore how to use Laramie County Library's latest resource to get to know our Wyoming birds! Volunteers from the Cheyenne - High Plains Audubon Society helped kids and their families learn how to use binoculars, field guides, and smartphone birding apps to discover our feathered friends and their habitats.

Similar programs will also be offered at the Pine Bluffs library June 18th at 5:30 pm and the Burns library June 20th at 4 pm.

This project is a test run with the Laramie County Library System. If successful this year, the chapter would be interested in partnering with county libraries in Platte and Goshen counties to make birding backpacks available to them.

Backpacks in Action

The Martin family was one of the first to check out the new backpacks after the kickoff. They joined us on May 18th for the Big Count Day at Lions Park and the Wyoming Hereford Ranch.

Besides the backpack binoculars they had some of their own. They also used the reference material in the backpack to help them identify some of the birds they saw.

(Photos by Kim Parfitt)



More ideas?

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

The second year of a grant for bluebird nest boxes resulted in eight additional boxes being installed along the road at the High Plains Arboretum. All 16 boxes are ready for nesting birds.

We have an updated nest box monitoring protocol this year. If you are interested in helping with the Nest Watch monitoring, please send an email to cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com. We will contact you about scheduling.

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

Habitat Hero



Habitat Hero Graden at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens

update

Spring is in full swing at CBG. The spring bulbs bloomed and are mostly finished. The perennial plants are coming back strong, and new seedlings are making a nice showing as they germinate and green up.

Barb recently planted some additional perennials in the expanded area beyond the flagpole. We also removed weeds like thistle from that area.



2025 Habitat Hero Workshop

We are preparing for our next Habitat Hero Workshop in Cheyenne on Saturday, February 1st. Watch for more information in the coming months.

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 updated information Audubon Rockies' activities.

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

May 11 – 50th Anniversary Field Trips

Hillsdale Longspurs

We had 16 people for this morning trip.
CR 142 State Land, Laramie, Wyoming, US
8:37 AM - 9:25 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.31 mile(s)
7 species

Swainson's Hawk 2
Horned Lark 20
Barn Swallow 1
Chestnut-collared Longspur 8
Thick-billed Longspur 20
Lark Bunting 28
Western Meadowlark 5



Chestnut-collared Longspur by Mark Gorges



Thick-billed Longspur by Mark Gorges

Wyoming Hereford Ranch

We also had 16 people for this noon trip, but not all the same people as the morning trip.

11:49 AM

Wyoming Hereford Ranch

Observers: 16

Duration: 3 hr, 21 min

Distance: 3.34 mi

Species Observed 53

Canada Goose 2
Mallard 10
Eurasian Collared-Dove 6
Mourning Dove 14
Killdeer 1
Spotted Sandpiper 1
American White Pelican 2
Great Blue Heron 1
White-faced Ibis 2
Northern Harrier 1
Swainson's Hawk 2
Red-tailed Hawk 3
Great Horned Owl 3
Belted Kingfisher 1
Downy Woodpecker 2
Hairy Woodpecker 1
Northern Flicker 4
American Kestrel 1

Say's Phoebe 1
Western Kingbird 4
Black-billed Magpie 1
Barn Swallow 20
Cliff Swallow 36
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 2
Rock Wren 1
House Wren 6
European Starling 24
Brown Thrasher 2
Swainson's Thrush 4
American Robin 29
House Sparrow 6
House Finch 12
American Goldfinch 21
Chipping Sparrow 14
Lark Sparrow 4
White-crowned Sparrow 1

Vesper Sparrow 1
Savannah Sparrow 1
Song Sparrow 6
Lincoln's Sparrow 2
Green-tailed Towhee 1
Spotted Towhee 1
Western Meadowlark 4
Red-winged Blackbird 23
Brown-headed Cowbird 4
Common Grackle 26
Orange-crowned Warbler 1
MacGillivray's Warbler 1
Common Yellowthroat 1
Yellow Warbler 12
Blackpoll Warbler 1
Yellow-rumped Warbler 21
Lazuli Bunting 1



Blackpoll Warbler: Photo by Mark Gorges

May 18 – Cheyenne Big Day Count

For the results of our Big Day Count in the Cheyenne area, see the Bird Banter article at the end of the newsletter (109 species).



Osprey with breakfast on morning of Big Count Day at Sloans Lake, by Mark Gorges

May 24 – Country Club Survey Results

7:00 AM - 8:52 AM

Protocol: Traveling

3.0 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: Clear skies, 45 degrees. Virtually no breeze. Grant Frost, Bill Gerhart, Mark Gorges, Vicki Herren, Jerry Johnson, Kim Parfitt, Chuck Seniawski, Susan and Roy West.

42 species

Cackling Goose 2
Canada Goose 5
Gadwall 1
Mallard 12
Pied-billed Grebe 1
Eurasian Collared-Dove 2
Mourning Dove 1
American Coot 1
Killdeer 1
California Gull 2
American White Pelican 6
Turkey Vulture 6
Osprey 1
Red-tailed Hawk 2

Great Horned Owl 1
Downy Woodpecker 1
Northern Flicker 2
Blue Jay 1
Black-billed Magpie 7
American Crow 6
Common Raven 2
Mountain Chickadee 1
Barn Swallow 2
Cliff Swallow 2
White-breasted Nuthatch 1
Red-breasted Nuthatch 2
European Starling 1
Gray Catbird 1

Brown Thrasher 1
Swainson's Thrush 4
American Robin 8
House Sparrow 1
House Finch 7
American Goldfinch 16
Chipping Sparrow 3
Song Sparrow 1
Yellow-headed Blackbird 1
Red-winged Blackbird 15
Common Grackle 4
Common Yellowthroat 2
Yellow Warbler 3
Wilson's Warbler 1

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S176870322>



American White Pelicans fishing at the Country Club

2024 Cheyenne Big Day Bird Count is colorful

By Barb Gorges

Birdwatchers on the Cheyenne Big Day Bird Count held May 18 tallied 109 species in the Cheyenne area, including a lot of colorful birds Mark and I had at our backyard feeders during the month of May.

These birds were as colorful as the birds printed on home dec items: American goldfinch (bright yellow with black and white), lazuli bunting (bright blue with white belly and rusty chest), Bullock's oriole (orange with black and white), western tanager (mostly yellow with black and white wings and bright red-orange face), black-headed grosbeak (orange with black and white).

Not quite as flashy were the lesser goldfinches (black with yellow bellies and chins), pine siskins (sparrow-like, dark brown and white stripes with a touch of yellow), house finches (brown and white stripes with red-faced males) and mourning doves ("dove gray"). Skulking in the garden early in the month was a spotted towhee (orange, black and white and red eyes). Stopping only briefly were the chipping sparrows (rusty brown caps) and white-crowned sparrows (black and white head markings).

Our winter regulars were seldom seen in May at our feeders, but they made the count. Dark-eyed juncos mostly departed for higher elevations earlier and the red-breasted nuthatches and mountain chickadees seldom navigate the mobs of migrants.

Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society's annual counts, Big Day and Christmas Bird Count, historically conclude with a tally party where all the participants come together to contribute to the final list. It's become almost irrelevant since almost everyone records their bird sightings at eBird.org and the compiler, Grant Frost, can find those results online. But it's still fun to get together and talk about the birds we saw.

Those of us birding with the main group, including a young family of five, were treated to two osprey at Lions Park eating fish they'd just caught and taken to the tops of neighboring power poles to eat.

Chuck Seniawski found a very unusual bird for our area, a green heron. Sort of like the black-crowned night herons nesting in Lions Park, it has a longer, reddish neck and reddish head. The green back is iridescent so sometimes it looks black. It's so unusual for Wyoming that only someone like Chuck, who has birded extensively in the east, might i.d. this bird correctly as it flew away from him.

The American avocet is an easily identified large, common shorebird: white body, black and white wings, long pinkish neck and pinkish head, long gray legs. Mark and I saw its close cousin, the black-necked stilt. Imagine a white body, black back and wings, black on the back of a very long neck and very long, thin red legs. And of course, a long bill for searching for edible critters in the muck of marshes and mudflats. It has been a very long time since I last saw one here.

This Big Day had the nicest weather in years—for the comfort of birdwatchers. There was no snow, no ice, no rain and little wind until afternoon. However, it was not our biggest day for the number of species. Would there have been more birds if the weather the night before had been a bit rough and grounded migrants overnight?

2024 Cheyenne Big Day Bird Count list: 109 species - List compiled by Grant Frost

Canada Goose	Eared Grebe	Killdeer
Blue-winged Teal	Western Grebe	Wilson's Phalarope
Northern Shoveler	Rock Pigeon	Willet
Gadwall	Eurasian Collared-dove	Spotted Sandpiper
Wood Duck	Mourning Dove	Ring-billed Gull
Mallard	Chimney Swift	California Gull
Redhead	Sora	Double-crested Cormorant
Ring-necked Duck	American Coot	American White Pelican
Lesser Scaup	Black-necked Stilt	Black-crowned Night Heron
Common Merganser	American Avocet	Green Heron
Ruddy Duck	Black-bellied Plover	Great Blue Heron

Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Cooper's Hawk
Swainson's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Great horned Owl
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
American Kestrel
Western Wood-pewee
Least Flycatcher
Say's Phoebe
Cassin's Kingbird
Western Kingbird
Eastern Kingbird
Dusky Flycatcher
Blue Jay
Black-billed Magpie
American Crow
Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
Mountain Chickadee
Horned Lark

Bank Swallow
Northern rough-winged
Swallow
Barn Swallow
Tree Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
White-breasted Nuthatch
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
House Wren
European Starling
Mountain Bluebird
Gray Catbird
Swainson's Thrush
American Robin
House Sparrow
House Finch
Pine Siskin
American Goldfinch
Thick-billed Longspur
White-throated Sparrow
Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco

White-crowned Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
Spotted Towhee
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Western Meadowlark
Orchard Oriole
Bullock's Oriole
Red-winged Blackbird
Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Grackle
Great-tailed Grackle
MacGillivray's Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Western Tanager
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Black-headed Grosbeak
Lazuli Bunting
Blue Grosbeak



Cheyenne is right on the eastern edge of the lazuli bunting breeding range. Maybe someday they will spend the summer here instead of just a few days during migration. Photo by Mark Gorges.

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

