



December 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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Board

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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/>

Thank you to all who have renewed their chapter membership for 2024-2025; and welcome to new chapter members.

Calendar

December 7, 1:00 to 3:00 pm – Introduction to the Christmas Bird Count

This is a class and outing for families and kids of all ages. We will meet at the Children's Village in the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens and

introduce you to some of the local winter birds. Then we will take a short hike in the park to see what birds we can find and record their numbers.

We will talk about the upcoming official Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count planned for December 14th.

December 9, 4:00 to 5:00 pm - Bird Counts and Birds Count!

Join us at the Laramie County Library in the Early Literacy Center on the 2nd floor: for kids from the 2nd through 6th grades.

Meet a volunteer from the Cheyenne High Plains Audubon Society who will tell us how and why we count birds. Discover how to find and identify birds then test your skills at spotting feathered friends (or their look-alikes) and learn about the library's birding backpack program and the upcoming Christmas Bird Count.

December 14 – Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count (Meet at the downtown Post Office at 8 a.m., 2120 Capitol Ave.)

Or be a field observer on your own.

If you are interested in participating, contact Grant Frost, 307-343-2024, so that he has a list of those expected, so he can let you know if the plans change for any reason such as stormy weather.

Grant will have a list of regular spots within our count circle and will encourage people to spread out to specific areas so that we can have good coverage of all hot spots first thing in the morning to assure a good count on the number of each species in the Cheyenne area, i.e. the number of geese before they all start flying around. Novice birders will be paired with experienced counters.

If you are doing an area assigned by Grant, please start there by 8 a.m. Throughout the rest of the day, you are free to look for birds anywhere within the Cheyenne count circle—see map on Page 5.

Record numbers of each species you observe and the amount of time and distance you walk and the amount of time and distance you drive. Keep track of where and when you saw species of note so we can tell if you counted the same bird or flock as someone else.

For your report, compile the total number of individuals of each species and include all your travel information. Come to the tally party with your results or contact Grant Frost, CBC coordinator, 307-343-2024, frostgrant2@gmail.com.

December 14 – CBC Tally Party, 6:00 p.m., Perkins on Del Range Blvd.

For the tally party have ready the numbers of each species you observe and the amount of time and distance you walk and the amount of time and distance you drive. Keep track of where and when you saw species of note so we can tell if you counted the same bird or flock as someone else. Feeder watchers can bring their counts too.

Please contact Mark Gorges at 307-287-4953 if you plan to attend the Tally Party so that we can arrange for enough room.

After the tally party contact Grant with any species that you see three days before or three days after December 14 that were not listed at the tally party. They are entered in the CBC data as "Week of the Count" species.

Be a feeder watcher.

CHEYENNE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT FEEDER-WATCHER DATA SHEET

Directions:

The feeder(s) you intend to watch on Dec. 14 must be within the "count circle," an area defined by a 15-mile diameter circle centered on the Capitol building in downtown Cheyenne. See the map on Page 4.

Identify and count the number of each species that visits your feeder on the day of the count. Record only the maximum number seen at any one time. For example, if a single house finch visits your feeder 10 times, but you never actually see more than one house finch at a time, then that counts as one house finch seen, not 10.

Record the total hours spent observing the action at the feeder. It is not necessary to watch the feeder the entire day. Even if you can only watch for 15 minutes, we're still interested in receiving your data.

Please report the species and number observed ASAP to Grant Frost, Cheyenne CBC compiler, at 307-343-2024 or by email, frostgrant2@gmail.com.

Date: Dec. 14, 2024

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Feeder(s) watched for _____ hours and _____ minutes.

Species list: _____

December 27, 8:00 a.m. – Country Club Bird Survey

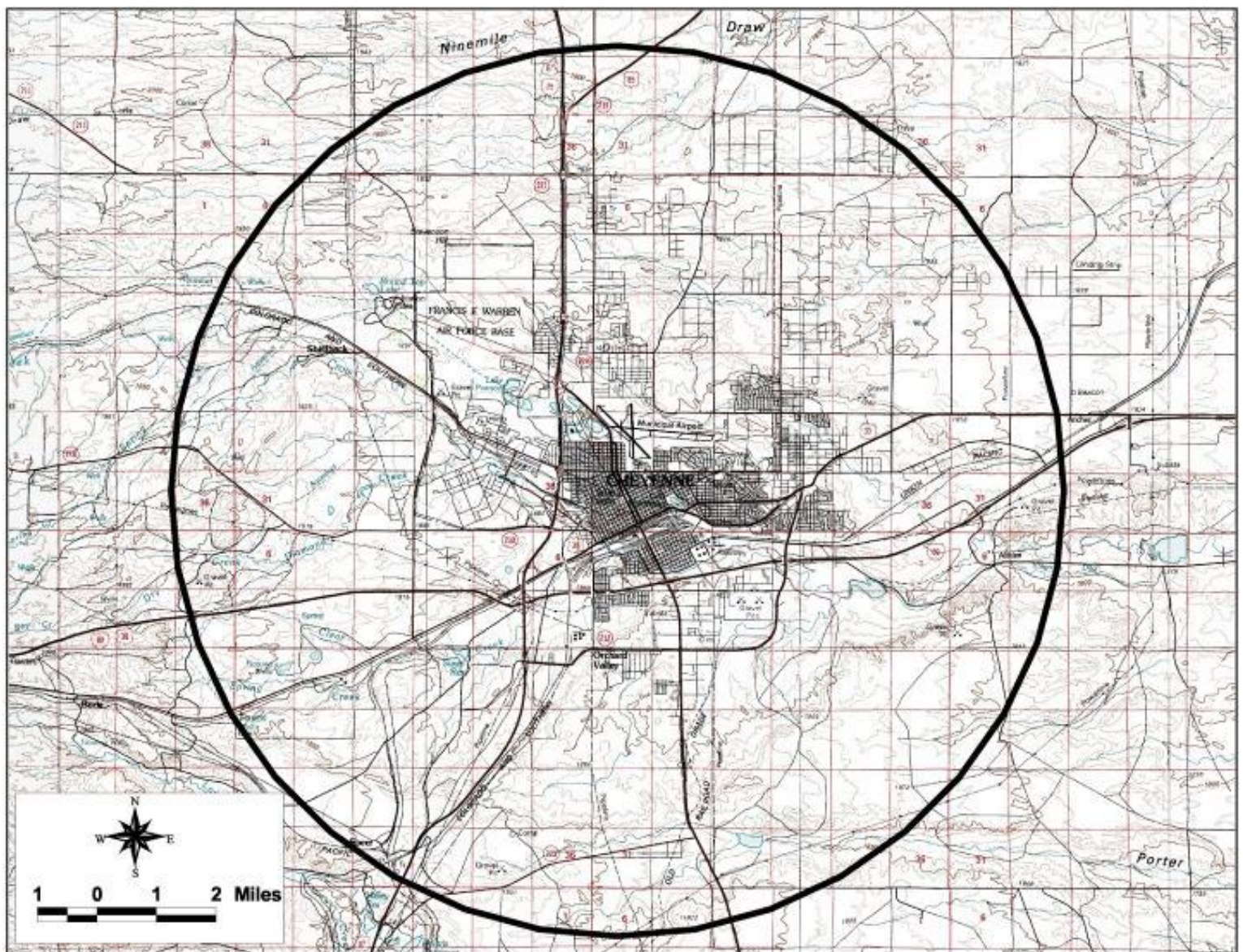
Contact Chuck Seniawski to be on his email notice list: 307-638-6519 or chuckski@aol.com. The count will start in the Country Club's clubhouse's main parking lot. These counts are free and open to everyone, but please let Chuck know you are coming.

January 1 - Guernsey/Ft. Laramie Christmas Bird Count

If you are going to join the count, please let Jane Dorn know at 307-640-4002. Also call her if the weather turns nasty; she will set an alternate date. Bring water, lunch, warm clothes, binoculars, and a scope if you have one, and whatever you need for a day watching birds at Guernsey State Park, Ft. Laramie National Historic Site, the Oregon Trail Ruts and Hartville.

Birding on your own or watching your feeders? The center point of the 7.5-mile radius count circle is where Highway 26 crosses the Goshen County/Platte County line. Please send in your results ASAP to the count compiler, Jane Dorn, 307-640-4002, linglebird@yahoo.com. Anyone in the neighborhood of the count area is welcome to meet Jane at 8 a.m. at the Ft. Laramie Post Office, or at 9:30 a.m. at the main entrance to Guernsey State Park.

Cheyenne Bird Count Circle Map



Mark your calendars for this upcoming special event:

**February 1, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Habitat Hero Workshop – “The Native Plant Garden: Planning, Planting and Preserving, Laramie County Community College
Keynote Speaker: Lauren Springer**

See the agenda and registration information below.

Chapter News



*Mountain Plover,
drawn by Michelle
LaGory*

Chapter President's message

Everybody thinks about the big things we can do to help birds in particular and nature in general. But do you consider what you eat or drink?

Deforestation in the tropics impacts both the local birds and the ones we're familiar with that migrate there to winter. As I drive around town, I see so many coffee shops that I can't believe it sometimes. That means there's a lot of coffee being consumed, and that is grown in the tropics. Shade-grown coffee has proved to be a much better alternative for maintaining forests that birds can live in. It's not the original forest, but it's way better than the alternative, which is deforestation, erosion, herbicide and pesticide use, and illegal forest cutting in national parks and nature reserves.

I read an article in Smithsonian magazine (Sep/Oct 2023) about another option for chocolate. There's more than one kind of cacao tree, and one that was thought to be extinct has been rediscovered. It, by most accounts, produces the best tasting chocolate there is, and it is also being used to reforest the coastal forests in Ecuador. It's an amazing story.

One problem with both of these alternatives to the destructive ways of growing coffee and cacao is they are more expensive, sometimes much more. Another is the appetite that we have for both of these commodities is large and growing, and unless the markets are given some direction from consumers, the tropical forests will continue to decline, all for two things that are not essential for living. That news may come as a shock to some people.

Grant
CHPAS President

Education and Conservation

Chapter Grants

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

Habitat Hero



2025 Habitat Hero Workshop

11th Annual Habitat Hero Workshop: The Native Plant Garden: Planning, Planting and Preserving – Saturday, Feb. 1st, Laramie County Community College

Keynote Speaker: Lauren Springer

Lauren Springer designed Denver Botanic Gardens' WaterSmart Garden, Chatfield Farms' all-native Visitor Center plantings; the new David Salmon Tribute Garden at Santa Fe Botanical Garden, and the Undaunted Garden at the Gardens on Spring Creek. Her gardens have been featured in books, magazines, and on television and several have received Habitat Hero designation by Audubon Rockies.

Her six books include “The Undaunted Garden, Plant-Driven Design,” and the upcoming “Rocky Mountain Native Plant Primer.” She has introduced numerous plants, with two new plants debuting in the 2026 Plant Select lineup. Along with 35 years of commitment to waterwise landscapes, she seeks to create beauty with wildlife function.

Agenda

8:15 a.m. Doors open

9:00 a.m. – info and housekeeping

9:05 – **Scott Aker: A New Way with Natives** – Scott is the Director of the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens. Scott will highlight the new Cheyenne Botanic Gardens Master Plan, which provides for an expansion of plantings representing wild areas and new opportunities to use native plants in simplistic design that may appeal to those who seek tidiness in their landscape. He will also speak of the initiatives with water aimed at decreasing the Gardens' water use, creation of garden spaces with year-round appeal, and gardens geared toward education.

9:40 – Break

10:00 – **Lauren Springer: Plantings for Pollinators, Birds, Wildlife, and People** - Observing the insects, birds, and other wildlife that our gardens attract is endlessly fascinating and brings joy and satisfaction, knowing we are helping the web of life no matter how small our space. Yet many well-intentioned all-native and habitat plantings sadly fall short when it comes to design, plant placement and combinations, and overall visual appeal. Seeing and being among beautiful plants and well-thought-out designs feeds the soul as well. Join Lauren as she discusses concepts, plants, and practices that make gardens into good habitat, and that also make them pleasing outdoor spaces for people.

11:00 – **Amanda Martinez: Habitat Hero Application Overview** – Amanda is the Habitat Hero Senior Coordinator for Audubon Rockies. We will learn about the basics of the Habitat Hero program, qualifying landscapes, and a general overview of the tiered criteria system. There are new updates to the application. We will also review the online application system. Additionally, we will see some examples of Gold-level Habitat Hero certified gardens in Cheyenne.

11:30 – **LUNCH - Included in registration**

1:00 p.m. – **Mark Rinne, city council member: Changing City Codes to Accommodate Native Plantings**

1:30 – Break

1:45 – **Deryn Davidson: Native Plant Garden Maintenance, What's the Secret?** – Deryn is the Sustainable Landscape State Specialist for Colorado State University Extension. She conducts educational programming and provides consultation for public and private entities on ways to create sustainable and resilient landscapes. She holds a B.S. in Horticulture from CSU and a Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Arizona. Deryn believes that with thoughtful design and appropriate horticulture practices we can foster biodiversity and use nature-based solutions to enhance the livability and resilience of our urban areas.

Maintaining a thriving native plant garden doesn't have to be a mystery! In this talk, we'll uncover practical tips and techniques to keep your native garden healthy, beautiful, and low maintenance. From seasonal care to increasing biodiversity, this session offers insights for gardeners of all levels who want to nurture their native landscapes with confidence.

2:45 – **Michelle Bohanan - How to transplant winter sown seedlings**, hands on, and you take home a seedling.

4:00 p.m. – End

Registration opens December 1st and closes January 30th at 6 p.m.

Registration (in-person only) will be \$28 and will include lunch. **Registration information at:**
www.CheyenneAudubon.org/habitat-hero/

Or register directly with Ticket Leap at:

<https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/cheyenne50th/HabitatHero-the-native-plant-garden-planning-planting-and-preserving-1223662526#>

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 "Flowing Forward: Reviving Streams through Partnerships"; the launch of a stream restoration project on a Colorado ranch, as well as other articles.

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

November 16 - Arapahoe Bend Natural Area, Larimer, Colorado

Twelve people came on the outing. Besides the birds listed below, 2 Iceland Gulls along with many other gulls were in the area but were chased off by the eagles.

8:55 AM - 11:01 AM

1.56 mile(s)

20 species

Canada Goose 6
Gadwall 1
Mallard 9
Common Merganser 60
Ring-billed Gull 1
American Herring Gull 1
California Gull 1
Pied-billed Grebe 1
Double-crested Cormorant 2
Bald Eagle 3
Northern Flicker 2
Merlin 1
Blue Jay 2
Black-capped Chickadee 4
European Starling 20
American Robin 2
House Finch 7
American Goldfinch 5
Dark-eyed Junco 4
White-crowned Sparrow 3



White-crowned Sparrow from the trip: Photo by Mark Gorges

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S202704023>

November 29 – Country Club Survey Results

8:00 AM - 10:01 AM

Protocol: Traveling

2.8 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 30 degrees. Mostly sunny. Light breeze. Grant Frost, Mark Gorges, Vicki Herren, Sue Lowry, Chuck Seniawski and Pete Sokolosky.

17 species (+1 other taxa)

Greater White-fronted Goose 1
 Cackling Goose 100
 Canada Goose 250
 Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 1
 Eurasian Collared-Dove 2
 Bald Eagle 1
 Red-tailed Hawk 2
 Downy/Hairy Woodpecker 1
 Northern Flicker 2
 Black-billed Magpie 3
 American Crow 10
 Mountain Chickadee 2
 Red-breasted Nuthatch 15
 Townsend's Solitaire 2
 House Finch 1
 Pine Siskin 20
 Dark-eyed Junco 3
 Song Sparrow 1



Pine Siskin from the Country Club: Photo by Mark Gorges

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S204004362>

Bird books worth reading this winter

By Barb Gorges

I have sticky notes on the edges of my laptop about things I find online, including names of books I want to read. One repeatedly showed up beginning early this year: “The Backyard Bird Chronicles,” written and illustrated by Amy Tan, published by Alfred A. Knopf.

Before I had a chance to look for it locally, a friend passed a copy on to me and I enjoyed it so much that I am currently rereading it, but this time aloud to Mark while he washes the dinner dishes.

Author Amy Tan hit the literary bigtime in 1989 with her first novel, “The Joy Luck Club.” In this newest book, she turns her people-observing skills to birds and finds that there are just as many stories to be recorded. However, Tan also does her research, reading and speaking with experts.

Six years ago, at age 64, Tan took up drawing birds. There’s a sketch or full color portrait with nearly every page of text in this book, some even comic strip-like, complete with dialogue balloons.

Despite the drama of bird lives, this is a relaxing and informative read, written by a world-class writer and I recommend it to anyone with even the tiniest place in their heart for wild birds.

Along the same lines is Margaret Renkl’s “The Comfort of Crows,” from 2023. Her yearlong journal explores her patch of the world. I listened to her narrate it on a download from Hoopla. She also writes opinion columns for the New York Times from her home in Nashville, Tennessee.

Kenn Kaufman came out with a new book in 2024. A birding celebrity, he dropped out of high school to bird by hitchhiking, crisscrossing the country in the 1970s. He lived to tell the tale in “Kingbird Highway,” a bird nerd cult classic. He’s also authored and co-authored field guides and he’s an editor and consultant for the National Audubon Society.

His new book was researched in online library and museum reference rooms rather than the road: “The Birds That Audubon Missed: Discovery and Desire in the American Wilderness,” published by Avid Reader Press, illustrated by Kenn Kaufman and John James Audubon.

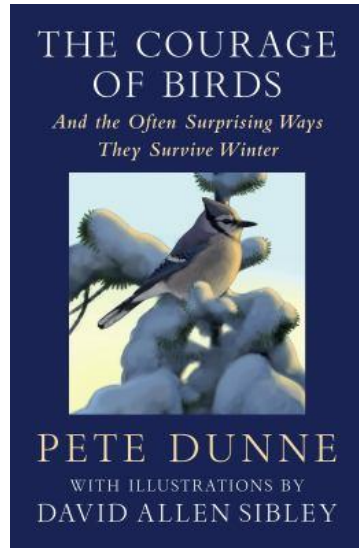
If you don’t know John James Audubon’s life story, there are several biographies you may want to read one of before tackling this account of his professional life. This is certainly a book for people who enjoy the history of science.

Audubon (1785-1851) was exploring the American frontier and finding birds new to science—though not new to Indigenous inhabitants—in competition with explorers whose names grace American species: Bonaparte, Townsend, Nuttall, Wilson.

In his haste to collect bird species to paint for his multi-volume, over-sized work, Audubon invented at least one bird and misidentified others. Without binoculars, he missed birds that look similar to others at a distance. He also made it only as far as Fort Union, North Dakota, so he missed species unique to the West.

Because Audubon's work is now in the public domain, Kaufman can include plates to illustrate the historical stories. And between chapters, in asides titled "Interlude: Channeling the Illustrator," Kaufman analyzes Audubon's paintings so that he can paint, in Audubon's style, the birds Audubon missed.

I have three bird books on my sticky notes I haven't picked up yet.



One came out last December from the University of Chicago. It is by an author I don't know but the premise is intriguing: "Bird Day: A Story of 24 Hours and 24 Avian Lives," by Mark E. Hauber. He starts at midnight with the barn owl. I read that chapter courtesy of Google Books, and the writing is good, informative, and interesting.

Another book on my sticky note list is by well-known author and birder Pete Dunne. It came out in October: "The Courage of Birds: and the Often Surprising Ways They Survive Winter." It's published by Chelsea Green Publishing and illustrated by David Allen Sibley—famous for his Sibley bird field guides. It is a slender book, 192 pages, rated for everyone of any level of interest in birds.

Dunne has written the forward for Sophie A.H. Osborn's new book, also published by Chelsea Green, "Feather Trails: A Journey of Discovery Among Endangered Birds, One Conservationist's Effort to Save the Peregrine Falcon, Hawaiian Crow, and California Condor." I met her years ago in Laramie and look forward to reading her new book about her work.

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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