



Cheyenne-High Plains
Audubon Society

September 2025 "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 2025-2026

Lorie Chesnut, President

Grant Frost, Vice president

Kirk Miller, Secretary

Chuck Seniawski, Treasurer

Kurt Warmbier, Conservation

Sarah Grace Delgado, Education

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

Pete Arnold, Audubon Rockies Board

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/>

Have you sent in your annual chapter membership renewal that is good through August 2026?

Calendar

September 14, 10:00 a.m. – Greenway Cleanup

Cheyenne Audubon is hosting a Greenway cleanup event, Saturday, September 14th. The public is invited to help.

The starting location is the parking lot adjacent to the intersection of Van Buren Avenue and Laramie Street (just north of East Lincolnway and east of its intersection with Pershing Blvd.). Work will proceed to the north along Dry Creek and should take a little over an hour.

Trash bags and light-weight gloves will be provided. Participants should wear sturdy footwear (preferably waterproof) and heavy gloves and bring rakes and hoes, if available, for fishing trash out of the creek.

September 16, 6:00 p.m. – Program: Lions Park Audubon Projects and Evening Birds (note the starting time)

This is a free event open to the public. Everyone is invited, no matter what your birding skills.

We will meet in the Lions Park parking lot between the Children's Village at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens and the picnic shelter.

Our plan is to hike around the lake, doing an evening bird walk. But we will make strategic stops along the way to talk about the new signs that the chapter has commissioned to highlight the fact that the park is an official State Important Bird Area. We hope to have a dedication ceremony for the newly installed signs with the park in early October.

In addition, we will stop to look at and discuss some of the on-going and future work to establish native plants that are appropriate for our native pollinators. These are some of the areas in the park that are not mowed by the city.

September 20, 9:00 a.m. – Field Trip: Fall Migrants at the Wyoming Hereford Ranch

This is a free event open to the public. Everyone, no matter what your birding skills, is invited. Carpooling should be available.

We will leave from the Lions Park parking lot between the Children's Village at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens and the picnic shelter. WHR is about a ten-mile drive east of town. We expect to hike a mile or two over sometimes rough ground before returning to our vehicles.

We should see a variety of resident and migrating birds including any fall warblers we can find.

Bring water and dress for variable weather. Bring binoculars if you have them. The more eyes we have, the more birds we will see. We should be back in town by noon.

If you are interested in going, 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

September 23, 6:00 p.m. – Monthly Board Meeting

Contact us, cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com, if you would like to attend and participate in helping to plan chapter activities, or if you are interested in volunteering in some of our activities. This meeting will be held at the Laramie County Conservation District Office

September 26, 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 outings are free and open to everyone, but please let Chuck know you are coming

October

October is right around the corner, and that means it's time to mark your calendars for October Big Day—11 Oct 2025! Like Global Big Day, October Big Day is an opportunity to unite around our shared love of birds.

Watch for more information in the October Flyer.

Chapter News

Chapter President's message

Happy Fall 2025! Our family has been enjoying the cooler temperatures and rain over the past few weeks. Our native plant garden appreciates the moisture too – the Rabbit Brush bush in our back yard is a vibrant yellow and filled with native bees.

Baby birds abound! As migration southward begins, many of us are enjoying the antics of young birds in our yards and parks. Of special note in this newsletter is the sighting of a juvenile Mississippi Kite at one of our local cemeteries.

Usually a south and central U.S. species, the Mississippi Kite migrates to central South American for the winter. Having the opportunity to see a family in Wyoming is truly exceptional. Read more about this in the Flyer article below provided by Grant Frost, Senior Wildlife Biologist at Wyoming Game and Fish.

Our membership drive and Lions Park Sign Project is well underway. As of Monday, August 25th, we had over \$ 2,500.00 in donations – more than halfway to our goal of \$5,000.00.

Our membership totals are also ahead of last year, so keep them coming in! We appreciate every gift we receive and more than anything else, we appreciate your presence at our events and programs. 2025/2026 promises to be a great year for our Chapter ... join us!

Lorie Wayne Chesnut, Chapter President

Other Chapter Board Activities:

Bluebird Box Final Report – 2025-08-18

By Kirk Miller

Final nestbox survey completed. With few exceptions, all boxes cleaned out. Eight volunteers/pairs visited weekly from May through July.

They observed 37 Tree Swallow fledglings (assumed) from 8 nests and 15 Mountain Bluebird fledglings from 3 nests. With regard to the possible Eastern x Mountain brood, we cannot definitively conclude the species without testing the fledglings.

Our Nestwatch monitoring is ended for the year. Thank you to this year's volunteers.

Bumper Stickers

Our chapter repositionable bumper stickers, "I Brake For Birds" are here. This one has already seen rain, hail and dust.



Volunteer with the Chapter

CHPAS welcomes anyone who cares about birds and their environment to join us in volunteer activities; we have many ongoing projects. Just email us at cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com and let us know of your interest.

Education and Conservation

Chapter Grants

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

Habitat Hero



Cheyenne Habitat Hero Gardens Tour on Aug. 16 report

We had great weather for the garden tour and a very good turnout of people. The hosts and volunteers at the three gardens deserve a big "Thank You" They were very busy all morning showing people around and answering myriad questions like "How did you get that to grow?"

Besides the people who came to see the gardens, there were many pollinators to be seen at each of the locations. Everyone was impressed with the number of hummingbirds at Earl DeGroot's and Donna Griffith's backyard

feeders.

If you want more information on how to get the Habitat Hero Garden designation for your yard, go to: <https://cheyennegardengossip.wordpress.com/2025/07/28/habitat-hero-tour-aug-16-2025/>.



Rocky Mountain Bee Plant and bee in the garden at Bella Fuoco Pizza during the tour: Photo by Barb Gorges

Bird News

News from Audubon Rockies

Check out the Audubon Rockies News for up-to-date information on conservation issues in our part of the West.

For the latest update go to: <https://www.audubon.org/rockies/news>

New Local Bird

By Grant Frost

Seeing a car with Mississippi license plates in Wyoming is rare. Seeing a Mississippi Kite is even tougher.

Last year I encountered one of these rare medium-sized raptors at the Lakeview Cemetery here in Cheyenne just by chance, and this year in early August I had some business downtown and stopped by there on the remote chance that one might be there again. This time I saw two flying. They have a way of flying that is distinctive from other raptors we have, and also a different look that, once you see them a few times, makes them fairly easy to distinguish.

But two adult raptors of the same species hanging out together bring up other possibilities. Could they be nesting? If they were, it would be the first time it had been documented in the Cowboy State. So, the biologist in me has taken over, and I have seen the birds numerous times since then.

The problem was, the birds didn't act like it. I would often see both, and they would either be flying or just perched on dead limbs. I was starting to think they had lost the nest and trying to figure out what to do next. Luckily, a friend from work wanted to see them last week, and it was like a switch had been flipped. We saw both adults flying, but another calling from a tall cottonwood tree. And the adults were flying into the same spot for about 5 to 10 seconds and then departing again. The nest is well hidden, and no matter which angle we looked at it from, we couldn't even see the adult while in the tree. But, at least we had confirmed it was there.

I stopped by last weekend, and was parked in the right spot to see where the adult flew in. The nestling was right there in sight! I got some so-so pictures in the dim light and got some better ones yesterday with the adult present.

This is great, but I'm concerned about how late it is. The Kiteling(?) is still not ready to fly, maybe a month or so behind others, and we all know how quickly the weather can change here. All we can do is hope the adults are dedicated and good aerial insect hunters until the young one is ready.



Mississippi Kite: Photo by Chuck Seniawski

August 16 – Field Trip: Snowy Range Birding Hike

The group hiked about a mile, one way, but because of the birding it took about 3 hours.

14 Species

Osprey 1

Red-tailed Hawk 1

Northern Flicker 2

Western Wood-Pewee 1
Dusky Flycatcher 1
Mountain Chickadee 2
American Robin 1
Pine Grosbeak 2
Red Crossbill 4
Pine Siskin 25
Chipping Sparrow 1
White-crowned Sparrow 16
Yellow-rumped Warbler 4
Wilson's Warbler 1



Pine Siskin: Photo by Grant Frost

August 29 – Cheyenne Country Club Survey Results

7:00 AM - 8:25 AM

Protocol: Traveling

2.74 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: Beautiful sunny, windless temperate day. Bill Gebhart, Mark Gorges, Vicki Herren, Jerry Johnson, Chuck Seniawski, Pete Sokolosky and Kurt Warmbier.
18 species

Canada Goose 5
Mallard 15
Eurasian Collared-Dove 1
Pied-billed Grebe 1
Great Blue Heron 1
Turkey Vulture 2
Belted Kingfisher 1
Northern Flicker 6
Western Wood-Pewee 1
Black-billed Magpie 2
American Crow 10
Mountain Chickadee 2
Barn Swallow 1
Red-breasted Nuthatch 1
American Robin 69 Lots of robins moving around this morning.
House Finch 1
American Goldfinch 1
Common Yellowthroat 1



Pied-billed Grebe: Photo by Mark Gorges

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S270222448>

AviList: the Global Avian Checklist unifies the (bird) world

By Barb Gorges

Cornell Lab of Ornithology is at it again. This time they are instigating the unification of the whole world of birds, the bird checklists of the American Ornithological Society, BirdLife International, International Ornithologists' Union and Avibase.

Yes, CLO already has a subscription-based website called Birds of the World where I can research bird species in depth. But AviList (rhymes with "Have-a-List"), introduced in June, is a response to the problem which is that up until now there have been these several entities attempting to keep track of the world's bird species and their checklists were not identical.

If you are a globe-trotting birder, this may be of interest to you. Typically, someone bragging they've seen some huge number of species, say 5,000, had to qualify that with the name of the bird

checklist they were using. Apparently, you might be able to chalk up more species on one list than another—even though the individual birds you saw didn't change.

So is AviList in response to globe-trotting birders? No, it's more about accurately describing birds for the sake of conserving them. Birds can fly. One species can be found in different countries, even different continents and have different names.

Here's the crux of the matter: the definition of "species." In the CLO webinar I attended (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrhNDXLRLDY>), one definition is that birds of one species are reproductively isolated from other species.

Now there's the integrative species concept. Here's the description found on the CLO website: "looks at all areas of evidence to make an assessment, including morphology (what a species looks like), behavior, ecology, genetics, phylogenetic relations (species relationships on an evolutionary tree), time since divergence based on genetics, biogeographical distributions, and of course any evidence of reproductive isolation."

Applying these tests has, for example, split the island thrush into 17 species. This Indonesian island group has some visual differences. Several species look remarkably like the American robin, which is in the same genus.

Back in 1931, there was the Peter's Checklist. Just a few people were making species decisions based on museum specimens. Over the last four years, there was a much more inclusive protocol set up to work through 1,000 sets of issues between the four checklists.

For future AviList updates there is an Executive Committee coordinating three committees:

- Taxonomic
- Bibliographic & Nomenclature (determining the earliest name for a species)
- Technical (updating databases and websites for public information).

There are the Regional Advisory Groups:

- Palaeartic
- Nearctic (North America and Greenland)
- Neotropical (Central and South America)
- African
- Tropical Asia
- Australo-Pacific

The real advantage of a unified bird checklist is for conservation work. One must be able to accurately name and describe a bird before determining its conservation status or protecting it through law enforcement. For instance, we need to know if two isolated populations of similar-looking birds are two separate species or if we have more of the same species than we thought.

AviList will be important for the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Endangered Species which rates bird species as critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable or near threatened.

The people behind AviList expect that conservation groups and agencies will eventually adopt it. eBird, the record-keeping program popular with so many birders, is 99 percent congruent with AviList already and will be totally aligned in 2026. Any species or name changes will automatically update everyone's records in eBird.

Each year AviList will be updated based on the best science available. North American birders are used to the American Ornithological Society's annual list of species lumped, species split and name changes and the AOS will be consulted for AviList changes.

It will be the scientific names that will be worked over for unity. As for English names, more than one will be OK—for AviList—probably not for the AOS. And of course, around the world birds have common names in other languages.

Check out AviList: The Global Avian Checklist, at <https://www.avilist.org/checklist/v2025/>. As of the date of that July webinar I attended, there were 11,131 species. That's going to be a lot of globe-trotting for any would-be world record-breaking birder.

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.



A successfully hatched Mississippi Kite youngster, one of its parents and the nest were documented with this photo in late August in a Cheyenne residential neighborhood taken by Grant Frost. This is the first breeding record for the species in Wyoming. This hawk is mostly an insect eater historically found in the southeastern U.S. It is changes in range and other species identifiers that will keep the AviList committees busy forever: Photo by Grant Frost.

Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society P. O. Box 2502, Cheyenne, WY 82003