



Cheyenne-High Plains
Audubon Society

December 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

Historian, Open

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/>

Calendar

December 20, 8:00 a.m. – Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count

This is a free event open to the public. Everyone, no matter what your birding skills, is invited. Walk for a couple of hours or leave when you need to.

(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 below.

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 20 – CBC Tally Party/Potluck, 6:00 p.m., at the Gorges house.

If you plan to attend, you must RSVP to Barb Gorges at bgorges4@msn.com.

If you do not put your results into eBird, bring them to the tally party and 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.

After the tally party contact Grant with any species that you see three days before or three days after December 20 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. 20 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 below.

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.

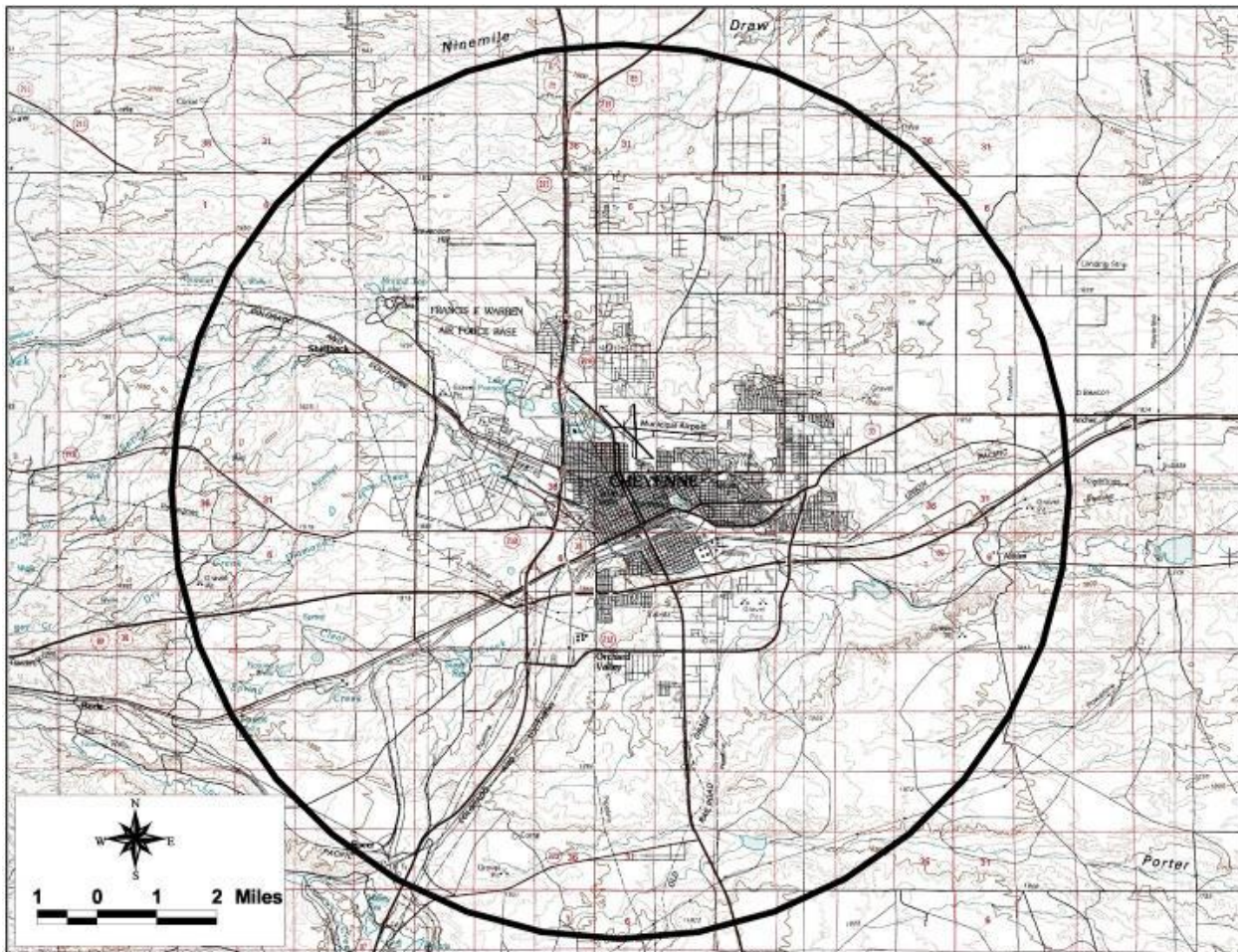
Please report the species and number observed ASAP to Grant Frost, Cheyenne CBC compiler, at 307-343-2024 or by email, frostgrant2@gmail.com.

Date: Dec. 20, 2025

Name: _____

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

Species list: _____



December 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.

January 3 - Guernsey/Ft. Laramie Christmas Bird Count

Details in the January newsletter.

January 3, 10: a.m. – Wyoming State Museum Program

Join the Cheyenne High Plains Audubon on January 3rd from 10:00AM-2:00PM for a family day focused on winter in Wyoming. Let's learn more about the birds that migrate to Wyoming in time for winter and what their journeys look like along the way.

Together, we'll find out how these birds adapt to winter weather and changing conditions, including some neat physiological adaptations that make them expert winter survivalists.

Chapter News

Chapter President's message

Greetings to bird lovers everywhere! I hope that everyone is dusting off their binoculars and getting ready to join us for the annual Christmas Bird Count on December 20, 2025. This is a great time for birders of all experience levels. If you are new to birding, you will be paired with a more experienced birder – what a great time to learn!

We have wonderful news about one of our special projects – the Motus Wildlife Tracking System. Earlier this month we learned that the Pine Bluffs City Council approved the placement of a Motus System at The Bluffs. We thank Mayor Justin Fornstrom and the members of City Council for this privilege.

Have you ever hiked the Pine Bluffs Nature Trail? It is a great place to see birds throughout the year. Directions to the trail are posted on our website under Birding Our Region/Locations. The Pine Bluffs Nature Trail is a hidden gem in eastern Laramie County. You can park at the rest area and enjoy a leisurely walk or a more strenuous hike through the Bluffs area – and then visit the town for lunch or dinner. A perfect afternoon outing before the snows arrive.

Our annual membership drive is winding down but if you haven't yet renewed your Audubon membership (only \$ 12.00 annually), we hope that you will do so. Your gifts help us to do special projects like the Lions Park Signs, the Motus Tracking System installation, and Birding Backpacks for our wonderful libraries.

Please think about your local Audubon Chapter as you consider your end-of-year donations. We are a great investment in your community!

Lorie Wayne Chesnut, Chapter President

November Program Report: "Feather Trails" with author Sophie Osborn

By Barb Gorges

***** Purchase "Feather Trails" directly from the publisher, ChelseaGreen.com. Use the code CGP35 for a 35% discount. *****

Sophie Osborn, author of "Feather Trails: A Journey of Discovery Among Endangered Species," spoke to us at our November meeting from her home in Montana via Zoom. Her book's sub-subtitle is "One Conservationist's Effort to Save the Peregrine Falcon, Hawaiian Crow, and California Condor."

Sophie's field work with each of the three species showed how often she and the other biologists had to adapt to conditions, learning more about the birds as they went. Peregrines seemed to be the easiest to raise as there were centuries of information available from falconers. The cause of their population decline, DDT, was possibly the easiest one to reverse, of the three species.

Hawaiian crows are still struggling. Io, the only Hawaiian hawk species, likes to pick them off and mosquitoes, not native to the islands, transfer deadly diseases to them unless they live at the highest, mosquito-free elevations. And those cooler heights are disappearing as the climate changes.

Lead poisoning is what is holding back the condor population, the lead shot left behind in gut piles by hunters unwilling to switch to lead-free bullets. Condors are routinely rounded up (not an

easy task, Sophie assures us, when dealing with intelligent 20-pound birds) for lead testing and chelation therapy.

Sophie describes her field work challenges as well as the future challenges for these species, but she also writes lyrically about the experience of working with the individual birds and helping them get back to their places in the universe.

Other Chapter Board Activities:

Programs Committee Positions available

We are looking for people to join the Programs committee. Barb Gorges, current chair, is planning to step down as chair. She would be happy to work with anyone interested in volunteering for the committee.

The program committee solicits ideas for speakers and topics from members for seven programs per year. There is also a 30-year record of past programs for inspiration. A committee member reserves library meeting rooms exactly 90 days in advance; schedules speakers; gets each speaker's photo, bio, and topic information to newsletter editor; arranges no-host dinners for speakers—speakers are our dinner guests; helps speakers set up before the program (tech help is available from library staff) and pack up before 7:45 p.m.

Weed Control Project at the Wyoming Hereford Ranch (WHR) Important Bird Area

Work by chapter members continues at WHR with weed removal in preparation for a soil treatment to eliminate the invasive kochia plants. We will be replanting the area along Crow Creek with pollinator friendly native plants.



Photo by: Lorie Chesnut

Volunteer with the Chapter

CHPAS welcomes anyone who cares about birds and their environments 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



2026 Habitat Hero Workshop, February 7th

Laramie County Community College, 1400 East College Drive, Clay Pathfinder Building, Rooms 108/109

Agenda

7:45 a.m. Doors open

8:30 a.m. – Welcome and housekeeping information

8:40 – Kevin Philip Williams and Michael Guidi- "Shrouded in Light: Naturalistic Planting Inspired by Wild Shrublands."

Shrublands exist all around us, thriving in almost any environmental condition, from the desiccating sunshine of the endless sagebrush steppe to the deep, private shade of moist forests. These diverse and inspiring ecosystems serve as perfect models for our gardens.

Beyond their inherent beauty, they provide nurturing habitats, demonstrate resilience in the face of a changing climate, and offer a challenge to conventional garden-making through their intense aesthetics and obscured intentions.

Join the authors of “Shrouded in Light: Naturalistic Planting Inspired by Wild Shrublands” (Filbert Press, 2024) as they invite you to work, live and play with shrubs. Explore a glorious spectrum of wild shrublands and discover the philosophies and design strategies behind translating these magnificent plant communities into your home garden.

Kevin and Michael are Managers of Horticulture for Denver Botanic Gardens.

10:00 – Break

10:15 – Stephen Hornbeck, Nursery Manager at High Plains Environmental Center (HPEC), Loveland, CO.

Stephen will give us an introduction to regional native plant species and his work to propagate them at HPEC.

11:30 – LUNCH - Included in registration

1:00 p.m. – Isaiah Smith, Horticulture & Operations Supervisor at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens – Garden Design Exercise

Each participant should bring a sketch, map or picture of their landscape or garden area. The exercise will involve moving cutouts representing various plant types (we will provide those) on your sketch as Isaiah talks about different aspects of garden design.

When done take a picture of your sketch or paste the cutouts on it. You will use those to work one-on-one with Isaiah after the break.

2:30 – Break

2:45 – 4:30 p.m. Breakout Sessions:

- Your specific garden design – Isaiah Smith
- Winter Sowing – Michelle Bohanan
- How to transplant winter sown seedlings – Michelle’s helper
- Audubon Rockies – Amanda Martinez
- Cheyenne Audubon’s & the City’s plans for pollinator plants in Lions Park – Vicki Herren

Registration for the one-day workshop is \$25, which includes lunch. Registration opens December 1st; only 100 seats are available. To register. Go to:

<https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/cheyenne50th/2026-habitat-hero-workshop-cheyenne> .

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. Articles include: “2025 Conservation Ranching Bird Monitoring Results in the Rockies” and “Solving Migration Mysteries, One Motus Station at a Time”.

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

November 15 – Laramie Plains Lakes

A crowd of 15 people from Cheyenne and Laramie participated in over three hours of birding at two lakes with almost 600 individual birds recorded.



Common Goldeneye at Lake Hattie: Photo by Kurt Warmbier

Lake Hattie Reservoir, Albany, Wyoming, US

Nov 15, 2025 9:15 AM - 11:35 AM

Protocol: Traveling

2.25 mile(s)

18 species (+1 other taxa)

Canada Goose 12

Mallard 2

Canvasback 10

Redhead 150

White-winged Scoter 4 Continuing near the dam at the east end of the reservoir.

Large brown diving ducks with two white spots on face, white patch in wings.

Bufflehead 1

Common Goldeneye 150

Common Merganser 20

Red-breasted Merganser 4

American Coot 75

Ring-billed Gull 12

American Herring Gull 6

California Gull 8

gull sp. 50

Pied-billed Grebe 1

Western Grebe 12

Common Loon 2

Bald Eagle 2

Common Raven 1

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S284994697>

Twin Buttes Lake, Albany, Wyoming, US

Nov 15, 2025 12:05 PM - 12:30 PM

Protocol: Traveling

0.75 mile(s)

8 species

Redhead 1

Long-tailed Duck 2 Two non-breeding plumage females seen together. In flight noted very pointed, all-dark wings with very fast wingbeats. On the water, distinctive whitish head with two large dark spots on face.

Bufflehead 30

Common Merganser 1

Ruddy Duck 5

American Herring Gull 2

Bald Eagle 1

Common Raven 2

View this checklist online at

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S284994732>



Bufflehead at Twin Buttes Lake: Photo by Kurt Warmbier

November 28 – Cheyenne Country Club Survey Results

8:00 AM - 10:02 AM

Protocol: Traveling

3.15 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 34 degrees. Calm. High clouds with sun. Grant and Jeff Frost, Vicki Herren, Sue Lowry, Kirk Miller, Chuck Seniawski and Kurt Warmbier. Still no snow.

17 species

Cackling Goose 1
Canada Goose 218
Mallard 2
Eurasian Collared-Dove 1
Great Blue Heron 1
Downy Woodpecker 1
Hairy Woodpecker 1
Northern Flicker 4
Merlin 1
Black-billed Magpie 14
American Crow 4
Mountain Chickadee 3
Red-breasted Nuthatch 3
European Starling 4
Townsend's Solitaire 2
House Finch 2
Red-winged Blackbird 1

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S286505873>



This winter, count birds at your feeder for the Christmas Bird Count and Project FeederWatch. Keep the feeders clean. And keep your cat indoors while there's food in the feeder or spilled on the ground. Photo by Mark Gorges

It's the season for the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch and reading bird books

By Barb Gorges

If you need a unique, locally produced gift for a bird lover this season, look for my "The Best of Cheyenne Bird Banter." See YuccaRoadPress.com for the list of local stores. It's also available through just about any online bookstore, like Bookshop.org.

Other bird books that look intriguing:

"Bird Talk: Hilariously Accurate Ways to Identify Birds by the Sounds They Make" by Becca Rowland. Humorous comparisons help readers identify bird calls.

"Ornithography: An Illustrated Guide to Bird Lore & Symbolism" by Jessica Roux. One hundred bird species explored.

"The Birding Dictionary" written and illustrated by Rosemary Mosco. She is a science writer and cartoonist, including the regular "Bird and Moon" cartoons.

"The Feather Detective: Mystery, Mayhem and the Magnificent Life of Roxie Laybourne" by Chris Sweeney. Biography of Smithsonian's forensic ornithologist who solved crimes.

"Bird Day: A Story of 24 Hours and 24 Avian Lives" by Mark E. Hauber. For each hour, a different bird species illustrates what it does at that hour.

In my book, you'll find that discussing Project FeederWatch and the Christmas Bird Count are nearly annual themes since I started writing this bird-centric column in 1999. So here is this year's take on them.

Project FeederWatch

It's the season for beginning another year of Project FeederWatch, Cornell Lab of Ornithology's winter survey of birdfeeders. Most of the lab's birdwatching programs and apps, eBird, Merlin, All About Birds, etc., are free, but Project FeederWatch, which pre-dates them (It started with tally sheets that needed to be mailed back), does have a subscription fee. I think it's now \$18, up from \$15 when Mark and I started participating 27 years ago.

The Project FeederWatch survey season began Nov. 1, but it isn't too late to sign up or give a gift membership.

Christmas Bird Count

The Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Saturday, December 20. Anyone who wants to take part can, by entering an eBird checklist for any place within the 7.5-mile diameter circle that centers on the Wyoming State Capitol. Your checklist will be automatically picked up—no need to do anything special.

If you are not familiar with eBird, or even if you are, you can join us at 8 a.m. in the lobby of the U.S. Post Office downtown Cheyenne, 2120 Capitol Avenue. You'll be assigned to a group covering a local birding hotspot like Lions Park or the Wyoming Hereford Ranch or downtown. Plan on helping look for birds with the group for a couple hours—or until you're ready to go home and warm up.

If you want to count birds at your backyard feeder and you don't do eBird, make a list of all the birds you see there Dec. 20. Only count how many birds you see at one time for each species. For instance, Mark and I have a mountain chickadee that flies back and forth from tree to feeder. No matter how many times it flies in, we can count only one mountain chickadee. But once in a great while, we can see two at once so finally, we can say we counted two chickadees.

Tally Party

Back in the day, when all our bird lists were done with paper and pencil, we would gather in the evening for a tally party potluck. But now that our CBC coordinator can harvest count information from eBird, we don't need to get together to tally so much. But we are reinstituting it this year. If you have a hand-written list of birds you saw, bring it along with a potluck dish. Sign up for the potluck by emailing me, bgorges4@msn.com.

If you aren't on eBird and you can't make the potluck, please contact our CBC coordinator, Grant Frost, 307-343-2024.

Clean birdfeeders reminder

Winter is the best time to put out a bird feeder. The seed-eating birds aren't distracted by having to feed their young insects, plus cold weather keeps a lot of germs from building up on feeders. But it is still a good idea to wash out your feeders and birdbath every week or so. And keep your cat indoors!

If any of your feeder birds look sick—mangy feathers, sore eyes, lethargic—wash your feeders and birdbath and put them away for about a week so that sick birds disperse instead of passing germs to a crowd of hungry birds.

Some people think bird feeding is bad for the birds. But done safely and in moderation, it's a wonderful way to get people hooked on birds, and hopefully, advocate for them.

Barb Gorges is the author of "Cheyenne Birds by the Month" and "The Best of Cheyenne Bird Banter," www.YuccaRoadPress.com. Her previous columns are at <http://cheyennebirdbanter.wordpress.com>. Contact her at bgorges4@msn.com.

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