



Cheyenne-High Plains  
Audubon Society

# February 2026 "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](http://www.CheyenneAudubon.org).*

**Contact Us** at [cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com](mailto: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

### February 13-16 - Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)

*From the Cornell Lab of Ornithology*

Spend time in your favorite places watching birds—then tell us about them! Join us in this world-wide event. Bird and nature lovers everywhere unite in the effort to tally as many of the world's bird species as possible over four days in February.

In as little as 15 minutes, notice the birds around you. Identify them, count them, and submit your counts to help scientists better understand and protect birds around the world. If you already use eBird or Merlin, your submissions over the 4 days count toward GBBC.

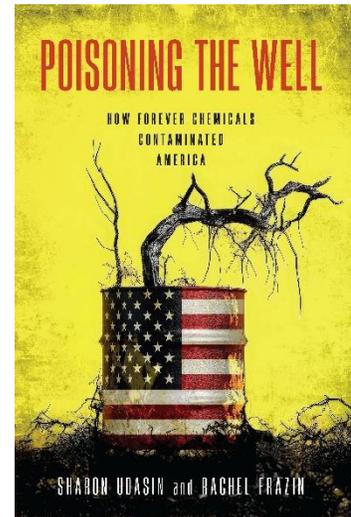
You're also invited to tune in to a special webinar about how to participate in the GBBC. Register for one of two free events happening on Thursday, February 5, at 1 p.m. Mountain or Wednesday, February 11, 5 p.m. Mountain. Register here.

For all the information about the GBBC, go to:  
<https://www.birdcount.org/>

**February 17, 6:00 p.m. – Program: Sharon Udasin, co-author “Poisoning the Well: How Forever Chemicals Contaminated America”, in the Sunflower Room of the Laramie County Library, 2200 Pioneer Ave, Cheyenne.**

Cheyenne Audubon invites the public for a free lecture by environment reporter and author Sharon Udasin about how forever chemicals, like PFAS, have contaminated America.

Udasin, of Boulder, Colorado, will present her new book, “Poisoning the Well: How Forever Chemicals Contaminated America,” which traces an ugly history of corporate greed, military impunity and community devastation, based on original reporting in four highly contaminated places — including Colorado Springs. The book introduces readers to people who, while fighting for their own lives, take action to fix a broken regulatory system. The talk will be followed by discussion with Udasin and Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities water treatment division manager Clint Bassett.



Sharon is a Colorado-based journalist who delves into complex water contamination and conservation issues. Sharon was a Ted Scripps Fellow in Environmental Journalism at the University of Colorado Boulder in 2019-2020 and received a SEAL Environmental Journalism Award in 2023. A graduate of both the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia Journalism School, she has reported for numerous publications over the past two decades, most recently for The Hill.

We will have a no-host dinner with the speaker at Hacienda Guadalajara, 317 E Lincolnway, Cheyenne, WY 82001 at 4:30 p.m.

Please let Barb Gorges know if you are planning to join us for dinner so that we can reserve enough room at the restaurant. Text or email Barb at 307-287-4952 or [bgorges4@msn.com](mailto:bgorges4@msn.com).

## **February 21, 9:00 a.m. – Field Trip: Curt Gowdy State Park**

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

We will meet at the Lions Park parking lot between the Children's Village at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens and the picnic shelter. We will leave the park at 9:00 a.m. and drive to Curt Gowdy. Then, meeting at the visitor's center, we will decide where to hike for a couple of hours.

We could see Steller's Jays and Red Crossbills among others including Bald Eagles and a variety of smaller birds.

Bring lunch or snacks and water. Be sure to dress for variable weather. Bring binoculars if you have them.

We should be back in Cheyenne no later than 1 p.m., but if you drive, you can leave whenever you need to.

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. Please let him know if you will need a ride from Cheyenne and back.



*Red Crossbill: Photo by Mark Gorges*

## **February 24, 6:00 p.m. – Monthly Board Meeting**

Contact us, [cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com](mailto: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 Library in the Sage Room

## **February 27, 8:00 a.m. – Country Club Bird Survey**

Contact Grant Frost to be on his email notice list: 307-343-2024 or [FrostGrant2@gmail.com](mailto:FrostGrant2@gmail.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 Grant know you are coming.

## **AARP and Audubon bring virtual birdwatching series to Wyoming**

"For the Birds: From Backyard to Binoculars", an AARP Wyoming-sponsored virtual series in partnership with the Audubon of the Rockies, helps you spot, identify and track birds of the West by using simple observation skills, digital birding tools and migration insights.

Each session builds confidence without jargon or pressure — perfect for beginners and curious watchers alike.

The series is free, and there is no need to be an AARP member or over age 50 to participate. To register for the event, use your [aarp.org](https://aarp.org) account, or visit [events.aarp.org/event/forthebirds/](https://events.aarp.org/event/forthebirds/). You will receive an email with the Zoom link before the session.

The sessions are led by Zach Hutchinson, community science coordinator for Audubon Rockies, who brings deep knowledge of bird identification, migration behavior and modern birding tools — especially digital resources that make bird watching easier and more accurate than ever.

The sessions all run from 10-11 a.m. MDT and include:

March 27 — A trivia-based kickoff

April 3 — An introduction to birdwatching

April 10 — Identification session

April 17 — Tools of the trade and digital birding

April 24 — Where to look for birds in Wyoming and the West

Explore other Wyoming events and visit AARP Wyoming on Demand to view recordings of any classes.

---

## Chapter News

### Chapter President's message

February brings the beginning of the busy spring season to our Audubon Chapter. First, I hope that you will attend the 2026 Habitat Hero Workshop on Saturday, February 7 at LCCC. This popular event is always near or at capacity and heralds thoughts of spring and the coming planting season for all attendees. More about the workshop is shared in this document and, as always, the lineup will be both informative and enjoyable. Thank you, Habitat Hero Committee!

It is also time to think about spring migration. In March many of our waterfowl and other species (like the Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese) begin their migration north. While southeastern Wyoming may not have the numbers that can be seen in Central Nebraska, there is still quite a show in our region of the state. CHPAS will have a special event in late March, giving bird lovers a chance to experience this migration close to home. Watch for more information!

I would like to share an opportunity to be more involved in our Lions Park Project – help us plant and maintain our Pollinator Patch! In partnership with the City of Cheyenne, we are creating a small meadow around the Pollinator Patch sign and looking for volunteers. As the saying goes, “Many hands make light work”. More about this project and how you can help on our website: <https://cheyenneaudubon.org/special-projects/lions-park-pollinator-patch/>.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who made a donation to support our Lions Park educational signage project. At our last board meeting I was informed that my goal of \$ 5,000 has officially been met. Every penny counts and thank you, everyone!

Lorie Wayne Chesnut, Chapter President

### Other Chapter Board Activities:

**January 3, Wyoming State Museum:** 63 adults, 96 kids participated. Sarah presented caloric expenditure of birds which was very well received. Dennis donated a bird feeder that was given away in a free raffle.



*At the Museum: Photo by Lorie Chesnut*

**January 28, St. Mary's School:** CHPAS board members Lorie Chesnut and Kirk Miller participated in an Open House at St. Mary's elementary school in Cheyenne. Students rotated through classrooms where information on faith, fitness, and science was shared. Chesnut and Miller talked with individual students and parents about basic binocular use and identification skills for common birds in the area. There were 90 families who came through St. Mary's school that evening.

### **Lions Park Pollinator Patch - Cheyenne Birds and Pollinators Need Your Help!**

- Are you planning to thin out the plants in your garden next May?
- Do you enjoy gardening?
- Would you volunteer to help us water these plants this summer at Lions Park?

The Cheyenne-High Plains Audubon Society (CHPAS) needs about 45 plants to create a Pollinator Patch surrounding the new "Place for Pollinators" interpretive sign. We want to create a small "meadow" where none currently exists.

We hope to expand this area in future years, bringing more color and plant diversity to the park.

CHPAS and the City of Cheyenne Parks and Recreation staff have identified 18 species for this area that will bloom throughout the growing season and provide foraging opportunities for a wide variety of pollinators and birds.

Next time you are in Lions Park, check out the new sign and the future Pollinator Patch semi-circle around it. We need 2 or 3 plants of each of these 18 species for the Lions Park Pollinator Patch. For a listing of plants go to:

[https://cheyenneaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/pollinator-patch-species\\_lions-park.pdf](https://cheyenneaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/pollinator-patch-species_lions-park.pdf)

We also need help watering these new plants until they are established. We will water at least twice weekly, depending on rainfall.

Please let us know if you would like to help us with our Pollinator Patch by contacting CHPAS by email at [cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com).

Or, if you will be at the Habitat Hero Workshop on February 7th, stop at our table to see Vicki and sign up. The birds, bees, and bugs thank you!



*The site in the park*

### **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.

### **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](mailto: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](http://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

7:45 a.m. Doors open

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m Workshop

Tickets may be sold out by the time that you read this newsletter.

Registration for the one-day workshop is \$25, which includes lunch.

Registration opened December 1<sup>st</sup>; only 100 seats are available. To register. Go to: <https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/cheyenne50th/2026-habitat-hero-workshop-cheyenne> .

---

## Bird and Conservation 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>

### Wyoming Outdoor Council

Keep up with the environmental issues during the state legislative session at:

<https://wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org/>.

### Camo at the Capitol: February 12, 2026

Camo at the Capitol provides an opportunity for hunters, anglers, and other conservationists to exercise their public voice. Attendees will learn the ins and outs of the legislative process, including bill creation, tracking, and ultimately its passing (or not passing) into law. Those who attend will not only learn the skill necessary for communicating with lawmakers but will also have the opportunity to speak directly with elected officials as they lobby for specific bills affecting the hunting and angling community.

For information go to: [wyomingwildlife.org](http://wyomingwildlife.org)

### Pollinator Friendly Summit:

A three-day on-line webinar, February 24-26, 9:00 a.m. till 1:15 p.m., Mountain time each day. Registration is \$65.87. For information, go to: [www.pollinatorfriendly.org/summit](http://www.pollinatorfriendly.org/summit)

### Xerces webinars: "Building a Pollinator Haven at Home: Tips and Lessons"

This pollinator-related session is February 12, 11:00-12:00. Most of these are recorded for later viewing on the Xerces YouTube channel. For additional information and to register, go to: [xerces.org/events/webinars](http://xerces.org/events/webinars)

### Olympic BirdFest 2026

Takes place April 16–19 in Sequim, WA. Co-sponsored by the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, this year's Bird Fest offers something for birders of all levels:

- Expert-led birding trips;
- Saturday evening banquet;
- Classes, lectures, and workshops tailored for nature enthusiasts.
- A post-event excursion to the Makah Reservation at Neah Bay.

For registration information go to: <https://olympicbirdfest.org/>

## Jackson Hole Birding Festival, May 27-30

For registration information go to: <https://www.jacksonholebirdingfestival.com/>

---

### January 3 - Guernsey-Ft Laramie Christmas Bird Count results

*By Grant Frost, count leader*

Walked 7.15 hours, 8.6 miles

Drove 13.25 hours, 125.8 miles

Watched 1.75 hours

Number of people 17

Temperature 30-57 degrees, no precip, no snow on ground, winds calm to 8 mph

53 Species

Cackling goose 246

Canada goose 4053

American wigeon 1

Northern shoveler 1

Gadwall 13

Mallard 1471

Northern pintail 6

Common goldeneye 404

Common merganser 54

Ring-billed gull 1

Wild turkey 62

Pigeon 418

Eurasian collared dove 46

Mourning dove 16

Golden eagle 7

Northern harrier 2

Sharp-shinned hawk 1

Coopers hawk 3

Bald eagle 12

Red-tailed hawk 4

Rough-legged hawk 1

Ferruginous hawk 2

Eastern-screech owl 1

Great-horned owl 4

Downy woodpecker 1

Northern flicker 11

American kestrel 11

Merlin 1

Northern shrike 2

Blue jay 20

Black-billed magpie 2

American crow 6

Common raven 52

Mountain chickadee 2

Black-capped chickadee 8

Canyon wren 1

Horned lark 34

Cedar waxwing 10

Red-breasted nuthatch 7

White-breasted nuthatch 3



*Bald Eagle: Photo by Mark Gorges*

European starling 58  
Townsend's solitaire 126  
American robin 508  
House sparrow 17  
House finch 1  
Cassin's finch 1  
Red crossbill 5  
American tree sparrow 25  
Dark-eyed junco 36  
Song sparrow 11  
Spotted towhee 1  
White-crowned sparrow 12  
Red-winged blackbird 19

### **January 17 - Raptor Alley Field Trip, Weld, Colorado, US**

10:00 AM - 11:54 AM

Protocol: Traveling

25 mile(s)

7 species

Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 25  
Northern Harrier 1  
Bald Eagle 1  
Ferruginous Hawk 2  
Horned Lark 1000  
European Starling 5  
Western Meadowlark 2



*Western Meadowlark: Photo  
by Mark Gorges*

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S295092064>

### **January 30 – Cheyenne Country Club Survey Results**

7:54 AM - 9:36 AM

Protocol: Traveling

3.04 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: 28 degrees. Sunny. Breezy. Jeff Frost, Chuck Seniawski and Kurt Warmbier.  
10 species

Canada Goose 148  
Mallard 11  
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 4  
Red-tailed Hawk 1  
Northern Flicker 2  
Black-billed Magpie 4  
American Crow 2  
Mountain Chickadee 1  
Red-breasted Nuthatch 2  
European Starling 6

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S297047806>

---



*This photo taken June 13, 2024, shows a Rejuvra cheatgrass treatment boundary, with the untreated control on the left and the treated area on the right. Cheatgrass is an invasive annual grass that greens up as early as winter and dies before early summer. Photo courtesy Jake Courkamp.*

## **Cheatgrass finds its match, giving native rangeland plants a boost**

*By Barb Gorges*

Last month's Cheyenne Audubon guest speaker was Jake Courkamp, a research scientist in the Restoration Ecology Lab at Colorado State University who studies the control of cheatgrass.

Why would this be of interest to birdwatchers? Because one-third of the intermountain West is infested with non-native, cheatgrass, Courkamp says. Cheatgrass is not very nutritious, to the detriment of native birds and other wildlife, and livestock.

To help you understand cheatgrass, also known as downy brome and scientifically as *Bromus tectorum*, I'm quoting one of my favorite books, "Weeds of the West" 9th edition, 2001, written and published by a consortium that takes three pages to list and includes University of Wyoming contributors.

"Downy brome was introduced from the Mediterranean region [1900-1910, said Courkamp] in packing material and first found near Denver, Colorado. It is now widely distributed throughout North America and is common along roadsides, waste areas, misused pastures and rangelands, and cultivated crop areas. The [annual] plant competes with more desirable perennial grasses for

moisture because of its winter and early spring growth habit. After maturity it becomes a nuisance and a fire hazard”.

And after fires, it spreads like, well, wildfire. Cheatgrass is very good at getting a jump on the natives, germinating in winter, stealing soil moisture from the perennials before they even wake up.

Courkamp said with careful grazing practices, over time, cheatgrass could be controlled, though probably not totally eradicated.

It turns out cheatgrass seed germination improves where its previous year’s growth shelters the ground. So, if you take your livestock in and knock down and eat the old plants before germination season, along with spring grazing, fewer cheatgrass seeds will germinate. It takes years to wear down the seedbank in the soil, and not every rancher can afford to graze at that particular time.

The herbicide Imazapic, generally referred to by the commercial name, Plateau, has had mixed results over the years. It blocks a plant’s ability to feed itself so it starves to death. It’s broad spectrum, water soluble and short-term and needs to be reapplied every one to two years when cheatgrass is green.

The newer herbicide Courkamp has been studying, Indaziflam, going by the brand name Rejuvra, works as a cellulose biosynthesis inhibitor. It’s a pre-emergent herbicide keeping the cheatgrass from sprouting. An application is good for about two or three years. Each year that cheatgrass doesn’t grow means fewer cheatgrass seeds sprouting and hogging soil moisture and leaving more moisture for the native plants, allowing them to win the competition against cheatgrass.

Because Rejuvra is not water soluble, it never gets deep enough in the soil to affect the deep-rooted perennial plants. As for native annuals with seeds on or close to the soil surface, they are many times less sensitive to Rejuvra than annual grasses like cheatgrass, and off hand, I can’t think of a native annual grass growing on Wyoming’s rangelands.

Courkamp has a huge caveat though, on the use of Rejuvra. It works best on a cheatgrass infestation where there are still a lot of perennial plants. If you treat an area that is 100 percent cheatgrass, you’ll be left with bare dirt and an erosion problem when the wind blows and the rain and snow falls.

After Courkamp’s formal talk, questions from the audience, which included a high percentage of rangeland and wildlife professionals, revolved around two main questions, the first was when the best time is to spray. Rejuvra doesn’t kill green cheatgrass sprouts, but you also can’t put it out too early. Courkamp suggested combining it with Plateau which does kill the green shoots.

He also recommended fixed boom application because Rejuvra does not move around with rainfall like other herbicides. A fixed boom makes it easier to get complete coverage.

The second question was how can Rejuvra be combined with re-seeding? Can the native seeds be drilled in deep enough not to be affected by the herbicide, or perhaps coated? Scientists are working on a solution.

Rejuvra is not as effective on other invasive weed species, like kochia which also likes disturbed areas.

Courkamp said follow-up studies in our area show that cheatgrass infestations treated with Rejuvra result in:

- more growth of shrub leaders (tips), favorite food of mule deer
- increased vegetative moisture in the native plants, thus making them much less flammable than cheatgrass, which is dead and dry most of the year.
- higher species richness which continues to increase year to year, as shown in one 8-year study
- possibly a higher diversity of flowers and pollinators (study is ongoing).

It looks like Rejuvra is another tool in the toolbox for repairing our Western rangelands.

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

---

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