



Cheyenne-High Plains
Audubon Society

May 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.

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

May 2, 10:30-a.m. – 12:00 Noon: Birding 101 Class

This Saturday class will be at the Laramie County Library, Cheyenne, in the Sunflower Room. "Birding 101" is a free class taught by wildlife biologists Grant Frost and Dennis Saville.

Whether you're a beginner or looking to refine your birding skills, this event will cover the basics of bird identification, birdwatching tips, and local species information. Grant & Dennis will guide you through the essentials of spotting and identifying birds in the wild, sharing expert insights from their fieldwork.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with nature and explore the fascinating world of birds.

May 3, 9:00 a.m. – Noon: Field Trip, AARP Wyoming In-Person Bird Watching, Lions Park, Cheyenne

For this Sunday field trip, we will meet in the Lions Park parking lot between the Children's Village and the picnic shelter at 9 a.m. **Preregistration with AARP was required. Registration is now closed.**

The walk is led by Zach Hutchinson, Community Science Coordinator with Audubon Rockies, who will share insights on bird behavior, habitats, and what species you're most likely to see in Wyoming this time of year. CHPAS Board Members will also attend to help you spot those elusive warblers!

May 9: Global Big Day and World Migratory Bird Day

Be a part of birding's biggest team! Global Big Day is an annual celebration of the birds around you. For more information, go to: <https://ebird.org/news/global-big-day-2026>

No matter where you are, go outside on May 9, help celebrate World Migratory Bird Day, and share the birds you find with [eBird.org](https://www.migratorybirdday.org/). For more information, go to <https://www.migratorybirdday.org/>

May 9, 10:00 a.m. – Big Day Bird Count for Platte and Goshen Counties

The second annual Big Day Bird Count for Platte and Goshen Counties is coming up soon. A Big Day is an effort to see as many species as possible in one 24-hour period. This is organized by the Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society. Last year, 82 species were seen in Platte County, and 114 species were seen in Goshen County.

This day coincides with the Global Big Day and International Migratory Bird Day, and comes at the peak of spring migration, making for the best possible chance to see a variety of birds. And it's easy to participate.

A guided group will meet at the Guernsey Fish Ponds at 10:00 where the path meets the South Guernsey Road and will use the paved path between there and the North Platte River to bird. This will be for anybody, but is directed toward those brand-new to birding, families, and those that may have mobility issues.

Others can get into groups or bird individually, and submit observations via the free eBird mobile app, or can send your bird list to Grant Frost via text, phone call, or email. Observations from your home looking at your bird feeders are also encouraged.

Birding backpacks at the Torrington and Guernsey Libraries can be checked out that have binoculars, bird ID guides, and other resources. Several pairs of binoculars will also be available for the group at Guernsey.

Observations of bird sounds also count! If you know calls and songs, those can be included. The free Merlin bird ID app is a great aid in identifying birds (although not perfect).

Contact Grant Frost at 307-343-2024 or via email at frostgrant2@gmail.com with questions, to let him know where you will be birding, or to send him lists of birds seen.

May 16, 8:00 a.m. - Annual Cheyenne Big Day Bird Count

Starting at Lions Park, we will cover birding hot spots throughout the Cheyenne area. **If you want to join us later than 8:00 a.m., please call Mark, 307-287-4953, to get a location update throughout the morning.** We also encourage people to report all bird sightings during the 24-hour period beginning at midnight on the free app at eBird.org. The middle of May is the high point of the spring migration of birds to their nesting areas from their winter homes.

We will leave the Lions Park parking lot between the Children's Village at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens and the picnic shelter to hike around the park for about an hour or two. We will then head to the Wyoming Hereford Ranch. At about lunch time we will head out to the Agricultural Research Station and the Arboretum west of the Air Force Base.

Bring a lunch or pick one up on the way; bring water and dress for variable weather. Everyone, no matter what your birding skills, is invited. Bring binoculars if you have them. The more eyes we have, the more birds we will see. We may finish the planned routes by 3 p.m. You may join us at any time throughout the day for as long as you wish and leave when you need to.

May 16, 8:00 p.m. A Tally-Get-Together after the count, pie at Perkins!

We'll talk over our Big Day experiences over pie and/or ice cream at Perkins Restaurant, 1730 Dell Range. Let Barb Gorges know if you plan to attend so that we can reserve enough tables. Call or text her at 307-287-4952

May 17, 10:00 a.m. - Greenway Cleanup

Cheyenne Audubon is hosting a Greenway cleanup event, Sunday, May 17th. 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.

May 22 - Pollinator's Pantry

10:30 – 11:30 a.m. - Burns Branch – Laramie County Public Library

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Pine Bluffs Branch – Laramie County Public Library

Pollinators are on the decline throughout the world; a concern for farmers and consumers alike. When we think about pollinators, bees and butterflies often come to mind. But pollinators also include flies, beetles, moths and those little jewels of our garden, hummingbirds. How can we help them survive and flourish?

Join the Cheyenne-High Plains Audubon Society (CHPAS) for a discussion about native bees and other pollinators, and the role that they play on our prairie landscape.

Retired environmental attorney and CHPAS Conservation Chair Kurt Warmbier will join Wanda Manley, Range Management Specialist and Past President of CHPAS, to share information about the importance of pollinators, how to protect them, and how to maintain the prairie environment that they need.

May 26, 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 Library in the Sage Room.

May 29, 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.

Chapter News

Chapter President's message

Dear Members and Friends,

The 2026 migration season started off with a bang! Our new Motus system identified two migratory birds coming through the area; a Thick-billed Longspur and a Chestnut-collared Longspur – two important prairie birds. Both of these birds were tagged in New Mexico and flew approximately 600 miles to the Pine Bluffs area. We haven't seen them leave, so perhaps they are nesting in the area.

I want to thank the Goshen County Library and the Guernsey Branch Library for hosting Audubon this past weekend as we officially announced our Birding Adventure Packs to their communities. Sarah Delgado, Education Chair and I visited both places with great attendance at both locations. We look forward to involving our friends in Platte and Goshen County in our birding activities in the future.



Left - Goshen County Library. Pictured are Bethany Rose, Adult Programs and Cristine Braddy, Director.



Right - Guernsey Branch Library with Pamela Merlino, Branch Librarian.

Photos by Lorie Chesnut

Finally, some of you may have seen our new Birding Roadmap. Our three-county area (Goshen, Laramie, and Platte) has many wonderful places to bird. Some of these may be new to even our most seasoned birders. The purpose of this map is to get our friends and visitors excited about birding in the CHPAS chapter region. For those of you who haven't seen it yet check it out on our website: <https://cheyenneaudubon.org/birding/>. You can download your own copy today or pick one up at our many presentations scheduled for May. Audubon is "on the road" sharing the excitement about birds this spring!

I want to thank everyone who becomes a member and/or donates to our chapter. It is because of you that our projects like the Birding Adventure packs and the Birding Roadmap are possible. We appreciate you!

Lorie Wayne Chesnut, President

Other Chapter Activities:

Education Chair Report

Sarah Delgado, MPA, CHPAS Education Committee chair

Since becoming the education chair, I've had many opportunities to see first hand the incredible connection that kids in our Wyoming communities have to birds and our public lands.

In March of 2026, I participated in the judging of our state's submissions for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Junior Duck Stamp Contest. It was clear that the participants had worked very hard to share art that both celebrated birds as well as the conservation of their habitats. Their art work was creative and very thoughtful. Wyoming Game and Fish were excellent hosts for the contest, and I really enjoyed meeting my fellow judges. We look forward to either participating or assisting with hosting the event next year!

In April of 2026, we had the opportunity to host programming focused on our new adventure packs at the Torrington Library and the Guernsey Library. We're pleased to announce that the Torrington Library has two backpacks available to check out, and the Guernsey library has one. Our adventure packs have everything that families need to get out and get birding, including binoculars, field guides and more.

Most of all with our programs, we wanted to spread the word that birding is for everyone. Our program in Torrington was well attended by future Junior birders and their parents, who contributed so much to our program by sharing about their experiences. The library had a bird-themed scavenger hunt and bird-themed children's books out in promotion for our event, which we really appreciated. We definitely felt like special guests and were so happy to be there.

Our event in Guernsey was well attended as well, and we held a group origami activity at the end where we learned a little about origami and made an origami owl. We are so thankful for library staff for helping facilitate these events, and for all they do for their communities. We hope to continue building connections in Goshen and Platte counties, and once again are thankful for our hosts.

Most of all, these events served as reminders that Wyoming's small towns and those who live in them are what makes this state truly great.

Bluebird Nest Boxes at the Arboretum

Report from Kirk Miller

This spring repairs were completed to several boxes. As of April 26, all 16 nest boxes have been visited three times by surveyors.

Nest building by pairs of Mountain Bluebirds has occurred in three boxes. Eggs were observed last week in one box. Several Tree Swallow and Mountain Bluebird pairs also were observed in vicinity of boxes without nest building.



Mountain Bluebird, April 12, 2026. Photo by Kirk Miller

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

We also need help watering these new plants until they are established. We will water at least twice weekly, depending on rainfall. We are planning the planting day on June 6; more information on that in June.

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

The birds, bees, and bugs thank you!



The site in the park

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



Cheyenne Botanic Gardens Update

In late April we had a work morning at the Habitat Hero Garden in front of the Conservatory. We clipped most of the standing vegetation from last year and shredded it. Then we spread that as mulch throughout the garden.

We also took down the black fence around the expanded garden area. The plan there is to plant a row of native shrubs across the back of that section of the Habitat Hero Garden to separate it from the rest of the Botanic Garden's plantings.

2027 Habitat Hero Workshop, February 13, 2027

We are helping the Laramie Conservation District set up and coordinate the 2027 workshop at Laramie County Community College. Watch for more updates in the coming months.

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 BioBlitz, June 26-28 in beautiful Bridger-Teton National Forest. For information on what is a BioBlitz, go to: <https://www.audubon.org/rockies/get-involved/wyoming-bioblitz>. And if you've never joined us, please make time this summer – a great opportunity to explore nature and biodiversity! **Do you know a WY teacher?** ... pass this along to them as they can earn 2 Professional Standards Teaching Board (PTSB) credits! Registration will open on May 10.

Regionwide Virtual BioBlitz, July 17-20. More info coming soon for the outdoorsy and curious around Colorado, Utah and Wyoming!

Detailed information next month.

Community-sourced Hotspot Descriptions and Hotspot Groups are Here

From ebird.org

Every great birding spot has a story—the reliable routes, where the rarities show up, and all the details that make a place worth returning to. Now there's a place to share that knowledge and help others appreciate your favorite locations, almost as much as you do.

We're thrilled to introduce two highly requested community features to eBird: Hotspot About pages and Hotspot Groups. Together, they transform eBird Hotspots into a rich, collaborative resource that captures not just what birds you might find, but how to make the most of each visit.

For more information go to: <https://ebird.org/news/new-hotspot-about-pages-and-groups>.

April 18 - Wyoming Hereford Ranch Field Trip Report

10:00 AM - 12:26 PM

Protocol: Traveling

1.019 mile(s)

Because of snowy conditions in the hills, the Sage Grouse Lek viewing was canceled. Instead, 5 people showed up to bird the Wyoming Hereford Ranch that morning.

31 species

Blue-winged Teal 4

Gadwall 8

Mallard 8

Green-winged Teal 3

Eurasian Collared-Dove 7

Mourning Dove 21

Franklin's Gull 16

Great Blue Heron 2

Sharp-shinned Hawk 1

Swainson's Hawk 1

Red-tailed Hawk 3

Belted Kingfisher 1
Downy Woodpecker 1
Northern Flicker 4
American Kestrel 1
Say's Phoebe 1
Red-breasted Nuthatch 2
European Starling 9
American Robin 17
House Sparrow 1
House Finch 7
American Goldfinch 3
Chipping Sparrow 1
Dark-eyed Junco 3
White-crowned Sparrow 21
Song Sparrow 3
Lincoln's Sparrow 1
Western Meadowlark 1
Red-winged Blackbird 1
Common Grackle 14
Yellow-rumped Warbler 4

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S328235320>

April 24 - Cheyenne Country Club Report

6:52 AM - 9:26 AM

Protocol: Traveling

1.9 mile(s)

32 species

Canada Goose 23
Mallard 5
Eurasian Collared-Dove 10
Mourning Dove 12
Killdeer 2
Ring-billed Gull 1
Double-crested Cormorant 12
Great Blue Heron 4
Sharp-shinned Hawk 1
Red-tailed Hawk 3 One on nest
Downy Woodpecker 1
Northern Flicker 19
Black-billed Magpie 7
American Crow 10
Mountain Chickadee 4
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2
White-breasted Nuthatch 2
Red-breasted Nuthatch 3
European Starling 12
Townsend's Solitaire 1
American Robin 21
House Finch 9
Chipping Sparrow 6

White-crowned Sparrow 3
Song Sparrow 4
Lincoln's Sparrow 1
Yellow-headed Blackbird 3
Western Meadowlark 2
Red-winged Blackbird 42
Common Grackle 8
Northern Parula 1
Yellow-rumped Warbler 9
View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S328235676>



Cheyenne birder Vicki Herren takes a selfie on a birding trip in Peru. Courtesy Vicki Herren.

Birding Peru is a colorful experience for local birder

By Barb Gorges

We know many people get into birding through a spark bird. Vicki Herren told me, “It was a bird that said ‘Quick, three beers’ that got me hooked into learning birds and bird songs. So, it all goes back to the olive-sided flycatcher!” It also led her to study boreal owls in Wyoming for her master’s degree project.

But what sparked her interest in international bird trips? “It was when I traveled to Lima, Peru, in 1996 for a biodiversity conservation business trip and got to hold a Humboldt penguin at a study site that I got hooked into traveling to find new birds.

“In 1997, my boyfriend, who had birded in Mexico the year before, convinced me that we could do a trip on our own. We read up on places to bird in the Yucatan Peninsula (this was long before eBird!), packed our camping gear and binocs and flew to Cancun. I had never taken a trip like that before, but it was so much fun seeing all those new birds that we made another trip the next year to the Puerto Vallarta area.”

For the April Cheyenne Audubon talk, Vicki, now a seasoned international birder, recounted her trip to Peru in November 2025. Her birding friends put together a private tour for six through Manakin Expeditions, a company based in Cusco, Peru, and invited Vicki to join them.

The highlights of the 12-day trip included Manu National Park, near famous destination Machu Picchu, plus the Vilcabamba range and the Abra Malaga mountain pass.

Of the 1,905 bird species recorded in Peru, more than 1,025 have been seen in Manu. Vicki’s group, overall, saw 367 species, of which 204 were “lifers” for her—her first time seeing them. And about 75 were familiar species because they summer in the U.S.

Birding tour companies send out lots of information in advance, including a list of bird species that might be seen. No one says you must study up ahead of the trip, but Vicki does—that

way, when the guide says “Sapphire-vented Puffleg” she knows to look for a metallic-green hummingbird with a blue bottom and white feather puffs on its tiny legs.

Information is also included about what kind of weather and how much hiking to prepare for. Vicki’s trip overlapped a little with the rainy season. In fact, the road was washed out in one place so, while waiting for the van to be able to cross, everyone got out and birded.

In internationally known birding hotspots like Costa Rica and Peru, there are now lodges that cater to birding tourists. However, Vicki found that on this trip, heat, hot water, electricity and WiFi didn’t always happen together in her own room or cabin. But the main lodge, and plenty of blankets, usually made up for it.

Foodwise, rather than the beans and rice of Central America, Peru’s menus are based on quinoa. Vicki didn’t have much else to say about the food. However, in a particularly remote valley, the tour company brought their own cooks and provisions to maintain food safety.

Peru, like Costa Rica, my one experience with international birding, has a system for certifying birding guides and Vicki’s guides were certified and included an intern. Guides must be excellent birders, but they also expect to help everyone see each bird species and solve all travel problems. These bird-rich countries take the tourism economy seriously, not only by providing trained guides and suitable accommodations, but also by preserving species and habitats.

This particular tour included visiting cultural features and historic sites, but not all birding tours do.

The biggest inconvenience was that one of the participants arrived with a cold and in the meager space of the van, everyone seemed to take a turn catching it, including Vicki. She took one day off, staying back at the lodge while everyone climbed a mountain.

Since Vicki already owns binoculars and hiking gear, her expenses were airfare and the tour itself. Flying out of Cheyenne for about 24 hours to Cusco and back was about \$1,400. Overall, the trip was about \$6,000. Vicki says to be sure to get trip insurance, which can also cover medical emergencies. Manakin Expeditions also offers a similar trip half as long for nearly half as much.

Vicki is not a bird photographer, so for her Audubon talk, she borrowed images (with credits) from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Many of the birds were incredibly colorful: “Blue-and-Yellow Tanager,” “Paradise Tanager” (multi-colored), “Purple Honeycreeper,” “Andean Cock-of-the-Rock” (brilliant red head), “Lemon-throated Barbet,” and my favorite, an almost entirely bright turquoise-blue bird named the “Plum-throated Cotinga.”

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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