



## September 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 Wayne Chesnut, President | Kurt Warmbier, Conservation              | Barb Gorges, Programs & Publicity        |
| Grant Frost, Vice President    | Grant Frost, Field Trips & Bird Compiler | Kirk Miller, Social Media                |
| Kirk Miller, Secretary         | Mark Gorges, Habitat Hero Garden         | Wanda Manley, Habitat Hero Conference    |
| Chuck Seniawski, Treasurer     | Vicki Herren, Important Bird Areas       | Lorie Wayne Chesnut, Website, Newsletter |
|                                |                                          | Pete Arnold, At-Large Member             |

Note: Three (3) positions are currently open: Education, Historian & Advocacy

**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/>



## In Memoriam



On August 15, 2026, *Joseph Sloan Hales, MD* peacefully passed away at the age of 87.

We mourn the loss of a generous man who believed in environmental stewardship and put his beliefs into action every day.

Dr. Hales and the love of his life, *Anna Marie Nielson Hales*, have been ardent supporters of the Cheyenne-High Plains Audubon Society for many years. People from around the country and around the world visit *Wyoming Hereford Ranch*, a designated Important Birding Area by the National Audubon Society. It is a place of beauty and peace, enjoyed by so many.

We know that many of you have shared in this experience and that you may have memories to share with Dr. Hales' family. Cards may be sent to the family at *1600 Hereford Ranch Road, Cheyenne, WY 82007*. Emails may be sent to [SloanHalesMemories@gmail.com](mailto:SloanHalesMemories@gmail.com).

## Calendar

### September 12, 10:00 a.m. – Dry Creek Greenway Cleanup



Cheyenne Audubon is hosting a Greenway cleanup event on Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup> and we need your 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 15, 6:00 p.m. – Dr. Craig W. Benkman presenting *Crossbills and Conifers: A 40-Year Obsession Leads to a New Bird Species*.

Join us on Tuesday, September 15<sup>th</sup> for the first in a series of monthly programs at the Laramie County Public Library (2200 Pioneer Avenue, Cheyenne) in the Sunflower Room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

Our series begins with University of Wyoming professor emeritus Craig Benkman, the author of *Crossbills and Conifers: One Million Years of Adaptation and Coevolution*. Dr. Benkman will talk about how crossbills use their crossed upper and lower beaks to extract seeds and why there's so much variety in size. One variation became the new species: Cassia crossbill.



Red Crossbill. Photo by Mark Gorges

Benkman is an evolutionary ecologist and ornithologist. He is a Fellow of the American Association of the Advancement of Science and received the E. O. Wilson Naturalist Award from the American Society of Naturalists and the William Brewster Memorial Award from the American Ornithological Society.

*Join us for dinner with the speaker!* We will have dinner with Dr. Benkman at 4:30 p.m. at Hacienda Guadalajara, 217 E. Lincolnway. Please contact Barb if you plan to join us at [bgorges4@msn.com](mailto:bgorges4@msn.com) or 307-287-4952.

### September 19, 10:00 a.m. - Field Trip to Wyoming Hereford Ranch



Red-headed Woodpecker.  
Photo by Mark Gorges

Join us for our September field trip to Wyoming Hereford Ranch. We will meet at the [WHR Office Headquarters](#) at 1114 Hereford Ranch Rd. Fall migration is currently underway. Birds that we are likely to see Red-headed Woodpecker, Blue Grosbeak, Song Sparrow, Brown Thrasher, and Northern House Wren.

Bring sunscreen and water, along with a snack if you like. Dress appropriately for hiking along an uneven path and on a dirt road.

Contact Grant Frost (307-343-2024) if you are interested in joining us, so that we can inform you if something changes. Questions? Email us at [cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com).

### September 22, 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 Sunflower Room.

## September 25, 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](mailto: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

August is our membership renewal month and we hope that everyone receiving this newsletter will support our local chapter by either renewing their current membership or becoming a member. Membership is a bargain at \$ 12.00 per household!

Your support helps us provide programs throughout our three-county area (Goshen, Laramie, and Platte Counties) and makes a difference as we work to provide conservation activities and resources to adults and youth alike.

Most of our activities are free but your membership helps us to do more, including educational activities and special projects.

Interested in learning more about our Chapter? Check out our [2026\\_2027 Membership Letter](#) on our website. We are happy to send you a membership packet – just let us know at [cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com).

*Lorie Wayne Chesnut*, Chapter President

*(Membership in National Audubon does not mean automatic membership in your local chapter).*

### Habitat Hero: In Full Bloom

Barb and Mark report that the Habitat Hero garden at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens is in full bloom with brilliant yellow Goldenrod.

Bees love this plant, one of the later blooming native plants in our region. Visit the Botanic Gardens and check out the colors.



*Goldenrod with bee.  
Photo by Barb Gorges*

### A young Cooper's hawk visits the Gorges birdbath on August 3, a hot day. by Barb Gorges

Signs of moving on and migration are visible and audible.

The birds have returned to our yard. This statement doesn't sound quite right if you know that we are in the middle of fall migration

What I mean is that after hosting four juvenile Cooper's hawks for about a month, they are now gone and our usual birds, scared away by those bird-eating raptors, are back.



*Cooper's Hawk.  
Photo by Barb Gorges*

In last month's column, sent into the Wyoming Tribune Eagle July 31 and published August 14, I wrote about the hawks and how they liked to eat their meals in our tree that hangs over the driveway. A few days later, August 3, I caught one standing in our front yard birdbath, cooling its huge yellow feet on a hot day, occasionally taking a drink or wiggling in the water breast-first, just like the robins do to bathe. There's no telling what wildlife will show up in a Habitat Hero garden in the shade of an old silver maple right outside my home office window.

Another day, from the same window, I watched one of the hawks and a squirrel in the middle of the street, the hawk trying to figure out how to jump on the squirrel and the squirrel trying to predict what move the hawk would make next. They danced on down the street where I couldn't see them.

A week later, as I walked up the same street with the dog, I heard a car honk up at the corner where I could see one hawk on the streetlight. The driver, one of my neighbors, drove around the corner and down the street and stopped to talk to me, "There are three hawks trying to kill a squirrel!" He might have been pro-squirrel, but I assured him it was so exciting how young hawks learn to hunt, and in our neighborhood, too!

When the column ran, a reader emailed me a couple photos of three young hawks on the ground at the Prairie View Golf Course. As the hawk flies, that's about a mile north of our house and could have been "our" hawks.

When I researched the August column, I discovered that one of my college acquaintances, Bob Rosenfield, is now the world expert on Cooper's hawks. He graciously shared his photo of four bright white young hawks in a nest which I featured with the column. When I sent him the links to the column mid-August, he responded and mentioned the young hawks would soon be on their way. I heard one keening August 19, the day before we left town but, our first day back, August 26, I heard none at all.

But I did hear and see a red-breasted nuthatch, a mountain chickadee, a crow and squirrels—typical. When I walked the dog around the neighborhood, I saw or heard robins, starlings, Eurasian collared-doves and blue jays again.

It's like everyone lay low while the hawks were here, to avoid being eaten, and now that the hawks had left their natal neighborhood, it was safe to come out. The squirrels got right back to chewing up Mark's tomatoes.

It is migration season, and I also saw migrants August 26: a western wood-pewee and two orange-crowned warblers flitting in our back garden, plus two western kingbirds a couple blocks away, unusual for our neighborhood. So, it's time to examine other leafy places for warblers, like Cheyenne's two Wyoming Important Bird Areas, Lions Park and Wyoming Hereford Ranch.

But of course, it's also window-striking season for migrating birds who are not familiar with our buildings.

Cheyenne Audubon member Susan Parkins texted me about a Townsend's warbler that hit the big windows at our airport terminal August 25, where she was having lunch. The bird was stunned so she used a takeout box to collect it and released it in a leafy place where, checking later, she found it dead.

I wish I'd remembered to think about bird strikes when local large-windowed buildings were in the planning stages, like the airport and the botanic gardens' conservatory. It costs more to have special "fritted" glass, but I think there would have been funding available, either through fundraising or grant writing.

Last fall, Mark and I put up an array of quarter-inch-sized dots spaced two inches apart on our most problematic window. It faces four mountain ash trees that can be loaded with fruit and silly robins. But this year the flower buds froze and thus, no fruit and no robin frenzy. But I think it helped keep the young hawks from hitting the glass.

To see the ebb and flow of bird migration across the continental U.S., visit BirdCast.org.

**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).

## Bird and Conservation News



Do you want to learn more about the impact of changes in the Colorado River Basin area? It's complicated but Audubon is here to help!

Audubon Rockies Program Director, Western Rivers, Abby Burk, wrote an article in May (2026) entitled "[Ecological Drought in the Colorado River Basin: Seeing the Full Picture](#)".

Audubon Magazine also published an article this summer by Maddie Burakoff, Associate Editor "[As Water-Sharing Negotiations Heat Up, Wildlife Habitat Along the Shrinking Colorado River Are at Risk](#)".

This is an important issue to understand for anyone who loves birds and their habitat. Share this information with friends so that we can all help to conserve the precious water of the West.

### Field Trip: August 15, 2026 Curt Gowdy State Park Pinball Trail and Crow Creek (23 species)

*Protocol: Traveling. 2 hours; 1.63 miles*

|                          |                         |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Common Merganser         | Western Wood-Pewee      | Pine Siskin             |
| Mourning Dove            | Steller's Jay           | Lesser Goldfinch        |
| Broad-tailed Hummingbird | Black-billed Magpie     | American Goldfinch      |
| Spotted Sandpiper        | Mountain Chickadee      | Song Sparrow            |
| Osprey                   | White-breasted Nuthatch | Bullock's Oriole        |
| Golden Eagle             | Pygmy Nuthatch          | Brewer's Blackbird      |
| Belted Kingfisher        | Northern House Wren     | Northern Yellow Warbler |
| Northern Flicker         | American Robin          |                         |

### August 28, 2026 Cheyenne Country Club (22 species)

*Protocol: Traveling. 3.54 miles. 6:58 AM – 10:00 AM 57 degrees and sunny with very little breeze. Grant Frost, Jerry Johnson, Chuck Seniawski, Pete Sokolosky, and Kurt Warmbier.*

|                            |                         |                           |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mallard 7                  | Cassin's Vireo 1        | Song Sparrow 1            |
| Eurasian Collared-Dove 2   | Black-billed Magpie 4   | Red-winged Blackbird 7    |
| Mourning Dove 3            | American Crow 5         | Common Grackle 1          |
| American Coot 1            | Red-breasted Nuthatch 9 | MacGillivray's Warbler 1  |
| Double-crested Cormorant 1 | European Starling 3     | Northern Yellow Warbler 3 |
| Northern Flicker 11        | American Robin 21       | Wilson's Warbler 22       |
| Western Wood-Pewee 3       | House Finch 6           |                           |
| Hammond's Flycatcher 3     | American Goldfinch 1    |                           |



*Cassin's Vireo. Photo by Chuck Seniawski.*



*Lesser Goldfinch. Photo by Mark Gorges*