November 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 2026-2027

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

Please become a CHPAS member: Just 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. Contact us at cheyenneaudubon@gmail.com.

Join our Facebook Group: Cheyenne-High Plains Audubon Society Group

"Wyoming Bird" chat group: Subscribe, post and/or read about interesting sightings on this public Facebook group at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/403337446664409/

Calendar

November 17, 6:00 p.m. Why Gardening with Native Plants is Important for Maintaining Biodiversity with speaker Erin Bentley



Cheyenne Audubon invites the public to a free talk, "**Why Gardening with Native Plants is Important for Maintaining Biodiversity**," November 17 at 6 p.m. in the Sunflower Room at the Laramie County Library, 2200 Pioneer Ave.

Speaker Erin Bentley will share how native Wyoming plants and floral biodiversity make the path from native gardens to native birds. She will list places that can help you get started on your own native plant journey, and the reason why we need to start maintaining our ecosystems from the bottom up.

Erin is the associate director of the University of Wyoming's Biodiversity Institute, where she teaches the importance of maintaining native biodiversity and coordinates science outreach, community science, and educational opportunities inside and outside the classroom. She received her PhD from the University of Wyoming studying the endangered wildflower *Penstemon haydenii*, and best practices in integrating art into formal and informal educational settings.

Join us for a no-host dinner with speaker Erin Bentley on November 17 at 4:30 p.m. at 2 Doors Down, 118 E. 17th Street. All are welcome! Please reserve your seat by contacting Barb Gorges, 307-287-4952 or bgorges4@msn.com.



Pawnee Buttes. Photo by Don Chesnut

November 21, 9:00 a.m. Field Trip to Pawnee National Grassland

Join us for a field trip to Pawnee National Grassland, a 30-by-60 mile area with 193,060 acres, rich in history and wildlife. Located in Weld County, Colorado, this field trip will take a good part of the day. We hope to see a variety of raptors (including Golden Eagle, Northern Harrier, Prairie Falcon, and American Kestrel) and depending on the weather, late migrants such as Sage Thrasher.

We will leave Cheyenne from the Children's Village Parking lot (by the picnic shelter) at 9:00 a.m. and return home by 3:00 p.m. Bring a lunch or snack and water.

Carpooling will be available. 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.

November 24, 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.

November 27, 8:00 a.m. - Country Club Bird Survey

Contact Vicki Herren to be on her email notice list: vickiblue@hotmail.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 Vicki know you are coming.

Save The Date! The Cheyenne Christmas Bird Count will be Saturday, December 19th! More details in the December issue of "Flyer".

Chapter News



Cap City News reporter Garrett Grochowski meets WHR Manager Michael Genho on Oct. 7, 2026. Photo by Lorie Chesnut.

Chapter President's message

Our chapter has been very pleased with great press coverage lately. In early October, Vicki Herren, Grant Frost, and I were happy to host **Cap City News** reporter **Garrett Grochowski** on a walk around Wyoming Hereford Ranch. Our goal was to share our excitement about this local birding treasure. The group was happy to see about 100 Sandhill Cranes fly overhead and had a total of 25 species observed that day. If you missed Garrett's article about his trip to WHR, check it out here! **The birds of Hereford Ranch.**

In late October, **Grant Frost** was a guest on **Dr. Jerry Erschabek's Lawn and Garden Show** on 98.3 KERM FM, in Goshen County**.** Birding was the focal point of this interview with great discussion about the Sandhill Crane migration to Table Mountain (in eastern Goshen County) and other interesting bird topics. If you missed the show you are in luck – each one is recorded as a podcast. You can listen by linking to **goconow.com/podcasts/** and scrolling down to "Lawn & Garden Show". The interview date was 10/23/26.

Thanks to both Garrett and Jerry for their interest in CHPAS!

Lorie Wayne Chesnut, Chapter President

13th Annual Habitat Hero Conference: Mark Your Calendars!

On **Saturday, February 13, 2027** CHPAS will hold our 13th Annual Habitat Hero Conference at Laramie County Community College (soon to be Wyoming State College) in the Pathfinder Building. This conference is co-sponsored by the Laramie County Conservation District, a close partner of CHPAS.

Speakers include *Tom Peterson*, Ducks Unlimited; *Katelynn Martinez*, OneCanopy; and *Chrissy Land*, Western Nebraska Community Forester.

In the afternoon, you will also have the opportunity to hear and talk to experts on a number of garden topics including *Rachel Crowther* (Soil Sampling), *Jacki Bakker* (Water Harvesting), *Kathleen King* (Entomology), *Nancy Loomis* (Native Plant Salvaging), *Jeff Cowley* (Colorado River Compact), and *Isaiah Smith* (Planning Your Garden).

All this and a great lunch in the LCCC/WSC cafeteria for only $ 35.00! You will have a full day learning about our prairie environment, the importance of wetlands, and how to create spaces for pollinators and other wildlife using native plants on your property. *Registration will be available on our website in December.*

Find exotic birds – at home and away *by Barb Gorges*



An immature long-tailed jaeger was documented at East Allen Lake in Carbon County Oct. 2-17. The species breeds in the high Arctic worldwide and winters over southern oceans. It is not normally found inland. Photo by Don Jones.

To see exotic birds, one must travel, like my friend, Pete Arnold, who gave an Audubon presentation last month about the birds he photographed in Egypt. The definition of “exotic” is something originating in a foreign or distant country.

But sometimes exotic birds come to us, which was the case recently.

I first heard about the long-tailed jaeger sightings Oct. 17, when a few of us from the Cheyenne – High Plains Audubon Society met up with members of the Laramie Audubon Society to bird the Laramie Plains lakes, a long tradition.

George Jones, an LAS member, wanted to see the jaeger again. It had been hanging out south of Medicine Bow for two weeks. Six of the Cheyenne folks wanted to add it to their life lists. It meant considerably more driving, 57 miles, over to Medicine Bow, more time and distance than I had planned for, so Mark and I joined the remaining LAS member for a tour of the lakes instead.

At Lake Hattie, we saw a lesser black-backed gull, a species that normally winters off the East Coast or the Great Lakes but is becoming a regular Wyoming migrant. Individuals were quite the celebrities when they first started showing up a few years ago.

The jaeger is a circumpolar tern-like seabird that nests on the Arctic tundra, but spends the rest of its year south, normally over either the southern Pacific or Atlantic oceans. eBird has recorded a few other Wyoming instances, including one in 2020 south of Laramie.

This jaeger was first documented by Tyrell Perry Oct. 2. When Don Jones saw it on eBird later that day, he and his dad, George, drove out to find it. It’s been one of Don’s nemesis birds and he was very happy to see the bird and then have it fly quite close.

Altogether, 15 people photo documented the jaeger through October 17. The photos show an immature bird, brownish with a pattern of white markings. A breeding adult would appear white and pale gray with a black cap and a long tail.

In many of the photos there is a gull nearby, a Sabine's. Apparently, long-tailed jaegers, despite "jaeger" being German for "hunter", prefer to steal their food from gulls. So, perhaps they were accidental travelling companions, the Sabine's also being a rare fall migrant in the interior U.S.

East Allen Lake in Carbon County, managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, where the jaeger spent those two weeks, is not terribly picturesque. It is a wildlife habitat unit on scrubby flats with a sign and a vault toilet.

George and the Cheyenne birdwatchers were happy to see the toilet after the hour drive from Laramie. But just as one of the party had entered it, the jaeger was immediately spotted. Can you imagine losing a life-bird opportunity that way? The good news is that the jaeger was sticking around for the day. It was a life bird for all the Cheyenne folks.

Another definition of "exotic" is that which is exciting because it feels different from the everyday. A few days later, Cheyenne Audubon chapter members and friends immersed themselves in exotic birds at Pete Arnold's talk about his trip to Egypt and boating down the Nile in a dahabiya, a traditional river sailboat.

Pete found birds everywhere, as well as in the ancient tombs where rulers were portrayed as gods and goddesses having the faces of owls and falcons. Many hieroglyphs are birds, too.

Pete took thousands of photos. But rather than look exotic, many birds looked surprisingly familiar, but slightly different: pied kingfisher, Squacco heron, purple heron, gray heron, whiskered tern, ferruginous duck, black-winged stilt, Egyptian vulture, hooded crow, Eurasian spoonbill, Egyptian house sparrow—all different species of genuses here in North America.

But of course, Pete had photos of some species from bird families we don't have, bee-eaters, wagtails, hoopoes, thick-knees and sunbirds.

At least a few species found in Egypt are found here, like the cattle egret that has spread from Africa to North America.

I don't travel long distances to tick off rare birds to add to my life list of bird species seen. However, while accessing my eBird account to research the jaeger, it showed that I have seen 698 species "worldwide" (I've been out of the country twice).

The jaeger would have made 699. I may have to sign up for eBird's rare bird alerts for our area, or travel someplace exotic, to make the nice round number of 700.

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.*

Bird and Conservation News

Welcome Julie Shapiro, Audubon Rockies



Audubon Rockies recently announce that Julie Shapiro has been selected as the new Vice President for Audubon's Rockies region. Julie has more than 20 years of experience in natural resource and environmental policy, strategy, and management.

She joins Audubon Rockies after an 18-year career with Keystone Policy Center where she worked with diverse sectors, communities and perspectives to address a variety of environmental and conservation issues. Julie also worked as an outdoor and natural science educator at Walking Mountain Science School in Avon, Colorado.

Her short bio is provided in the November calendar post if you would like to learn more about our new Vice President. We hope to have her visit Cheyenne in early 2027 to meet our members and partners. Welcome Julie!

Celebrating Forty Years of Project FeederWatch

Cornell Lab of Ornithology recently announced the 40 year anniversary of their popular program **Project FeederWatch**. This community science program monitors birds during the winter, transforming our daily observations into an important data set. Cornell notes that "*FeederWatch is one of the largest and longest-running participatory science monitoring programs in the world*".

Want to know more? Enjoy this short video on YouTube prepared by Cornell to celebrate this important anniversary! Project FeederWatch Video





We have a flock of five Blue Jays who regularly visit the yard for peanuts. If they aren't happy with our delivery schedule, they sit in our front tree and scream at us to get moving!

October Field Trips and Bird Surveys

The October 17th Field Trip split into two groups upon arrival in Laramie. Some of the participants wished to see the **Long-tailed Jaeger** (a rare bird for our area seen at East Allen Lake in Carbon County) while others wanted to continue on to Lake Hattie Reservoir. The list below details species observed by both groups.

Field Trip: October 17, 2026 East Allen Lake (Group 1) (15 species)

Protocol: Traveling. 1 hour, 26 minutes 4.03 miles

Gadwall	Bufflehead	Golden Eagle
American Wigeon	Ruddy Duck	Prairie Falcon
Canvasback	American Coot	Common Raven
Redhead	Long-tailed Jaeger	Horned Lark
Ring-necked Duck	Eared Grebe	Chipping Sparrow

Note: The East Allen Lake team also birded along Carbon County Road 1 where they observed 8 species: Golden Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Common Raven, Horned Lark, and Western Meadowlark.

Field Trip: October 17, 2026 Lake Hattie Reservoir (Group 2) (23 Species)

Protocol: Traveling. 1 hour, 30 minutes 2.45 miles

Canada Goose	Common Merganser	Western Grebe
Gadwall	Ruddy Duck	Common Loon
American Wigeon	American Coot	American White Pelican
Mallard	Ring-billed Gull	Bald Eagle
Green-winged Teal	American Herring Gull	Common Raven
Redhead	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Horned Lark
Ring-necked Duck	California Gull	European Starling
Lesser Scaup	Eared Grebe	

Note: The Lake Hattie team also visited Twin Buttes Lake where they observed 9 species: Canada Goose, Mallard, Common Merganser, Baird's Sandpiper, Rig-billed Gull, American Hering Gull, Western Grebe, American White Pelican, and Horned Lark.

October 30, 2026 Cheyenne Country Club (27 species)

Protocol: Traveling. 2.0 miles. 2 hours, 45 minutes. 6 individuals.

Canada Goose (5)	Downy Woodpecker (2)	Brown Creeper (2)
Gadwall (6)	Northern Flicker (7)	European Starling (27)
Mallard (2)	Merlin (1)	Townsend's Solitaire (5)
Green-winged Teal (8)	Blue Jay (2)	American Robin (10)
Ring-necked Duck (7)	Black-billed Magpie (3)	House Finch (11)
Eurasian Collared-Dove (1)	American Crow (12)	Dark-eyed Junco (4)
American Coot (28)	Mountain Chickadee (4)	White-crowned Sparrow (1)
Pied-billed Grebe (5)	Golden-crowned Kinglet (1)	Song Sparrow (1)
Cooper's Hawk (1)	Red-breasted Nuthatch (12)	Red-winged Blackbird (1)