

42nd Annual Conference of Western Field Ornithologists Pueblo, Colorado

Friday, August 18, 2017
Field Trips and Workshops

Friday Field Trips

2FR

Holbrook Reservoir

Rarely is such a good lake so routinely underestimated—the number of rarities that have shown up at this location given its coverage is staggering. The lake, depending on water level, can be awesome for shorebirds, terns, or waterbirds, and the grove is a first rate migrant trap. The lake can be scanned from the south side via the large parking lot, or along the west side via the rough dirt road. Look in the trees along the south side for migrants, and the southern shore for Black-necked Stilt and other shorebirds. Note that the trees to the south of CR FF are on private property and must be birded from the road.

Leader: Homer Hansen

Departure time: 5:30 AM. Return time: 11 AM.

Cost: \$20.

Miles (one way): ~ 60 mi. Time driving (one way): ~ 66 minutes

Restroom facilities: Yes.

Difficulty level: Easy—flat ground some walking.

4FR

Lakes Meredith and Henry

This gargantuan lake just south of Lake Henry is rarely visited, which is unfortunate, since it is probably just about the best shorebird lake in the state. When water levels are appropriate, thousands of shorebirds can be seen, of practically any species. Colorado's second Ruff showed up here. The nearby Lake Meredith Feedlot Ponds can also be good for shorebirds, large numbers of gulls, and ducks. Lake Henry itself is also a rarity magnet, especially when water levels are low enough to attract shorebirds. Most of the lake can be scanned well from the road along the southern and eastern side.

Leader: Doug Faulkner

Departure time: 5:30 AM. Return Time: 11 AM.

Cost: \$20

Miles (one way): ~55 miles. Time (one way): ~57 minutes.

Restroom facilities: Yes

Difficulty level: Easy—flat ground some walking.

5FR

Huerfano County: Walsenburg and Lathrop State Park

The diverse habitat of this park makes it the best place in Huerfano County to find the widest variety of birds. Martin and Horseshoe Lakes are good-sized bodies of water. Riparian habitat abounds for good

passerines. There are two good hikes. A fairly long one (up to 1.5 miles) begins at North Martin Inlet parking area on the north side of this lake. A shorter walk (about 1/2 mile) starts at the south end of Horseshoe Lake. On the north side, scan the hogback ridge for Greater Roadrunners & Pinyon Jays. There is a parking area and trail to the ridge on the north side of the park. On the south side of the lakes, there are good stands of yucca where Ladder-backed Woodpeckers can sometimes be found. **Note:** There is a Daily Fee of \$7/car.

Leader: Jay Withgott

Departure time: 5:30 AM. Return Time: 11 AM.

Cost: \$20

Miles (one way): ~ 54 miles. Time (one way): ~50 minutes.

Restroom facilities: Yes

Difficulty level: Moderate—walking needed to get to the birding sites, some elevation changes.

6FR

Cañon City

The Cañon City Riverwalk extends 3 miles, much of it adjacent to the Arkansas River right through the middle of Cañon City. Plumbeous Vireo, Blue Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Yellow-breasted Chat, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler and Bullock's Oriole regularly breed in many sections of the Riverwalk. Black and Eastern phoebes, Gray Catbird and Cooper's Hawk have also bred here. The Riverwalk has been quite reliable for Green Herons from May to Sept with breeding probable. Other spots on this tour include Temple Canyon Park and Tunnel Drive.

Leader: Christian Nunes

Departure Time: 5:45 AM. Return Time: 11 AM.

Cost: \$20

Miles (one way): 39 miles. Time (one way): ~ 48 minutes.

Restrooms: Yes

Difficulty level: Moderate—walking needed to get to the birding sites, some elevation changes.

7FR

Chico Basin—Pueblo—CANCELLED

8FR

Pueblo Mountain Park

Pueblo Mountain Park, owned by the city of Pueblo, contains the Mountain Park Environmental Center, with well-stocked feeders worth checking anytime. The park is most enjoyable in summer and hosts large populations of Western Tanager, Pygmy Nuthatch and other mountain birds including one of Colorado's two reliable spots for Acorn Woodpecker and the eastern most spot for Grace's Warbler. A stream runs through the park and is good for American Dipper. Habitats include spruce/fir, ponderosa pine savannah, and scrub oak/mountain mahogany.

Leader: Nathan Pieplow

Departure time: 5:45 AM. Return Time: 11 AM.

Cost: \$20

Miles (one way): ~ 31 miles. Time (one way): ~ 35 minutes.

Restrooms: Yes

Difficulty level: Difficult—fair amount of walking with elevation changes.

9FR

Rye and Colorado City

Stops might include Lake Beckwith Recreation Area, Greenhorn Meadows Park, and Rye Mountain Park. Lake Beckwith Recreation Area is good for waterfowl in migration. Below the dam is some of the best passerine habitat in the Greenhorn Valley. Greenhorn Meadows Park is bisected by Greenhorn Creek. It provides excellent riparian habitat which is good for passerines any time of year but especially in migration. Rye Mountain Park at the west end of town consists mainly of Ponderosa Pine and Scrub Oak habitats. The Park is an easy place to find Dusky and Cordilleran Flycatchers. The willow riparian area along Greenhorn Creek near the Pavilion has nesting MacGillivray's Warblers.

Leader: Joel Such

Departure Time: 6:00 AM. Return Time: 11 AM.

Cost: \$20

Miles (one way): ~ 32 miles. Time (one way): ~ 27 minutes.

Restrooms: Yes.

Difficulty level: Moderate—walking needed to get to the birding sites, some elevation changes.

10FR

Fountain Creek

This is a very popular location to look for riparian migrants in El Paso County. There are many different areas at the park and each seems to have something a little different. Most of Colorado's recorded warbler species have been seen here along with many other migrants.

Leader: Nick Komar

Departure Time: 6:00 AM. Return Time: 11 AM.

Cost: \$20

Miles (one way): ~30 miles. Time (one way): ~ 29 minutes.

Restrooms: Yes

Difficulty level: Moderate—walking needed to get to the birding sites, some elevation changes.

11FR

Chico Basin—El Paso

This is a private ranch on the plains straddling the El Paso/Pueblo County line. There is a huge grove of Russian Olives, plus Peachleaf Willows and large Plains Cottonwoods. The banding station area (in migration) is probably the most birded spot, as most of the warbler species that have occurred in Colorado have been recorded here. Good semi-desert shrubland supports such species as Scaled Quail, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Greater Roadrunner, Curve-billed Thrasher, Cassin's and Brewer's Sparrows. **Note:** There is a \$10 cost/person for groups over 6. Liability waivers and a registration form to be filled out prior to entrance.

Leader: Ron Martin

Departure Time: 6:00 AM. Return Time: 11 AM.

Cost: \$20

Miles (one way): ~ 40 miles. Time (one way): ~ 48 Minutes.

Restrooms: Unknown

Difficulty level: Easy—flat ground some walking.

12FR

Brush Hollow and Florence

Florence River Park, located east of town, is good for migrant warblers, egrets, rails, as well as Yellow-billed Cuckoos in the late summer. Brush Hollow SWA is located a few miles north of Penrose. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Townsend's Solitaire and Juniper Titmouse can be seen in the pinyon-juniper areas on the west shore. Bushtits are seen fairly often; Ladder-backed Woodpeckers are sometimes found around the dam area; Hundreds of Mountain and Western Bluebirds frequent the fields here. Driving around the town of Penrose itself can often be a rewarding experience, with Black-chinned Hummingbirds breeding, and a good chance of running into the local Pinyon Jay flock.

Leader: Chip Clouse

Departure Time: 6:15 AM. Return Time: 11 AM.

Cost: \$20

Miles (one way): ~ 32 miles. Time (one way): ~ 37 minutes.

Restrooms: Yes.

Difficulty level: Moderate—walking needed to get to the birding sites, some elevation changes.

13FR

Lake Pueblo State Park—South Side—CANCELLED

14FR

Valco Ponds and Rock Creek—CANCELLED

15FR

Lake Pueblo State Park—North Side

Within easy reach of downtown Pueblo, Lake Pueblo State Park combines opportunities for dry scrubland birds like Curve-billed Thrasher, Canyon Towhee, Scaled Quail, Rock and Canyon Wren and Say's Phoebe with water birds including large numbers of grebes, Black Terns, shorebirds and raptors.

Note: There is a Daily Fee of \$7/car.

Leader: Peter Gent

Departure Time: 6:30 AM. Return Time: 11 AM

Cost: \$20

Miles (one way): 15 miles. Time (one way): 15 minutes

Restrooms: Yes

Difficulty level: Easy—flat ground some walking.

16FR

Pueblo Zoo, Nature Center and other city spots

This trip will sample a variety of Pueblo's close in spots including the Zoo, Nature Center and others such as Lake Minnequa, Runyon Lake, Roselawn Cemetery and Mineral Palace Park. Expect migrants and Pueblo area residents, but frankly these spots are not well birded in late August so who knows what will turn up.

Leader: Kimball Garrett

Departure Time: 6:30 AM. Return Time: 11 AM

Cost: \$20

Miles (one way): 5 miles. Time (one way): 8 minutes.

Restrooms: Yes

Difficulty level: Easy—flat ground some walking.

Friday Workshops

FR-ws1

Birds from the Inside Out

Workshop Leader: Lauryn Benedict

Why does it appear that birds' knees bend backwards? What percentage of a bird's weight comes from its skeleton? How about from its feathers? What distinguishes primaries from secondaries? Why do so many birds have wing bars in the same location? This workshop will explore these questions and other topics related to bird form. We will use museum study skins and skeletons to detect how avian anatomy produces the many characteristics that birders rely on when identifying species. The workshop will include a presentation and overview of the topic of bird internal and external traits followed by several hands-on activities that will allow for close examination of bird bones, feathers, and general appearance. We will assemble the skeletons of raptors, songbirds and more, and we will get up close and personal with a range of plumage traits on the study skins of diverse species.

Time: 8:00–11:00 AM

Location: Meeting Room #3

Cost: \$20

Spaces available: 24

Leader's bio: Lauryn Benedict is an Associate Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of Northern Colorado. She teaches courses on ornithology and animal diversity, and curates the University's Zoology Museum. Lauryn's research program studies the vocalizations and behavior of wild birds, including songs given by both sexes as well as nesting and habitat use behavior. She has been honored with teaching and research awards, including elective membership in the American Ornithological Society (previously the AOU), and she serves as an associate editor for the journal *The Auk: Ornithological Advances*. You can often find Lauryn observing and recording Rock or Canyon Wrens on the many beautiful public lands of Northern Colorado.

FR-ws2

How to Make, Analyze, Edit, Share, and Publish Recordings of Bird Vocalizations

Workshop Leader: Ted Floyd

Not all that long ago, only a tiny handful of tech-savvy enthusiasts made recordings of bird vocalizations. Today anybody can do it! Not only that, anybody can easily analyze and edit, and even share and publish, their recordings. In this hands-on field workshop, we will learn how it is done. No experience necessary; no equipment necessary. This workshop requires a bit of "field" work, but we won't have to leave the hotel parking lot. After we record a few bird vocalizations, we will head indoors. There we will learn how to get bird vocalizations off our recording gear and onto our laptops; from there, we'll learn about awesome free technology for analyzing and editing our recordings. Then we'll upload our recordings to Xeno-Canto and the Macaulay Library of Nature Sounds. And if we're not careful, our recordings just might work their way into the scientific paper session! In other words, don't say anything incriminating while Floyd has the record button pressed to "on."

Time: 8:00–11:00 AM
Location: Meeting Room #1
Cost: \$20
Spaces available: 24

Leader's Bio: Ted Floyd proudly serves as editor of *Birding*, a publication of the American Birding Association. He is also the author of various recent and forthcoming bird books, and he has published several hundred articles and papers on birds and nature. Floyd has served on the boards of directors of Western Field Ornithologists and Colorado Field Ornithologists, and he is a frequent speaker at bird festivals and ornithological society meetings. Ted is the Cal Ripken of eBird, with a consecutive-days streak approaching 4,000 straight days of submitting at least one complete eBird checklist. He will hold the record until he dies.

FR-ws3

What Do Birds Eat?

Workshop Leader: David Leatherman

Just about everything a bird does is connected to reproduction and acquisition of food (so they can live long enough to reproduce again). This workshop is devoted to bird's food issues, specifically items that anecdotally at least, seem important to birds in Colorado but also very likely universally. During the indoor session of roughly one and a half hours, we will talk about how insectivores key on non-food items, and the particulars of Loggerhead Shrike impaling on the eastern plains of Colorado. After a break, we will go outside and look at a few examples, both pre-scouted and hopefully spontaneous.

Time: 8:00–11:00 AM
Location: Meeting Room #2
Cost: \$20
Spaces available: 24

Leader's bio: David Leatherman has been interested in nature since childhood. He obtained a Master of Forestry degree from Duke University in 1974. He moved to Fort Collins, CO in 1974, where he now lives. He served as the forest entomologist for the Colorado State Forest Service from 1974 to 2005. His major responsibilities included all aspects of the mountain pine beetle issue, forest insect outreach/teaching, and surveys. An avid birder, he is active in the Colorado Field Ornithologists (CFO) and the recipient of Colorado Field Ornithologists' "*Ronald A. Ryder Award*" for sustained educational efforts about birds. His passion is figuring out the food habits of birds. David currently writes a column called "The Hungry Bird" in the journal "Colorado Birds."