

42nd Annual Conference of Western Field Ornithologists Pueblo, Colorado

Thursday, August 17, 2017
Field Trips

1TH

Custer County including De Weese Reservoir

De Weese, the largest reservoir in Custer County, is often quite productive, and is an essential stop for any Custer County lister. The lake itself often holds large rafts of ducks, and when low can have good mudflats that have attracted many shorebirds. Gulls and terns can sometimes be seen in small numbers. The grassy bluffs around the lake can often produce good-sized flocks of sparrows. Keep an eye out for hummingbird feeders on the small cabins on the way to the lake, and for sparrows and hawks on the road between De Weese and Westcliffe. The best scanning points for the lake are from the bluff on the SE side, from a similar bluff on the NE side, and from the boat ramps on the north side.

Leader: Lisa Edwards

Departure Time: 5:30 AM. Return Time: 3:30 PM

Cost: \$25

Miles (one way): ~ 58 miles. Time (one way): ~ 64 minutes

Restroom facilities: Yes

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

2TH

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: John Vanderpoel

Departure time: 5:30 AM. Return time: 3:30 PM

Cost: \$25

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

Restroom facilities: Unknown

Difficulty level: Easy—flat ground some walking.

3TH

Phantom Canyon

This trip follows a narrow and winding mountain road through an amazingly scenic red-rock canyon. The canyon traverses a number of habitats, starting out in cholla grassland adjacent to US-50, and quickly transitioning into pinyon-juniper woodland. Once the road joins Eightmile Creek there are some excellent patches of lowland riparian. At this point the road also enters a deep, steep sided red-rock

canyon. Canyon and Rock Wrens, White-throated Swift and American Dipper are all possible from here north to the county line. As the road nears Teller County the PJ transitions into mixed coniferous forest, and the bird species mix changes accordingly, with Steller's Jays, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Cassin's Finches, and others.

Leader: Chip Clouse

Departure time: 5:30 AM. Return time: 3:30 PM.

Cost: \$25

Miles (one way): ~ 35 mi. Time driving (one way): ~ 40 minutes.

Restroom facilities: Unknown

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

4TH

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: Ron Martin

Departure time: 5:45 AM. Return Time: 3:30 PM.

Cost: \$25

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

Restroom facilities: Yes

Difficulty level: Easy—flat ground some walking.

5TH

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: Joel Such

Departure time: 5:45 AM. Return Time: 3:30 PM.

Cost: \$25

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.

6TH

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: Nathan Pieplow

Departure Time: 5:45 AM. Return Time: 3:30 PM.

Cost: \$25

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.

7TH

Chico Basin 1

This is a private ranch on the plains straddling the El Paso/Pueblo County line. The bulk of the ranch is in Pueblo County but there is an excellent migrant trap on the El Paso side. There are also 5 warm water, spring-fed lakes, which can provide some interesting waterbirds on occasion. Apart from the riparian area, there is good semi-desert shrubland that supports Scaled Quail, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Greater Roadrunner, Curve-billed Thrasher, Cassin's Sparrow, and Brewer's Sparrow. **Note:** There is a \$10 cost/person for groups over 6. Liability waivers and a registration form to be filled out prior to entrance.

Leaders: Don Marsh

Departure Time: 6:00 AM. Return Time: 3:30 PM.

Cost: \$25

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

Restrooms: Unknown

Difficulty level: Easy—flat ground some walking.

8TH

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: Christian Nunes

Departure time: 6:00 AM. Return Time: 3:30 PM.

Cost: \$25

Miles (one way): ~ 31 miles. Time (one way): ~ 37 minutes.

Restrooms: Yes

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

9TH

Rye and Colorado City

Stops might include Lake Beckwith Recreation Area, Greenhorn Meadows Park, Rye Mountain Park and Greenhorn Mountain on longer trips.

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: Marcel Such

Departure Time: 6:00 AM. Return Time: 3:30 PM.

Cost: \$25

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

Restrooms: Yes.

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

10TH

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: Sue Riffe

Departure Time: 6:15 AM. Return Time: 3:30 PM.

Cost: \$25

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.

11TH

Chico Basin 2

This is a private ranch on the plains straddling the El Paso/Pueblo County line. The bulk of the ranch is in Pueblo County but there is an excellent migrant trap on the El Paso side. There are also 5 warm water, spring-fed lakes, which can provide some interesting waterbirds on occasion. Apart from the riparian area, there is good semi-desert shrubland that supports Scaled Quail, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Greater Roadrunner, Curve-billed Thrasher, Cassin's Sparrow, and Brewer's Sparrow. **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: Chris Conard

Departure Time: 6:15 AM. Return Time: 3:30 PM.

Cost: \$25

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

Restrooms: Yes

Difficulty level: Easy—flat ground some walking.

12TH

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: Forrest Rowland

Departure Time: 6:15 AM. Return Time: 3:30 PM.

Cost: \$25

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.

13TH

Lake Pueblo State Park, aka Pueblo Res

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: Jay Withgott

Departure Time: 6:30 AM. Return Time: 3:30 PM.

Cost: \$25

Miles (one way): 8 miles. Time (one way): 15 minutes.

Restrooms: Yes

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

14TH

Valco Ponds and Rock Creek

These spots are only a few minutes from the Convention Center and will be good for early migrants and residents like kingbirds (including Cassin's), phoebes and wrens. Water birds will be found in the marshes and riparian habitats will have migrants. Mississippi Kites will top the raptor target list.

Leader: Doug Faulkner

Departure Time: 6:30 AM. Return Time: 3:30 PM

Cost: \$25

Miles (one way): 6 miles. Time (one way): 12 minutes

Restrooms: Yes

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