

42nd Annual Conference of Western Field Ornithologists Pueblo, Colorado

Saturday, August 19, 2017
Field Trips and Workshops

Saturday Field Trips

2SA

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: Mark Peterson

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

Cost: \$20

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

Restroom facilities: Unknown

Difficulty level: Easy—flat ground some walking.

4SA

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: Jay Withgott

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.

5SA

Huerfano County: Walsenburg and Lathrop State Park—CANCELLED

6SA

Cañon City—CANCELLED

7SA

Chico Basin—Pueblo

This is a private ranch on the plains straddling the El Paso/Pueblo County line. There are 5 warm water, spring-fed lakes, which can provide interesting waterbirds on occasion. Apart from the riparian area, there is good semi-desert shrubland that 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: Doug Faulkner

Departure Time: 5:45 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.

8SA

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: Ron Martin

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.

9SA

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: Marcel 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.

10SA

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.

11SA

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: Peter Gent

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

12SA

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: Christian Nunes

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.

13SA

Lake Pueblo State Park - South 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: Joel Such

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

Cost: \$20

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.

14SA

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: Kimball Garrett

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

Cost: \$20

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.

15SA

Lake Pueblo State Park—North Side—CANCELLED

16SA

Pueblo Zoo, Nature Center and Other City Spots—CANCELLED

Saturday Workshops

SA-ws1

Identifying Birds by Their Sounds

Workshop Leader: Nathan Pieplow

"It is sometimes said that expert birders make 90 percent of their identifications by ear. It is also said that no aspect of birding is more frustrating for the beginner and more difficult to master than voice identification."

So says David Sibley in the introduction to the "Sibley Guide to Birds" and many birders would agree. Until recently, most attempts to teach bird sound identification have relied almost entirely on

memorization techniques. This workshop will take a different approach. Nathan will work on advanced listening skills, teaching you how to pay attention to the fine details of a sound. In the process, you will learn a common vocabulary for describing bird sounds. Just as beginning birders learn the different parts of the bird and how to distinguish colors like “buff” and “rufous,” you’ll learn the different parts of a sound and how to distinguish tone qualities like “burry” and “polyphonic.” You’ll also study how to visualize sounds and read spectrograms and then use these skills to tackle some of the more significant audio identification challenges in the western United States, from Empidonax flycatchers to thrashers. Regardless of your level of experience with bird sounds, this workshop will help you listen to sounds more analytically, describe them more accurately, and use them more effectively in identifying birds.

Time: 8:00–11:00 AM

Where: Meeting Room #1

Cost: \$20

Spaces available: 24

Leader’s Bio: Nathan Pieplow is the author of Peterson Field Guide to *Bird Sounds of Eastern North America*. He has been fascinated by birds since his childhood in South Dakota, and has intensively studied bird sounds since 2003. He is the founder of the bird sound blog *Earbirding.com*, one of the authors of the Colorado Birding Trail, and the former editor of the journal *Colorado Birds*. Nathan teaches writing at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

SA-ws2

The Ins and Outs of eBird: from the basics to advanced use and application
Workshop Leader: Scott Somershoe

eBird has become a widely popular birding and listing tool over the last decade. The program itself has grown by leaps and bounds with amazing new features and tools, even a mobile application for submitting lists in the field in real time from your smart phone! Although eBird is an incredible tool, the power, value, and quality of eBird and the data lays with you, the user. In this workshop, we’ll review the basics of eBird from how to effectively submit lists to using eBird for your birding benefit. We’ll create and submit lists in the field, aka the parking lot and a city park, and review “extras” such as adding photos from both your mobile device and on a desktop. I’ll also cover a lot of what we reviewers and eBird users refer to as “good eBird behaviors” with respect to submitting lists and data. New tools and uses of eBird seem to be coming out almost monthly, and we’ll review a lot of the “cool” stuff you can do with eBird data.

Time: 8:00–11:00 AM

Where: Meeting Room #2

Cost: \$20

Spaces available: 24

Leader’s Bio: Scott Somershoe is the land bird coordinator for the Migratory Bird Program, Region 6, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, based in Lakewood, Colorado, and focuses on tri-national grassland bird conservation. Scott is an avid birder, eBirder, and eBird reviewer for 3 counties in Colorado and 16 counties in Tennessee.

SA-ws3 and SU-2SU

This workshop includes a classroom session on Saturday and an all-day field session on Sunday. Registrants may sign up for the classroom session only or classroom PLUS field session. Only 12 people will be allowed to register in both the field trip and workshop and an additional 12 people can register for the workshop without field trip (SA-ws3).

Identification of Shorebirds, Saturday workshop and Sunday field trip
Workshop and Field Trip Leader: Jon Dunn

Time: 8:00–11:00 AM on Saturday; Sunday from 5:30 AM—3:30 PM

Where: Meeting room #3 on Saturday. On Sunday you'll meet at the convention center entrance.

Cost: \$45

Spaces available: 12

Workshop: If you find shorebird identification difficult, this is the workshop for you. Jon will focus on the more difficult groups such as yellowlegs, small sandpipers (peeps or stints), and dowitchers, taking lots of time to view the subtle differences in plumage and shape. Jon will use digital images and when applicable listen to distinguishing vocalizations to help you with identification. He will start with a brief overview of plumages of shorebirds and seasonable timing and routes of migration.

Field Trip: For the shorebird field trip, Jon will lead participants to one of the wetland areas to the east in the Arkansas River Valley, likely around one of the reservoirs. Local Colorado birders will be able to provide information about which locations are best. There is a slight chance that water levels may be very high with no location affording good shorebird viewing. In that case, the field trip will go to some other location and will focus on some other group of birds. Jon is sure you will not be bored as every day in the field provides lots of opportunities to learn.

Leader's bio: Jon Dunn is the co-writer and host of the two-video set *Large and Small Gulls of North America* as well as co-author (with Kimball Garrett) of *Birds of Southern California: Status and Distribution* and the *Peterson Field Guide to Warblers* and co-authored (with Steve Howell) *Gulls of the Americas*. Jon has a passion for teaching about field identification, status and distribution, both in the field and the classroom. Jon Dunn is the co-author of the seventh edition of the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* which will be out in late September 2017. He was chief consultant for the first five editions and co-author with Jonathan Alderfer for the 6th and 7th. He is a member of the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union and has served more than 27 years on the California Bird Records Committee. He has also been on the Board of Directors for Western Field Ornithologists for over ten years. In 2012, Jon was the recipient of the ABA's Roger Tory Peterson Award, given for a lifetime of achievements in promoting the cause of birding. Beyond birds, Jon has a keen interest in history, politics and the cinema.

SA-ws3

Identification of Shorebirds, workshop only
Workshop Leader: Jon Dunn

Time: 8:00–11:00 AM

Where: Meeting Room #3

Cost: \$20

Spaces available: 12

Workshop: If you find shorebird identification difficult, this is the workshop for you. Jon will focus on the more difficult groups such as yellowlegs, small sandpipers (peeps or stints), and dowitchers, taking lots of time to view the subtle differences in plumage and shape. Jon will use digital images and when applicable listen to distinguishing vocalizations to help you with identification. He will start with a brief overview of plumages of shorebirds and seasonable timing and routes of migration.

Leader's bio: See previous page.